



UK Health Security Agency

Weekly Care Homes Evidence Digest

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

10th December 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 UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Covid-19 evidence digest (including Covid-19 evidence digests produced by Public Health England prior to October 2021), 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 UKHSA [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 USA, a qualitative study of the challenges of caring for relatives living with dementia in long-term care facilities, with recommendations to improve practice; and an evaluation of point of care antigen testing for detection of breakthrough cases of SARS-CoV-2 infection following vaccination in long term care facilities; from New Zealand, evidence of differences in health and psychological impacts of COVID-19 among ethnic groups in long term care; from France, evidence of a link between the humoral SARS-CoV-2 immune response and previous infection among nursing home residents; from the Netherlands, reflections on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on older people in long term care and a call for a greater focus on well-being as the central basis for care; from South Africa, a retrospective cohort study of temporal trends in SARS-Co-V-2 infection in sentinel long term care facilities during initial waves of the COVID-19 pandemic; from Sri Lanka, a systematic review of factors associated with mortality of older people with COVID-19; and from the International Long-term Care Policy Network, international evidence of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on long term care facilities, mitigations in response and proposals for future reforms.

From the UK evidence from lived experience in care homes during the COVID-19 pandemic of the continuing need for clear and concise guidance for infection control measures; and an editorial on the emerging evidence concerning waning immunity and re-infection in care homes.

Finally, summaries of other recently published COVID-19 pandemic reports, guidance and statistics.

An ongoing series of UKHSA rapid reviews on a range of COVID-19 related research questions can be also found at <https://ukhsalibrary.koha-ptfs.co.uk/covid19rapidreviews/>. A wider range of UKHSA information resources on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic may be found at <https://ukhsalibrary.koha-ptfs.co.uk/coronavirusinformation/>.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
01.12.2021	Caring for a Relative with Dementia in Long-Term Care During COVID-19	JAMDA / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The COVID-19 pandemic created unique stressors for caregivers of persons with dementia living in long-term care (LTC) facilities. The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify the challenges associated with caring for a relative with dementia in LTC during the pandemic, as well as resources, strategies, and practices caregivers found helpful in coping with COVID-19. • Study aimed to identify challenges associated with caring for a relative with dementia in LTC during the pandemic, as well as resources, strategies, and practices caregivers found helpful in coping with COVID-19. • In addition to concerns about COVID-19 infection, participants reported key challenges such as the difficulty of maintaining contact with relatives because of visiting restrictions, lack of information about relatives' health and well-being, worries about overburdened LTC staff, impossibility of returning relatives home from the LTC facility, and fears about relatives dying alone. • Participants also identified resources, strategies, and practices that they perceived as helpful, including effective infection prevention within the LTC facility, good communication with LTC staff, and creative strategies for connecting with their relatives
02.12.2021	Impact of the first wave of COVID-19 on the health and psychosocial well-being of Māori, Pacific Peoples and New Zealand Europeans living in aged residential care	Australian Journal on Aging / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study aimed to investigate the impact of New Zealand's (NZ) first wave of COVID-19, which included a nationwide lockdown, on the health and psychosocial well-being of Māori, Pacific Peoples and NZ Europeans in aged residential care (ARC). • A total of 538 Māori, 276 Pacific Peoples and 11,322 NZ Europeans had an interRAI assessment during the first wave of COVID-19, while there were 549 Māori, 248 Pacific Peoples and 12,367 NZ Europeans in the comparative period

