



UK Health Security Agency

Weekly Care Homes Evidence Digest

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

12th November 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 the Netherlands, advantages of advanced care planning in nursing homes during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic; from the Republic of Ireland, further evidence of the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of nursing home staff; and on the mental health of older people living in the community; from USA, value of multiple strategies in improving the uptake of COVID-19 vaccine among nursing home staff; impact and value of outreach phone call programmes in supporting isolated older people in the community during the COVID-19 pandemic; from France, analysis of changes in the health care system for older people over the last decade and the implications for integrated care; from Canada, a rapid review of interventions to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 among older people in long-term care; from Germany, further evidence for the need for COVID-19 booster vaccination in residents of long-term care facilities; and from Singapore, a call for new strategies to combat the impact of COVID-19 in long-term care facilities.

From the UK, the value of frailty reviews in reducing inappropriate hospital admissions of care home residents during the COVID-19 pandemic; reflections on the role of client hired workers in infection prevention and control and a call for further research; an analysis of a comparison of the impact of COVID-19 on the care of older people In England compared with 11 OECD countries; publication of the adult social care winter plan for COVID-19 for 2021/2022; and a review of the adult social care plan for 2020/2021.

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
02.11.2021	Advance care planning in Dutch nursing homes during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic	JAMDA / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study aimed explore how physicians in Dutch nursing homes practiced advance care planning (ACP) during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to explore whether and how ACP changed during the first wave of the pandemic. • A total of 129 questionnaires were filled out. Saturation was reached after analyzing 60 questionnaires. • Four main themes evolved after coding the questionnaires: reasons for ACP discussion, discussing ACP, topics discussed in ACP and decision-making in ACP. • COVID-19 specific changes in ACP indicated by respondents included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1) COVID-19 infection as a reason for initiating ACP, ○ 2) a higher frequency of ACP discussions, ○ 3) less face-to-face contact with surrogate decision makers, and ○ 4) intensive care unit admission as an additional topic in anticipatory medical decision making.
02.11.2021	Nursing home staff mental health during the Covid-19 pandemic in the Republic of Ireland	Int. J. Geriatric Psych. / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursing homes for older adults have been disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 pandemic with increased mortality of residents and staff distress. This paper aimed to quantify the mental health of nursing home staff during the Covid-19 pandemic in Ireland. • There were significant differences between nurses, healthcare assistants (HCA) and non-clinical staff history in age, ethnicity, years' experience, history of Covid-19 infection and contact with Covid-19 positive acquaintances. • Moderate–severe post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms were found in 45.1% of all staff. • Suicidal ideation and suicide planning were reported, respectively, by 13.8% and 9.2% of participants with no between-group differences. • HCAs reported a significantly higher degree of moral injury than non-clinical staff.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurses were more likely to use approach coping styles than non-clinical staff. • Work ability was insufficient in 24.6% of staff
02.11.2021	76 Using frailty reviews to manage the COVID-19 pandemic in an evidence-based and person-centred manner across Buckinghamshire care homes	BMJ / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports on project which used a collaborative approach to undertake frailty reviews, aiming to reduce inappropriate hospital admissions. The reviews included discussing residents' preferred place of care and options in the event of deterioration, a Treatment Escalation Plan (TEP). • Review outcomes were recorded electronically onto the GP clinical system. Care homes kept a copy and informed residents/families of the outcome. 595 residents were reviewed in 21 care homes. • Preliminary analysis for 71 residents reviewed May 2020 to April 2021 show: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 42 survivors, 33 with severe frailty (CFS 7–9), 9 not severely frail (CFS<7). Out of total 28 residents with TEP indicating avoidance of hospital admission, 23 were not admitted and 5 had single hospital admission. 14 residents TEP included hospital management of whom 7 were admitted. ○ 26 of the 29 deceased residents were severely frail. 96% died in their preferred place of death. • Clinical leadership demonstrated courage and capacity to challenge the status quo, improve organisational processes and innovate practice. This helped staff morale at a difficult time of immense pressure and positively enhanced care homes' profile and residents' experience.
03.11.2021	Personal Assistants' role in infection prevention and control: Their experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic	Health and Social Care in the Community / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Assistants (PA) or client-hired workers are directly employed by people needing care and support, often making use of government funding. In the context of Covid-19, questions emerged about how this workforce is supported to practice safely. • This paper reports PAs' understanding and views of infection control during the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic in England. • Interviews with PAs during the start of the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted their role in infection prevention and control but also underline how they are disconnected from other services and networks

