

# CARE

COVID-19 Attitudes, Resilience  
and Epidemiology

## CARE Survey 6: COVID-19 rapid antigen testing and changes over time

Research commissioned by the Victorian Department of Health



## **Suggested citation:**

Niamh Meagher, Katitza Marinkovic Chavez, Lauren Carpenter, Colin McDougall, Stephanie Fletcher-Lartey, David Price, Margaret Hellard, Lisa Gibbs, Freya Shearer. “CARE Survey 6: COVID-19 rapid antigen testing and changes over time.” Report to the Victorian Department of Health. University of Melbourne. December 2021.

## **Acknowledgements:**

Participants responding to the survey

Optimise study team

YouGov





# SURVEY SUMMARY

- 1,019 participants surveyed
- Survey conducted from 6th to 15th December, 2021
- Cross-sectional comparisons of each survey of approximately 1,000 participants are presented to track changes over time
- A significant proportion of the December sample are repeat participants:
  - 591 completed three surveys (July, September and December)
  - 205 completed two surveys (September and December)
  - 223 completed one survey (December only)
- Results have been weighted by age, gender and location, and are representative of Victorian adults (18+ years)

# CONTEXT OF SURVEY

- Increased availability of self-administered rapid antigen testing (RAT)
- Very high coverage of two dose vaccination course (>90% of 12+ years)
- Updates to the recommendations for 3<sup>rd</sup> doses of COVID-19 vaccines
  - Interval between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> doses shortened to 5 months
- TGA and ATAGI approve use of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine in 5 to 11 year old children
  - Rollout of vaccines for this age group announced for 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2022
- Easing of public health and social measures
- Changes in border restrictions and testing requirements for travel
- Early stages of emergence of the Omicron variant in Australia

