



UK Health Security Agency

Weekly Care Homes Evidence Digest

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

19th 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 USA, value of routine testing for asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 infection in both unvaccinated and vaccinated health care workers; further evidence of the contribution of asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2-infected long-term care staff to virus transmission within the workplace during the early pandemic period; the importance of factors in the built environment for the resilience of older people living in the community during the pandemic; and reflections on care giving and ageing; from Turkey, evidence of a relationship between health literacy and fear of COVID-19 in older adults; from the Netherlands, further evidence of the value of preventive testing compared to symptom based testing for SARS-CoV-2 of nursing home residents; from Italy, the impact of caregiver fatigue during the COVID-19 pandemic; and reflections on ethical issues for the care of people living with dementia; from Canada, an analysis of 'burn out' of nursing home managers during the COVID-19 pandemic and a call for recognition and further research.

From the UK, a case –control study showing the risk of mortality following SARS-CoV-2 infection in older people living in long –term care facilities compared to living in the community; and an evidence summary of research investigating links between hospital discharges and Covid-19 outbreaks in long-term care facilities.

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
10.11.2021	Vaccination Status and the Detection of SARS-CoV-2 Infection in Health Care Personnel Under Surveillance in Long-term Residential Facilities	JAMA Network Open / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routine testing for asymptomatic SARS-COV-2 infection among health care personnel (HCP) who have not been vaccinated against COVID-19 can reduce transmission to the residents of long-term care (LTC) facilities. However, the utility of surveillance testing for LTC HCP who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 is unclear. Although rates of positive results among HCP who are vaccinated are extremely low, breakthrough infections and transmission still occur. • By the end of the study, 1388 of 1973 HCP (70.3%) and approximately 90% of LTC residents were fully vaccinated. Lower case rates were detected in vaccinated vs unvaccinated staff during each monthly period (Table). • The detection rate declined toward zero in both groups in parallel with a drop in community transmission (Figure). SARS-CoV-2 infection in 1 HCP who was not vaccinated was linked through contact tracing to asymptomatic infection in 1 resident who was fully vaccinated.
10.11.2021	Case-control study to estimate odds of death within 28 days of positive test for SARS-CoV-2 prior to vaccination for residents of long-term care facilities in England, 2020–2021	Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After linking demographic and mortality data for cases with confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection between March 2020 and January 2021 in England, a random sample of 6000 persons who died and 36 000 who did not die within 28 days of a positive test was obtained from the dataset of 3 020 800 patients. Based on an address-matching process, the residence type of each case was categorised into one of private home and residential or nursing LTCF. • Multivariable analysis showed that an interaction effect between age and residence type determined the outcome. Compared with a 60-year-old person not living in LTCF, the adjusted OR (aOR) for same-aged persons living in residential and nursing LTCFs was 1.77 (95% CI 1.21 to 2.6, p=0.0017) and 3.95 (95% CI 2.77 to 5.64, p<0.0001), respectively.

10.11.2021	Early Adoption of Longitudinal Surveillance for SARS-CoV-2 among Staff in Long-Term Care Facilities: Prevalence, Virologic and Sequence Analysis	Microbiology Spectrum / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The emergence of SARS-CoV-2 has been notable due to its impacts on residents in long-term care facilities (LTCFs). LTCF residents tend to possess several risk factors for severe outcomes of SARS-CoV-2 infection, including advanced age and the presence of comorbidities. Indeed, residents of LTCFs represent approximately 40% of SARS-CoV-2 deaths in the United States. Few studies have focused on the prevalence and transmission dynamics of SARS-CoV-2 among LTCF staff during the early months of the pandemic, prior to mandated surveillance testing. • To assess the prevalence and incidence of SARS-CoV-2 among LTCF staff, characterize the extent of asymptomatic infections, and investigate the genomic epidemiology of the virus within these settings, authors sampled staff for 8 to 11 weeks at six LTCFs with nasopharyngeal swabs from March through June of 2020. • Data revealed that over 50% of infections were asymptomatic/mildly symptomatic and that there was a strongly significant relationship between viral RNA (vRNA) and infectious virus, prolonged infections, and persistent vRNA (4+ weeks) in a subset of individuals, and declining incidence over time. • This suggests asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2-infected LTCF staff contributed to virus persistence and transmission within the workplace during the early pandemic period.
11.11.2021	Fear of coronavirus and health literacy levels of older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic	Geriatric Nursing / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlights of this study include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The present study provides the first evidence of a relationship between health literacy and fear of COVID-19 in older adults. ○ The significant determinants of fear related to COVID-19 were found as gender, the presence of a chronic disease, and the sufficiency of epidemic measures. ○ The predictors of health literacy were age, education level, regular medicine use.
11.11.2021	Symptom- and Prevention-Based Testing of COVID-19 in Nursing Home Residents: A Retrospective Cohort Study	Gerontology and Geriatric medicine / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This study, in which NH residents were tested either because of presence of core symptoms (symptom-based testing) or because of transmission prevention (transmission-prevention-based testing), aims

