



CanCOVID Speaker Series

Event Summary



Key Characteristics of a Fragile Healthcare Supply Chain

Speaker

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Objective

This summary provides an overview of the Speaker Series presentation on the 'Key Characteristics of a Fragile Healthcare Supply Chain,' which presented emerging results from the CIHR-funded study. The study's objective was to develop an implementation framework to advance provincial and national health system supply chain management, through comparative analysis of provincial healthcare supply chains, examining the digital maturity of supply chain infrastructure, exploring related policy frameworks, as well as the effectiveness of federal, provincial, and territorial governmental supply chain coordination through mixed methods research.

Key Messages

- 'Features of fragility' identified in the study (key features of the supply chain that can limit the support of care delivery):
 - Decentralized leadership strategy
 - Inability to manage a surge in demand: health systems are now moving toward purchasing manufacturing capacity to address this moving forward
 - Single-sourcing of products from single geographies or single suppliers: governments inquired into domestic manufacturing to make up for losses through disruptions to single-sourcing
 - Limited data infrastructure in most provinces, with Alberta being the exception: provinces with more decentralized leadership had significantly limited product data, lack of standardization of data across jurisdictions
 - Reactive supply chain response: many provinces established an allocation formula, whereby healthcare professionals were allocated a prescribed amount of PPE and could not go above that amount. This impacted the delivery of care and created anxiety and uncertainty in the health workforce.
- Areas of impact:
 - Health workforce: significant impact to the health workforces' confidence in the safety of the workplace setting. This led to high rates of absenteeism among the employees, including health workers as they became infected with the virus, and it reinforced a culture of compliance as opposed to a culture of collaboration.
 - Long-term care: Canada suffered a significantly high number of deaths in long-term care homes.
 - Learning health systems
 - Post-pandemic health system recovery
 - Need for healthy supply chain resilience

Implications/Next Steps

- The learnings from this research may be used to inform other work in this area, including in a supply chain strategic roadmap that is being established to help governments and organizations evaluate the strength of their supply chain.

[Click here to view the recording of this event.](#)