

Rachel Savage, PhD

(she/her)

Postdoctoral fellow, Women's College Research Institute
Women's College Hospital, Toronto, ON, Canada



About me



I grew up in St. Thomas, a small town in southwestern Ontario, but always longed for the big city! Now I live in Toronto with my husband and two kids – Levi (5) and Isabelle (1.5) (see left from last summer). I really love to travel, eat great food, ride my bike and do pilates/barre classes – looking forward to getting back to those things one day soon!

I did my undergraduate degree in Life Sciences at Queen's University and then moved overseas to complete my masters degree in Epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in London, England. I worked in regional and provincial public health for about 5 years and then went back to school to do my PhD at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto and graduated in 2018 – see right. I am currently completing my postdoctoral fellowship at Women's College Hospital in Toronto and will be starting as a scientist there on May 1st.



Current research

I am leading a program of research funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to study how loneliness and social isolation in older adults impacts health system use. This work involves linkages with population health survey data from the Canadian Community Health Survey and health administrative data held at Statistics Canada and ICES in Ontario. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, I have been investigating how older adults living in the community have been impacted through survey-based research and examining the impact of isolation among residents in long-term care. I am a member of the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table's Congregate Care Setting Working Group.

Career development

Before my postdoc, my career was focused on infectious diseases and public health surveillance. My PhD dissertation used linkages between reportable infectious disease surveillance and health administrative data to examine the burden of travel-related infectious disease in Ontario. I was involved in Ontario's response to the 2009 influenza pandemic and have authored a number of publications that were used to inform provincial containment strategies and ongoing surveillance investments.

Goals for the SPA

Longitudinal studies are central to my current research. Given the value of longitudinal studies to untangle the complicated relationships between social factors and health system use, I am keen to learn more about relevant methodologies and analytic approaches from leaders in this field. Because my research integrates key knowledge users from public health, healthcare, and the community through participation on a study advisory committee, I am also interested to learn how to translate findings from longitudinal studies to diverse audiences in an effective and impactful way.