			<p>to describe the clinical presentation and course of COVID-19 (including 30-day mortality) in both groups and differences between both groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authors conclude: Many NH residents in this investigated sample with positive PCR did not have core symptoms when tested (fever, cough, and dyspnea) but had other signs/symptoms at the day of testing and in the week before the positive test. Yet, a large part of this group did develop these core symptoms after the testing day.
12.11.2021	Aging in Place During a Pandemic: Neighborhood Engagement and Environments Since the COVID-19 Pandemic Onset	The Gerontologist / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the present analysis, we conducted a qualitative thematic analysis of responses to an open-ended survey question about how respondents felt that COVID-19 has impacted their neighborhood and relationships with neighbors. • We identified four overarching themes: altered neighborly social interactions, support levels, and community environments; and no observed changes. • The results highlight resilience among aging adults and their neighbors, sources of individual and community vulnerability, and opportunities to strengthen social infrastructure to support aging in place since the pandemic onset.
12.11.2021	Recognizing Caregiving Fatigue in the Pandemic: Notes on Aging, Burden and Social Isolation in Emilia-Romagna, Italy	Anthropology & Aging / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Italy, the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated lockdowns have provoked potentially serious short and long-term consequences for older people with serious health conditions as well as their family caregivers. • This article examines interpretations of aging and caregiving fatigue during the first period of national lockdown in Emilia-Romagna, Italy. The relation between old age, lockdown, and social isolation, with respect to global ideas and rhetoric, focuses on vulnerability, individual autonomy, and caregiving fatigue. • Author argues the recognition of aging and caregiving fatigue during the lockdown reflected pre-existing normative models and structural inequalities of family care rather than radically altering them.
14.11.2021	Nursing Home Managers' High Risk of Burnout	Journal of the American Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We completed a cross-sectional analysis of managers' questionnaire data collected between September 3, 2019, and February 28, 2020.

		Directors Association / Study	<p>Managers were from a random sample of 91 urban nursing homes in the 3 provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, and British Columbia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nursing home managers critically influence work environments, staff outcomes, and quality of care for residents. Their workload and well-being can significantly impact their ability to oversee and support resident care yet they are often overlooked as vital care team members. Therefore, it is urgent that nursing home managers be recognized and their work be thoroughly examined and supported.
14.11.2021	Dementia in the era of COVID-19. Some considerations and ethical issues	Psychogeriatrics / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 20 March 2020, the COVID-19 Surveillance Group of the Italian Higher Institute of Health reported data about the characteristics of coronavirus patients who had died in Italy. Dementia was assessed as one of the most common comorbidities (11.9%) among COVID-19-positive deceased patients. The problems of people with dementia living in such an era as the COVID-19 pandemic are discussed with respect to the following two ethical questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What strategies are available to mitigate the outcome of the pandemic among patients with dementia? What makes one life more worth saving than another?

Reports and other publications

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
13.11.2021	Aging, Caregiving, and COVID-19	Bhattacharyya, Kallol Kumar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Book chapter in <i>Rethinking the Age Transition</i>, ISBN 9783030888695. Most older adults have a critical need for better support to age well; however, only a limited number of professionals exist in the field of caregiving. Thus, older adults are often forced to live alone and are exposed to various helpless situations, such as lack of physical, social, emotional, and financial support. The current pandemic has further compounded these challenges, both for caregivers and care recipients. It is essential to generate

			<p>awareness in the general population and implement strict monitoring of the existing laws to protect older adults living within or outside families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This chapter discusses different facets of caregiving, whether it is healthcare or regular care for basic activities or to provide emotional and financial care.
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Guidance

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
Updated 10.11.2021	COVID-19: Normalising Visiting in Long Term Residential Care Facilities (LTRCFs)	Health Protection Surveillance Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This guide is intended to support nursing homes and other LTRCFs to restore the right to visiting as completely and quickly as is practically possible in the context of the assessed level of risk at the time. The measures recommended will also reduce the risk of introduction and spread of other viral infections including influenza.

Evidence Summaries

Publication Date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
15.11.2021	Evidence Summary: What research is there linking hospital discharges to Covid-19 outbreaks in long-term care facilities?	William Byrd, Maximilian Salcher-Konrad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This evidence summary seeks to identify and summarise research that investigates links between hospital discharges and Covid-19 outbreaks in long-term care facilities (covering the period up to October 18, 2021). • Key findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All comprehensive studies on the association of hospital discharges and Covid-19 outbreaks in long-term care facilities we identified were from the United Kingdom. ○ Four nationwide or regional studies (two from England, one each from Scotland and Wales) investigated patterns of the introduction

			<p>of Covid-19 into care homes, including through hospital discharges, and associated outbreaks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hospital discharges were also mentioned in some outbreak reports on the experience of individual long-term care facilities in the UK and other countries. ○ All the studies are subject to substantial uncertainty due to data limitations.
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Statistics

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
16.11.2021	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.
16.11.2021	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.
17.11.2021	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.