



Public Health
England

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Weekly Care Homes Evidence Digest

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

4th June 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: further evidence of the effectiveness and safety of Covid-19 vaccines in residents of long term care facilities but also a note of caution following an expert review by the Norwegian Medicines Agency of deaths in frail elderly nursing home residents who had received an mRNA vaccine; from the USA, further evidence from a rapid systematic review of the impact of Covid-19 on the health and well-being of informal carers of people with dementia, and further evidence of an association between nursing home quality ratings and outcomes of Covid-19 infection in residents; from Canada, a living review of the association of frailty with outcomes in individuals with COVID-19, and a study of the viability of SARS-CoV-2 in aerosols in hospital and care homes settings. From the UK, a rapid review of the research gaps in understanding the impact of Covid-19 on the health and well-being of people living with dementia, a briefing on the impact of Covid-19 on adult social care after the first wave, and reflections on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on key drivers for social care reform. Finally, summaries of other recently published reports, guidance and statistics.

Starting this month is a new UK centre for implementing evidence in adult social care, funded by the ESRC and the Health Foundation, IMPACT - **IM**Proving **A**dult **C**are **T**ogether (<https://more.bham.ac.uk/impact/>). As it starts its work, IMPACT will seek to:

- Provide **practical support** to implement evidence in the realities of everyday life and front-line services
- Overcome the limitations of previous approaches in a **diverse, fragmented and under-funded sector**
- Bring key stakeholders together to co-design its work in inclusive and diverse **'IMPACT Assemblies'** (based in all four nations of the UK to reflect different policy and practice contexts)
- Work over **three phases of development** ('co-design', 'establishment' and 'delivery') to build a centre that becomes a permanent feature of the adult social care landscape

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/>.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
16.05.2021	Dementia wellbeing and COVID-19: Review and expert consensus on current research and knowledge gaps	International Journal of geriatric Psychiatry / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In response to a commissioned research update on dementia during the COVID-19 pandemic, a UK-based working group, comprising dementia researchers from a range of fields and disciplines, aimed to describe the impact of the pandemic on dementia wellbeing and identify priorities for future research. A rapid literature search (including unpublished, non-peer reviewed and ongoing studies/reports) on dementia wellbeing in the context of COVID-19 was supplemented with expert group members' consensus about future research needs. Broad themes emerged from 141 studies including the potential benefits and risks of new models of working including remote healthcare, the need for population-representative longitudinal studies to monitor longer-term impacts, and the importance of reporting dementia-related findings within broader health and care studies.
25.05.2021	Emerging evidence on effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines among residents of long-term care facilities	Journal of the American Medical Directors Association / Research Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The authors aim was to monitor and summarise emerging evidence on the effects of COVID-19 vaccines in long-term care users. Weekly literature searches were conducted to identify research articles and key findings were extracted and summarised narratively. 17 studies were identified, all were conducted in institutional care facilities. Studies range from providing evidence of vaccine effectiveness at the individual level, facility level and documenting immune response. These studies fill a gap that was left by the large registration trials of COVID-19 vaccines, which systematically excluded older and frail people.
28.05.2021	Adverse Events Following mRNA SARS-CoV-2 Vaccination among U.S. Nursing Home Residents	Vaccine / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prospectively monitor for potential adverse events associated with vaccination, we used Electronic Health Record (EHR) data from Genesis HealthCare, the largest Nursing Home (NH) provider in the US

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As of January 3, 2021, 8,553 NH residents had received one dose of SARS-CoV-2 vaccine and by February 20, 2021, 8,371 residents had received their second dose of vaccine; 11,072 were included in the unvaccinated comparator group. No significant associations were noted for neurologic outcomes, anaphylaxis, or cardiac events. No major safety problems were detected following the first or second dose of the vaccine to prevent COVID-19 in the study cohort from December 18, 2020 through March 7, 2021.
29.05.2021	Was hospital care refused to Belgian nursing home residents during Covid-19?	Journal of the American Medical Directors Association / Research Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Belgian Society for Gerontology and Geriatrics (BSGG) issued directives to prevent avoidable hospital admissions and transfers from nursing homes. These directives emphasized the use of advanced care planning tools to recognize older adults' personal end-of-life decisions, and urged that palliative care was more appropriate than advanced intensive care in case of a score of ≥ 8 on the Clinical Frailty Scale. Nonetheless, many people died, and almost half of the Belgian casualties passed away in a nursing home. Newspaper articles, including international press, presumed that these older adults were deliberately left to die. To disclose whether these presumptions were true and how these presumptions arose, a rapid qualitative appraisal was carried out. The results from the data analysis indicate no hard evidence that hospitals refused nursing home residents. There is, however, a strong perception that older adults were refused, and this perception originated from five causes according to the participants of the study.
29.05.2021	Specific approaches to patients affected by dementia and covid-19 in nursing homes: the role of the geriatrician	Ageing Research Reviews / Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discusses the approaches for daily problems found in nursing home as geriatricians in the context of COVID-19, starting with problems of older people affected by dementia and issues around wandering patients Authors believe that geriatricians have a pivotal role in COVID-19 management in nursing home, from diagnosis to prognosis and finally for the best therapeutically approach to nursing home residents. Despite it is a dramatic situation, future research is urgently needed particularly for verifying the effect and safety of COVID-19 vaccinations, the use of telemedicine and the re-organization of these structures

