



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

28th 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 Canada, evidence of the value of nurse practitioners in managing end of life care in long term care facilities; from Australia, a review of preparedness for viral pandemics to inform the post-Covid-19 response; an international systematic review of the clinical features and outcomes of Covid-19 in older people; an international evidence summary of strategies to improve the uptake of Covid-19 vaccination among staff working in social care settings; and also an international overview of national policy approaches to the specific question of mandatory Covid-19 vaccination for long term care workers. From the UK, evidence of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on unpaid carers of adults with long term care needs, further evidence of the negative impacts of increased infection control measures on care home visiting; and the impact of hospital associated SARS-CoV-2 infection on care home outbreaks. Finally, summaries of other 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.

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

Peer-Reviewed Articles

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
14.05.2021	The Impacts of COVID-19 on Unpaid Carers of Adults with Long-Term Care Needs and Measures to Address these Impacts: A Rapid Review of Evidence up to November 2020	Journal of Long-Term Care / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study aims to map available evidence of the impacts of COVID-19 on unpaid carers of adults (>18 years) with LTC needs as well as of measures implemented to mitigate these effects and how well they have worked • Authors identified six key themes that highlight the impacts of COVID-19 on unpaid carers of people living in the community. These are: care commitment, concerns related to COVID-19, availability of formal and informal support, financial implications, carer health and well-being, and carers' adaptability. • Authors additionally captured aspects identified by unpaid carers supporting people in residential care settings under the theme 'carers of people in residential settings'
17.05.2021	Delivering Hospice Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Meeting Nursing Home Residents' Needs	Journal of Hospice and Palliative Nursing / discussion article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The article provides an overview of the expectations of hospice care, explains the differences in delivering hospice care during the COVID-19 pandemic, examines social isolation and emotional loneliness and the role of familial caregivers, and describes policy changes related to the COVID-19 affecting hospice care delivery in nursing homes. • This article also summarized the lessons learned as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and provided practical implications for nursing, specific to changes in hospice care deliveries for nursing home residents and answers the following questions: (1) How did residents receiving hospice care have their needs met during the COVID-19 pandemic? • (2) What areas of nursing home care need to be improved through governmental policy and restructuring?
19.05.2021	Complexity of Nurse Practitioners' Role in Facilitating a Dignified	Journal of Personalized Medicine / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This qualitative study employed a phenomenological approach to explore the role of Nurse Practitioners in facilitating a dignified death for

	Death for Long-Term Care Home Residents during the COVID-19 Pandemic		<p>Long-Term Care home residents while also facing increased pressures related to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data were generated using semi-structured interviews and examined using thematic analysis. Three categories were derived: (a) advance care planning and goals of care discussions; (b) pain and symptom management at the end-of-life; and (c) care after death. The findings suggest that further implementation of the NP role in LTC homes in collaboration with LTC home team and external partners will promote a good death and optimize the experiences of residents and their care partners during the end-of-life journey.
19.05.2021	Clinical features and outcomes of COVID-19 in older adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis	BMC Geriatrics / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observational studies including older adults (age \geq 60 years) with COVID-19 infection and reporting clinical characteristics or outcome were included. Primary outcome was assessing weighted pooled prevalence (WPP) of severity and outcomes. Secondary outcomes were clinical features including comorbidities and need of respiratory support. Severe infection was seen in 51% (95% CI– 36-65%, I2–95%) patients while 22% (95% CI– 16-28%, I2–88%) were critically ill. Overall, 11% (95% CI– 5-21%, I2–98%) patients died. The common comorbidities were hypertension (48, 95% CI– 36-60% I2–92%), diabetes mellitus (22, 95% CI– 13-32%, I2–86%) and cardiovascular disease (19, 95% CI – 11-28%, I2–85%). Common symptoms were fever (83, 95% CI– 66-97%, I2–91%), cough (60, 95% CI– 50-70%, I2–71%) and dyspnoea (42, 95% CI– 19-67%, I2–94%). Authors concluded approximately half of older patients with COVID-19 have severe infection, one in five are critically ill and one in ten die.
20.05.2021	Health and social care professionals' experiences of providing end of life care during the COVID-19 pandemic: A qualitative study	Paliative Medicine / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-structured interviews and thematic data analysis were used to explore health and social care professionals' experiences of providing end of life care during the COVID-19 pandemic to help inform current/future clinical practice and policy. Results are discussed under two themes: (1) challenges and facilitators to providing end of life care, and (2) support needs of relatives when a family member was dying during the COVID-19 pandemic.

