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Report

Canadians Perceptions of Opioid Crisis: Wave 2

Prepared for: Dr. Peter Centre



DATE FEB 2023

PROJECT NUMBER 25106-001



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OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY

PROJECT OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY



The Dr. Peter Centre has become one of the leading organizations in harm reduction through its community practice program.



The centre would like additional understanding of Canadians' opinions and perceptions of the opioid crisis in Canada to assist in its efforts.



Leger was commissioned to undertake research in early 2022 to provide insights and again in early 2023 to repeat this work and look for trending.



Online survey using Leger's Canadian Omnibus (shared study).



Fieldwork January 21-23, 2022 and February 17-20, 2023.



1,525 in 2022 and 1,521 in 2023 completed surveys with adult Canadians; total results have a margin of error of $\pm 2.5\%$, 19 times out of 20.

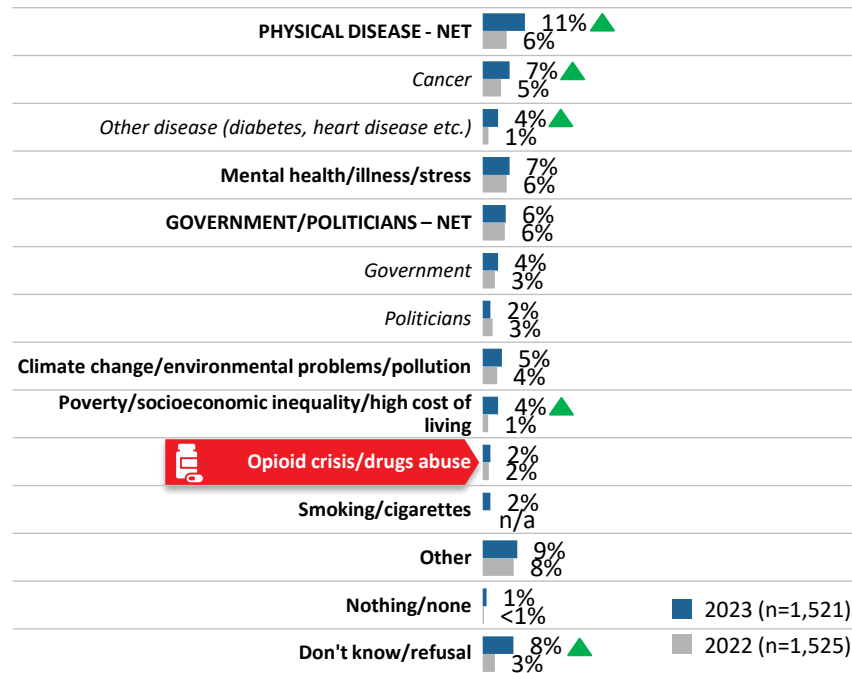
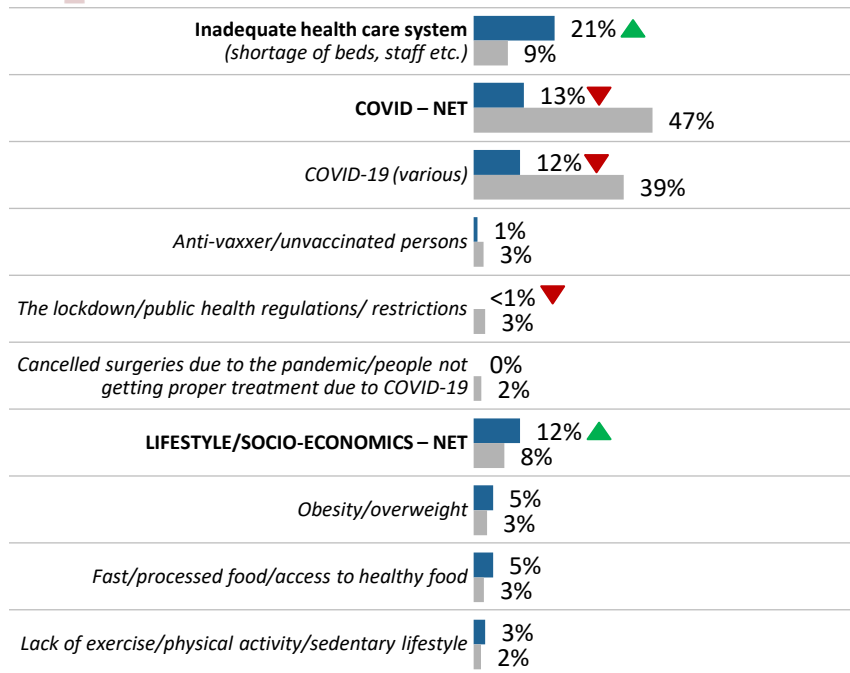
Note: Since data presented in this report is rounded, the sums in graphs and tables (based on actual figures before rounding) may not match the manual addition of rounded numbers.

