



Public Health  
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

## Weekly Care Homes Evidence Digest

### Prevention and control of COVID-19 in home care/care homes settings

21<sup>st</sup> May 2021

#### Summary

This weekly digest contains a selection of evidence published in the last 7 days, in relation to the prevention and control of COVID-19 in home care/care home settings. We search a number of Covid-19 review repositories, an existing PHE Covid-19 evidence digest, Ovid Medline and Embase, Social Care Online, medRxiv (pre-print server) and various websites. We select peer reviewed and non-peer reviewed publications (pre-prints), as well as systematic reviews, guidance and evidence summaries.

The digest is produced by PHE [Knowledge and Library Services](#) (KLS), in conjunction with a small editorial team.

We do not accept responsibility for the availability, reliability or content of the items included in this resource and do not necessarily endorse the views expressed within them. Our intent is to highlight early emerging research findings as well as research that has been subject to peer review and wider scrutiny.

This week's digest includes: from France, evidence of the impact of Covid-19 on nursing homes during the first wave from a national cohort study, also evidence of Covid-19 vaccination in reducing transmission and disease severity in nursing homes; from Japan, reflections on the impact of the national policy of early lockdown of long term care facilities during the first wave of Covid-19; from the USA, an evaluation of the potential for transmission of infection from nursing home residents with persistently positive RT-PCR results; and findings from a rapid international review of the evidence for interventions to control Covid-19 in long term care facilities. From the UK, further evidence of the 'real world' impact of Covid-19 vaccines in older adults, social identity modelling as an approach to guide digital interventions to reduce the impact of loneliness on older people during the Covid-19 pandemic, and lessons for the use of point of care tests and for implementing testing regimes more generally in nursing homes. Finally, summaries of recently published reports, guidance and statistics.

We now have a search facility for the Weekly Care Homes Evidence Digest. This can be achieved by using Endnote Software and accessing the monthly backups of the Research Digest. This will give access to the content of all previous weekly Digests and allow simple searches e.g. on authors, abstracts (where these are captured) and titles. Please note that this is not a substitute for a proper literature search. If you would like to access this facility please contact [gareth.durling@phe.gov.uk](mailto:gareth.durling@phe.gov.uk).

An ongoing series of PHE rapid reviews on a range of Covid-19 related research questions can be also found at <https://phelibrary.koha-ptfs.co.uk/covid19rapidreviews/>.

## Peer-Reviewed Articles

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
12.05.2021	Magnitude, change over time, demographic characteristics and geographic distribution of excess deaths among nursing home residents during the first wave of COVID-19 in France: a nationwide cohort study	Age & Aging / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A cohort of 494,753 adults in 6,515 NHs in France exposed to COVID-19 pandemic (from March 1st to May 31st, 2020) were studied and compared with the 2014–2019 cohorts using data from the French National Health Data System.</li> <li>• The study concludes that Nursing Home residents accounted for half of the total excess deaths in France during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The excess death rate was higher among males than females and among younger than older residents.</li> </ul>
13.05.2021	Effectiveness of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines on covid-19 related symptoms, hospital admissions, and mortality in older adults in England: test negative case-control study	BMJ / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research estimates real world effectiveness of the Pfizer-BioNTech BNT162b2 and Oxford-AstraZeneca ChAdOx1-S vaccines against confirmed covid-19 symptoms (including the UK variant of concern B.1.1.7)</li> <li>• Vaccination with either one dose of BNT162b2 or ChAdOx1-S was associated with a significant reduction in symptomatic covid-19 in older adults, and with further protection against severe disease. Both vaccines showed similar effects. Protection was maintained for the duration of follow-up (&gt;6 weeks). A second dose of BNT162b2 was associated with further protection against symptomatic disease. A clear effect of the vaccines against the B.1.1.7 variant was found.</li> </ul>
13.05.2021	Visitor restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic: An ethical case study	Nursing Ethics / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To prevent and reduce transmission of COVID to vulnerable populations, the WHO recommended restriction of visitors to nursing homes. It was recognised that such restrictions could have profound impact on residents and their families. Nonetheless, these measures were strictly imposed over a prolonged period in many countries; impeding families from remaining involved in their relatives' care and diluting the meaningful connections for residents with society.</li> <li>• This study explores the impact of public health measures on people living in nursing homes from an ethical perspective. This ethical case</li> </ul>

