

relatively low, her extended family lives elsewhere and COVID-19 restrictions mean she hasn't received the kind of support she would have normally.

People as young as in their twenties have told the Star they were initially shocked to discover streaks of grey in their hair, but once they thought more about it, they weren't surprised.

A wide range of [studies](#) has shown that stress not only manifests in physical signs like greying hair, weight gain and body aches, extended stress can accelerate aging on a cellular level, by shortening the length of each DNA strand.

And when chronic depression is left untreated, cells of the immune system can change to make people more prone to diseases typically associated with old age, including heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis and stroke, according to [2013 research](#) by a team of scientists at University of California San Francisco.

"I have had greying hair, lessened sleep and anxiety, back spasms from sitting, and migraines from (teaching) online Zoom classes. This is pretty normal among my social network," says Peter, a 34-year-old university instructor in Montreal who requested anonymity because of concerns over job security.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Quebec has been one of the hardest-hit provinces. But cases have surged across Canada as several provinces smashed daily infection records and the nationwide tally crested 4,000 on Sunday.

Peter has virtually spent the entire year in lockdown, and he knows that stress and isolation has taken a physical toll.

"I have only seen friends seven times during the entire year. I am unable to see my family as they live in a COVID hot zone in the United States. I have tried to be as productive as possible, but my productivity on projects has dramatically declined.

## Headlines newsletter

---

Top stories delivered to your inbox.

[Sign Up](#)

"There is nowhere to go, nothing to really do, nothing to plan for or look forward to," he said.