

# How do Canadian newspapers report on climate-related anxiety and grief?

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## Introduction

- Newspapers are an important way to communicate science and research with members of the general public.
- News coverage of mental health responses to climate change, such as ecoanxiety and climate grief, has appeared to increase in recent years.<sup>1</sup>
- The American Psychological Association defines “ecoaxiety” as a “chronic fear of environmental doom.”<sup>2</sup>
- Exploring how Canadian newspapers are portraying climate-related anxiety and grief could help us understand how the public perceives and is responding to these issues.

## Research Question

- How do Canadian newspapers report on anxiety and grief as they relate to climate change?

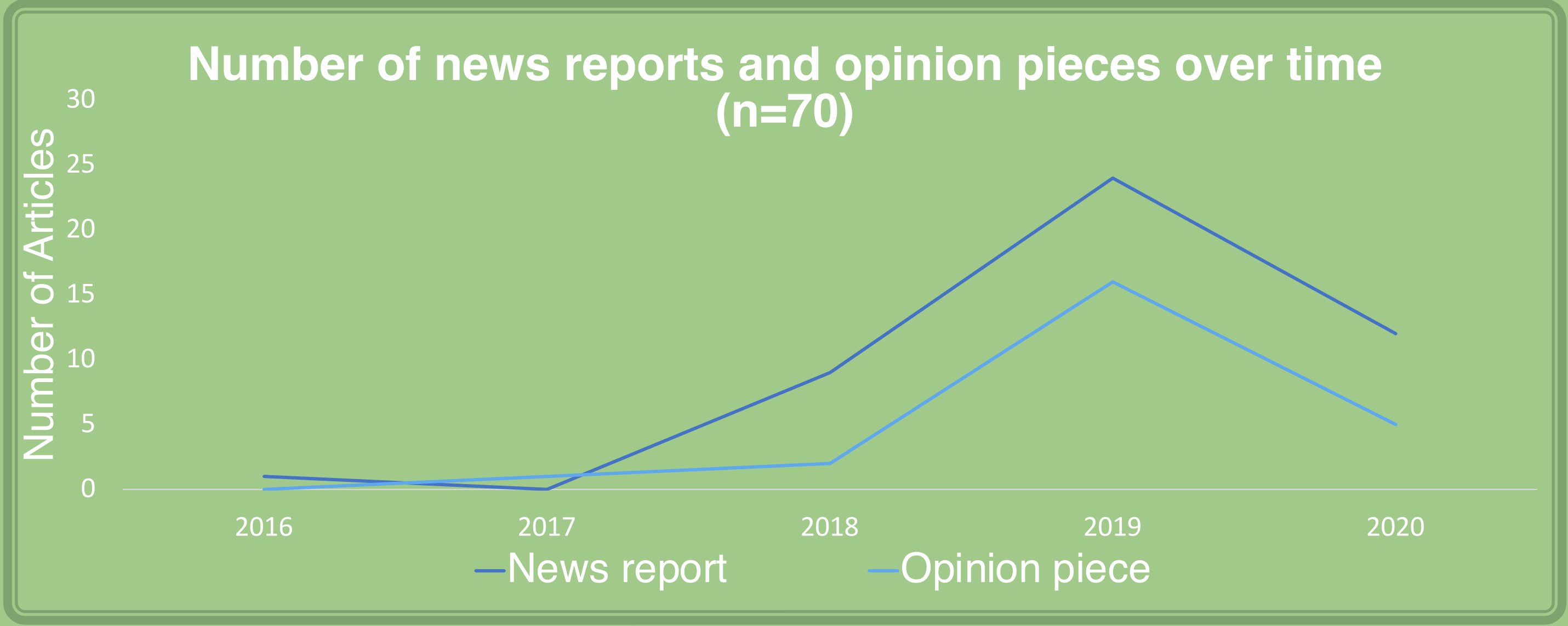
## Methods

- 1. Search:** We searched five databases using one search string that covered both climate-related anxiety and grief terms.
- 2. Screening:** Two reviewers applied eligibility criteria to identify relevant news article. For the first level of screening, they assessed the relevance of each article's title and first paragraph. For the second level of screening, they reviewed the full text of all articles that made it past the first level of screening.
- 3. Data extraction and analysis:** We then used a data charting form to manually extract information from a sample of included articles (n=70), such as the type of article and its focus. After each set of extractions, we met to discuss and resolve conflicts. We used descriptive statistics to analyse the data.

