



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 November 2020

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 the USA, implications for the transmission of COVID-19 in care homes from care home staff having second jobs; an analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on assisted living facilities with lessons for prevention; and further evidence of the impact of COVID-19 on mental health from a survey conducted during the German lockdown. From the UK, further evidence of the value of genomics in care home outbreaks of SARS-CoV-2; community factors underlying excess mortality from COVID-19 during the first wave of the pandemic; and a critique of the policy response to outbreaks of COVID-19 in care homes. Finally, summaries of recently published reports, guidance and statistics.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
17.11.2020	Characteristics and well-being of urban informal home care providers during COVID-19 pandemic: a population-based study	BMJ / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-sectional study run between 22 March to 1 April in Hong Kong seeks to examine patterns of home care, characteristics of informal home care providers and challenges experienced by them during COVID-19 pandemic • 18.4% of respondents took leave from work or school to deliver caring responsibilities and 37.2% reported challenges of daily living. 49.5% felt inadequately prepared to cope with additional health risks of COVID-19 • Study concludes heavy reliance on informal home healthcare in a health emergency requires better understanding of their specific needs, and increase in government services to support informal home care.
19.11.2020	Delirium in Older Patients With COVID-19 Presenting to the Emergency Department	JAMA Network / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents findings of investigation into frequency of delirium as a presenting complaint in elderly patients diagnosed with COVID-19 after presenting at Emergency departments in US hospitals • 28% of those studied presented with delirium as a symptom, and 37% showed no typical COVID-19 symptoms. Factors associated with delirium were an age of 75+, and living in a nursing home or assisted living • Study concludes delirium should be considered a presenting symptom for COVID-19 in older patients
19.11.2020	Second Job Holding Among Direct Care Workers and Nurses: Implications for COVID-19 Transmission in Long-Term Care	Medical Care Research & Review / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigates theory that a major cause of COVID-19 spread in US care homes is linked to staff working in multiple jobs, increasing transmission risks • Study finds direct care workers in nursing home settings are 35% more likely to work additional jobs than other members of staff, either in other care settings or in alternative “frontline” roles, such as cashier or cleaner
21.11.2020	Covid-19: A perspective for the Italian Health Service	Economia Internazionale International Economics / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes COVID-19 epidemic has highlighted structural shortcomings of Italian national health service, which this study attributes to reduction of funding. As new resources are made available by European programs to respond to COVID-19 epidemic, decisions on allocation of resources become crucial for health system sustainability • Argues that such investments must be used to secure an increase in productivity greater than increase in current resources. Study determines that areas for such intervention should be: • 1) the hospital network,

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2) post-acute residential networks, and • 3) long-term care services and territorial / home care services
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Preprints

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18.11.2020	Aging during COVID-19 in Germany: A Longitudinal Analysis of Psychosocial Adaptation and Attitudes Toward Aging	Schlomann, Anna; et al.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyses data from 3,215 40 – 79 year old participants through German lockdown of mid-March – early-August 2020 to assess respondent analysis of own life satisfaction • Both mid-aged and older participants experienced the greatest decreases in satisfaction in the social domain, but this was more pronounced in middle aged than older people. Additionally, a partial recovery of ratings at third sample stage was more pronounced in older adults • Concludes being described as a “risk group” had some impact on life satisfaction of older respondents but that pre-existing attitudes to own aging may have influenced resilience and recovery
21.11.2020	COVID-19 Infection Control Measures in Long-Term Care Facility, Pennsylvania, USA	Shimotsu, Scott T.; et al.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports on implementation of stringent testing regime at Pennsylvanian care home in which all involved in daily contact with the facility were tested for COVID-19 symptoms by both survey & nasal swab • During the testing period 28 September – 9 October 2020, the facility reported a COVID-19 case number 17 times below that of neighbouring care homes
22.11.2020	Community factors and excess mortality in first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic	Davies, Bethan; et al.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses two-stage Bayesian spatial model to quantify inequalities in excess mortality in English communities during wave of COVID-19 pandemic, contrasting data on deaths in over 40s during March-May 2020 against data from 2015-2019 • Concludes communities with increased risk of excess mortality had a high density of care homes, and/or high proportion of residents on income support, living in overcrowded homes and/or high percent of people from BAME backgrounds

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study found no association between population density or air pollution and excess mortality. • Identified socio-environmental variables account for ~15% variation in community-level mortality from COVID-19
23.11.2020	The role of genomics in understanding COVID-19 outbreaks in long term care facilities	Aggarwal, Dinesh; et al.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all genomic epidemiology studies on COVID-19 in long term care facilities (LTCF) published to date. Key findings are that staff and residents were usually infected with identical/near identical, SARS-CoV-2 genomes. • Outbreaks usually involved one main lineage, & same lineages persist in LTCFs despite infection control measures. Outbreaks were most commonly due to single or few introductions followed by spread, not multiple seeding events from community into LTCFs. • Transmission between LTCFs is detected in multiple studies and mortality rate for residents was high in all cases, regardless of lineage.

