



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

6<sup>th</sup> August 2021

#### Summary

This weekly digest contains a selection of recently published evidence, 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 Australia, a rapid review of the international evidence for interventions that may protect nursing homes and long term care facilities from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic***; from USA, recommendations and tools to improve social functioning in care home residents during the COVID-19 pandemic; further evidence of the views of people living with dementia and their care givers on the negative impacts of social distancing on health and well-being; and evidence of high risk groups for loneliness among older people during the COVID-19 pandemic who may benefit from interventions; from Japan, a review of advanced care planning during the COVID-19 pandemic and a call for simplifying procedures; and from the UK, further evidence of the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the delivery of end of life care in care homes.

Finally, summaries of other recently published reports, guidance and statistics.

We now have a search facility for the Weekly Care Homes Evidence Digest. This can be achieved by using Endnote Software and accessing the monthly backups of the Research Digest. This will give access to the content of all previous weekly Digests and allow simple searches e.g. on authors, abstracts

(where these are captured) and titles. Please note that this is not a substitute for a proper literature search. If you would like to access this facility please contact [gareth.durling@phe.gov.uk](mailto:gareth.durling@phe.gov.uk).

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
28.07.2021	Aging, Empathy, and Prosocial Behaviors During the COVID-19 Pandemic	J. of Gerontol. / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous literature suggests age-related increases in prosociality: this present study investigates whether this tendency was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and whether the target (distant- compared to close-others) of prosocial behaviors differs by age.</li> <li>• Age was positively related to greater prosocial during the pandemic. Although empathy was positively associated with individuals' prosociality, it did not account for the age-prosociality association.</li> <li>• Increasing age was associated with greater prosocial behaviors towards close-others (i.e., family, friends).</li> <li>• Results confirmed differences in prosocial behaviors occur during the period of limited resources and threat associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> </ul>
29.07.2021	"What Keeps Me Awake at Night": Assisted Living Administrator Responses to COVID-19	Gerontologist / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This qualitative study sought to understand the impact of the early stages of the pandemic (February-August 2020) from the perspective of Assisted Living (AL) administrators.</li> <li>• Authors identified three themes that characterize AL administrators' response to COVID-19: emotion and burn-out management; information management; and crisis management. Based on their experiences, administrators made suggestions for managing future crises.</li> <li>• AL as a care setting, and the role of administrators, requires more scholarly and policy attention, especially regarding emergency preparedness and response</li> </ul>
29.07.2021	Coronavirus in Wisconsin Nursing Homes: A Longitudinal Analysis of the First 10 Months of the Pandemic	Antimicrobial Stewardship & Healthcare Epidemiol. / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authors describe distribution of COVID-19 cases in Wisconsin nursing homes from January 2020 to October 2020, the effect of rural versus urban locations on COVID-19 incidence, and temporal changes in COVID-19 incidence.</li> <li>• Higher COVID-19 incidence rates during the first 5 months of the pandemic were observed in urban, larger facilities with lower 5-star</li> </ul>

