



Quick Facts

Mpox vaccine among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (GBM)

The Mpox outbreak began in May 2022, with the first vaccine dose becoming available in Ontario in June, and the second dose in September 2022.

In 2023, OCS introduced a module to assess Mpox vaccine uptake among GBM living with HIV in Ontario.

1,518 GBM provided data in 2023-24.

- Median age: 58 years
- 72% white
- 66% born in Canada
- 73% in Toronto area

Among the 1518 participants:

- 40% (607/1518) GBM, reported receiving ≥ 1 doses of the mpox vaccine
- Among the 607 vaccinated, 330 (54%) have completed the recommended 2-dose series.

High Risk of Mpox Exposure

Among a subset of 576 GBM with high risk of Mpox exposure (i.e., diagnosed with an STI in the past year, reported ≥ 2 sexual partners, met sexual partners from sex venues or dating apps/websites):

- 59.0% (339/576) had received ≥ 1 doses
- 58% (195/339) of those vaccinated had completed the 2-dose series.

In this higher-exposure group, vaccine uptake was higher among participants who:

- Were born in Canada,
- Had higher income,
- Expressed concern about Mpox,
- Received other vaccines than GBM who didn't receive the Mpox vaccine.

Key Takeaway

Mpox vaccine uptake among high-risk GBM was higher among those with greater access to resources, healthcare engagement, and concern about Mpox, underscoring the need for targeted outreach and equitable access strategies.



Quarterly Update
JULY 2026

Welcoming the new Senior Director, Science, Data, and KTE.

Dr. Ganesan is an HIV epidemiologist and implementation scientist with over 14 years of experience in public health research, surveillance, and program implementation. She holds a PhD in Epidemiology from Columbia University, where her research focused on identifying gaps in HIV prevention and treatment and applying advanced analytic methods including mathematical modelling, to inform more precise, data-driven HIV responses. Her work incorporates social determinants of health to support equity-focused approaches aimed at bringing greater precision to HIV prevention and treatment efforts in service of getting to zero.



Dr. Ganesan has intentionally built her career across diverse epidemic contexts to better understand how HIV transmission dynamics and response strategies vary across populations and health systems. Her experience spans large-scale implementation science studies within the U.S. PEPFAR portfolio across multiple key and priority populations in sub-Saharan Africa, and longitudinal HIV cohort studies in Washington, DC (the DC Cohort Study) and sub-Saharan Africa (the African Cohort Study).

She is motivated to expand this portfolio to Canada, where the epidemic profile, health system structure, and policy environment offer a distinct and important context for advancing precision, equity-centered HIV endgame strategies.

OCS at 2026 CAHR

OCS team members and collaborators attended the 35th Canadian Conference on HIV/AIDS Research (CAHR), held in Winnipeg, April 23 – 26, with **8 presentations** highlighting important issues affecting people living with HIV in Ontario.

Topics included: receipt of Mpox vaccine; trends in key populations; integrated data for HIV surveillance; trends in HIV care engagement; prevalence and patterns of comorbidities; experiences with technology among adults aging with HIV; disability among people with HIV; and Tele-coaching and online community-based exercise intervention.

We are proud to see OCS continues contributing to knowledge-sharing and evidence-informed HIV care and policy.

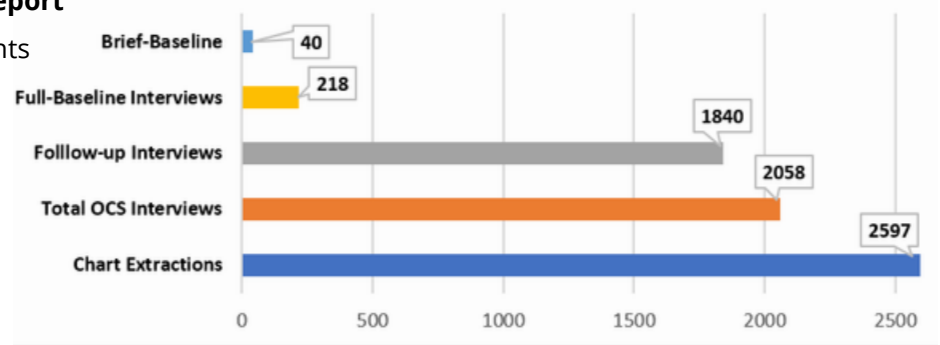
Posters and presentation slides are available on the **OCS website**.

OCS 2025 Year-End Data Collection Report

The OCS included 4452 active participants across 14 participating sites.

OCS Site RAs successfully completed:

- 40 brief-baseline surveys
- 218 full-baseline survey
- 1840 follow-up surveys
- 2597 chart extractions
- 249 new consents



New consents represented 12% of all 2025 questionnaires completed and 6% of the overall cohort.

These accomplishments reflect the deep commitment of our participating sites, site RAs, and OCS participants. We sincerely thank everyone involved for their ongoing dedication to the OCS.

OCS Seminar Series: 9 Editions Completed

In January, **Dr. Catharine Chambers**, joined by **Tsegaye Bekele**, shared OCS findings on uptake of Mpox vaccine among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM) living with HIV in Ontario. In February, **Dr. Lawrence Mbuagbaw**, OCS Principal Investigator and Chair, discussed efforts to modernize the OCS to make it more accessible, diverse, and impactful. In March, **Dr. Ted Su**, supervised by **Dr. Kelly O'Brien**, presented findings from a longitudinal trajectory analysis of OCS data examining patterns of disability and associated contextual factors among adults aging with HIV.

Upcoming Seminar Schedule: Monday, July 20; Monday, August 17; and Monday, September 21.

New Site Research Associates join the OCS team!

We're pleased to welcome three new Site RAs: Katie Grace and Hanna Rude at Maple Leaf, and Noah Jameus at Elevate NWO.

Farewell to two long-time OCS Research Associates

OCS team bid farewell to two extraordinary site RAs: **Raj Maharaj** (Maple Leaf) and **Saba Poursasan** (Hamilton).

Raj has been part of the OCS since the days of the HIV Ontario Observational Database (HOOD) study, which later became the OCS. Over the years, Raj has been instrumental in the continued success of the cohort, consistently contributing approximately 500 interviews and chart extractions annually – an extraordinary accomplishment for a long-running study. Beyond data collection, Raj continuously provided thoughtful feedback on annual OCS questionnaires that have helped strengthen them. We sincerely thank Raj for his decades of dedication and wish him all the best in his retirement.

Saba has been an invaluable part of the OCS for many years, playing a big role in the success of the study. Through her commitment, expertise, and ongoing feedback, she helped strengthen not only data collection and quality at the Hamilton site but the consistency of annual OCS questionnaire and study procedures. We thank Saba warmly and wish her continued success in her future endeavours.

The OCS team remains deeply grateful to both Raj and Saba for their immense contributions and long-standing commitment to the OCS community.

The Ontario HIV Treatment Network Cohort Study (OCS) is an ongoing research study that collects clinical, social and behavioural information about people living with HIV (PHA) in Ontario. Participation in the study is voluntary, and all personally identifying information of study participants is removed to ensure confidentiality. The OCS was established to improve our understanding of HIV and inform HIV prevention, care and treatment strategies for people living with HIV and groups at risk of HIV infection. For more information about the OCS, please visit ohtncohortstudy.ca or email ocs@ohtn.on.ca.