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DETAILED RESULTS

Unaided Most Serious Threat to Health of Canadians

Unaided concerns of Canadians regarding health have changed significantly since last year, but the changes have had nothing to do with the opioid/drug toxicity crisis. This crisis remains an issue that is little thought of top of mind by Canadians, with only 2% mention in this context, identical to last year. Not surprisingly, COVID-19 is far less often thought of now compared to a year ago whereas inadequacies in the health care system have risen to the # 1 concern. More mentions of lifestyle/ socio-economic factors and physical diseases have also filled some of the gap left by decreasing concern about COVID.



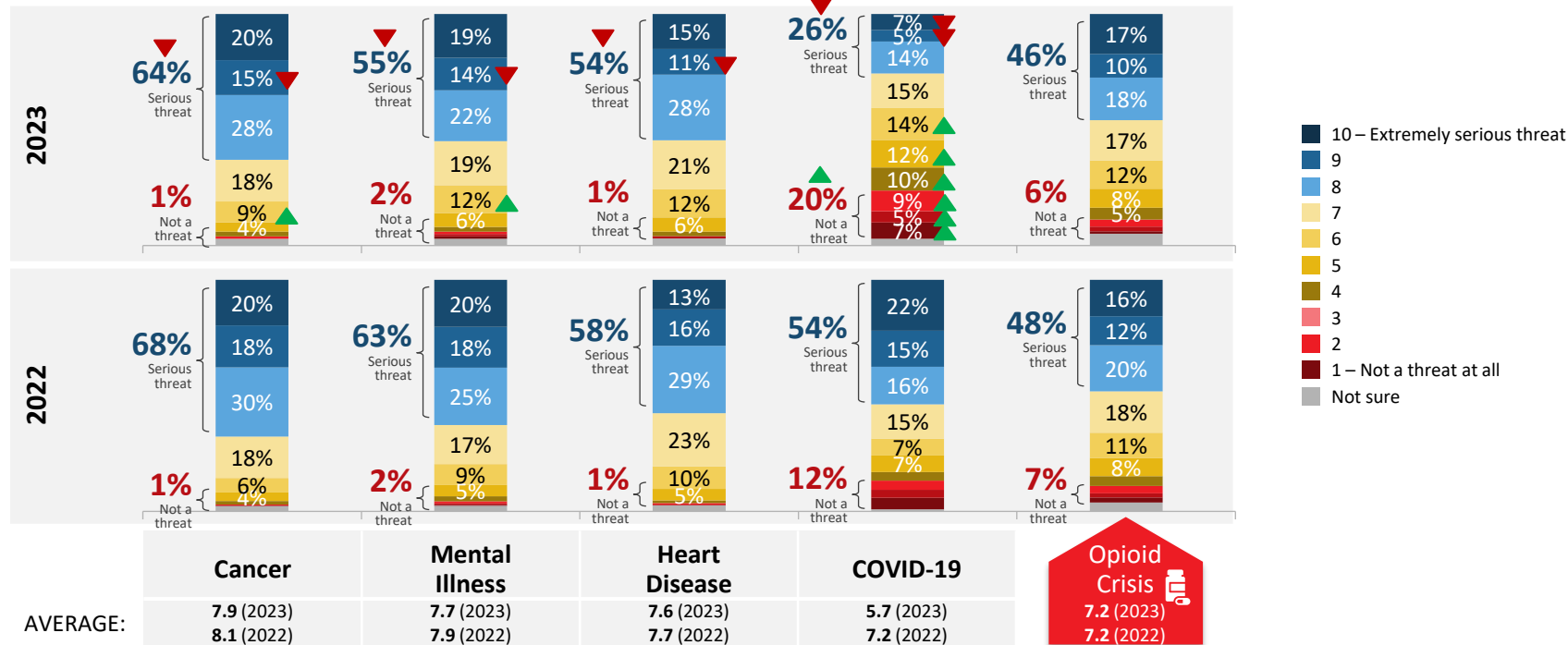
Base: All respondents (n=1,525 in 2022 and n= 1,521 in 2023)
D1. In your opinion, what is the most serious threat to the health of Canadians today?