			<p>reflects some recent experiences of nursing homes residents and their families, in the Irish Republic, describing a series of events encountered by a woman and her family during the first wave of the pandemic in 2020 and deploying an ethical decision-making tool to guide and structure our analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authors conclude that a number of different strategies should be adopted by nursing homes and relevant regulatory bodies. This includes honest, regular communication between the nursing home staff, the resident and their family. Central to communications is the resident's wishes, their current clinical status and the all-important wider public health obligations.</li> <li>• National strategies include mass vaccination, the timely provision of guidance documents, and interventions from regulatory bodies that are patient-centred, adaptable, and cost effective.</li> </ul>
14.05.2021	COVID-19 and Long-Term Care Policy for Older People in Japan	Journal of Aging and Social Policy / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Japan's initial response to COVID-19 was similar to that of the US. However, the number of deaths in Japan has remained very low. Japan also stands out for the relatively low incidence of viral transmission in Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCFs) compared to both European countries and the United States.</li> <li>• Authors agree that Japan's institutional decision to lockdown Long-Term Care facilities as early as mid-February contributed to lowering the number of deaths in LTCFs and highlight a few lessons from the Japanese experience.</li> </ul>
14.05.2021	Evaluating the Presence of Replication-Competent SARS-CoV-2 from Nursing Home Residents with Persistently Positive RT-PCR Results	Clinical Infectious Diseases / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replication-competent virus has not been detected in individuals with mild to moderate COVID-19 more than 10 days after symptom onset. It is unknown whether these findings apply to nursing home residents.</li> <li>• Of 273 specimens collected from nursing home residents &gt;10 days from the initial positive test, none were culture positive</li> </ul>

15.05.2021	Trends in COVID-19 Death Rates by Racial Composition of Nursing Homes	J. American Geriatric Society / Research Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This research examined trends in COVID-19 death rates by racial composition of US nursing homes through mid-April 2021. Nursing homes were categorized into quintiles based on the percentage of residents who were white.</li> <li>• By the time of the vaccine rollout to nursing homes in late December 2020, the high-white quintile had experienced three months of higher community spread and its death rate was almost three times that of the low-white quintile (8.8 deaths per 1,000 vs 3.0 deaths per 1,000).</li> <li>• After the vaccine rollout, death rates declined substantially for both groups. Overall, the high-white quintile had more total deaths than the low-white quintile (18,974 vs 18,019) despite having fewer beds and higher star rating.</li> <li>• The authors hope their findings highlight the need for COVID-19 to be taken seriously as a disease impacting all racial groups.</li> </ul>
15.05.2021	Characteristics and Quality of Nursing Homes Reporting COVID-19 Admissions from Hospitals	J. American Geriatric Society / Research Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes the characteristics and quality of US nursing homes reporting COVID-19 admissions through late December 2020, when vaccine rollout to nursing homes began a decline in reported death rates.</li> <li>• Authors found nursing homes with high COVID-19 admissions had lower levels of nurse staffing, more infection control citations, and more cases and deaths among residents than nursing homes with no COVID-19 admissions from late May 2020 to late December 2020.</li> <li>• These findings suggest that the nursing homes most likely to take on patients with a prior COVID-19 diagnosis may have been the ones least able to do so safely.</li> </ul>
16.05.2021	BNT162b2 mRNA vaccination did not prevent an outbreak of SARS-CoV-2 variant 501Y.V2 in an elderly nursing home but reduced transmission and disease severity	Clinical Infectious Diseases / Case Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report an outbreak of SARS-CoV-2 501Y.V2 in a nursing home. All non-vaccinated residents (5/5) versus half of those vaccinated with BNT162b2 (13/26) were infected.</li> <li>• 2 of 13 vaccinated, versus 4 of 5 non-vaccinated residents presented severe disease.</li> <li>• BNT162b2 did not prevent the outbreak, but reduced transmission and disease severity.</li> </ul>

## Preprints

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
17.05.2021	Loneliness in Older People and COVID-19: Applying the Social Identity Approach to Digital Intervention Design	Psyarxiv / Preprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COVID-19 is increasing older people's existing challenges in engaging with their physical and social worlds, and is thereby likely to worsen their loneliness.</li> <li>• Digital technology has been offered as a potential aid for social connectedness during social distancing/isolation. However, many popular digital communication tools have not been designed to specifically address the needs of older adults impacted by social isolation.</li> <li>• Authors propose the social identity approach to health and the Social Identity Model of Identity Change (SIMIC) could be a foundation for digital interventions to address loneliness. While SIMIC applies to maintaining wellbeing during life transitions, it has not previously been rigorously applied to digital interventions.</li> </ul>
17.05.2021	Ageing in the time of COVID-19: the coronavirus pandemic exacerbates the experience of loneliness in older people by undermining identity processes	Psyarxiv / Preprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loneliness can develop as a result of the identity transitions accompanying older adulthood, including the onset of health conditions and loss of social connections.</li> <li>• Paper examines how the COVID-19 pandemic affected these identity change processes among older adults thereby impacting their experience of loneliness.</li> <li>• Themes identified were: threatened social contact; being categorised as a vulnerable older adult; restricted ability to gain and maintain identities; undermined reciprocal social support; and wellbeing hindered by loneliness related fears.</li> <li>• Implications discussed include how the pandemic recovery effort will require facilitating positive ageing identities to counteract the vulnerabilities introduced by the pandemic.</li> </ul>
19.05.2021	What long-term care interventions and policy measures have been studied during the Covid-19	LitCovid / Preprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authors conducted a pragmatic, rapid mapping review of international evidence to identify the range of interventions, policies, and measures in long-term care studied during the Covid-19 pandemic and published throughout 2020.</li> </ul>

