

Reporting Summary

Nature Research wishes to improve the reproducibility of the work that we publish. This form provides structure for consistency and transparency in reporting. For further information on Nature Research policies, see our [Editorial Policies](#) and the [Editorial Policy Checklist](#).

Statistics

For all statistical analyses, confirm that the following items are present in the figure legend, table legend, main text, or Methods section.

n/a Confirmed

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| ☐ | ☒ | The exact sample size (n) for each experimental group/condition, given as a discrete number and unit of measurement |
| ☐ | ☒ | A statement on whether measurements were taken from distinct samples or whether the same sample was measured repeatedly |
| ☐ | ☒ | The statistical test(s) used AND whether they are one- or two-sided
<i>Only common tests should be described solely by name; describe more complex techniques in the Methods section.</i> |
| ☐ | ☒ | A description of all covariates tested |
| ☐ | ☒ | A description of any assumptions or corrections, such as tests of normality and adjustment for multiple comparisons |
| ☐ | ☒ | A full description of the statistical parameters including central tendency (e.g. means) or other basic estimates (e.g. regression coefficient) AND variation (e.g. standard deviation) or associated estimates of uncertainty (e.g. confidence intervals) |
| ☐ | ☒ | For null hypothesis testing, the test statistic (e.g. F , t , r) with confidence intervals, effect sizes, degrees of freedom and P value noted
<i>Give P values as exact values whenever suitable.</i> |
| ☒ | ☐ | For Bayesian analysis, information on the choice of priors and Markov chain Monte Carlo settings |
| ☒ | ☐ | For hierarchical and complex designs, identification of the appropriate level for tests and full reporting of outcomes |
| ☐ | ☒ | Estimates of effect sizes (e.g. Cohen's d , Pearson's r), indicating how they were calculated |

Our web collection on [statistics for biologists](#) contains articles on many of the points above.

Software and code

Policy information about [availability of computer code](#)

Data collection Survey responses were collected using the Qualtrics survey platform.

Data analysis Data was analyzed with Stata version 16. Replication code can be found at the Open Science Foundation repository at <https://osf.io/pqhju/>

For manuscripts utilizing custom algorithms or software that are central to the research but not yet described in published literature, software must be made available to editors and reviewers. We strongly encourage code deposition in a community repository (e.g. GitHub). See the Nature Research [guidelines for submitting code & software](#) for further information.

Data

Policy information about [availability of data](#)

All manuscripts must include a [data availability statement](#). This statement should provide the following information, where applicable:

- Accession codes, unique identifiers, or web links for publicly available datasets
- A list of figures that have associated raw data
- A description of any restrictions on data availability

Datasets analyzed for the current study are available at the Open Science Foundation repository at <https://osf.io/pqhju/>

Field-specific reporting

Please select the one below that is the best fit for your research. If you are not sure, read the appropriate sections before making your selection.

☐ Life sciences ☒ Behavioural & social sciences ☐ Ecological, evolutionary & environmental sciences

For a reference copy of the document with all sections, see [nature.com/documents/nr-reporting-summary-flat.pdf](https://www.nature.com/documents/nr-reporting-summary-flat.pdf)

Behavioural & social sciences study design

All studies must disclose on these points even when the disclosure is negative.

Study description	The manuscript includes a quantitative cross-sectional study, a quantitative panel study, and two quantitative experimental studies.
Research sample	Respondents were part of an online panel maintained by the sample provider Dynata. Participants had to be Canadian citizens and 18 years of age or older. Each sample cohort is representative of the Canadian population by age, gender, language, and region due to the use of quotas. 51% are female, 27% are between 18-34, 34% are between 35-54, and 40% are 55 and older. 7% live in the Atlantic provinces, 22% in Quebec, 39% in Ontario, and 32% in the West. 19% are French Canadian. The sample provider was chosen as a cost-effective means of gathering representative samples of the Canadian population over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Sampling strategy	Respondents were sampled from an online panel maintained by the sample provider Dynata. Quotas were set for each sample cohort on age (18-34, 35-54, 55+), gender, region (Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, West), and language (French, English) based on the 2016 Canadian census and respondents were filtered out of the collection once requisite quotas were met. Weekly cohort sample sizes were set by the research team for projects unrelated to this manuscript.
Data collection	The respondents completed the survey online through the Qualtrics survey platform. Researchers were not blind to experimental condition, but respondents were. Informed consent was received from participants
Timing	March 25-30, 2020; April 2-6, 2020; April 9-11, 2020; April 16-19, 2020; April 24-29, 2020; May 1-5, 2020; May 8-12, 2020; May 21-27, 2020; June 15-18, 2020; June 22-29, 2020; June 29-July 6, 2020
Data exclusions	2,576 respondents were excluded for being non-citizens, being under the age of 18, completing the survey in under 1/3 of the estimated time, for straight-lining three or more matrix questions, or for being duplicates (the second response of a duplicate respondent ID was dropped). These exclusion criteria were set in advance for unrelated projects.
Non-participation	14,537 respondents failed to complete the survey or were filtered out of the survey when quotas were exceeded
Randomization	Respondents were randomly assigned into treatment conditions for the experiments.

Reporting for specific materials, systems and methods

We require information from authors about some types of materials, experimental systems and methods used in many studies. Here, indicate whether each material, system or method listed is relevant to your study. If you are not sure if a list item applies to your research, read the appropriate section before selecting a response.

Materials & experimental systems

n/a	Involved in the study
☒	☐ Antibodies
☒	☐ Eukaryotic cell lines
☒	☐ Palaeontology and archaeology
☒	☐ Animals and other organisms
☐	☒ Human research participants
☒	☐ Clinical data
☒	☐ Dual use research of concern

Methods

n/a	Involved in the study
☒	☐ ChIP-seq
☒	☐ Flow cytometry
☒	☐ MRI-based neuroimaging

Human research participants

Policy information about [studies involving human research participants](#)

Population characteristics	See above.
Recruitment	Respondents were participants of an online panel maintained by the sample provider Dynata. They are paid a nominal fee for participation in surveys. Online panels have been shown to be generally representative of the general population, though the sample is skewed toward respondents who are more frequent users of the Internet.

Ethics oversight

University of Toronto Social Sciences, Humanities, and Education Research Ethics Board

Note that full information on the approval of the study protocol must also be provided in the manuscript.