▲ Statistically significantly **higher** than previous wave
▼ Statistically significantly **lower** than previous wave

Relative Seriousness of Health Issues

Once prompted, there is continued recognition that the opioid crisis in Canada is serious, with few discounting it as not being a threat. Opinions are unchanged compared with 2022, meaning there is no greater concern or urgency around this issue among Canadians versus one year ago.

As seen with the unaided result, COVID-19 is far less of a concern now than at about this time last year. While the changes are small, the remaining health issues (cancer, mental illness and heart disease) are also slightly less likely to be seen as a threat by Canadians versus one year ago, although they are still seen to be serious health issues by a larger proportion of Canadians than the opioid crisis.



Base: All respondents (n=1,525 in 2022 and n=1,521 in 2023)

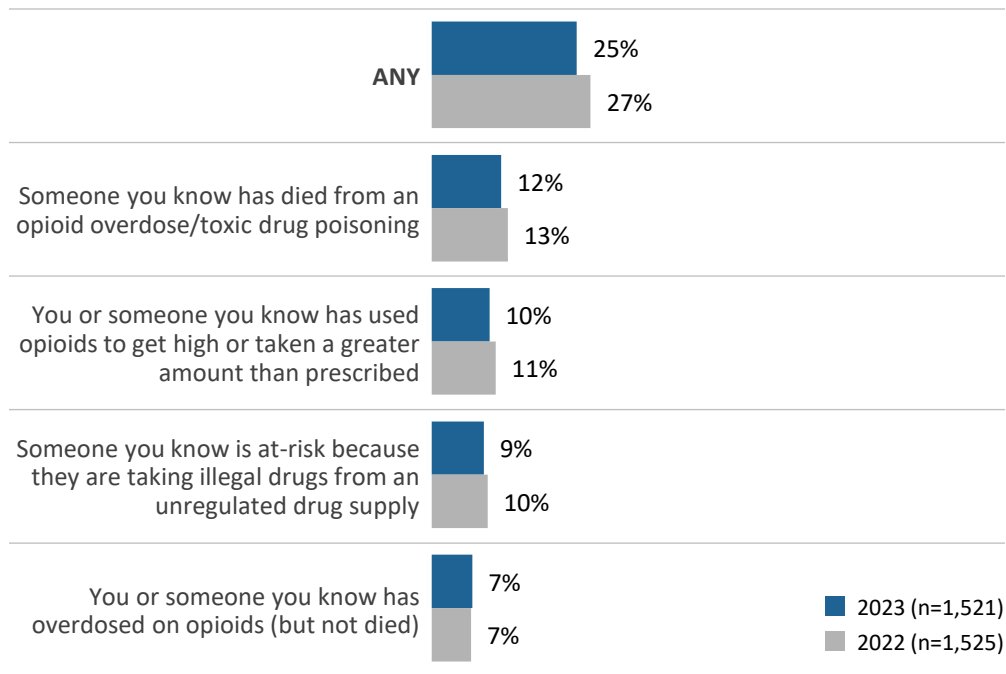
D2. In your opinion, how serious a threat to the health of Canadians today is each of the following issues?

▲ Statistically significantly **higher** than previous wave

▼ Statistically significantly **lower** than previous wave

Personal Experience with Opioid Crisis

About one-quarter of Canadians tell us they have had a personal experience (based on four specifics presented) with the opioid crisis. These results are versus 2022.



Base: All respondents (n=1,525 in 2022 and n=1,521 in 2023)

D4. The opioid crisis has impacted the lives of many Canadians. Which of the following, if any, apply to you?