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authors found a lower rate of loneliness in Māori but a higher rate of depression in NZ European ARC populations during the first wave of COVID-19.
03.12.2021	The Lived Experience of Implementing Infection Control Measures in Care Homes during Two Waves of the COVID-19 Pandemic. A Mixed-Methods Study	Journal of Long-Term Care / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This mixed-methods study comprising 238 online survey responses and 15 in-depth interviews with care-home staff, conducted November 2020-January 2021 in England, aims To explore the lived experiences of care-home staff in implementing Infection Control Measures (ICMs). • Three themes were identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ‘Integrating COVID-19 ICMs with caring’, ○ ‘Conveying knowledge and information’, ○ ‘Professional and personal impacts of care-work during the pandemic’. • Reported adherence to ICMs was high but fatalistic attitudes towards COVID-19 infection were present. Challenges of providing care using personal protective equipment (PPE), especially for residents with dementia, were highlighted. • Clear, concise and care-home focussed ICM guidance is still needed. This should include evidence-based assessments on implementing and sustaining adherence
03.12.2021	Humoral anti-SARS-CoV-2 immune response after two doses of Comirnaty vaccine in nursing home residents by previous infection status	Vaccine / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authors quantified and compared the humoral response in individuals with vs. without pre-existing seropositivity to severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), in a cohort of 69 patients living in a nursing home and who had received the recommended two doses of the Comirnaty (Pfizer-BioNTech®) vaccine • All 69 patients (100%) tested positive for antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 at 2 months post-vaccination. • Although all nursing home residents developed a humoral response following Comirnaty vaccine, its intensity appeared to depend on the pre-vaccination serological status.
04.12.2021	495. Evaluation of Antigen Testing for Detection of COVID-19 Vaccine	Open Forum Infectious Diseases / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of their pandemic response, Oregon Health Authority (OHA) deployed point-of-care antigen (Ag) tests to promptly identify COVID-19

	<p>Breakthrough Cases in Long-Term Care</p>		<p>cases in LTCFs. However, their performance in identifying vaccine breakthrough cases has not been evaluated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2/25/21–5/25/21, OHA supported testing of residents and staff for two outbreaks at a single LTCF. Paired nasal swabs were collected and tested for SARS-CoV-2 by CDC Influenza SARS-CoV-2 Multiplex PCR Assay (molecular test) and Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card (Ag test) twice weekly during the outbreaks. Participants were considered fully vaccinated if ≥ 14 days had passed since completion of a vaccine series; all others were deemed unvaccinated • 94 unvaccinated residents and staff provided 563 paired samples; SARS-CoV-2 was detected in 21 (12 by Ag and molecular test, 6 by molecular test only, 3 by Ag test only), yielding Ag test sensitivity of 66.7% and specificity of 99.4% • Ag test performance and reduced sensitivity on specimens with high Ct values found in this population are consistent with published data. Molecular testing maximizes identification of vaccine breakthrough cases. More studies are needed to estimate the proportion of breakthrough cases missed by Ag testing and their risk of transmitting the virus in LTCFs.
<p>06.12.2021</p>	<p>Well-being in long-term care: an ode to vulnerability</p>	<p>Aging & Mental Health / Study</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although many initiatives have been launched to promote person-centered care and attention for well-being in recent decades, the current COVID pandemic showed that the primary focus in (Dutch) long-term care was still on physical health. • However, a well-being perspective can be a central base of care: it is a means to include positive aspects, and it can be applied when addressing problems such as challenging behavior in the sense that both are about needs. • Furthermore, providing care from this perspective is not only about the well-being of frail people and their loved ones but also about the well-being and needs of the involved professionals

Preprints

Publication Date	Title / URL	Preprint Source	Digest
04.12.2021	SARS-CoV-2 Cases Reported From Long-Term Residential Facilities (Care Homes) in South Africa: A Retrospective Cohort Study	ResearchSquare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study aimed to describe the temporal trends as well as the characteristics and risk factors for mortality among residents and staff who tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 in 45 selected LTCFs across South Africa. • A total of 2,324 SARS-CoV-2 cases were reported from 5 March 2020 through 31 July 2021; 65% were residents and 35% staff. • Among LTCFs, 6 reported sporadic cases and 39 experienced outbreaks. Of those reporting outbreaks, 26% reported one and 74% reported more than one outbreak. 66.7% small outbreaks and 33.3% large outbreaks were reported. • There were 30 outbreaks reported in the first wave, 21 in the second wave and 15 in the third wave, with 6 outbreaks reporting between waves. There were 1,259 cases during the first COVID-19 wave, 362 during the second wave, and 299 during the current third wave. • The analysis of SARS-CoV-2 cases in sentinel LTCFs in South Africa points to an encouraging trend of decreasing numbers of outbreaks, cases and risk for mortality since the first wave. LTCFs are likely to have learnt from international experience and adopted national protocols, which include improved measures to limit transmission and administer early and appropriate clinical care