			rating. By the end of the year, nursing homes in rural areas and those with higher quality ratings had the highest incidence rates.
<b>29.07.2021</b>	<b>Risk Factors for In-Hospital Mortality from COVID-19 Among Nursing Home Patients—An Urban Center Experience</b>	Antimicrobial Stewardship & Healthcare Epidemiol. / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This retrospective cohort study, reviewed the electronic medical records of SARS-COV-2 PCR–positive nursing-home patients between March 8 and June 14, 2020. The primary outcome was in-hospital mortality.</li> <li>• The analysis revealed that patients with a greater burden of comorbidities, lower BMI, higher qSOFA sepsis score, and thrombocytopenia had a higher risk of death, perhaps because of severe infection despite a robust immune response.</li> </ul>
<b>02.08.2021</b>	<b>A Longitudinal, Clinical and Spatial Epidemiological Analysis of a Large COVID-19 Long-term Care Home Outbreak</b>	J. Post Acute & Long-Term Medical Care / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Longitudinal study of a large long-term care home COVID-19 outbreak in Ontario, Canada using electronic medical records, public health records, staff assignments and resident room locations to spatially map the outbreak through the facility.</li> <li>• Authors drew three key conclusions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1) 84.5% had typical COVID-19 symptoms and only 15.5% of residents had asymptomatic infection;</li> <li>○ 2) there was a high attack rate of 85.8%, which appeared to be explained by a high degree of interconnectedness within the home exacerbated by staffing shortages;</li> <li>○ 3) clustering of infections within multi-bedded rooms was common.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Low rates of asymptomatic infection suggest symptom-based screening in residents remains very important for detecting outbreaks, a high degree of interconnectedness explains the high attack rate and there is a need for improved guidance for homes with multi-bedded rooms on optimizing resident room movement to mitigate spread of COVID-19 in long-term care homes.</li> </ul>
<b>02.08.2021</b>	<b>Assessing Social Functioning during COVID-19 and Beyond: Tools and Considerations for Nursing Home Staff</b>	J. Post Acute & Long-Term Medical Care / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social functioning is defined as how a person operates in their unique social environment (i.e., engagement in activities, connectedness with others, and contributions to social roles). Healthy social functioning is important for nursing home residents as they are at increased risk for loneliness and isolation.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The aim of this paper is to provide resources and recommendations for interdisciplinary team assessment related to social functioning for nursing home residents.</li> <li>• Authors describe two domains of social functioning measures (First, Care-planning measures, and second, outcome measures), and provide recommendations for how to integrate said measures into practice. Healthy social functioning is needed to maintain nursing home residents' well-being and quality of life.</li> <li>• Measures and recommendations outlined in this paper can be used by nursing home staff to understand residents' social preferences and address social functioning during COVID-19 and beyond.</li> </ul>
03.08.2021	Living Through the Pandemic: The Voices of Persons With Dementia and Their Caregivers	J. Applied Gerontol. / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative study utilized semi-structured interviews between August-November 2020 to explore the impact of COVID-19 on Persons with Dementia (PwD) and caregivers.</li> <li>• Participants described how lack of socialization and confinement led to feelings of loneliness, depression, and worsening memory problems.</li> <li>• Caregivers reported increased burden and heightened feelings of responsibility for their loved one.</li> <li>• Further work is needed to develop interventions to support PwD and other cognitive impairments and caregivers during the pandemic and when in-person socialization is not possible.</li> </ul>
03.08.2021	Change in Loneliness Experienced by Older Men and Women Living Alone and With Others at the Onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic	Research on Aging / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study examined change in loneliness for older people at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> <li>• Analyzing 14-years of data with multilevel mixed-effects models, authors found higher levels of loneliness among people living alone, people more socially isolated, and people with less perceived support.</li> <li>• The findings demonstrate that loneliness changed at the onset of the pandemic as a function of gender and living arrangement identify older people most likely to benefit from intervention.</li> </ul>

## Reports and other publications

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
26.07.2021	Re-Thinking Positive Coronavirus Results: Interpreting RT-PCR Testing in Nursing Home Residents	Whitney, Scott A.; Berry, Sarah D.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports on case of 66-year-old female nursing home resident with a history of advanced frontotemporal and vascular dementia (stage 7f on the Functional Assessment Staging Tool (FAST)). In April 2020 she presented with fatigue, fever, anorexia, and tachypnea in the setting of a facility COVID-19 outbreak. At this time the patient returned a positive PCR test, and subsequently recovered.</li> <li>• In January 2021, 285 days after the initial PCR test, she returned another positive PCR test, during routine testing. All staff in the facility tested negative at this time. Despite family concerns, and staff suspicion that the patient’s PCR result was a residual false positive, the patient was moved to an isolation unit before being returned to her room when subsequent tests returned negative.</li> <li>• The authors argue that despite clear COVID-19 protocols dictating that nursing home residents who test positive for SARS-CoV-2 be moved to an isolation ward, moving such a frail patient presented an ethical and medical risk, particularly to providers and staff who were deeply concerned about the potential psychosocial harms of moving a patient near the end of life and the known harms of allowing a patient with active COVID-19 to remain on the unit</li> <li>• The authors conclude that nursing home staff should consider the nuances of the SARS-CoV-2 tests as well as the potential harms of isolating severely frail residents near the end of life while managing such outbreaks.</li> </ul>
04.08.2021	Statement on COVID-19 vaccination of people working/deployed in care	Care Quality Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) have amended the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 so that, from 11 November 2021, all care home workers, and anyone else entering a care home, will need to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, unless they have an exemption.</li> <li>• This statement outlines the CQC’s approach to a) registration, b) ongoing monitoring and inspection, and c) enforcement.</li> </ul>

	homes: the role of the Care Quality Commission		
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## Guidance

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
Updated <b>02.08.2021</b>	COVID-19: management of staff and exposed patients and residents in health and social care settings	Public Health England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidance on the management of staff, patients and residents who have been exposed to COVID-19.</li> </ul>
Updated <b>02.08.2021</b>	Supported living services during coronavirus (COVID-19)	DHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidance for providers of supported living settings.</li> </ul>
Updated <b>03.08.2021</b>	Visiting arrangements in care homes	DHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sets out how care homes can support families and visitors to visit residents.</li> </ul>
<b>04.08.2021</b>	Vaccination of people working or deployed in care homes: operational guidance	DHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From 11 November 2021, anyone working or volunteering in a care home will need to be fully vaccinated against coronavirus (COVID-19), unless exempt.</li> </ul>