▲ Statistically significantly **higher** than previous wave
 ▼ Statistically significantly **lower** than previous wave

Claimed Awareness/Familiarity with Opioid Crisis and Harm Reduction

Awareness of the opioid crisis remains basically universal.

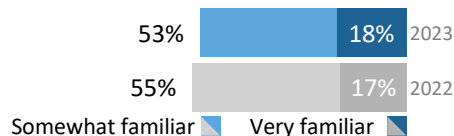
In contrast, many are not familiar with the opioid crisis, and this has not changed since 2022.

Also unchanged over the past year, most Canadians admit to not being familiar with harm reduction strategies and four-in-ten are not even aware.

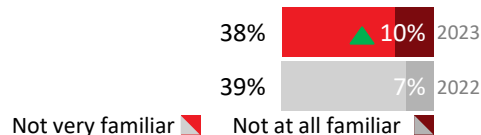
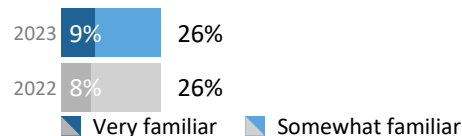
OPIOID CRISIS



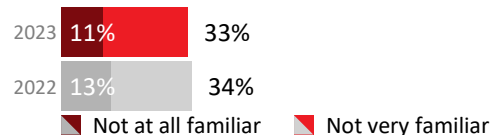
HARM REDUCTION STRATEGY



Familiar



Not familiar



Base: All respondents (n=1,525 in 2022 and n=1,521 in 2023)

D3. Canada is experiencing an opioid overdose, or drug poisoning crisis due to a toxic drug supply. This crisis is creating significant health and social impacts on Canadians and results in thousands of deaths each year. How aware and familiar are you with this issue? D5. How aware and familiar are you with what a harm reduction strategy is when it comes to opioid use?

▲ Statistically significantly **higher** than previous wave
▼ Statistically significantly **lower** than previous wave

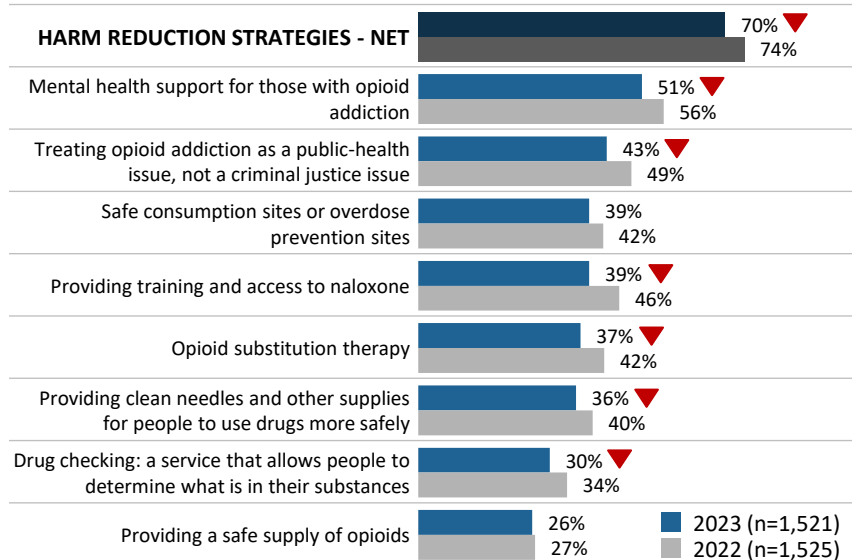
Proven Understanding of Harm Reduction

“Proven” understanding of harm reduction confirms Canadians are not well aware of what is involved in the strategy. If anything, understanding of those things that are included in harm reduction has fallen since last year.

