Africa is facing a catastrophe without vaccines while in Canada doses are wasted

We have more than enough vaccines, others don't.

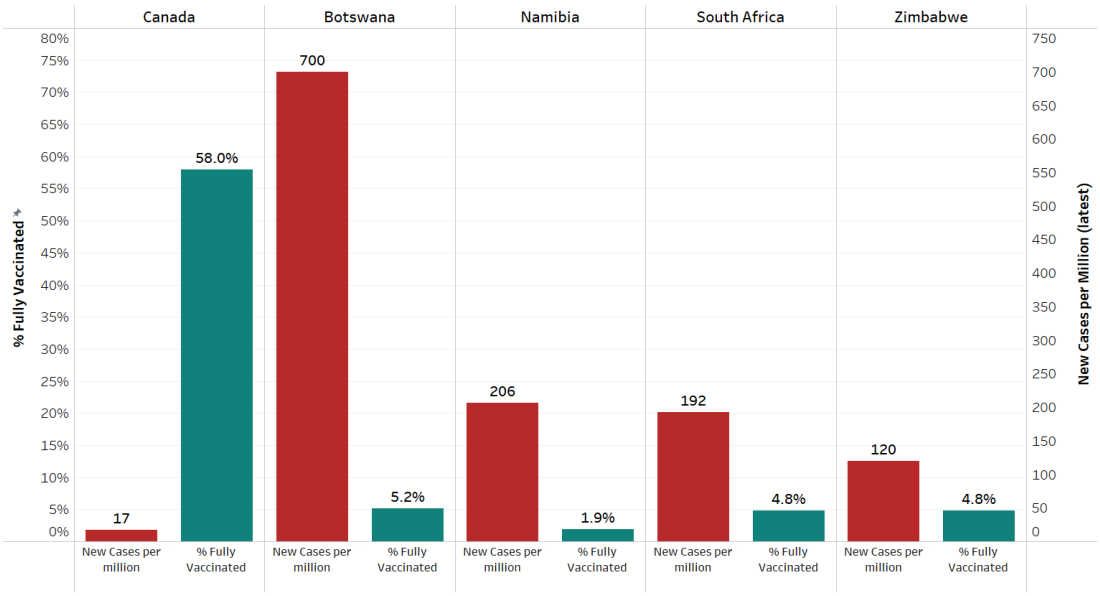
Africa is facing a COVID-19 crisis, cases are surging and the continent is heading towards a global catastrophe. Over the last month deaths from COVID in Africa have increased 80%. Only roughly 3% of Africans have received the first shot, and the continent is not on track to vaccinate 10% of its population by the end of the year. The WHO's Bruce Aylward said this should be "a scar on all of our consciences."

Meanwhile in Canada, Prime Minister Trudeau announced on July 27th that with 66 million doses received, we have enough to fully vaccinate every eligible Canadian. We have now reached a point where the supply of vaccine exceeds demand, and already Astra Zeneca doses have been thrown away and Moderna vaccines are sitting in freezers nearing their expiry dates.

Canada is the country that has ordered the most vaccines per person: counting optional purchases, enough to vaccinate each Canadian 5 times. Unless the excess doses are shared right now, we could end-up throwing away millions of doses while most of the rest of the world remains unvaccinated. This is a scandal that we cannot let happen.

Figure 1: A tale of two pandemics

While Canada is in a very good position, some African countries are seeing an increase in cases with a very small share of their population vaccinated.



Canada has so far committed to share 30.7 million doses with COVAX, the global vaccine distribution mechanism, including a recent pledge to donate the remainder of our Astra Zeneca orders. But there has been no confirmation of when these donated vaccines might reach countries in need.

In addition, **new analysis by the ONE Campaign based on data from analytics firm Airfinity shows that at the current rate, Canada will end-up with between 16 and 42 million more vaccines piling up in freezers or thrown away by Christmas,** while the pandemic continues raging on in Africa and the developing world.

We not only have a moral obligation to share doses, it is in our own best interest to stop the global spread and emergence of new variants. Until then, more preventable deaths will occur and Canada's own recovery will be threatened by a shaky global economy. According to the IMF, failing to help the developing world defeat Covid-19 could cost the global economy US$4.5 trillion.

The time to donate more doses is now. Lives depend on it.

Africa is experiencing an increasingly urgent COVID crisis and needs at least 200 million vaccine doses by the end of September to slow the spread and prevent more needless deaths. Canada should immediately transfer all incoming vaccine orders to COVAX, beyond ensuring that there are enough for every Canadians to be fully vaccinated. This should mean at least 12 million more doses shared before the end of September, and in total 16-42 million vaccines donated before the end of the year if we want to end the pandemic and avoid unimaginable waste.