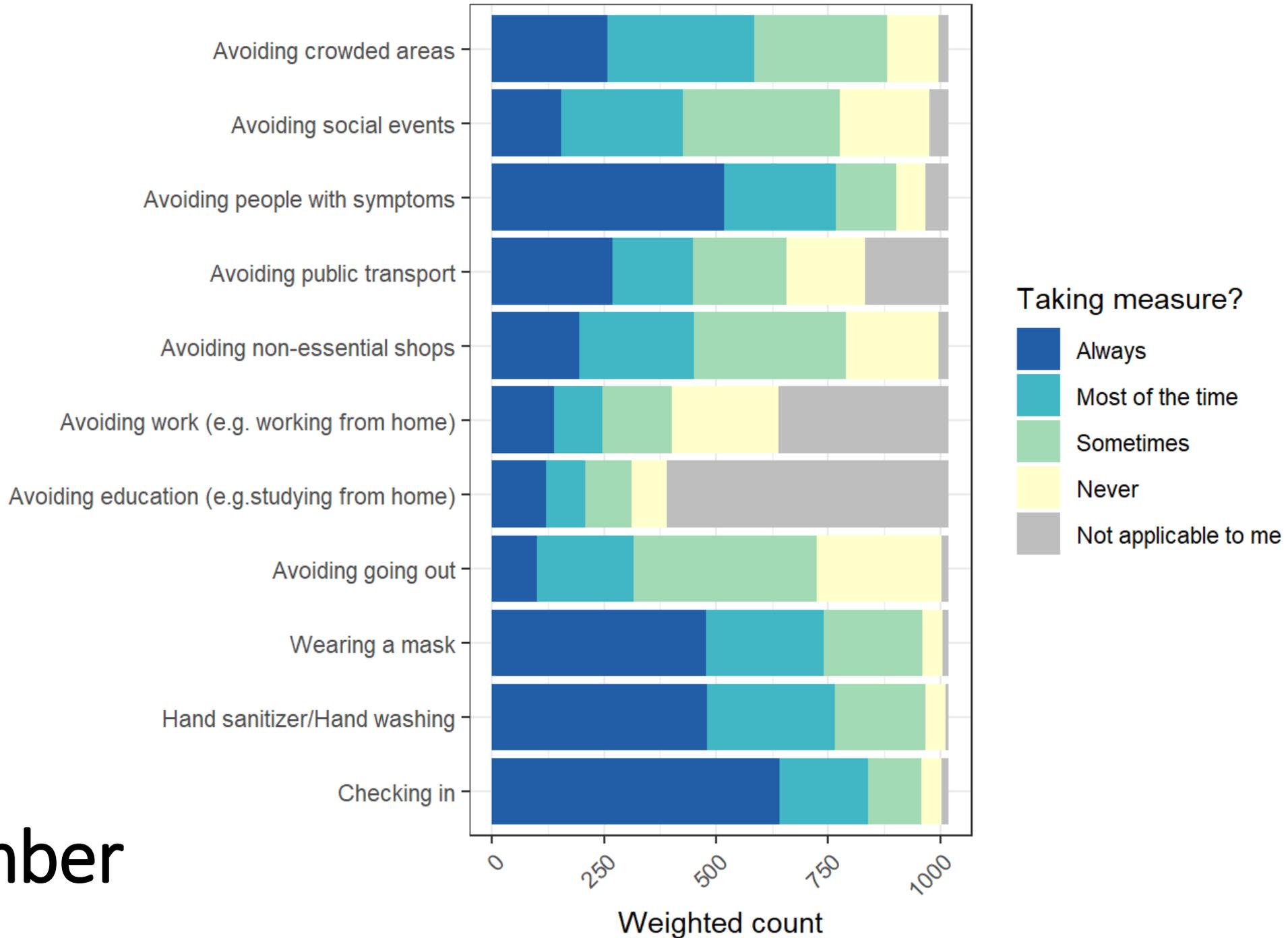


# **PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY MEASURES**

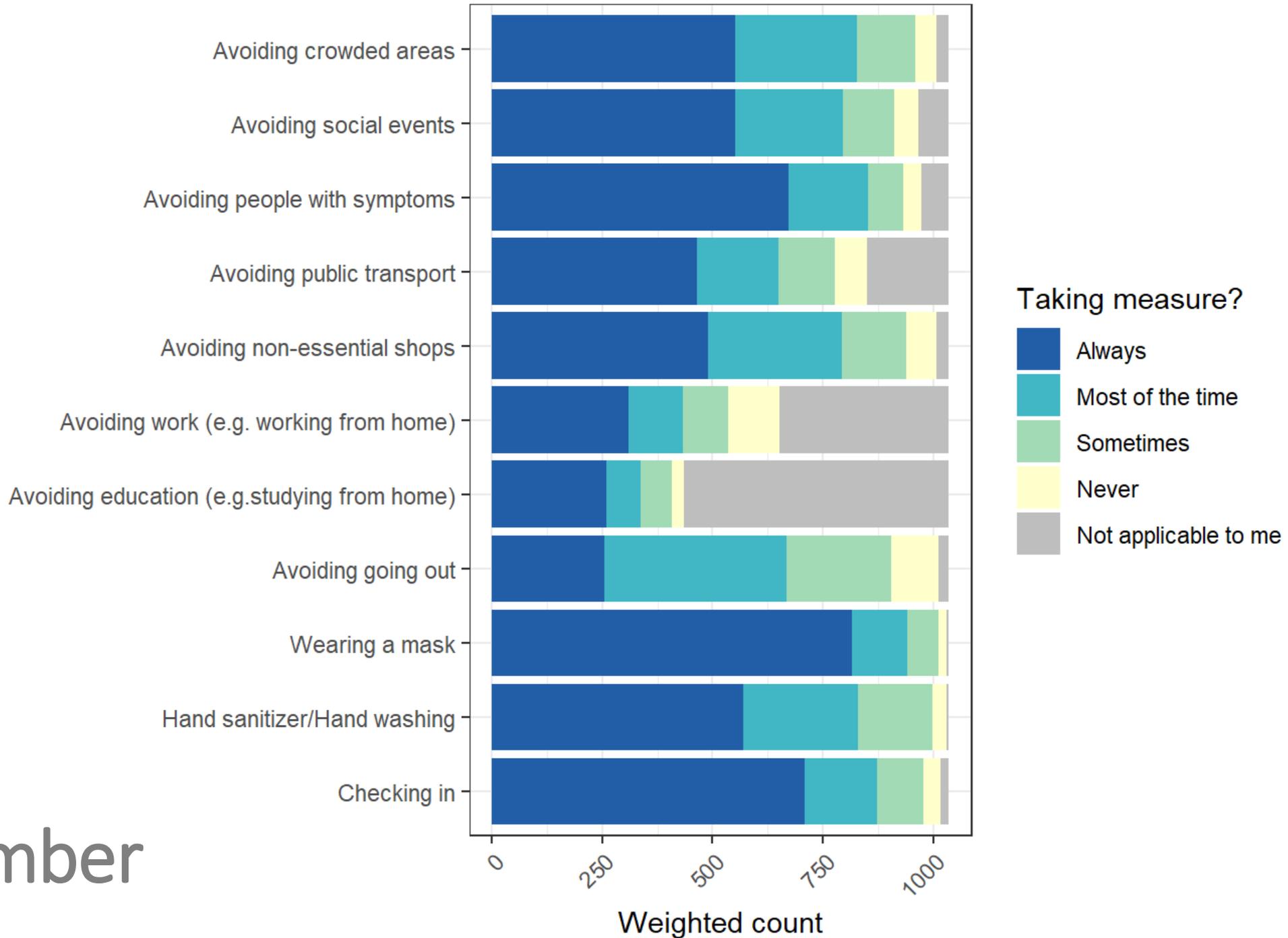


# OTHER PROTECTIVE MEASURES

- The majority of participants followed recommended personal safety practices:
  - 72.6% always or mostly wore a face mask in public
  - 75.1% regularly practiced hand hygiene
  - 82.2% would always or mostly check in at public venues or workplaces
- Compared to September, fewer people were avoiding:
  - Non-essential shops (44.3% December vs. 76.6% September)
  - Social events (41.8% December vs. 76.8% September)
  - Crowded areas (57.5% December vs. 79.9% September)
  - Taking public transport (44.0% December vs. 62.9% September)



December



September



# BEHAVIOURS TO STOP THE SPREAD

- Participants were asked whether their behaviours to stop the spread of COVID-19 have or would be different after getting vaccinated
  - The majority reported that their behaviours would stay the same
- Around 10% of all participants are/would be less likely to follow public health guidelines after vaccination
- 21.7% of unvaccinated individuals would be more likely adhere to other public health measures after vaccination