21.05.2021	COVID-19 Pandemic and Resilience of the Transnational Home-Based Elder Care System between Poland and Germany	Journal of Aging and Social Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As COVID-19 puts older people in long-term institutional care at the highest risk of infection and death, the need for home-based care has increased. Germany relies largely on migrant caregivers from Poland. Yet the pandemic-related mobility restrictions reveal the deficiencies of this transnational elder care system. • The research team conducted interviews with 10 experts and randomly selected representatives of brokering and sending agencies in Germany and Poland on the agencies' characteristics, recruitment strategies, challenges of the pandemic, and impact of legal regulations in the sector. • The analysis shows that the system could mobilize adaptive capacities and continue to deliver services, but its absorptive capacity is limited.
22.05.2021	Preparedness for viral respiratory infection pandemic in residential aged care facilities: A review of the literature to inform post-COVID-19 response	Journal of Clinical Nursing / Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This review identified six papers meeting inclusion criteria across care residential facilities in different countries. Several prevention and mitigation strategies were identified to manage and reduce the spread and severity of viral respiratory infection pandemics, including isolation, restriction of movement, personal protective and hygienic measures, health education, and screening • Concludes those in residential care settings are at greater risk of infection during a pandemic, and therefore, strict measures to protect their safety are warranted. However, they are also a group who already experience social isolation and so any measures involving restrictions to visiting and social interaction, particularly over the longer term, must be accompanied by strategies to mitigate potential loneliness and mental health sequelae arising from long-term pandemic restrictions

Preprints

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
------------------	-------------	------------------------	--------

24.05.2021	<p>Are we allowed to visit now? Concerns and issues surrounding vaccination and infection risks in UK care homes during COVID-19</p>	MedRxiv / Preprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aim of this longitudinal qualitative study was to explore the impact of both vaccination and testing on the conduct and experiences of care home visits. • Five core themes were developed: Delayed and inconsistent offers of face-to-face visits; Procedures and facilitation of visits; Frustration and anger among family carers; Variable uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine; Misinformation, education, and free choice. The variable uptake in staff, compared to family carers, was a key factor seemingly influencing visitation, with a lack of clear guidance leading care homes to implement infection control measures and visitation rights differently. • Authors present five recommendations to enable improved care home visitation in both ongoing and future pandemics: Visits need to be enabled and any changes to visiting rights must be used as a last resort, reviewed regularly in consultation with residents and carers and restored as soon as possible as a top priority, whilst more education needs to be provided surrounding vaccination for care home staff.
------------	--	--------------------	--

Reports and other publications

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
19.05.2021	<p>COVID-19 in Nursing Homes: Most Homes Had Multiple Outbreaks and Weeks of Sustained Transmission from May 2020 through January 2021</p>	U.S. Government Accountability Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report looked at the frequency and duration of COVID-19 outbreaks in US nursing homes from May 2020 through January 2021. A nursing home outbreak begins when a nursing home reports a new case among residents or staff and ends when the home has two consecutive weeks with no new cases. • GAO found that nursing homes had an average of about three outbreaks during the review period, with most of the nursing homes (94 percent, or 12,555 of the 13,380 nursing homes) experiencing more than one COVID-19 outbreak.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average number of COVID-19 cases per outbreak for nursing homes with a long-duration outbreak was 56, while the average for nursing homes with a short-duration outbreak was 13. • For both long- and short-duration outbreaks, over half of the nursing homes (66 percent, or 8,720 homes) reported that these outbreaks began with a staff member who tested positive the first week.
--	--	--	--

