



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 26th March 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 Australia and the UK, a comparison of the impact of government policy in Australia and UK on care homes during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic; from the USA, evidence of the benefit of a clinical management pathway in improving outcomes for Covid-19 in a nursing home of predominantly black residents; and further evidence of the factors resulting in Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy among care workers in skilled nursing facilities; from Canada and Japan, reflections on the impact of Covid-19 on the long term care system; and an international map of research conducted so far on the impact of Covid-19 on long term care facilities, the LTC covid research projects database (<https://ltccovid.org/completed-or-ongoing-research-projects-on-covid-19-and-long-term-care/>). From the UK, impact of hospital discharges on intensity of outbreaks of Covid-19 in care homes; and a call for further research on the impact of SARS-CoV-2 variants on outcomes for ethnic minority groups.

Finally, summaries of recently published reports, guidance and statistics. An ongoing series of PHE rapid reviews on a range of Covid-19 related research questions can be found at <https://phelibrary.koha-ptfs.co.uk/covid19rapidreviews/>.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
02.03.2021	COVID-19 in aged care homes: a comparison of effects initial government policies had in the UK (primarily focussing on England) and Australia during the first wave	International Journal for Quality in Health Care / study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact globally, with older people living in aged care homes suffering high death rates. • The study aimed to compare the impact of initial government policies on this vulnerable older population between the UK and Australia during the first wave of attack.
19.03.2021	Management and outcomes of a COVID-19 outbreak in a nursing home with predominantly Black residents	J. American Geriatrics Society / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports on single-centre retrospective observational cohort study run March 1 – May 31 2020, which describes outcomes of a clinical management pathway for a large COVID-19 outbreak in an urban skilled nursing facility with predominantly racial minority (>90% black), medically complex, older residents • Outbreak presented characteristic COVID-19 syndrome during a COVID-19 outbreak in SNF, including symptoms of low-grade fever, hypoxia, delirium, anorexia, hypernatremia, and acute kidney injury • Authors present the first available clinical strategy guiding the medical management of a COVID-19 syndrome in an urban SNF, caring for largely black residents, which may lead to improved mortality • This clinical management pathway, which was developed from clinical experience and consensus, may result in reduced hospitalizations and improved mortality outcomes and serve as a template for managing infectious outbreaks in SNFs.
20.03.2021	Post-Acute Care Nursing Home Deaths in the COVID Era: Potential for Attribution Bias	Journal of the American Geriatrics Society accepted articles / research letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the initial wave of COVID-19 illness in the spring of 2020 in New York State, nursing homes came under scrutiny due to large numbers of deaths and therefore to concerns related to appropriate facility preparedness and infection control practices. • However, deaths in the nursing home may have occurred among community residing patients transferred from hospitals with serious illness requiring hospitalization and subsequent post-acute nursing home based care.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Therefore, deaths of these latter patients in the nursing home may add to the impression of poor care and/or lack of appropriate preparedness or infection control practices.
20.03.2021	<p><i>“Somebody like me”:</i> Understanding COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy among Staff in Skilled Nursing Facilities</p>	Journal of the American Medical Directors Association / study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vaccination of skilled nursing facility (SNF) staff is a critical component in the battle against COVID-19. Together, residents and staff, constitute the single most vulnerable population in the pandemic. The health of these workers is completely entangled with the health of those they care for. Vaccination of SNF staff is key to increasing uptake of the vaccine, reducing health disparities, and reopening SNFs to visitors. Yet, as the vaccine rollout begins, some SNF staff are declining to be vaccinated. The purpose of this article is to describe reasons for COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy reported by staff of skilled nursing facilities and understand factors that could potentially reduce hesitancy.
20.03.2021	Coronavirus disease 2019 in French residential care facilities: a nationwide study	Journal of the American Medical Directors Association / study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic caused a considerable mortality in long-term care facilities (LTCFs), including residential care setting and nursing homes. This study aimed to estimate COVID-19 incidence and mortality in residential care facilities and to compare them with those recorded in nursing homes.
20.03.2021	The adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on nursing home resident well-being	Journal of the American Medical Directors Association / study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study seeks to quantify the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on nursing home resident well-being.
21.03.2021	Lived experiences of frontline workers and leaders during COVID-19 outbreaks in long-term care: A qualitative study	American journal of Infection Control / qualitative study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-term care facilities across Canada have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This study aims to describe the experiences of frontline workers and leaders involved in COVID-19 outbreak management in these facilities, identify best practices, and provide recommendations for improvement.
22.03.2021	The experience of executing preventive measures to protect a nursing home in Taiwan from a COVID-19 outbreak	European Geriatric Medicine / research paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study shares their strategies for preventing a COVID-19 outbreak in a nursing home in Taiwan and evaluates the efficacy of these strategies.

Preprints

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
20.03.2021	Intensity of COVID-19 in care homes following Hospital Discharge in the early stages of the UK epidemic	medRxiv / study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A defining feature of the COVID-19 pandemic in many countries was the tragic extent to which care home residents were affected, and the difficulty preventing introduction and subsequent spread of infection. • Management of risk in care homes requires good evidence on the most important transmission pathways. • One hypothesised route at the start of the pandemic, prior to widespread testing, was transfer of patients from hospitals, which were experiencing high levels of nosocomial events.
22.03.2021	Reduced BNT162b2 mRNA vaccine response in SARS-CoV-2-naive nursing home residents	medRxiv / study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic impact on nursing home (NH) residents prompted their prioritization for early vaccination. • To fill the data gap for vaccine immunogenicity in NH residents, we examined antibody levels after BNT162b2 mRNA vaccine to spike, receptor binding domain (RBD) and for virus neutralization in 149 NH residents and 111 health care worker controls.