Vaccines being discarded is not a theoretical concern. In addition to the 300,000 doses from Johnson and Johnson that were discarded due to a manufacturing issue, thousands of Astra Zeneca doses have already been wasted in Canada because they could not be used before their expiry dates. With this vaccine barely been used in anymore, there may be thousands more sitting in freezers or the garbage, and provinces are coy about how many they may be throwing away. The same is starting to happen with Moderna, with pharmacists unable to put some of the doses they have in arms.

It may be tempting for the Government to keep vaccines stockpiled just in case boosters may be needed. But the evidence so far on the need for boosters is far from conclusive, and many experts have warned that it would be counterproductive to start giving third doses to healthy people in rich countries while at-risk populations have not yet had their first shot in developing countries. Stockpiling a product with a short shelf life will inevitably lead to a lot of waste. In any case, Canada has already ordered up to 60 million more doses of Pfizer a year for the next 3 years in case boosters are needed.

The excess doses we have coming in the next 5 months must urgently be shared with countries in need to stem the pandemic globally. Variants spreading around the world pose a threat to Canadians. The longer we wait to vaccinate the world, the more variants we will see and the longer this vicious cycle will continue. The time to donating more doses is now. Lives depend on it.

Up to 42 million doses could go unused in Canada by Christmas

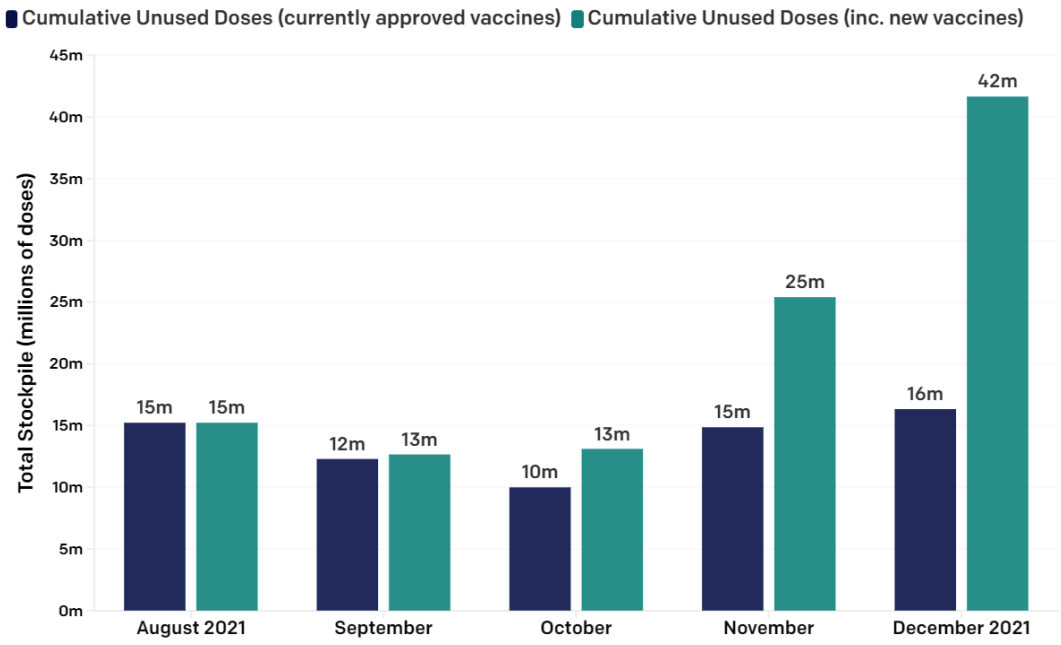
According to Airfinity, by December 2021 Canada will have received at least 92 million doses of the four vaccines currently approved by Health Canada (Moderna, Pfizer, Astra Zeneca and Johnson & Johnson). If Medicago and Novavax post positive Phase 3 results and are also approved, total **supply** could increase to 117 million doses. [1]

To fully vaccinate every Canadian, including children under 12 should vaccines be approved for them, 76 million doses will be required in total. These are highly optimistic projections of actual **demand**, since it is unlikely that 100% of the population will want to be vaccinated.

This means that between 16 and 42 million excess vaccines risk being stockpiled or wasted in Canada by the end of the year. The higher scenario means our excess vaccines would be enough to fully vaccinate everyone in a country like Burkina Faso this year. Right now, [0.01% of people are fully vaccinated in Burkina Faso].

Figure 2: A growing stockpile

Even accounting for the already-announced donations, Canada will have millions of excess vaccines



Source: Analysis by the ONE Campaign, Stockpile size calculated using supply forecasts from Airfinity, Vaccination data from Our World In Data • This chart shows the cumulative size of the potential unused vaccine stockpile.

[1] This excludes the 30 million doses already donated to Covax.