



For immediate release
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New digital comic book, *Invasion of the Alien Zombies*, aims to educate kids about the immune system

Comic takes kid-centred approach to underscore importance of immunization

OTTAWA, CANADA - Alien invaders descend on a world while defensive forces mobilize to battle the intruders... is this the plot from an upcoming blockbuster movie or a creative approach to science education? These scenes are from a new online comic, *Immunity Warriors: Invasion of the Alien Zombies*, created to educate elementary school students about the immune system and the role of immunization in defending against illness.

Conceived by Dr. Kumanan Wilson, a physician, researcher and comic book fan, *Invasion of the Alien Zombies* approaches immunization education from a child's perspective.

"I was inspired to create the comic after presenting to my son's Grade 6 science class about the immune system and immunization," said Dr. Wilson, an internal medicine specialist and scientist at The Ottawa Hospital and professor at the University of Ottawa. "Despite some complex scientific concepts, the kids were really engaged with the presentation that told the story using a space-invasion theme. I began thinking of how to expand the content to educate a wider group of kids about the importance of vaccination."

He approached Algonquin College's Health and Wellness Research Centre to see if there was interest in collaborating. Four senior students from three different programs worked on the project, and the digital comic was born.

"Our research centre focuses on the convergence of technology and health so the project really piqued our interest," said Kevin Holmes, Project Manager, Office of Applied Research and Innovation, Algonquin College. "We assembled an amazing student team from the Schools of Media and Design and Advanced Technology who were tasked with taking Dr. Wilson's concept and turning it into a compelling visual story, which is exactly what they did."

Invasion of the Alien Zombies was unveiled to a Grade 7 science class at Broadview Public School in Ottawa, Ontario, the same school that inspired the comic. Dr. Wilson hopes this content may be incorporated into the educational curriculum.

"I believe we can use digital media to make science and health education more fun. At the same time, we can combat future vaccine hesitancy by creating positive attitudes about vaccination amongst children," he said.



[Dr. Wilson](#) is also founder of The Ottawa Hospital mHealth Research Team and creator of CANImmunize, a mobile immunization tracking system that allows people across Canada to keep track of their family's immunizations through their smartphones and receive appointment reminders, outbreak alerts and expert-approved information about immunization. The comic will be available on CANImmunize, which is funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

More than 170,000 Canadians have downloaded CANImmunize, available on iTunes and Google Play.

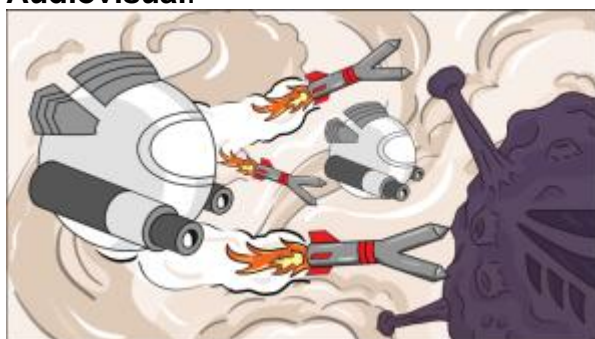
As part of a pilot project, parents in Ottawa may report their children's immunization status to Ottawa Public Health directly through CANImmunize. It is the only jurisdiction in the country with this option.

"For parents, the CANImmunize app is an excellent and easy way to keep track of their children's vaccinations and report their status to Ottawa Public Health to avoid suspension," said Catherine Deschambault, Principal of Broadview Public School. "The comic is a terrific way to engage and educate students about science.

Development of the comic book was partially funded through the College and Community Innovation Program, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC).

Immunity Warriors: Invasion of the Alien Zombies is available in English through CANImmunize on [iOS](#) and [Android](#), at www.canimmunize.ca or online at www.immunitywarriors.com. A French version will be available in the coming months.

Audiovisual:



Armed white blood cells firing antibody missiles at alien invaders (influenza virus) in *Immunity Warriors: Invasion of the Alien Zombies*, developed by students at Algonquin College and The Ottawa Hospital mHealth Research Team.

Additional high resolution photos of the team, the comic and the launch are available [here](#).



About Algonquin College

The mission of Algonquin College of Applied Arts and Technology is to transform hopes and dreams into lifelong success. Algonquin College, an Ontario public sector community college, does this by offering hands-on, digitally connected, experiential learning in more than 185 programs. Based in the Ottawa Valley, Algonquin College is the largest polytechnic institute in Eastern Ontario.

The Ottawa Hospital: Inspired by research. Driven by compassion

The Ottawa Hospital is one of Canada's largest learning and research hospitals with over 1,100 beds, approximately 12,000 staff and an annual budget of over \$1.2 billion. Our focus on research and learning helps us develop new and innovative ways to treat patients and improve care. As a multi-campus hospital, affiliated with the University of Ottawa, we deliver specialized care to the Eastern Ontario region, but our techniques and research discoveries are adopted around the world. We engage the community at all levels to support our vision for better patient care. See www.ohri.ca for more information about research at The Ottawa Hospital.

The Ottawa Hospital mHealth Research Team

In this digital world, people need digital solutions to manage their health and navigate the complex health systems. We create tools like practical, easy-to-use apps for people to manage their health information or the health information of their family members. We also create multi-platform resources that enable busy healthcare workers make fast, accurate decisions about the best patient care.

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The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board is the largest school board in Ottawa and offers students and parents a world of choice for education, growth, and achievement. Our 147 schools offer a wide range of programs to promote learning excellence and meet the individual needs of students, parents, and the community at large.

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