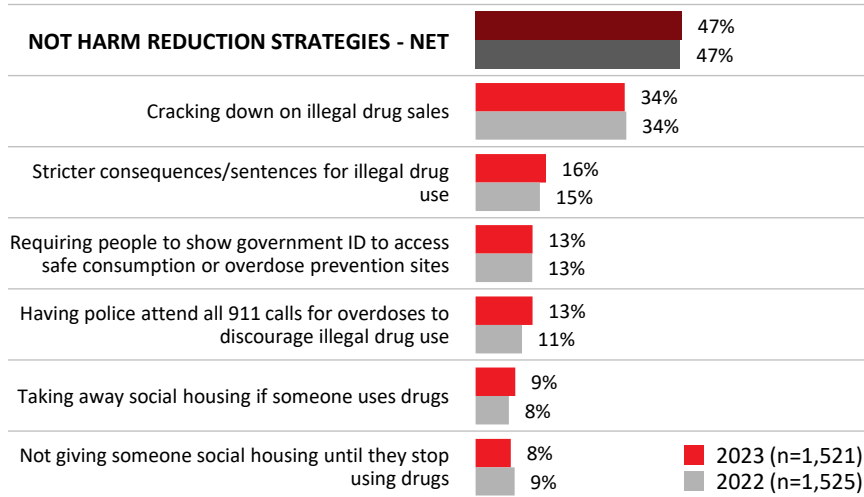
As commented on last year, when prompted with a list of items, respondents who don’t know a lot about the topic will tend to choose those that seem “plausible”. This may be happening here as despite low levels of knowledge of harm reduction admitted to earlier, a large number choose at least one of the eight harm reduction strategies and a fairly large number (almost half) believe at least one of the six strategies that are not actually harm reduction strategies to be so.



Harm Reduction Strategies



Not Harm Reduction Strategies



Base: All respondents (n=1,525 in 2022 and n=1,521 in 2023)

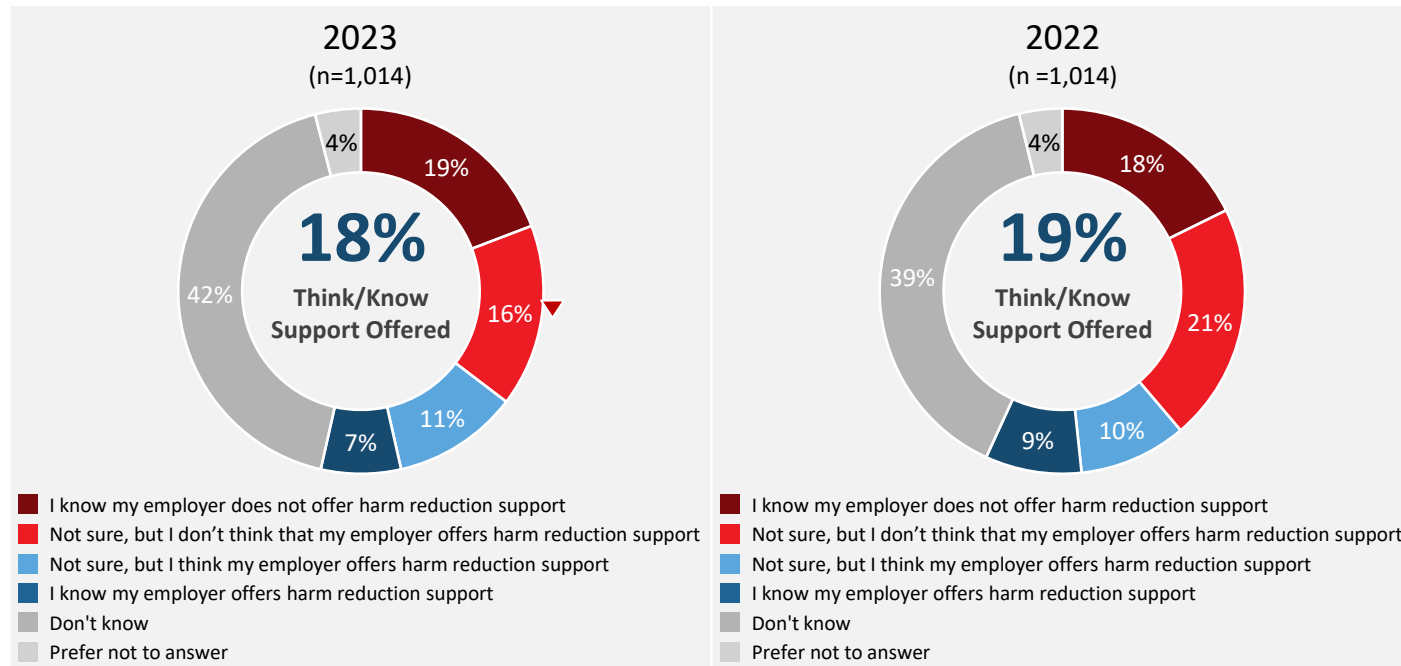
D6. As far as you are aware, which of the following, if any, can be part of harm reduction strategy for opioid use?