Reports and other publications

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
17.11.2020	COVID-19 and care homes in England: What happened and why?	Daly, Mary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examines the policy response to COVID-19 in UK care homes in the UK, with particular focus on England in the first 10 weeks of the pandemic • Argues a convergence of multiple factors, including underfunding and structural weaknesses in sector provision, a lack of political focus on care homes compared to core NHS services, and societal neglect of the importance of social care in general, helped enable a climate in which disproportionate deaths occurred in care homes vs the general population
20.11.2020	Characterization of COVID-19 in Assisted Living Facilities — 39 States, October 2020	Center For Disease Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of data across 39 states in the USA reveals that to 15 October 2020, an average of one death occurred among every five residents with COVID-19 in assisted living facilities, Vs. an average of one death in 40 people in the general population • Report concludes the disproportionate share of deaths in care home residents underlines the importance of surveillance and robust infection prevention and control activities. It also sets out 7 preventative steps facilities should take to protect their population:

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1) identifying a point of contact at the local health department to aid prompt notification; • 2) educating residents, family members, and staff members about COVID-19; • 3) having a plan for visitor and staff member restrictions; • 4) encouraging social (physical) distancing and the use of masks, as appropriate; • 5) implementing recommended infection prevention and control practices and providing access to supplies; • 6) rapidly identifying and properly responding to residents and staff members with suspected or confirmed COVID-19; and • 7) conducting surveillance of COVID-19 cases and deaths, facility staffing, and supply information
20.11.2020	Older Adults and the Mental Health Effects of COVID-19	Vahia, Ipsit V.; et al.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges concerns from early stages of COVID-19 pandemic regarding impact on mental wellbeing of older adults, including those in care, but argues that current data suggest higher resilience to the mental health effects of COVID-19 than initially anticipated • The article notes that multiple factors may act to mitigate the mental toll of COVID-19, and that older adults with worse material, social, and physical support networks may remain at greater risk

Guidance

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
Updated 20.11.2020	Preparing for COVID-19 in Nursing Homes	Center For Disease Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This guidance has been updated and reorganized according to core infection prevention and control practices that should remain in place even as nursing homes resume normal practices, plus additional strategies depending on the stages described in the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services reopening guidance or at the direction of state and local officials. This guidance is based on currently available information about COVID-19.
20.11.2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing for homecare workers	Department of Health & Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets out how homecare agencies in England can order regular tests for their homecare (domiciliary care) staff.

23.11.2020	COVID-19 Winter Plan	Cabinet Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets out Government plan for managing COVID-19 through the winter, including revisions to the tiered system for England following the current national Lockdown
23.11.2020	Testing and Management Considerations for Nursing Home Residents with Acute Respiratory Illness Symptoms when SARS-CoV-2 and Influenza Viruses are Co-circulating	Center For Disease Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets out the practices which care homes in the USA should consider when COVID-19 and Influenza viruses are found to be co-circulating based upon local public health surveillance data and testing at local healthcare facilities. • The considerations are specific to care of residents residing in nursing homes, but some practices could be adapted for use in other long-term care settings such as assisted living facilities

Evidence Summaries

Publication Date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
19.11.2020	Dementia and outcomes from coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pneumonia: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis	Arch. Geront. & Geriatrics / Metaanalysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews 24 studies with 46,391 dementia patients across PubMed and Europe PMC databases. • While there is no clear evidence of a link between COVID-19 and dementia diagnosis, dementia is associated with poorer outcomes for COVID-19 infection • The study concludes that patients with dementia should be given extra care and monitoring, to minimise possible exposure to COVID-19 and ensure early diagnosis if exposure occurs

Statistics

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
24.11.2020	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"> Weekly provisional counts of deaths in care homes caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) by local authority.
24.11.2020	Notifications of deaths of residents related to COVID-19 in adult care homes: 1 March to 20 November 2020	Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The data presented here are based on the Notifications of Service User Deaths received by Care Inspectorate Wales from adult care homes which relate to their residents. The location of death may be in the care home, in hospital or another location.
25.11.2020	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 up to 22 November including: Testing for COVID-19 in adult care homes in Scotland split by care homes with confirmed Covid-19 and without confirmed Covid-19, presented by NHS Health Board; Deaths reported to Care Inspectorate - the number of deaths reported by adult care homes, including COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 related deaths.

Editorials and News

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
14.11.2020	Irrational restrictions	Andrews, June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Editorial posits that care homes may be easing restrictions in England in line with updated guidance, and notes that increased contact with families is likely to reduce residents' sense of isolation Notes that while care home deaths form part of core statistical reporting, no metrics are gathered on the impact of isolation on elderly and vulnerable, and that increasing family contact could bring direct benefits to physical and mental wellbeing of home residents

20.11.2020	Nursing Homes in the Crosshairs	Nelson, Roxanne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports on impact of COVID-19 on the American care home industry, and the way in which pandemic pressures have highlighted systemic failings and variations in the application of quality & safety standards
23.11.2020	Health workers at risk, older adults and residents of long-term care facilities to be prioritized for COVID-19 vaccination	World Health Organization Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports that WHO's European Technical Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (ETAGE) held an online meeting on 11–12 November 2020, and made multiple recommendations for prioritising vaccine distribution • To maintain the most critical essential services, maximize the impact of available vaccines in reducing severe disease and deaths and in line with the principle of reciprocity, health workers (including care workers in hospitals and long-term care facilities, such as nursing homes and residential facilities) at high and very high risk of acquiring infection, transmitting infection to vulnerable persons with high risk for severe disease outcome or developing severe disease themselves should be prioritized for COVID-19 vaccination (stage 1a). • Allowing for vaccine supply situation, local epidemiology and the size and proportion of each eligible population group in their country, the recommendations also suggest that to maximize the impact of available vaccines in reducing severe disease and deaths, older adults (>60 years) should be prioritized for COVID-19 vaccination (stage 1b).
23.11.2020	Temporary visitor 'pods' for care homes to be rolled-out	Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Welsh Health Minister has announced that temporary 'pods' are being provided to care homes across Wales to better facilitate visits over Christmas and the winter months