Reports and other publications

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
07.12.2021	LTCcovid International living report on COVID-19 and Long-Term Care	Comas-Herrera, Adelina; et l.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a “wiki-style” report, which report is formed of 64 questions that can be answered at national or regional/sub-national level and is organised in four parts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Key characteristics of Long-Term Care systems and preparedness, pre-pandemic

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impacts of the COVID-19 on people who use and provide Long-Term Care ○ Measures adopted to minimise the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people who use and provide LTC ○ Reforms and actions to address structural weaknesses of LTC systems and improve preparedness for future emergencies ● The report can be read by question/topic or by country: COVID-19 and Long-Term Care country profiles. ● It is compiled and updated voluntarily by experts on LTC all over the world. Members of the Social Care COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery project are moderating the entries and editing as needed. ● To cite this report (please note the date in which it was consulted as the contents changes over time)
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Guidance

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
Updated 01.12.2021	Care homes visiting: guidance for visitors	Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What care home visitors need to do to ensure the safety of care home residents and staff.
02.12.2021	Coronavirus (COVID-19) Open for Care - visiting professionals into adult care homes: letter 2 December 2021	Scottish Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Letter from the Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care, the Interim Chief Nursing Officer, the National Clinical Director, the Chief Medical Officer and the Director for Mental Health and Social Care containing guidance on visiting health, social care and other professionals and services into adult care homes.
Updated 03.12.2021	Visiting arrangements in care homes	DHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sets out how care homes can support families and visitors to visit residents.

Updated 08.12.2021	COVID-19 contacts: guidance for health and social care staff	Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out requirements for staff who come into direct contact with patients or service users. Describes the process for employers to follow to protect vulnerable people.
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Evidence Summaries

Publication Date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
01.12.2021	Factors Associated for Mortality of Older People With COVID 19: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis	Damayanthi, H.D.W.T.; Prabani, K.I.P.; Weerasekara, I.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This study aimed to systematically review the numerous factors associated with mortality among COVID-19 infected older people: PubMed and Science Direct were searched from inception of the COVID-19 pandemic to April 15, 2021 Of 4,957 studies identified, 20 were included in the qualitative analysis, while 10 were included in the quantitative analysis. Male sex, age over 75 years old, Dementia and Dyspnoea, were found to be significantly associated with mortality. There is no significant association between Diabetes, or Hypertension. These findings may help health care professionals to identify high-risk groups, facilitate appropriate remedial measures, and control mortality among older people.

Statistics

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
07.12.2021	Notifications to Care Inspectorate Wales related to COVID-19 in adult care homes: 1 March 2020 to 1 December 2021	Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report provides provisional counts of the number of adult care homes reporting one or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 and provisional counts of deaths in care homes. This is based on notifications by care home providers to Care Inspectorate Wales. The location of death may be in the care home, in hospital or another location.

07.12.2021	Care home resident deaths registered in England and Wales, provisional	ONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provisional counts of the number of care home resident deaths registered in England and Wales, by region, including deaths involving coronavirus (COVID-19), in the latest weeks for which data are available.
07.12.2021	Number of deaths in care homes notified to the Care Quality Commission, England	ONS / CQC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provisional counts of deaths in care homes caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) by local authority. Published by the Office for National Statistics and Care Quality Commission.
08.12.2021	Coronavirus (COVID-19): adult care homes - additional data	Scottish Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly data on COVID-19 in adult care homes in Scotland.

Editorials and News

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
03.12.2021	SARS-Cov-2 immune waning and reinfection in care-home settings	Altmann, Daniel M.; Boyton, Rosemary J.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflects on studies of immunity and reinfection rates in UK care homes, and the ways in which emerging evidence from the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged establish medical research assumptions about immunology.