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This study provides confirmatory data and also flagged up potential dilemmas within the PA role; workers are expected to act under their client's instructions without the wider support of health and social care systems that could help them to do this optimally around infection control and beyond.
06.11.2021	Strategies associated with COVID-19 vaccine coverage among nursing home staff	J. American Geriatrics Soc. / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After the first of three COVID-19 vaccination clinics in U.S. nursing homes (NHs), the median vaccination coverage of staff was 37.5%, indicating the need to identify strategies to increase staff coverage. Authors aimed to compare the facility-level activities, policies, incentives, and communication methods associated with higher staff COVID-19 vaccination coverage. Compared with facilities with lower staff vaccination coverage, facilities with medium or high coverage were more likely to have designated frontline staff champions NHs with high vaccination coverage were more likely to have given vaccinated staff rewards such as T-shirts compared with NHs with low coverage. Use of multiple strategies was associated with greater likelihood of facilities having medium or high vaccination coverage: for example, facilities that used ≥ 9 strategies were three times more likely to have high staff vaccination coverage than facilities using < 6 strategies
07.11.2021	Caring callers: the impact of the telephone reassurance program on homebound older adults during COVID-19	Home Health Care Services Quarterly / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the COVID-19 pandemic, older adults experienced great levels of social isolation and feelings of loneliness. This paper reports on a telephone reassurance program, Caring Callers, to provide a weekly phone call to socially isolated older adults. Dyads were created which comprised of a Senior Companion volunteer and a homebound older adult. Using a mixed methods approach, we examined the program's impact on homebound older adults The participants were satisfied with the program and showed a significant increase in overall health. They discussed social and emotional benefits of the program and other benefits that they gained from community resources.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authors argue is critical that aging service providers recognize the resourcefulness and relatability of older adult volunteers and utilize them to continue to support socially isolated older adults during an unprecedented event affecting people’s isolation.
08.11.2021	Integrated Care for Older People in France in 2020: Findings, Challenges, and Prospects	Int. J. Of Integrated Care / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authors analyse major changes over the last decade in the French healthcare system for older people, in terms of the integrated care concept. • During this period, the major theme of public policies was “care coordination.” Despite some improvements, the multiplication of experimental programs and the multiplicity of stakeholders distanced the French healthcare system from an integrated care model. • The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted this fragmentation. The authors, we still lack data on the impact of these programs on people’s health trajectories and personal experiences. • The French healthcare system seems more fragmented in 2020 than in 2010, despite improvements in the culture of professional collaboration. • Future health reform is an opportunity to capitalize upon this progress and to implement “integrated care.” This implies a strong and continuous national leadership in governance and change management.
08.11.2021	Experiences and priorities of older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic	Irish Journal of Medical Science / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper aims to ascertain the self-reported physical and psychological effects of ‘cocooning’ and the expressed priorities of older adults themselves during the pandemic. • Study encompassed a cross-sectional, survey-based study involving 93 patients aged 65 and older, attending geriatric medicine out-patient and ambulatory day hospital services or in-patient rehabilitation units. • Mean age was 79., 24% had dementia, and most were mildly frail (CFS < 5). One-third reported new feelings of depression, decreased mobility, and loss of enjoyment as a consequence ‘cocooning’. Loneliness was more prevalent amongst in-patients. Respondents worried more about the risks of COVID-19 to their family than themselves.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given adverse consequences of ‘cocooning’ were commonly expressed amongst older adults, authors conclude public health policy should take into account the heterogeneity of this population and be sensitive to their self-expressed wishes and priorities.
09.11.2021	An Outreach Phone Call Project: Using Home Health to Reach Isolated Community Dwelling Adults During the COVID 19 Lockdown	J. Community Health / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home health care (HHC) focuses on delivering skilled health care services to patients in their homes. Over 82% of HHC patients are 65 and older, and living with chronic health conditions. In an effort to respond to the risk the COVID-19 pandemic presented for patients, a HHC agency designed “The Outreach Phone Call Project”. This program was developed to provide telephone support to at-risk patients who had received HHC prior to the COVID-19 lockdown. Results of this study demonstrate that the implementation of a calling project during the pandemic shutdown provided invaluable connection and outreach to vulnerable populations. This simple change in practice enabled HHC professionals to reach patients who were isolated and in need of education and assistance. As a result of the Project, the HHC agency learned many lessons which may be helpful to others who would like to create a similar program in the future The Project facilitated clinical assessment, education and intervention for isolated patients during the COVID 19 pandemic and implementation of similar practice should be considered in the post-pandemic world.

Preprints

Publication Date	Title / URL	Preprint Source	Digest
08.11.2021	Preventing the Transmission of COVID-19 in Older Adults Aged 60 Years and Above Living in Long-Term Care	MedRxiv	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study aimed to examine the effect of measures of control and management of COVID-19, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in adults 60 years or above living in long-term care facilities (an update of previous work done by Rios et al.).

