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Weekly Care Homes Evidence Digest

Prevention and control of COVID-19 in home care/care homes settings
3rd December 2020

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 the USA, further evidence of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on front-line nursing home staff; a review of strategies to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on mental health in long term care facilities; international evidence of a reduced contribution to COVID-19 mortality from long term facilities during the 'second wave'; and evidence of impact of mask-wearing in reducing secondary transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in care homes. From the UK, further evidence of the impact of COVID-19 on long term care; and an interim report of a review of the application of DNACPR notices in care homes and other settings. Finally, summaries of recently published reports, guidance and statistics.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
24.11.2020	Front-line Nursing Home Staff Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic	Journal of the American Medical Directors Association / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey of 152 nursing home staff from 32 states, including direct-care staff and administrators. • Respondents described ongoing constraints on testing and continued reliance on crisis standards for extended use and reuse of personal protective equipment. Administrators discussed the burden of tracking and implementing sometimes confusing or contradictory guidance from numerous agencies. Direct-care staff expressed fears of infecting themselves and their families and expressed sincere empathy and concern for their residents. They described experiencing burnout due to increased workloads, staffing shortages, and the emotional burden of caring for residents facing significant isolation, illness, and death.
24.11.2020	Using drawings to express and represent one's emotional experience during the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic: a case report of a woman living in a nursing home	Psychogeriatrics / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The case of an elderly woman who spent 3 months in isolation in her room in our nursing home as a prevention strategy during COVID-19 pandemic. She was encouraged to draw pictures to drawing as a therapeutic strategy to represent her emotional condition and as way to spend time constructively. • This therapeutic technique may be particularly useful in helping patients explore and express their own emotions during a difficult event, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
26.11.2020	Quality of Life of Informal Caregivers behind the Scene of the COVID-19 Epidemic in Serbia	Medicina / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cross-sectional study was conducted among 112 informal caregivers during the COVID-19 epidemic in Serbia. • Significant predictors of caregivers' physical health were delivering care to a family member and a higher level of care complexity, while significant predictors of caregivers' mental health were a higher level of care complexity and increased concerns about self-health and the health of the person being cared for due to the COVID-19 epidemic.
26.11.2020	Responding to COVID-19: Lessons Learned from a	Geriatrics / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This case study analyses one senior living and social service organization's coronavirus crisis response. Interviews conducted

	Senior Living and Social Service Organization		<p>with 14 department managers to explore the organization’s pivot to remote work and service provision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pre-existing culture of teamwork, willingness to adapt and adopt new approaches, and responsiveness to new policies and procedures facilitated the COVID-19 crisis response. • Low levels of digital literacy among staff, decreased job satisfaction due to no face-to-face interaction between care recipient and service provider, and lack of proactive policies for crisis response were obstacles in effective crisis response.
26.11.2020	Social connection in long-term care homes: A scoping review of published research on the mental health impacts and potential strategies during COVID-19	Journal of the American Medical Directors Association / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 133 studies included in the review. 61 studies tested the association between social connection and a mental health outcome. Authors highlighted 12 strategies, informed by 72 observational and intervention studies, that might help LTC residents, families and staff build and maintain social connection for LTC residents. • Published research conducted among LTC residents has linked good social connection to better mental health outcomes. Observational and intervention studies provide some evidence on approaches to address social connection in this population.
27.11.2020	COVID-19 mortality risk factors in older people in a long-term care center	European Geriatric Medicine / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted a retrospective analysis of all COVID-19 confirmed institutionalized older in a nursing home from March 15 to June 5, 2020. • Male gender, low Barthel index, and lymphocytopenia are independent risk factors for COVID-19 mortality in institutionalized older patients in long-term care nursing homes. Treatment with hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin was associated with lower mortality in these patients.
28.11.2020	Development of Herd Immunity to COVID-19 in Louisiana nursing homes	Journal of the American Medical Directors Association / Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An analysis of nursing home Covid statistics of the 281 nursing homes in the US state since April 18, 2020. • Five patterns emerged. 1) homes which already had a Covid cluster before the data collection started; 2) homes not yet having a Covid cluster; 3) homes still in the throes of a Covid cluster; 4) homes having completed a cluster of Covid during the period of the data collection; and 5) homes with more than one cluster.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proportion of infected residents was 59.8% of the nursing home population. The case mortality rate was 19.7%. The 95% probability limits of the infection rate lay between 45% and 75%. The daily rate of infection was 14.7% per day.
28.11.2020	Research Needed: Better Quantitative Studies to Identify Causes of COVID-19 Nursing Home Disparities	Journal of the American Medical Directors Association / Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This letter identifies gaps in quantitative analyses conducted to identify and explain nursing home racial and ethnic disparities in COVID-19 outcomes and offers strategies for studies needed to fill those gaps.
28.11.2020	Weight Loss in COVID-19 Positive Nursing Home Residents	Journal of the American Medical Directors Association / Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This study found weight loss among both COVID positive and COVID negative residents in a nursing home population after a widespread COVID-19 outbreak. Residents who were COVID positive had both a larger absolute weight loss and trended towards a larger percentage weight loss. These findings support the call to proactively address COVID-19 associated weight loss as part of a COVID-19 management strategy at SNFs. Creative strategies and policies are needed to ensure residents receive adequate mealtime support, symptom management, weight monitoring, and comprehensive nutrition assessments.
30.11.2020	COVID-19 and older adults in Israel – common challenges and recommendations	Quality in Ageing and Older Adults / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Author discusses major systemic problems pertaining to Israeli long-term care facilities and to community-based care; the neglect of mental health; systemic deficiencies in end of life care; and the need to revise communications concerning COVID-19. Recommended changes in strategy, policy and practice can help mitigate the dramatic impact of COVID-19 on the living experience of the older population.
30.11.2020	Medical strategies in nursing homes during the COVID-19 pandemic: A Brazilian experience	Australian Journal for General Practitioners / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline of actions taken within care homes by physicians in Brazil to manage Covid-19. Actions included closing homes to visitors, regular testing and targeted education videos for physicians working in care home.

