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Weekly Care Homes Evidence Digest

Prevention and control of COVID-19 in home care/care homes settings
10th December 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, an argument for more focussed research on the impact of future pandemics on older people; a comparison of outcomes of COVID-19 in community based long term care settings and nursing homes; benefits of home based case services compared with long term care facilities in reducing the impact of COVID-19; from France, the value of pre-hospital interventions in care homes in improving outcomes for residents with COVID-19; and from Canada, an evaluation of multiple strategies to mitigate outbreaks of COVID-19 in long term care facilities. From the UK, further evidence of the importance of recognising atypical cases of COVID-19 in care homes and early identification of 'silent hypoxia'. Finally, summaries of recently published reports, guidance and statistics.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
01.12.2020	Pandemic research for older people: doing it better next time	Age and Aging / Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argues global research response to COVID-19 has focused primarily on treatment and vaccination potential rather than prevention or rehabilitation, and that most focus has fallen on in-hospital treatments. Further argues that this imbalance has disproportionately disadvantaged the elderly, particularly those in care homes or community care, and that pandemic response planning going forward should ensure capacity and priorities for research and response focused on older people when novel infectious diseases are identified in future
01.12.2020	Delirium: A Frequent Manifestation in COVID-19 Older Patients	Clinical Interventions in Aging / Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report studied 123 patients >60 years admitted to Erasmus MC University Medical Center of Rotterdam in March-April 2020 with a COVID-19 diagnosis. 37% also presented signs / symptoms of delirium Delirium is associated with poor clinical outcomes including loss of independence, nursing home admission, & death. The study therefore concludes attention must be paid to early recognition of delirium both as a COVID-19 symptom in older patients and to reduce the negative impact of delirium on prognosis in the elderly
03.12.2020	Better COVID-19 outcomes in community-based long-term care than in nursing homes	Journal of the American Medical Directors Association / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examines statewide data from Connecticut, USA, gathered March – July 2020, in bid to compare COVID-19 cases and deaths across patients in three Medicaid Home & Community Based Service (HCBS) programs with patients in nursing homes (NH) & assisted living (AL) facilities in the same period Over the 5-month study instances of COVID-19 infection and death rates for HCBS programs were at 2-3%, but those for NH residents were 37%, and 14% for AL residents. The authors caution that testing protocols differed among the services studied – in particular HCBS did not have mandatory reporting – which may impact on the reported figures, but conclude the main distinction between the groups to account for the differing rates of infection / mortality is patients living situations

<p>03.12.2020</p>	<p>COVID 19: Trends, Disparities, and Consequences for Older Adults</p>	<p>Journals Gerontology / Study</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examines multiple sources of disparity in COVID-19 risk among older adults, including race, socioeconomic status, social isolation, etc. In particular, the study examines disparities relating to isolation and loneliness, and the ways in which these can (or cannot) be mitigated by technological solutions such as videocalls, depending on individual access to, and comfort with, technology
<p>04.12.2020</p>	<p>Importance of Infection Control and Continence Management Plans in Assisted Living Communities during the COVID-19 Pandemic</p>	<p>Geriatric Nursing / Report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report notes that delirium in older patients can be both a symptom of COVID-19 or of an undiagnosed UTI, as well as being potentially confused for or with symptoms of dementia. Two scenarios are presented, illustrating the variance in outcome for the same patient in the same setting, and with the same symptoms if a comprehensive infection protocol is present or absent Study concludes that both infection control, and incontinence management, programs are vital to maintaining patient health and reducing hospital (re)admissions
<p>05.12.2020</p>	<p>COVID-19 among nursing home residents: results of an urgent pre-hospital intervention by a multidisciplinary task force</p>	<p>Brazilian Journal of Infectious Diseases</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study reports results of urgent pre-hospital intervention in eight French nursing homes. Sonducted from March 26th to May 7th, 2020, before and after the intervention of a task force which took action from April 9th to April 11th, 2020 Notes that the urgent pre-hospital intervention by a multidisciplinary task force achieved mortality reduction during COVID-19 outbreak in nursing homes. The conclusion is that pre-hospital intervention is a valid alternative to hospitalization in case of hospital saturation.
<p>06.12.2020</p>	<p>Home-Based Medical Care: High-Value Health Care During Coronavirus Disease 2019 and Beyond</p>	<p>Journal of the American Geriatric Society / Case Study</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses the case of “Ms H”, a 78-year old woman as the basis for illustrating the value of Home-Based Medical Care (HBMC) for management of both COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 related conditions in older patients The study argues that benefits include reduced exposure to vectors, reduced risk of social isolation/disconnection, and improved patient outcomes with lower risk of readmission. The authors therefore conclude that there is an urgently need to expand and invest in HBMC provision