30.05.2021	The Impact of COVID-19 on Nursing Homes in Italy: The Case of Lombardy	Journal of Aging & Social Policy / Perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Perspective focuses on the large number of deaths that occurred in nursing homes during the first wave of the pandemic, and the weak capacity of public policy to provide them with adequate protection. • Authors investigate the situation of such facilities before the pandemic in their search for possible causes and analyse two aspects: their institutional embeddedness and recent trends in their management. • Authors conclude by arguing that the negative impact of COVID-19 stems from the poor development of long-term care policy and from the marginality of residential institutions within the healthcare system.
31.05.2021	Impact of COVID-19 on the Health and Well-being of Informal Caregivers of People with Dementia: A Rapid Systematic Review	Gerontology & Geriatric Medicine /Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This rapid review of the literature reported quantitative descriptive data from 10 studies from across the globe; however, no studies existed from the U.S. or East Asia countries. • All of the studies examined the psychological rather than physical impact of COVID-19 and highlighted risk and protective factors in the areas of psychosocial (resilience, neuropsychiatric, and social isolation), sociodemographic (gender and education), and environmental (home confinement, living arrangement, and dementia stage). • Authors concluded that COVID-19 has had a considerable negative impact on the psychological well-being of informal caregivers of people with dementia, namely causing more depression and anxiety than pre-pandemic.
31.05.2021	The Association of Nursing Home Quality Ratings and Spread of COVID-19	Journal of the American Geriatrics Society / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regression analysis was used to analyse nursing home facility-level data on COVID-19 cases and deaths, county-level COVID-19 rates, and nursing home data from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), including ratings from the CMS Nursing Home Five-Star Quality Rating System. • Authors conclude that nursing home quality ratings are associated with COVID-19 incidence, mortality, and persistence. Nursing homes receiving 5-star ratings, for overall quality as well as for each domain, had lower COVID-19 rates among their residents.
31.05.2021	COVID-19 Disease Trajectories Among Nursing Home Residents	Journal of the American Geriatrics Society / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this case series of 74 residents with COVID-19 infection in a nursing home the objective is to describe and identify patterns in the disease course of nursing home residents infected with COVID-19.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most common symptoms were fever, hypoxia, anorexia, and fatigue/malaise. • A subset of residents with COVID-19 infection experienced a rapidly progressive, fatal course. • Authors conclude that nursing home residents infected with COVID-19 from the facility studied experienced a prolonged disease course regardless of the severity of their symptoms, with implications for the resources needed to care for and support these residents during active infection and post-disease.
01.06.2021	COVID, Communication and Care Homes: A Staffs' Perspective of Supporting the Emotional Needs of Families	Journal of Long-Term Care / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This paper focuses on steps taken to maintain communication between residents and families to support emotional well-being during the first wave of the pandemic. • The authors undertook in-depth café-style interviews with twenty-one staff to explore creative practices that they introduced. • Findings reveal the enormous effort by care staff to maintain family connections and the rapid acclimatisation involved working with a number of different on-line platforms, the pulling together of staff from across the care home, and, the attention to emotional well-being of residents living and dying in the care home.

Preprints

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
01.06.2021	Aerosol SARS-CoV-2 in hospitals and long-term care homes during the COVID-19 pandemic.	MedRxiv	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study to quantify aerosol concentrations of SARS-CoV-2 in hospitals and long-term care homes, which data is needed to clarify transmission risks beyond close contact. • Authors deployed particulate air samplers in rooms with COVID-19 positive patients in hospital ward and ICU rooms, rooms in long-term care homes experiencing outbreaks, and a correctional facility experiencing an outbreak

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although a subset of aerosol samples exhibited detectable SARS-CoV-2 RNA at low titres, the presence of viable SARS-CoV-2 virus in aerosols appears to be infrequent at >2m distance.
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Reports and other publications