Reports and other publications

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
18.03.2021	COVID-19 and the new variant strain in England – What are the implications for those from ethnic minority groups?	Pan, Daniel; et al.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies impact of two COVID-19 variants, VUI-202,012/01, originally detected in Kent and London, and 501Y.V2 first detected in Nelson Mandela Bay in South Africa. Epidemiological evidence of a sharp rise in Coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) admissions to both UK and South African hospitals along with a rising attributable proportion of cases due to these two variants, suggests that both are significantly more transmissible than previous variants • Ethnic minority groups in the UK have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic and a key driver in this association is the increased risk of infection, while, Black and Asian

			<p>groups continue to be under-represented in COVID-19 research and vaccine uptake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The authors call for a focused effort to conduct more research on their transmission and outcomes in ethnic minority populations. This should be supported by meaningful engagement with these groups to inform research, policy, and practice: the first wave of COVID-19 has disproportionately affected ethnic minority groups resulting in poorer clinical outcomes in these communities; the new variant has the potential to worsen this further. Authors conclude we must learn from our experiences in 2020 and proactively include ethnic minority groups into public health policy.
19.03.2021	Adjustment of daily activities to restrictions and reported spread of the COVID-19 pandemic across Europe	Connolly, Filip Fors; et al.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses adjustments of daily activities in wake of COVID-19 pandemic among over-50s in Europe, & investigates extent to which such adjustments are associated with stringency of governmental restrictions and the overall spread of COVID-19 Analysis show older Europeans across continent have reduced daily activities substantially during the pandemic. However, authors observe variation across countries demographics, which may be important for policymakers to note Authors analysis replicates previous studies using mobility data, showing that both restrictions and infections predict a reduction in mobility. However, it is noteworthy that we find relatively weaker associations with restrictions compared to previous studies using mobility data.

Guidance

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
22.03.2021	COVID-19 Guidance on visits to Long Term Residential Care Facilities (LTRCFs) ***To be	Irish Health Protection Surveillance Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General resequencing to improve flow and reduce duplication Changes to text to place greater emphasis on the harm associated with visiting restrictions and the rights of residents to maintain meaningful contacts

	implemented as of 22nd March 2021***		
24.03.2021	Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing for adult social care settings	Department of Health and Social Care / gov.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing for COVID-19 in adult social care (ASC) is crucial to help protect those who receive care and adult social care staff. • Testing programmes identify people who may unknowingly have the virus, enabling those who test positive and their contacts to self-isolate and break the chain of transmission.
24.03.2021	Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing in adult care homes	Department of Health and Social Care / gov.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to access test kits and step-by-step guides on how to use PCR and rapid lateral flow test kits for regular and outbreak testing of residents and staff.

Evidence Summaries

Publication Date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
12.03.2021	COVID-19 and the Long-Term Care system in Japan	Margarita Estévez-Abe & Hiroo Ide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japan locked down long-term care facilities (LTCFs) during the first months of the pandemic, several weeks earlier than in Europe and the United States. • This helped protect the most vulnerable elderly population from infection risks.
22.03.2021	Developing a map of international research on COVID-19 and Long-Term Care, 21st March update	Jessica Yu and Adelina Comas-Herrera	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LTCcovid research projects database shares information about ongoing and completed research projects on COVID-19 and long-term care, with the aim of facilitating collaboration and learning across countries. • The projects are categorized by country covered, care setting, outcomes of interest, funding, methodological approach and group covered.

Statistics

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17.03.2021	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.
23.03.2021	Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional	ONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provisional counts of the number of deaths registered in England and Wales, by age, sex and region, in the latest weeks for which data are available. Includes the most up-to-date figures available for deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19).
23.03.2021	Number of deaths in care homes notified to the Care Quality Commission, England	Office for National Statistics; Care Quality Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provisional counts of deaths in care homes caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) by local authority.

Editorials and News

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
17.03.2021	UK nursing homes saw spikes in B117 COVID variant in early winter	Van Beusekom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researchers from University College London examined a sample of 4,442 positive COVID-19 tests from nursing home residents and staff from Oct 5 to Dec 17 to determine the proportion of cases caused by B117, the variant first discovered in the United Kingdom.
18.03.2021	Elderly Patient Care: A New Reality of the SARS-CoV-2 Pandemic	Jankowska-Polańska	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three residential medical centers in Poland were selected for evaluation of existing medical procedures to identify any errors in the current procedures applied for the prevention of SARS-CoV-2 spread in the facility.
19.03.2021	The Rollout of COVID-19 Vaccines in Canadian Long-Term Care Homes, 15th March 2021 update	Samir Sinha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In early November 2020, prior to the arrival of its first vaccines, Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommended that the first stage of immunizations be given to residents, staff and family caregivers in Long-Term Care (LTC), retirement homes and other congregate settings for older persons, adults over 70, health-care workers, and adults in Indigenous communities.