07.12.2020	Facing the COVID-19 Winter: Ethical Lessons for Treating Older Adults	Journal of the American Geriatric Society / Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cautions against the increased risks of elder abuse – including intentional, negligent, financial, emotional, and physical elder abuse – as the COVID-19 pandemic enters winter. The paper cites cases in US nursing homes where patient autonomy was violated in a rush to respond to COVID-19 outbreaks, or resident health was endangered by failures to report. • The authors urge that duty of care should extend into the community as well as in LTC settings, and that adequate testing, cleaning, and PPE provision for staff should also be seen as factors in protecting older patients
017.12.2020	The Adoption of Video Visits During the COVID-19 Pandemic by VA Home Based Primary Care	Journal of the American Geriatric Society / Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports on the introduction of telemedicine consultations to support delivery of at-home care to geriatric veterans in the USA as a result of the need to shield during the COVID-19 pandemic

Preprints

Publication date	Title / URL	Journal / Article type	Digest
05.12.2020	Age-Related Differences in Home Experiences and Worries During COVID-19	Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies representative sample of community-dwelling adults to examine how home experiences and personal worries during the COVID-19 pandemic may differ across age groups, including among older adults. • Finds fewer older adults experienced home-based stressors (e.g. household conflict, lack of personal space) and fewer worries (e.g. related to finances or boredom) that may arise during a disease outbreak with lockdown measures. Over 70s living alone also faced fewer negative home experiences and worries than individuals 60-69 years old living in single-person households. • Concludes supportive services to manage such home stressors and worries might benefit all age groups
07.12.2020	Multifaceted strategies for the control of COVID-19 outbreaks in	Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study seeks to evaluate the effect of mitigation measures in Long Term Care Facilities (LTCFs), including routine testing of staff and vaccination of staff and residents

	<p>long-term care facilities in Ontario, Canada</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concludes routine testing of staff reduces silent transmission in LTCFs • Cautions that vaccination could have a substantial impact on mitigating disease burden among residents, but may not eliminate the need for other measures before population-level control of COVID-19 is achieved
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Reports and other publications

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
<p>05.12.2020</p>	<p>Reflecting on the impact of COVID-19 on nurses</p>	<p>Resnick, Barbara</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects on the impact of COVID-19 on nursing homes, residents, staff, and relatives patients over the course of 2020, with a particular focus on the experiences of nursing staff, through the lens of the author’s work in a retirement community, and with a view to the challenges coming in 2021
<p>06.12.2020</p>	<p>COVID-19 in older adults: Typically atypical</p>	<p>Mandal, Armit K.; et al.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter summarises the broad range of symptoms which were identified across 122 older UK patients with COVID-19. 40% of presentations were atypical, and of this group most common complaints were falls (36%), reduced mobility or generalised weakness (36%) and delirium (22%). • Letter reports that in 24h of hospital admission 65% showed typical COVID-19 symptoms, and 44% were hypoxic. The hypoxic subset had worse outcomes than patients in the typical group, with a mortality rate of 50% Vs. 38% respectively • Theorises Older patients with atypical COVID-19 presentation may be more susceptible to poor outcomes, & physicians must be vigilant in patients living with advanced frailty. • Authors suggest extrapolating physiological implications of silent hypoxia may factor into high number of deaths reported in residential institutions

Guidance

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
04.12.2020	COVID-19 vaccinations and Care Homes: Programme Launch	Department of Health and Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines DHSC plans for getting the first vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech) to care home staff from the first day vaccinations are available. • Also sets out actions local authorities and care providers should take in coming days
Updated 04.12.2020	COVID-19: vaccination programme guidance for healthcare practitioners	Public Health England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended for healthcare staff involved in delivering the COVID-19 vaccination programme, this document includes detailed information on: programme background; vaccines (as they become available); vaccine recommendations and eligibility; contraindications and precautions; and vaccine administration issues
Updated 05.12.2020	COVID-19: the green book, chapter 14a	Public Health England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Green Book has the latest information on vaccines and vaccination procedures, for vaccine preventable infectious diseases in the UK • This chapter includes current information on: the COVID-19 vaccines; the dosage and schedule for the UK; recommendations for the use of the vaccine
07.12.2020	COVID-19: Considerations, Strategies, and Resources for Crisis Standards of Care in Post-Acute and Long-Term Care (PALTC) Facilities	Covid-19 Healthcare Resilience Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This framework, developed in the United States, is intended to provide post-acute and long-term care (PALTC) facilities with overview of general considerations, potential strategies, and existing resources to inform changes to their operations and care processes in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. • Covers five major sectors / aspects for consideration: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A general overview of considerations for forming crisis management standards within PALTC settings; 2. Response and Operations, including formation of an 'Incident Command System', possible mitigations for staff shortages, and coordination between local agencies and healthcare systems; 3. Daily Care & Life Enrichment, serving to remind PALTC settings and staff that their duties extend beyond crisis management and