## Evidence Summaries

Publication Date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
27.07.2021	Implementation of advance care planning amid the COVID-19 crisis: A narrative review and synthesis	Hirakawa, Yoshihisa; et al.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authors used a two-faceted approach to obtain relevant material for synthesizing available scientific articles focusing on implementing Advance Care Planning (ACP) under the COVID-19 crisis.</li> <li>• 20 articles were included, of which eight were primary studies incorporating 5,542 participants</li> <li>• Major themes evolved from the qualitative content analysis were, in accordance with relevance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Palliative care</li> <li>○ Lack of coordination among acute care, hospital palliative care and long-term care</li> <li>○ Community-based advance care planning supported by lay community people</li> <li>○ Real-time dissemination of scientific information on the regional pandemic situation</li> <li>○ Online systems and remote services</li> <li>○ Legislation to promote ACP</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The results suggested that the COVID-19 pandemic caused restrictions of transfer, lack of time to discuss ACP and the necessity of social distancing in healthcare settings, and had worsened the situation of ACP uptake</li> <li>• The results of this study suggest that ACP procedures need to be simplified so that they can reduce the risk of coronavirus infection through contact during ACP discussions and documentations. For example, social distancing measures create difficulties in getting the ACP signed face-to-face by the appropriate people and their physicians.</li> </ul>
02.08.2021	Protecting nursing homes and long term care facilities from	Dykgraaf, Sally H.; et al.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the extreme vulnerability of older people and other individuals who reside in long term care, creating an urgent need for evidence-based policy that can adequately</li> </ul>

	<p>COVID-19: a rapid review of international evidence</p>		<p>protect these community members. This study aimed to provide synthesized evidence to support policy decision-making.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Searches yielded 713 articles; 80 papers describing 77 studies were included. Most studies were observational with no randomized controlled trials identified.</li> <li>• Symptom or temperature based screening, and single point-prevalence testing, were found to be ineffective, and serial universal testing of residents and staff was considered crucial</li> <li>• Attention to ventilation and environmental management, digital health applications and acute sector support were also considered beneficial although evidence for effectiveness was lacking</li> <li>• Higher performing facilities with less crowding and higher nurse staffing ratios had reduced transmission rates.</li> <li>• Outbreak investigations suggested that facility-level leadership, inter-sectoral collaboration and policy that facilitated access to critical resources were all significant enablers of success.</li> <li>• High quality evidence of effectiveness in protecting LTCFs from COVID-19 was limited at the time of this study, though continues to emerge. Despite widespread COVID-19 vaccination programs in many countries, continuing prevention and mitigation measures may be required to protect vulnerable long term care residents from COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.</li> </ul>
30.07.2021	<p>Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on end of life care delivery in care homes: A mixed method systematic review</p>	Spacey, Adam; et al.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current evidence suggests that COVID-19 is having a negative impact on the delivery of end of life care in care homes around the world. This study sought to describe and evaluate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> <li>• Nine studies were included.</li> <li>• For care home staff, challenges included significant increases in responsibility and exposure to death, both of which have taken an emotional toll. Results indicate that staff tended not to be offered adequate emotional support or afforded the time to grieve.</li> <li>• For those receiving end of life care, results indicate that the end of life care that they tended to receive, especially in the form of advance planning, was disrupted by the pandemic.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The effect of the pandemic has been to exacerbate existing problems in the provision of end of life care in care homes for both service providers and users, making that which was previously opaque starkly visible. Future research is needed to explore the effects of the pandemic and its management on those receiving end of life care in care homes and their significant others.</li> </ul>
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## Statistics

Publication date	Title / URL	Author(s)	Digest
03.08.2021	Number of deaths in care homes notified to the Care Quality Commission, England	ONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provisional counts of deaths in care homes caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) by local authority</li> </ul>
03.08.2021	Care home resident deaths registered in England and Wales, provisional	ONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>
03.08.2021	Notifications to Care Inspectorate Wales related to COVID-19 in adult care homes: 1 March 2020 to 28 July 2021	Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notifications related to COVID-19 in adult care homes during the coronavirus pandemic for 1 March 2020 to 28 July 2021.</li> </ul>
04.08.2021	Coronavirus (COVID-19): adult care homes - additional data	Scottish Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly data on COVID-19 in adult care homes in Scotland.</li> </ul>

**Editorials and News**

<b>Publication date</b>	<b>Title / URL</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Digest</b>
01.08.2021	COVID-19 "Long-Haulers": Caring for Older People in the Aftermath of a Global Pandemic	Sibicky, Stephanie L.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This editorial asks how, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare professionals can effectively care for older people experiencing long-term complications of this disease?</li></ul>