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New Expert-Developed Tool Helps Individuals Assess Their Risks Associated with Visiting with Others During COVID-19 Pandemic

myCOVIDVisitRisk provides risk assessment and education to visit more safely

TORONTO – Today, the National Institute on Ageing released *myCOVIDVisitRisk*, an online decision aid designed by Dr. Samir Sinha and a team of experts to assist individuals, families, and friends in considering the risks associated with visiting with others during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Building on the success of previous decision aids recently created by the NIA to help older adults and their caregivers navigate the COVID-19 pandemic-related decisions, there emerged a need to develop a more sophisticated tool to specifically assist individuals, families, and friends in understanding and discussing their risks associated with visiting with others,” said Dr. Sinha, director of health policy research at the NIA.

The *myCOVID19VisitRisk* decision aid has been designed over the past 3 months to provide individuals with a mechanism to assess their level of risk in acquiring and/or dying from COVID-19 during visits. The questionnaire is based on criteria selected and weighted by infectious disease, epidemiology, and occupational health experts, including age, sex/gender, pre-existing health conditions, and visit considerations. Each questionnaire generates an individualized visit risk categorization of low, moderate, or high, along with an individualized score of between 1-100. Each individualized visit risk assessment result is bolstered by general public health information to help the user better understanding the risks associated with visiting with others during the pandemic.

In designing this tool, careful effort was made to align assessments with existing scientific literature to ensure that risk scores related to every individual response were assigned appropriately. This tool was supported by the expert input of 19 infectious diseases, epidemiology, and occupational health experts over two rounds of input—using a modified Delphi approach—on risk rankings for every factor. This expert input helped to determine the most appropriate factors to be included in the decision aid and the best ways of posing the questions. The decision aid will be revised and updated as is required every 3 months.

Ultimately, this unique tool, is meant to provide users, especially older persons and those with chronic health conditions, with more information as they carefully consider the risks of visiting with others over the remainder of this pandemic.

The *myCOVID19VisitRisk* Decision Aid accessible at www.covidvisitrisk.com.

The [National Institute on Ageing](http://www.nia.on.ca) is a Ryerson University think tank focused on the realities of Canada’s ageing population.

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