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
May 2021	Briefing: Adult social care and COVID-19 after the first wave	Dunn, Phoebe; et al. / The Health Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key points from this briefing include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 has had a major and sustained impact on social care in England. There have been 27,179 excess deaths among care home residents in England since 14 March 2020 (a 20% increase compared with recent years), and 9,571 excess deaths reported among people receiving domiciliary care since 11 April 2020 (a 62% increase). Social care staff have been at higher risk of dying from COVID-19 than others of the same age and sex. During the first wave of the pandemic, central government support for social care in England was too slow and limited, leading to inadequate protection for people using and providing care. Overall, we found a mixed picture. Support in some areas improved, such as access to testing and PPE, and the priority given to social care appeared to increase. Groups using and providing social care were prioritised for COVID-19 vaccines, alongside the NHS. This is likely to have offered much greater protection to care home residents and others. Fundamental reform of adult social care in England is needed to address the longstanding policy failures exposed by COVID-19. This reform must be comprehensive and long-term – not narrowly focused on preventing older people selling their homes to pay for care

28.05.2021	The 3 R's Of Social Care Reform: How constructive risk taking, respectful relationships and a sense of reciprocity characterised a positive response to the Covid-19 pandemic	Think Local, Act Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This paper reflects on these conversations and identifies drivers of the promising examples of practice, marked by changes in behaviour and increased levels of trust. • It suggests that positive risk-taking, respectful relationships and a sense of reciprocity are key ingredients in characterising a positive response to the pandemic. • These behaviours and attitudes are brought to life in case studies that explore the impact of Covid-19 on self-directed support, commissioning, and the community response in different places in England
27.05.2021	Discounting older disabled people in care homes during the COVID-19 pandemic : The English government's breaches of care, equality and human rights laws	Westwood, Sue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation given at the Law and Society Association 2021 Annual Meeting. The author's slides consider government responses to older people living in English long-term care and nursing homes during the COVID-19 lockdown in Spring/Summer of 2020, and the surrounding legal context / regulations. • Several key concerns, including belated social policies, excess deaths, family and friend exclusions, and unlawful use of DNAR orders, are considered, particularly in relation to the implications for patient care, equality and human rights legislation. • Author argues the English government behaved unlawfully, and that this reflects a wider systemic cultural devaluation of older and disabled lives

Guidance

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
25.05.2021	Guidance on reopening of day services for older people in	Health Protection Surveillance Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reopening of key services that support older people is now being examined. This advice specifically refers to those day centre services in Ireland provided through HSE or associated Section 38 services but may be used by others providing similar services.

	context of COVID19 vaccination programme		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The aim of this guidance is to support reopening of services while acknowledging ongoing risk of COVID 19 and community transmission pending deployment of the full national COVID 19 vaccination programme.
Updated 27.05.2021	Infection prevention and control in care homes	Care Quality Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> questions and prompts used to look at how well staff and people living in care homes are protected by infection prevention and control (IPC).
Updated 27.05.2021	Arrangements for visiting out of the care home	DHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out how care homes can support residents on visits outside of the care home.

Evidence Summaries

Publication Date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
28.05.2021	Association of frailty with outcomes in individuals with COVID-19: A living review and meta-analysis	Journal of the American Geriatrics Society / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frailty leaves older adults vulnerable to adverse health outcomes. Frailty assessment is recommended by multiple COVID-19 guidelines to inform care and resource allocation. Authors aimed to identify, describe, and synthesize studies reporting the association of frailty with outcomes (informed by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's Triple Aim [health, resource use, and experience]) in individuals with COVID-19. Conclusions from the study include: frailty is associated with a substantial increase in mortality risk in COVID-19 patients, even after adjustment and delirium risk is also increased.

Statistics

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
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02.06.2021	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
02.06.2021	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.
02.06.2021	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.

Editorials and News

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
27.05.2021	Covid-19: Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is “likely” responsible for deaths of some elderly patients, Norwegian review finds	Torjesen, Ingrid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expert review commissioned by the Norwegian Medicines Agency has concluded that the Pfizer-BioNTech covid-19 vaccine is “likely” to have been responsible for at least 10 deaths of frail elderly people in nursing homes in Norway Group noted that more thorough assessment of the benefits and risks of vaccination could have been made for some very frail elderly people, particularly during first few weeks of the vaccine’s use. People with very short life expectancy have little to gain from being vaccinated, it said, however, guidelines on risk assessment issued by the Norwegian Institute of Public Health were adequate
28.05.2021	Early Success of COVID-19 Vaccines in Nursing Homes – Will it Stick?	Ouslander, Joseph G.; Saliba, Debra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Editorial discusses articles to support early effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccine in reducing the incidence of SARS-CoV-2 infection and its complications in nursing homes.