## Results

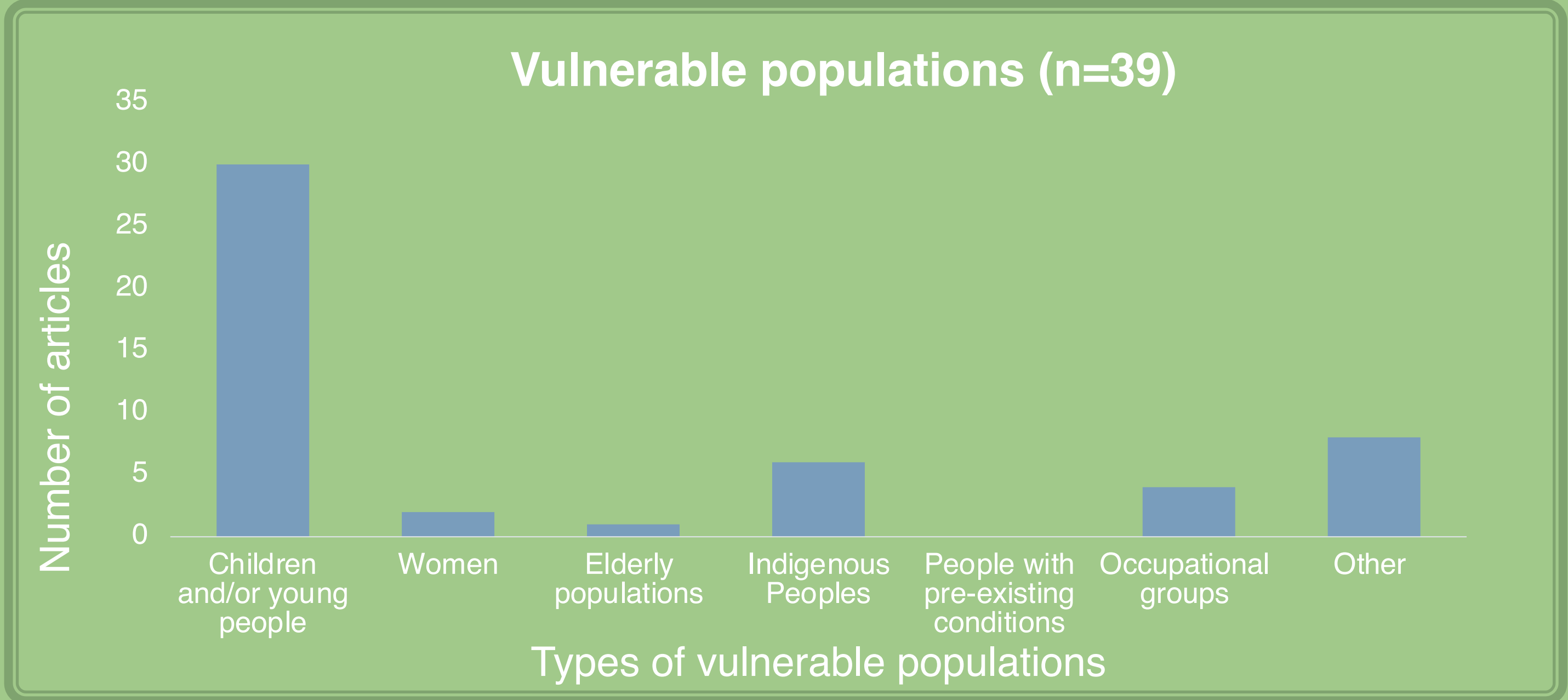
### Article Characteristics

- 64.3% of the articles are news reports (n=45/70).
- 74.3% of the articles focused on climate-related anxiety (n=52/70).
- Out of 25 opinion pieces: 18 had a positive tone, 2 had a neutral tone, and 5 had a negative tone.



### Vulnerable Populations

- 55.7% of the articles identify one or more vulnerable populations (n=39/70).
- 42.9% of the articles identified children and/or young people as a particularly vulnerable population (n=30/70).



### Coping Strategies

- 47.1% of the articles identified coping strategies (n=33/70).
- Behavioural coping strategies were the most commonly reported type of intervention (n=29/70), followed by institutional/regulatory (n=16/70), ecosystem or nature-based (n=11/70), and technological/infrastructure (n=6/70).

## Conclusions

- There was a spike in both news reports and opinion pieces concerning climate-related anxiety and grief in 2019.
- This could potentially be the result of the release of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C.<sup>3</sup>
- Most articles focused on climate-related anxiety.
- Behavioural coping strategies were the most commonly reported type of intervention.
- Examples include engaging in climate activism, joining support groups, or downloading apps that encourage living sustainably.
- This data sample fits into a larger research project focusing on how Canadian and American news media report on climate-related anxiety and grief.

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## References

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<sup>2</sup>Clayton S, Manning CM, Krygman K, Speiser M. *Mental Health and Our Changing Climate: Impacts, Implications, and Guidance*. American Psychological Association, and ecoAmerica: 2017.  
<sup>3</sup>IPCC. *Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty* [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, H.-O. Pörtner, D. Roberts, J. Skea, P.R. Shukla, A. Pirani, W. Moufouma-Okia, C. Péan, R. Pidcock, S. Connors, J.B.R. Matthews, Y. Chen, X. Zhou, M.I. Gomis, E. Lonnoy, T. Maycock, M. Tignor, and T. Waterfield (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press: 2018.