# CHANGE IN BEHAVIOURS

- *Now you have been or once you have been vaccinated against COVID-19, how likely is it that you will follow public health guidelines to stop the spread of COVID-19 (e.g., staying 1.5 meters away from others), compared to before you received the vaccine?*

	December		September	
	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated
Less likely	9.4%	9.4%	5.1%	11.7%
The same	76.1%	53.8%	79.6%	57.0%
More likely	12.8%	21.7%	14.5%	20.4%
Don't know/unsure	1.6%	15.1%	0.8%	10.9%



# DISTANCING BEHAVIOURS

- Participants were asked about household contacts and whether they were implementing distancing measures
- 21.3% of respondents had >10 non-household contacts on the day prior to the survey
- Fewer individuals are always maintaining 1.5m distance to non-household contacts
  - 19.7% December vs. 40.3% September

# NON-HOUSEHOLD CONTACTS

- *Thinking about the past 24 hours, how many people, excluding members of your household, have you had contact with between 5am yesterday and 5am today?*

	December	September
0	23.9%	37.8%
1	10.4%	15.5%
2	11.0%	13.2%
3	8.0%	7.3%
4	5.2%	4.6%
5	7.1%	5.0%
6 to 10	13.0%	9.8%
11 to 20	11.4%	3.0%
21 to 50	6.1%	2.8%
51 to 999	3.8%	0.9%