Guidance

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
Updated 21.05.2021	Guidance for Adult Day Services Centers	CDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Day Services Centers (ADSCs) provide social or health services to community-dwelling adults aged 65 and over and adults of any age living with disability. • Older adults and persons with disabilities are at highest risk for severe illness from COVID-19 including hospitalization, intensive care, and death. • ADSC administrators and staff can help protect themselves and program participants (that is, adults attending ADSCs) from COVID-19 by promoting and engaging in preventive behaviors that reduce spread and maintain healthy operations and environments at ADSC facilities.
27.05.2021	COVID-19: assessment of hospital-associated SARS-CoV-2 infection and care home outbreaks	PHE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A data linkage approach to assessing the contribution of hospital-associated SARS-CoV-2 infection to care home outbreaks in England, 30 January to 12 October 2020. • Paper prepared by PHE Epi Cell on the contribution of hospital-associated SARS-CoV-2 infection to care home outbreaks in England. • Commissioned by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), via the Social Care Working subgroup. It should be viewed in context: the paper assessed evidence at the time of writing.

Evidence Summaries

Publication Date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
25.05.2021	Evidence summary: Strategies to support uptake of Covid-19 vaccinations among staff working in social care settings	Nina Hemmings, Camille Oung et al	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key findings include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Modelling studies suggest that increasing levels of staff vaccination in care homes may significantly reduce the number of symptomatic cases among care residents, even in scenarios where the majority of residents are already fully vaccinated. ○ Around 2 in 5 local authorities in England report staff vaccination rates below the 80% threshold advised by SAGE for older adult care homes. ○ A number of factors are associated with lower uptake of Covid-19 vaccine among long-term care staff, including access barriers; lack of sufficient information and education about the vaccine; mistrust; and sociodemographic factors (age, gender, ethnicity and income).

Statistics

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
25.05.2021	Number of deaths in care homes notified to the Care Quality Commission, England	ONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly updated provisional counts of deaths caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) by local authority
25.05.2021	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 the coronavirus (COVID-19), in the latest weeks for which data are available.

25.05.2021	Notifications to Care Inspectorate Wales related to COVID-19 in adult care homes: 1 March 2020 to 20 May 2021	Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifications related to COVID-19 in adult care homes during the coronavirus pandemic for 1 March 2020 to 20 May 2021.
26.05.2021	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
19.05.2021	GAO: Almost all US nursing homes had multiple COVID-19 outbreaks	Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From May 2020 to January 2021, US nursing homes had an average of three COVID-19 outbreaks, according to a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report • The authors used Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) data and representative and expert interviews to look at COVID-19 outbreaks in 13,380 nursing homes. • The average nursing home had three outbreaks, and 93.8% had more than one. Less than half a percent had no outbreaks. • Most of the longer outbreaks were between October and December 2020 and were more likely to occur in nursing homes with a larger number of beds.
25.05.2021	National discussions on mandatory vaccination for long-term care staff in 24 countries. LTCcovid international overviews of long-term care policies and	Salas, Jorge Browne ; et al.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the enormous impacts of Covid-19 among people who use long-term care, most countries have prioritized people who live and work in care homes for vaccinations. However, there are concerns that vaccine supply, vaccine hesitancy and other barriers to vaccination are affecting the vaccination uptake among people who work in long-term care.

	<p>practices in relation to Covid-19 (No. 1, May 2021)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has lead to debate on whether it should be compulsory for people working in this sector (or particularly in care homes) to be vaccinated, or whether there are other measures that may be more acceptable and effective at increasing vaccination take-up and may not deter people from working in the sector. • This blog post provides an overview of the situation in May 2021 in 24 countries
--	--	--	---