Preprints

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30.11.2020	Increased Prescribing of Psychotropic Medications to Ontario Nursing Home Residents during the COVID-19 Pandemic	MedRxiv / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authors found increased prescribing of psychotropic drugs at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic that persisted through September 2020. • Increases in prescribing were out of proportion to expected secular trends, and distinct from observed prescribing changes in other drugs during the pandemic • Findings underscore need to balance infection prevention and control measures in nursing homes with the mental wellbeing of residents.
30.11.2020	Second versus first wave of COVID-19 deaths: shifts in age distribution and in nursing home fatalities	MedRxiv / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered all countries that had at least 4000 COVID-19 deaths occurring as of November 25, 2020, at least 200 COVID-19 deaths occurring in the first wave period, and at least 200 COVID-19 deaths occurring in the second wave period. • Individuals <50 years old tended to have a larger share in the total COVID-19 deaths in the second wave than in the first wave in western European countries and the USA, but the absolute difference did not exceed 0.5% in any country. • With the exception of Australia, the share of COVID-19 deaths that were accounted by nursing home residents decreased in the second wave, and the decrease was significant and substantial in 7/9 countries.
02.12.2020	Wearing masks and establishing COVID-19 areas reduces secondary attack risk in nursing homes	MedRxiv / Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysed COVID-19 outbreaks in 12 NH using rRT-PCR for SARS-CoV2. We estimated secondary attack risks (SARs) and identified cofactors associated with the proportion of infected residents. • The SAR was below 5%, suggesting a high efficiency of IPC measures. Mask-wearing or establishment of COVID-19 zones for infected residents were associated with lower SAR. • Wearing masks and isolating potentially infected residents appear to limit SARS-CoV-2 spread in nursing homes.

Reports and other publications

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
19.11.2020	The COVID-19 Long-Term Care situation in England	International Long-Term Care Policy Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the beginning of the pandemic and until the 6th November, 15,659 people had died in the care home and their deaths were linked to COVID-19 in the death register. An estimate of the deaths of care home residents (including those who died in hospital) suggests that, until the 13th November, 20,799 care home residents died whose deaths were attributed to COVID-19. An estimate of excess deaths in care homes suggests that 22,948 more people died until the 30th October, compared to the previous 5 years. This would represent around 5% all care home residents. • There have been increased deaths among people receiving care at home, people who work in social care provision, and the people with learning disabilities and dementia. • The initial COVID-19 policy responses did not adequately consider the social care sector. • With the response almost entirely focused on the NHS, too little consideration was given to the social care system. • Since the first wave, there has been improvement in terms of availability of guidance, access to Personal Protection Equipment and testing.
25.11.2020	The second wave has hit Austria harder – also in care homes	International Long-Term Care Policy Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austrian care homes were hit strongly during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular in some regions where also the general rates of infection were high. • More restrictive measures in the context of the second lockdown during November seem to show first signs of a flattened curve of infections.