▲ Statistically significantly **higher** than previous wave

▼ Statistically significantly **lower** than previous wave

Harm Reduction Supports by Employers *(Among Those Employed)*

Unchanged from 2022, there is little firm knowledge among working Canadians if their employer offers harm reduction supports and belief that it is offered (about one-in-five) remains significantly lower than belief that it is not (more than one-third). There is relatively little change in this metric in the past year.



Base: Those currently employed (n=1,014 in 2022 and n=1,014 in 2023)

D7. If you are employed, does your company offer any harm reduction supports for employees struggling with opioid addiction?

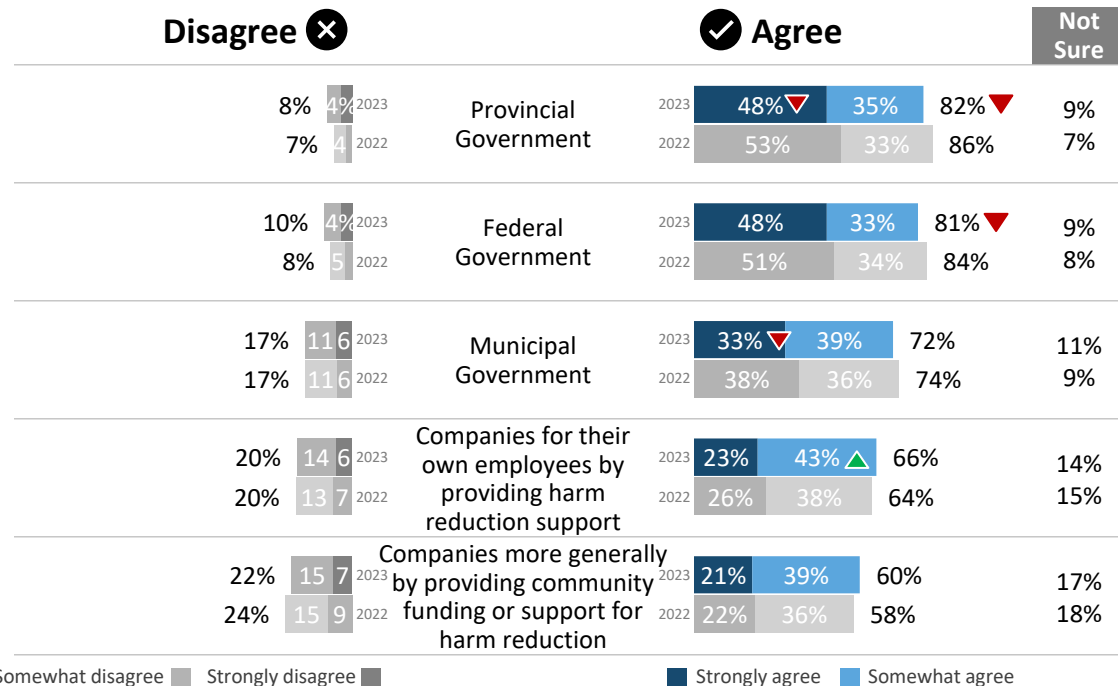
▲ Statistically significantly **higher** than previous wave
 ▼ Statistically significantly **lower** than previous wave



Perceived Responsibility for Addressing Opioid Crisis

The government (at all levels, but Provincial most strongly, followed by Federal) continue to be felt by Canadians to be responsible for addressing the opioid crisis in Canada. In 2023, there is slightly softer conviction in the belief that the Provincial and Federal Governments should address the crisis than in 2022.

The majority of Canadians who believe corporations have a role to play is not statistically significantly different since 2022 and if anything is directionally stronger.



Base: All respondents (n=1,525 in 2022 and n=1,521 in 2023)
 D8. To what extent do you agree or disagree that each of the following should take responsibility to addressing the opioid crisis in Canada?

▲ Statistically significantly **higher** than previous wave
▼ Statistically significantly **lower** than previous wave

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We know Canadians

