

Canada ranks worst in elderly care home coronavirus deaths: study

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Canada ranks worst among 16 OECD countries for its high number of coronavirus-related deaths in elderly care homes, according to a Canadian Institute for Health Information report released Thursday.

Eighty-one percent of COVID-19 deaths in Canada were recorded in

long-term care homes, according to an analysis by the [government agency](#).

This is significantly higher than the average for the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 42 percent.

Canada also ranks last behind Spain (66 percent), Israel and Norway (58 percent), Ireland (56 percent), Belgium (50 percent), France (48 percent) and the United States (31 percent).

Canada has had a "relatively low" overall COVID-19 mortality rate compared to other OECD countries.

However, the proportion of deaths in long-term care, which includes [retirement homes](#), is "double the OECD average", according to data collected from 17 countries as of May 25.

Australia, Austria and Slovenia, which implemented "specific prevention measures" targeted at elderly care homes, including segregating units and wide screening for the illness, have registered "fewer COVID-19 infections and deaths."

Conversely, Canada—like France, Spain and the United States—took more limited measures, according to the study.

"This report confirms what we all suspected: Canada is not taking care of our seniors as it should be," said Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, calling on the provinces to do more to remedy this situation.

The Canadian army had to be called in to care for seniors at long-term care facilities in Quebec and Ontario due to a chronic shortage of staff, which was worsened by the pandemic.

The report notes that the proportion of seniors aged 65 years and up living in care homes in Canada is higher than the OECD average, and they tend to be older on average too.

Canada also had fewer nurses and personal support workers per 100 senior residents relative to other countries.

The report's authors stressed the different testing and reporting standards across countries, as well as different definitions of [long-term care](#) homes, making direct comparisons difficult.

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