	pandemic? Findings from a rapid mapping review of the scientific evidence published during 2020		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, a substantial body of evidence on interventions to mitigate impacts of the pandemic in the long-term care sector emerged. However, most studies did not apply an analytical lens and there were very few studies on home care or community-based care settings.</li> <li>• As countries assess the lessons that can be learnt from the pandemic and improve preparedness of their long-term care systems for future pandemics and other shocks, it will be important to consider the importance of facilitating rapid generation of more robust evidence.</li> </ul>
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## Guidance

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
Updated 17.05.2021	Designated settings for people discharged to a care home	DHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance on the designated settings scheme for people discharged from hospital to a care home with a positive coronavirus (COVID-19) test.</li> </ul>
Updated 17.05.2021	Supported living services during coronavirus (COVID-19)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance for providers of supported living settings</li> </ul>
Updated 17.05.2021	Coronavirus (COVID-19): admission and care of people in care homes	DHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to protect care home residents and staff during the coronavirus outbreak.</li> </ul>
Updated 18.05.2021	COVID-19: how to work safely in care homes	DHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance for those working in care homes providing information on how to work safely during this period of sustained transmission of COVID-19.</li> </ul>

Updated <b>18.05.2021</b>	<a href="#">COVID-19: how to work safely in domiciliary care in England</a>	DHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A resource for those working in domiciliary care providing information on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).</li> </ul>
Updated <b>19.05.2021</b>	<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): health and wellbeing of the adult social care workforce</a>	DHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advice for those working in adult social care on managing your mental health and how employers can take care of the wellbeing of their staff during the coronavirus outbreak.</li> </ul>

### Evidence Summaries

Publication Date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
Updated <b>12.05.2021</b>	<a href="#">Coronavirus: Adult social care key issues and sources</a>	David Foster, Rachael Harker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section one of the briefing provides a high-level overview of policy in relation to adult social care since the start of the coronavirus outbreak in early 2020, including the development of key UK Government guidance.</li> <li>The remaining sections provide more detailed information on some key issues that have been raised during the course of the outbreak</li> </ul>

### Statistics

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
<b>18.05.2021</b>	<a href="#">Number of deaths in care homes notified to the Care Quality Commission, England</a>	ONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly updated provisional counts of deaths caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) by local authority</li> </ul>
<b>18.05.2021</b>	<a href="#">Care home resident deaths registered in England and Wales, provisional</a>	ONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provisional counts of the number of care home resident deaths registered in England and Wales, by region, including deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19), in the latest weeks for which data are available.</li> </ul>

<b>19.05.2021</b>	Coronavirus (COVID-19): adult care homes - additional data	Scottish Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly data on COVID-19 in adult care homes in Scotland.</li> </ul>
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## Editorials and News

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
<b>12.05.2021</b>	COVID-19 point-of-care testing in care homes: what are the lessons for policy and practice?	Buckle, Peter; et al	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Point of care tests (POCTs), mainly using Lateral Flow Devices (LFDs), have been deployed hurriedly without much consideration of their usability or impact on care workflow.</li> <li>Even after the pandemic POCTs, particularly multiplex tests, may be an important control against spread of SARS-CoV-2 and other respiratory infections in care homes by enabling identification of cases.</li> </ul>
<b>12.05.2021</b>	COVID-19 testing during care home outbreaks: the more the better?	Barker, Robert O.; et al	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More than a year into the pandemic, COVID-19 testing remains of vital importance in care homes</li> <li>When to initiate mass testing and robust infection prevention/control measures for suspected care home outbreaks is not clear</li> <li>Earlier triggering of rigorous outbreak control measures could benefit residents/staff, but creates opportunity costs</li> <li>Failure to engage care homes in policy development can generate a mismatch between guidance and what is feasible</li> <li>Without a system-wide approach to support care homes, more rigorous outbreak control measures may be a burden on staff/residents</li> </ul>