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The available studies are limited to only three countries despite the global nature of the disease. The majority of these studies showed that infection control measures such as favourable staffing policies, training, screening, social distancing, isolation and use of PPE significantly improved residents and staff related outcomes. • More studies exploring the effects infection prevention and control practices in long term care facilities are required.
10.11.2021	Characterization of the humoral immune response to BNT162b2 in elderly residents of long-term care facilities five to seven months after vaccination	MedRxiv	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The elderly residing in long-term care facilities (LTCFs) are a group at high risk for COVID-19. Hence, monitoring of the vaccine-based immunity has a pivotal role in identifying strategies to provide optimal protection in this population. • Authors examined the immune response to the mRNA vaccine BNT162b2 against COVID-19 five to seven months after completing a two-dose regimen. • Our data demonstrate that 90.5% of elderly residents of LTCFs had no detectable neutralization-competent antibodies against the dominant Delta variant five to seven months after vaccination, and that neutralizing antibody titers were restored following a break-through infection. • The results suggest both residents and health care workers in LTCFs would benefit from a booster vaccine six months after completing the two-dose schedule or earlier.

Reports and other publications

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
03.11.2021	Adult social care: coronavirus (COVID-19) winter plan 2021 to 2022	DHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government's ambitions for the sector and the challenges facing adult social care this winter.

09.11.2021	Consultation outcome overview: Making vaccination a condition of deployment in the health and wider social care sector	DHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides Government response to this consultation, which has now concluded
10.11.2021	Pandemic to Endemic: New Strategies Needed to Limit the Impact of COVID-19 in Long-term Care Facilities (LTCFs)	Feng, Tan L.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having achieved a high vaccination rate of over 80% in August 2021, Singapore pivoted to an endemic COVID-19 strategy, cautiously opening up economically and socially whilst aiming to avoid high mortality rates. There were only 42 deaths in total at the start of the pivot towards an endemic COVID-19 policy in August 2021. Within weeks of opening up, COVID-19 infections and mortalities have risen in tandem. Vulnerable populations such as LTCFs and acute hospitals had an unprecedented total ban on visitors imposed on 13th September 2021 and, at the time of writing, this has been extended for another month. Authors notes that new and sustainable strategies are needed to minimise the impact of an endemic COVID-19
10.11.2021	Caring for older patients with complex needs How does England compare with 11 OECD countries?	The Health Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The International Collaborative on Costs, Outcomes and Needs in Care (ICCONIC) aims to advance international comparisons research by using patient-level data. and includes research partners from 11 OECD countries. These have used electronic medical records securely to conduct comparable analysis examining how health care use, spending and outcomes differ between countries. This paper examines the results for England, reflects on whether these are part of a wider trend, and considers the implications for clinicians and policymakers in the context of the COVID-19 recovery. Based on pre-pandemic data, the analysis is further evidence that the NHS in England remains a relatively low-cost health care system. For both patient groups, England had among the lowest spending across both primary and acute health care settings. The findings support previously stated concerns that the mortality rate in England among older patients with high needs is higher than average among comparable countries. For both patient groups, England had the highest mortality at 30, 90 and 365 days. With integrated care systems (ICSs) to be established as statutory bodies from April 2022, there is a clear opportunity to make a step

			change in terms of linking up patient data and using the insights generated to reduce delays in discharge and improve quality of care and patient experience.
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Guidance

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
Updated 05.11.2021	Restricting workforce movement between care homes and other care settings	DHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance for care home providers on limiting staff movement between settings in all but exceptional circumstances to help reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.
Updated 08.11.2021	Coronavirus (COVID-19): providing home care	DHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information for those providing personal care to people living in their own home during the coronavirus outbreak.

Evidence Summaries

Publication Date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
03.11.2021	Review of the adult social care COVID-19 winter plan 2020 to 2021	Pearson, David; DHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sir David Pearson was employed by the Department of Health and Social Care as the chair of the Social Care Sector COVID-19 Support Taskforce, which supported the delivery of the adult social care: coronavirus (COVID-19) winter plan 2020 to 2021 This review has evaluated the policies and initiatives put in place to support the adult social care sector this winter, both those in the adult social care (COVID-19) winter plan (published in September 2020) and those introduced later. The winter plan set out the key elements of national support available for the social care sector for winter 2020 to 2021, as well as the main actions to take for local authorities, NHS organisations, social care

			providers and the CQC, including in the voluntary and community sector.
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Statistics

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
09.11.2021	Notifications to Care Inspectorate Wales related to COVID-19 in adult care homes: 1 March 2020 to 3 November 2021	Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report provides provisional counts of the number of adult care homes reporting one or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 and provisional counts of deaths in care homes. This is based on notifications by care home providers to Care Inspectorate Wales. The location of death may be in the care home, in hospital or another location.
09.11.2021	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.
09.11.2021	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.
10.11.2021	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

09.11.2021	Why social care is losing the 'generation game' in recruitment (and what can be done about it)	Bottery, Simon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Editorial uses Channel 4 drama 'Help' as a springboard to investigate why fewer and fewer younger people are joining the adult social care workforce
10.11.2021	Covid-19 and the UK's health care performance: how does it compare on the international stage?	Raleigh, Veena	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The latest edition of Health at a glance, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's biennial evaluation of the performance of health systems in OECD countries, extends its usual remit by assessing the impact of 'the most important health crisis since the 1918 influenza pandemic'. • This editorial examines these statistics from a UK perspective, and compares UK performance against other nations'