<p>Updated 25.11.2020</p>	<p>Updated country report: The impact of COVID-19 on long-term care in the Netherlands – the second wave</p>	<p>International Long-Term Care Policy Network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Dutch nursing home sector was severely affected by the first coronavirus wave. • In the first wave there was a steep increase in cases and then a rapid decline, in the second wave the number of cases in the long-term care sector has plateaued. It is unclear how long this will continue before cases start falling. • Protocols, personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing are more accessible than in the first wave.
<p>26.11.2020</p>	<p>Monitoring the Mental Health Act in 2019/20: The Mental Health Act in the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic</p>	<p>Care Quality Commission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This report puts a specific focus on the impact that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had on patients detained under the MHA, and on the services that care for and treat them. • Many of the services we considered through our remote monitoring coped well with the pandemic situation. • Services that focused the most on carefully applying the principles of least restriction were the most successful in empowering their patients (and staff) to cope with the extra restrictions imposed on society in general, especially during the first national lockdown.
<p>03.12.2020</p>	<p>Review of Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic - Interim report November 2020</p>	<p>Care Quality Commission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An interim report from its review into the application of do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation (DNACPR) decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Early findings are that at the beginning of the pandemic, a combination of unprecedented pressure on care providers and other issues may have led to decisions concerning DNACPR being incorrectly conflated with other clinical assessments around critical care.

Guidance

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
Updated 25.11.2020	Supported living services during coronavirus (COVID-19)	Department of Health and Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assist with planning and preparation in the context of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic so that local procedures can be put in place to minimise risk. Includes safe systems of working, including social distancing, respiratory and hand hygiene and enhanced cleaning and safe systems of working, including social distancing, respiratory and hand hygiene and enhanced cleaning.
Updated 26.11.2020	Admission and care of residents in a care home during COVID-19	Department of Health and Social Care, Public Health England & NHS England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This document updates the previous 'Admission and care of residents during COVID-19 incident in a care home' guidance published on 2 April 2020. This guidance is intended for care homes, local health protection teams, local authorities, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and registered providers of accommodation for people who need personal or nursing care.
Updated 26.11.2020	COVID-19: providing unpaid care to adults with learning disabilities and autistic adults	Department of Health and Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance for people who are providing unpaid care to adults with learning disabilities and autistic adults during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.
Updated 26.11.2020	COVID-19: supporting adults with learning disabilities and autistic adults	Department of Health and Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance for care staff who are supporting adults with learning disabilities and autistic adults during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.
Updated 26.11.2020	Pulse oximetry to detect early deterioration of patients with COVID-19 in primary and community care settings	NHS England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This document sets out principles to support the remote monitoring, using pulse oximetry, of patients with confirmed or possible COVID-19.
01.12.2020	Arrangements for visiting out of the care home	Department of Health and Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out how care homes can support residents of working age on visits outside of the care home.

01.12.2020	Visiting care homes during COVID-19	Department of Health and Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out how care homes can support families and visitors to visit residents from 2 December.
02.12.2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19): financial support arrangements for social care providers	Scottish Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance on arrangements for providing financial support to social care providers for costs relating to the COVID-19 pandemic from December 2020 to March 2021.

Evidence Summaries

Publication Date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
24.11.2020	How can patients with COVID-19 and their family or unpaid carers be enabled and supported to manage palliative care treatment safely and effectively at home?	Centre for Evidence Based Medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authors found no empirical research that has been conducted during the current COVID-19 pandemic to inform how to support carers of people receiving palliative care at home or to clarify whether this approach is safe for all involved. Research assessing the needs of home carers in other palliative care contexts suggests carers may be enabled to manage medication at home, provided that appropriate support and education is given, and that carers have the required capabilities. The use of digital technology can help, but healthcare professionals should be aware that not all carers have access to suitable equipment.

Statistics

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
27.11.2020	Data on COVID-19 visits: social care providers	Ofsted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This data shows how many assurance visits were carried out to social care providers within each local authority and gives a list

			of the providers. It does not include visits to local authority services (ILACS).
01.12.2020	Number of deaths in care homes notified to the Care Quality Commission, England	Office for National Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provisional weekly counts of deaths in care homes caused by COVID-19 by local authority. Published by the Office for National Statistics and Care Quality Commission.
02.12.2020	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
27.11.2020	Care homes need our support in the covid-19 era and beyond	BMJ / Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Author makes various recommendations for the care home sector based on the effect of COVID-19 on care homes. Recommendations for improving funding, staffing levels and future planning are made.
30.11.2020	Shining a light on care homes during the COVID 19 pandemic in the UK 2020	Quality in Ageing and Older Adults / Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authors personal insight into the plight of the care home sector during the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK. Examples of bad practice from the authorities relating to care homes are highlighted and the article concludes that Government policy on care homes from March to July 2020 was discriminatory and questions how far lessons have been learned.
01.12.2020	Care home residents to be reunited with families by Christmas	Department of Health and Social Care / Press release	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New guidance will safely allow indoor visits to care homes across England as the country moves back into tiered restrictions.
01.12.2020	Designated settings for COVID-19 patients leaving hospital	Care Quality Commission / News	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CQC is working with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), local authorities and individual care providers to provide assurance of safe and high-quality care in designated

			settings, which are part of a scheme to allow people with a COVID-positive test result to be discharged safely from hospitals.
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