UK Health Security Agency

Weekly Care Homes Evidence Digest

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

17th 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, value of alternative social interactions in improving low mood in older people during the COVID-19 pandemic; further evidence of the importance of COVID-19 vaccination of staff in improving COVID-19 outcomes in nursing homes; association between large outbreaks in nursing homes and a greater proportion of short-stay residents; and a report of an outbreak of SARS- CoV-2 Delta in nursing home residents despite vaccination; from Europe, evidence of risk of breakthrough COVID-19 outbreaks in long-term care facilities despite vaccination and the need for additional measures to ensure rapid detection and containment; from Sweden, predictive factors for sick leave among health care and residential care workers during the early phase of the COVID-19 pandemic; from Spain, further evidence of waning immunity in nursing home residents and of the need for booster vaccines; and from Hong Kong, evidence of a change in the pattern of abuse of older people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

From the UK, reflections on a rapid mapping review of international interventions and policy measures in long-term care facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic; a scoping review of impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on carers in the community and key issues identified; lessons from the response of retirement village and extra care housing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; and a case study of one person living with dementia in a care home during the COVID-19 pandemc with key themes for action and further research.

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
08.12.2021	Can Changes in Social Contact (Frequency, Mode) Mitigate Low Mood Before and During the COVID-19 pandemic? I-CONECT Project	Journal of the American Geriatrics Society / Study	• Phone-based surveys were administered weekly before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. • Participants were older adults ≥75 years old (n = 155, age = 81.0 ± 4.5, 72.3% women) in a randomized controlled trial, Internet-Based Conversational Engagement Clinical Trial (I-CONECT). • Low mood was self-reported as feeling downhearted or blue for three or more days in the past week. Social contact was self-reported by the amount of time spent in interactions, with whom (family; friends; others), and via which modes (in-person; phone/video-call; text/email/letter). • Authors conclude: The lost in-person time relating to COVID-19 restrictions tended to be partially compensated for with increased calls and writing time, although overall social interaction time decreased. During the COVID-19 pandemic, at least two types of social interactions (writing to friends, in-person family time) showed promise for mitigating low mood for older adults with limited social resources.
08.12.2021	Nursing Home Staff Vaccination and Covid-19 Outcomes	New England Journal of Medicine / Study	• Using national data (mainly from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Covid-19 Nursing Home Public File database), we classified 12,364 nursing homes (81% of all nursing homes in the United States) into quartiles of provider staff Covid-19 vaccination coverage as of June 13, 2021. We determined the number of Covid-19 cases among residents, the number of Covid-19 cases among staff, and the number of Covid-19–related deaths among residents (each per 100 facility beds) between June 13 and August 22, 2021. • In the presence of high community prevalence of Covid-19, nursing homes with low staff vaccination coverage had higher numbers of cases and deaths than those with high staff vaccination coverage.
09.12.2021	Short-Stay Admissions Associated With Large COVID-	Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine / Study	• We conducted a retrospective analysis of secondary data from Maryland NHs to identify characteristics associated with large outbreaks, defined as when total resident cases exceeded 10% of

	19 Outbreaks in Maryland Nursing Homes		licensed beds, from January 1, 2020, through July 1, 2020. Our dataset was unique in its inclusion of short-stay residents as a measure of resident type and family satisfaction as a measure of quality. • Like other studies, we found that large outbreaks were more likely to occur in counties with high cumulative incidence of COVID-19, and in NHs with more licensed beds or fewer daily certified nursing assistant (CNA) hours. We also found that NHs with a greater proportion of short-stay residents were more likely to have large outbreaks, even after adjustment for other facility characteristics.
09.12.2021	What Long-Term Care Interventions and Policy Measures Have Been Studied During the Covid-19 Pandemic? Findings from a Rapid Mapping Review of the Scientific Evidence Published During 2020	Journal of Long-Term Care / Study	• We included 137 studies from 22 countries, mostly focusing on the United States, Europe, and Canada. Half of the studies focused on preventing or controlling Covid-19 infections. • Only 13 studies covered home-based or community-based care. • 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, reflecting the context and speed with which they were carried out, most studies did not apply an analytical lens and instead provided descriptive findings only.
09.12.2021	Increasing risk of breakthrough COVID-19 in outbreaks with high attack rates in European long-term care facilities, July to October 2021	Eurosurveillance	• We present data from 240 outbreaks of COVID-19 occurring between 5 July and 3 October 2021, in LTCFs with high vaccination coverage reported by 10 European Union and European Economic Area (EU/EEA) countries in September and October 2021. • Authors conclude: Our results indicate that, despite high vaccination coverage, COVID-19 outbreaks continue to occur in LTCFs in the EU/EEA. They highlight the importance of early detection and rapid containment of COVID-19 outbreaks in LTCFs, thus to limit broad circulation of SARS-Cov-2, through rapid testing of all residents and staff, timely isolation of cases and ensuring strict infection prevention and control measures including appropriate ventilation, use of face masks, adherence to hand hygiene and the availability of resources to implement these measures.
09.12.2021	Patterns and predictors of sick leave among Swedish non-	PLOS ONE/ Study	• Healthcare and residential care workers represent two occupational groups that have, in particular, been at risk of Covid-19, its long-term