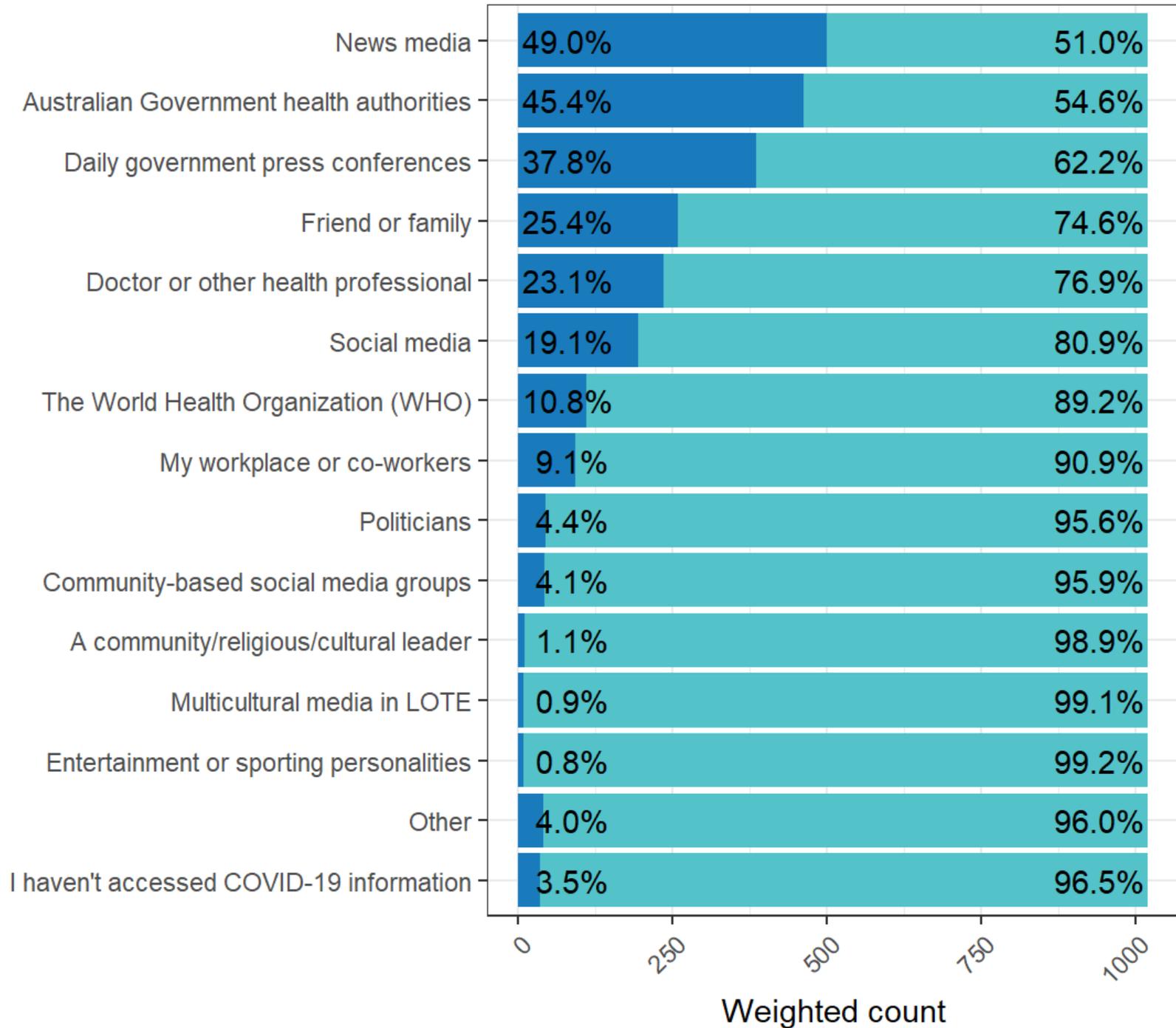
# PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- *Are you staying 1.5m away from people who are not members of your household?*

	<b>December</b>	<b>September</b>
Always	19.7%	40.3%
Often	34.3%	35.9%
Sometimes	27.7%	14.9%
Rarely	9.2%	4.4%
No	9.1%	4,6

# INFORMATION SOURCES

- Respondents reported the top three sources of information they had accessed to stay informed about COVID-19
- The most commonly reported sources were:
  - Mainstream media (including television, radio, print in English) – 49.0%
  - Australian Government health authorities – 45.4%
  - Daily government press conferences or media releases – 37.8%
- Participants are getting information from social settings, including friends or family (25.4%) and social media (19.1%)



Source of information?  
 Yes  
 No



## For more information on:

### CARE

Dr Freya Shearer

[freya.shearer@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:freya.shearer@unimelb.edu.au)

### Optimise

Professor Margaret Hellard AM

[margaret.hellard@burnet.edu.au](mailto:margaret.hellard@burnet.edu.au)

Dr Katherine Gibney

[katherine.gibney@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:katherine.gibney@unimelb.edu.au)

