



Public Health
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Weekly Care Homes Evidence Digest

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

24th September 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 Japan, further evidence of an association between lower social participation and symptoms of depression among older people in the community; and evidence for the need for better support for informal caregivers to mitigate the burden of the COVID-19 pandemic; from USA, lessons from an in depth study into the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 12 states; evidence of an association between higher uptake of COVID-19 vaccination among staff and a reduction in infections among nursing home residents; and a mixed methods study on the experience of home care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic; from the Netherlands and UK, a call for better government guidance to inform safer visiting in care homes during the COVID-19 pandemic and for future pandemics.

Also from the UK, reflections on the experiences of directly employed carers during the COVID-19 pandemic with implications for policy and practice.

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 arthur.pearce@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.koha-ptfs.co.uk/covid19rapidreviews/>. A wider range of PHE evidence resources on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic may be found at [Finding the evidence: Coronavirus – Knowledge & Library Services \(koha-ptfs.co.uk\)](#).

Peer-Reviewed Articles

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
15.09.2021	Association between Decreased Social Participation and Depressive Symptom Onset among Community-Dwelling Older Adults: A Longitudinal Study during the COVID-19 Pandemic	TheJournal of Nutrition, Health & Aging /Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The setting for this longitudinal study was communities in Minokamo City, a semi-urban area in Japan. Participants were community-dwelling older adults aged ≥ 65 years recruited using random sampling. A total of 597 older adults without depressive symptoms at baseline were analyzed (mean age = 79.8 years; 50.4% females). Depressive symptoms occurred in 20.1% of the participants during the observation period. Multivariable Poisson regression analysis showed that decreased social participation was significantly associated with the onset of the depressive symptoms, compared to continued participation, after adjusting for all covariates (incidence rate ratio = 1.59, 95% confidence interval = 1.01–2.50, $p = 0.045$).
16.09.2021	“Because if I don’t hold his hand then I might as well not be there”: Experiences of Dutch and UK care home visiting during the COVID-19 pandemic	Journal of the American Medical Directors Association / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across 125 interviews, we developed four themes: (1) Different types of contact during lockdown; (2) Deterioration of resident health and well-being; (3) Emotional distress of both visitors and residents; (4) Compliance to guidelines and regulations. In the Netherlands, government guidance did enable early care home visitation, whilst the UK was lacking any guidance leading to care homes implementing restrictions differently. Authors conclude: Early and clear guidance, as well as communication, is required in future pandemics, and in this ongoing pandemic, to enable care home visits between residents and loved ones.
17.09.2021	Family Caregiving and Changes in Mental Health Status in Japan During the COVID-19 Pandemic	Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlights from this study include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal caregiving was related to mental health deterioration during the pandemic. High-intensity caregivers experienced worse mental health deterioration. Self-reported deterioration in mental health was more severe among women caregivers.

20.09.2021	Lessons Learned in Preventing COVID-19 within a Skilled Nursing Facility during the Early Pandemic	Geriatric Nursing / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authors conducted a retrospective cohort (March 1st–August 31st, 2020) study. Data were collected from internal COVID-19 documents and resident electronic health records. • There were 325 residents who lived in and 296 staff who worked at the SNF during the study period. • There was a total of 2 confirmed cases among residents and 4 confirmed cases among staff. Cases were isolated and all were living at their baseline health status at the end of the study.
20.09.2021	State Policy Responses to COVID-19 in Nursing Homes	Journal of Long Term Care / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This study employs an in-depth examination of 12 states' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in nursing homes through June 2020, using publicly reported information such as government decrees, health department guidance, and news reports. • Findings from the study include: No state emerged as a model of care. All states faced difficulty with limited availability of testing and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). State-level efforts to increase pay and benefits as a strategy to enable infected staff to quickly physically separate from residents were minimal, and other separation strategies depended on the ability to obtain test results rapidly and on state rules regarding accepting discharged COVID-19 patients into nursing homes. Visitor restrictions to reduce risk were ubiquitous, though based on a slim evidence-base.
20.09.2021	Caring in Covid-19: Personal Assistants' Changing Relationships with their Clients' Family Members	Journal of Long Term Care / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sample of 41 PAs working in England were interviewed by telephone during the early months of Covid-19 (April–June 2020) in England. Interview data were analysed thematically and accounts of PAs' engagement with their clients' family members were explored. • Study findings illustrate the fluidity of relationships at this time within four dimensions: 1) some family members working more closely with PAs, 2) the development of tensions between PAs and family members, 3) displacement by family members of PAs and other care services, 4) PA accounts of working with clients who had little or no family contact or other assistance during the pandemic.

Preprints

Publication Date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
21.09.2021	The Relationship of Vaccine Uptake and COVID-19 Infections among Nursing Home Staff and Residents in Missouri	MedRxiv / Preprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older adults living in communal spaces, such as nursing or retirement communities are at greater risk of infection due to close proximity to others, advanced aging-related or medical conditions, and engagement with staff that support multiple clients and facilities. • Mobility between residents and facilities may result in staff acting as vectors of COVID-19 infection in these spaces. • Vaccine uptake has been shown to markedly reduce the spread of COVID-19, yet there is little data on vaccine uptake and the continued COVID-19 risk among residents. • 504 nursing homes were included in the study and 1124 COVID-19 infections were reported during the study period. As the percent of vaccinated staff increased, the risk of COVID-19 infections among residents significantly decreased. • This study identified that nursing home staff, likely due to greater mobility, are important to prioritize in vaccination efforts to protect themselves and residents of their facilities from COVID-19 infections

Reports and other publications

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
26.07.2021	Capturing COVID: A Pilot Study Using the EPII with Long-Term Care Staff	Schneider, Lauren	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please note that this is a PhD. Thesis submitted to the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, with limited a limited preview rather than free full-text access. • The study investigated the Epidemic-Pandemic Impact Inventory (EPII), a newly developed measure designed to capture a person's experience of the pandemic across multiple domains of life, and a demographic questionnaire in a long-term care (LTC) sample. • Additional exploratory analyses were performed to understand

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether job title and self-identified race impacted response to the EPII. Fifty participants from three different long-term care facilities in Southern Colorado completed the EPII. • Results indicated that LTC workers endorsed the greatest number of adverse experiences related to work and employment, infection, and quarantine. EPII did not capture any potential differences based on job title. • White participants endorsed a greater number of problems with mental health and wellbeing compared to participants of color. • This pilot study provided evidence for the utility of the EPII among a LTC population and identified potential areas to improve the psychometric properties of the assessment tool moving forward. •
18.09.2021	Safety Trade-Offs in Home Care During COVID-19: A Mixed Methods Study Capturing the Perspective of Frontline Workers	Osei-Poku, Godwin K.; et al.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports on Mixed Methods study into experiences of home care workers during COVID-19, particularly their access to information about infection status, to testing, and to personal protective equipment (PPE); their understanding of guidelines; and trade-offs associated with protecting workers' safety. The study involved 83 home care workers who care for clients/consumers in Massachusetts, USA. • Home care workers expressed deep commitment to continuing to care for their clients/consumers during COVID-19, but often had to operate with insufficient resources and under conditions that made their work environments feel unsafe. Their ability to identify exposure risks and make decisions on how to protect themselves often hinged on a transparent and trusting relationship with their clients/consumers. These relationships were particularly important for PCAs who did not have access to safety guidance from a home care agency.

Guidance

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
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Updated 22.09.2021	Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing for hospices	DHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out how hospices can access COVID-19 testing for staff and patients on-site, for staff visiting patients in their own homes, and for visitors to hospices.
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Statistics

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
21.09.2021	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.
21.09.2021	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.