	hospitalized healthcare and residential care workers with Covid-19 during the early phase of the pandemic		consequences, and related sick leave. In this study, we investigated the predictors of prolonged sick leave among healthcare and residential workers due to non-hospitalized Covid-19 in the early period of the pandemic. • Of 433 (77% women) healthcare and residential care workers included in this study, 14.8% needed longer sick leave (> 3 weeks) due to Covid-19. Only 1.4% of the subjects were on sick leave because of long Covid. The risk of sick leave was increased two-fold among residential care workers (adjusted RR 2.14 [95% CI 1.31–3.51]).
09.12.2021	Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on family carers in the community: A scoping review	Health and Social Care in the Community / Study	• The current scoping review aimed to identify the impact of COVID-19 upon carers and support provided for them during the pandemic. Four online databases (CINAHL, Medline, PsycINFO and PubMed) were systematically searched on 16th December 2020 and updated on 16th July 2021 for articles written in English and published after January 2020, focused on the carer and the impact of COVID-19. • Whilst a number of issues were identified that were exacerbated by the pandemic, others directly resulting from it were revealed. Few studies discussed support measures for carers and only one trial evaluated an intervention.
10.12.2021	Learning from the experience and effectiveness of retirement village and extra care housing responses to the COVID-19 pandemic	Quality in Aging and Older Adults / Study	• Invitations to take part in a RE-COV study survey were emailed to the operators of 270 retirement villages and older people's extra care housing schemes in England which were known to the Elderly Accommodation Counsel. • Survey findings evidenced the breadth and depth of the operators' responses, the effects these had on residents' lives and worthwhile changes which could be made. Outcomes demonstrated included higher levels of protection for residents from the COVID-19 virus compared to older people living in the general community, and high levels of residents feeling safe, supported and reassured.
10.12.2021	Living in a care home during COVID-19: a case study of one person living with dementia	Quality in Aging and Older Adults / Study	• The paper adopts a single case study design applied thematic analysis to semi-structured interview data to discover the experiences of one person living with dementia in a care home during a period of lockdown.

			• Five themes reveal how the participant responded to the practical and emotional challenges of the pandemic: autonomy; fears; keeping connected; keeping safe and other people living with dementia. These themes highlight the participant's ability to adapt, accept and dispute lockdown restrictions, revealing considerable insight into their situation.
10.12.2021	SARS-CoV-2 Delta outbreak among fully vaccinated nursing home residents likely initiated by a fully vaccinated staff member – Connecticut, July–August 2021	Clinical Infectious Diseases / Study	• During July–August 2021, a COVID-19 outbreak involving 21 residents (all fully vaccinated) and 10 staff (9 fully vaccinated) occurred in a Connecticut nursing home. The outbreak was likely initiated by a fully vaccinated staff member and propagated by fully vaccinated persons.
11.12.2021	Immunogenicity after six months of BNT162b2 vaccination in frail or disabled nursing home residents: the COVID-A Study	Journal of the American Geriatrics Society / Study	• Multicenter longitudinal cohort study including 127 residents (90 females, 37 males) with a mean age of 82.7 years (range 65-99) with different frailty and disability profiles in two LTCFs in Albacete, Spain. Residents received 2 doses of BNT162b2 as per label, and antibody levels were determined 1 and 6 months after the second dose. • Authors conclude: Older adults in LTCFs experience a rapid loss of antibodies between over the first six months after the second dose of BNT162b2 vaccine. Only pre-vaccination COVID-19 is associated with a slower rate of antibodies decrease. Our data support immunization with a third dose in this vulnerable, high-risk population.

11.12.2021	Changes in pattern of elderly abuse during COVID-19 pandemic	Psychogeriatrics / Study	• Authors retrospectively reviewed the Social Welfare Department (SWD) data on EA in Hong Kong and compared the data during the pandemic in 2020 with the pre-pandemic data (2014 to 2019).
			• Authors findings include:
			  ○ the total number of EA did not increase during the pandemic.
			  ○ using $\chi 2$ statistics there was proportionately more physical abuse (70.5% vs. 65.9%, $\chi 2 = 3.9638$, $P = 0.046$) but less financial abuse (9.8% vs. 16.2%, $\chi 2 = 12.8614$, $P = 0.0003$) during the pandemic as compared with the pre-pandemic period.
			  ○ there were proportionately more spouses as perpetrators (61.8% vs. 54.7%, $\chi 2 = 8.5675$. P-value = 0.003).

Statistics

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
14.12.2021	Care home resident deaths registered in England and Wales, provisional	ONS	• 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.
14.12.2021	Number of deaths in care homes notified to the Care Quality Commission, England	ONS & CQC	• 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.
15.12.2021	Coronavirus (COVID-19): adult care homes - additional data	Scottish Government	• Weekly data on COVID-19 in adult care homes in Scotland.