			<p>that residents and patients should be supported to live rich and fulfilling lives in spite of the ongoing pandemic;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Medical Care & Treatment, including both COVID-19 treatment and mechanisms to enhance care through triaging, as well as ways to consider reducing transmission risk to front-line staff; 5. Transport & Transfer, covering both internal transfers within PALTC settings (eg, to isolation rooms) and external transfers to hospitals or other care facilities
07.12.2020	COVID-19 vaccination: consent forms and letters for care home residents	Public Health England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination consent forms and letter templates for care home residents. • Templates cover residents who both have, or lack, capacity to give consent
07.12.2020	COVID-19 vaccination: consent form and letter for social care staff	Public Health England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination consent forms and letter templates for social care and/or care home staff
Updated 08.12.2020	Regulating coronavirus (COVID-19) testing	Care Quality Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets out CQC’s position on care home providers testing residents, staff or visitors by taking and analysing swab specimens under their existing regulated activities
08.12.2020	Coronavirus (COVID-19) lateral flow testing of visitors in care homes	Department of Health and Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets out how care homes and visitors can prepare for visitor testing with lateral flow devices (LFDs).

Evidence Summaries

Publication Date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
07.12.2020	Social Connection in Long-Term Care homes	International Long-Term Care Policy Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarises 61 research articles testing the association between social connection and mental health outcomes in LTC residents; results underscore important links between social connection and mental health in this population

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infection control measures put in place to protect long-term care (LTC) home residents from COVID-19 – such as prohibiting visitors and limiting contact with others in the home – have also negatively impacted their health through the effect on social connection. • Authors acknowledge there is limited research evidence on effective interventions to build and maintain social connection for LTC residents, and that the applicability in the context of disease outbreaks is unclear, but conclude strategies are needed to address social connection in LTC both during and beyond COVID-19
Updated 08.12.2020	Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)	BMJ Best Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated guidance on COVID-19 response from the BMJ. This update includes updated aetiology data on viral shedding in immunocompromised people, the CDC reduction in quarantine for contacts from 14 days to 7-10 days, and the beginning of the UK rollout of COVID-19 vaccination programs
08.12.2020	Coronavirus: Adult social care key issues and sources	House of Commons Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Commons Library briefing paper provides an overview of key issues facing the adult social care sector during the COVID-19 outbreak, and provides links to some of the key official guidance for the sector

Statistics

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
Updated 08.12.2020	Number of deaths in care homes notified to the Care Quality Commission, England	Office for National Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly updated provisional counts of deaths caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) by local authority
Updated 09.12.2020	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 6 December 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;

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deaths reported to Care Inspectorate - the number of deaths reported by adult care homes, including COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 related deaths.
Updated 08.12.2020	Notifications of deaths of residents related to COVID-19 in adult care homes: 1 March to 4 December 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.

Editorials and News

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
04.12.2020	Covid-19: Safety of lateral flow tests questioned after they are found to miss half of cases	Wise, Jacqui	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports on recent revelation that lateral flow tests have failed to identify 50% of COVID-19 cases identified by Polymerase Chain Reaction tests, and missed 30% of cases with higher viral loads The article also reports that lateral flow tests as being used as entry checks for access to care homes.
04.12.2020	COVID-19 vaccine urgently needed for all care settings	Care Provider Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Press Release / News article from CPA welcomes commencement of COVID-19 vaccination program, and urges its expansion into the wider adult social care sector
07.12.2020	Crisis Standards of Care for the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Essential Resource for the PALTC Community	Wright, Jim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Editorial describes the development of the Nursing Home Crisis Standards of Care Workgroup and the creation of the '<i>COVID-19: Considerations, Strategies, and Resources for Crisis Standards of Care in Post-Acute and Long-Term Care (PALTC) Facilities</i>', as well as challenges faced and limitations of the guidance