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Produced by Health Evidence Matters

Public Health England

Public Health Matters: An opportunity to address inequalities: learning from the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic

It is the disadvantaged poor that have been hardest hit by COVID-19 in the UK, as they have all over the world. This blog looks at how we can address health inequalities and learnings from the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Details](#)

Cancer survival in England for patients diagnosed between 2014 and 2018, and followed up until 2019

Cancer survival statistics for adults and children by stage at diagnosis and by different geographical variations.

[Details](#)

Flu vaccination: why you are being asked to wait

Following significant early demand for flu vaccinations this season, Public Health England have published a leaflet for the public, which explains why some people eligible for flu vaccination are being asked to wait to get vaccinated.

[Details](#)

Influenza: the green book, chapter 19- updated

The chapter has been updated to include information on the recombinant quadrivalent influenza vaccine.

[Details](#)

Cold weather plan for England 2020 to 2021

The cold weather plan for England remains unchanged for winter 2020 to 2021. Additional actions may be needed due to COVID-19 and specific resources are available including slide set on cold weather health risks and COVID-19: actions to prevent harm.

[Details](#)

Weekly national Influenza and COVID-19 surveillance report: Week 44 report (up to week 43 data), 29 October 2020

Surveillance indicators suggest COVID-19 activity at national level has continued to increase further during week 43. There is currently limited testing for other respiratory viruses, however, lab indicators suggest influenza activity is low and rhinovirus activity has decreased

[Details](#)

Department of Health and Social Care

REACT-2: real-time assessment of community transmission – antibody waning

From June to Sept 20, SARS-CoV-2 antibodies were measured in the community in three rounds in England at an overall adjusted prevalence ranging from 6.0% in round 1 to 4.4% in round 3. Reduction of people testing positive suggests antibody waning at the population level.

[Details](#)

REACT-1 study of coronavirus transmission: October 2020 interim results

The main findings from 6th Real-time Assessment of Community Transmission (REACT) study show that between 16 and 25 October, 128 people per 10,000 were infected in England, up from 60 per 10,000, virus was doubling every 9 days and national R rate increased to 1.6.

[Details](#)

Meanwhile, Tim Spector of the Zoe Covid Symptom Tracker app disputes these data, saying that their work shows R to be 1.1 with a doubling of cases every 28 days. This article sets out his reasons for the disparity

[Details](#)

Coronavirus cases by local authority: epidemiological data

Weekly watchlist giving epidemiological coronavirus (COVID-19) data for each lower-tier local authority in England.

[Details](#)

Government Office for Science

The R number and growth rate in the UK

Last updated on Friday 30 October 2020.

Latest R number range for the UK

1.1-1.3

Latest growth rate range for the UK

+2% to +4% per day

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

NICE, SIGN and RCGP set out further details about the UK guideline on management of the long-term effects of COVID-19

Scope, which defines post-COVID syndrome (Long COVID) as signs and symptoms that develop during or following an infection consistent with COVID-19 which continue for more than 12 weeks and are not explained by an alternative diagnosis, outlines what areas the guideline will cover

Areas covered will include, among other things, what symptoms or signs should prompt a referral for specialist assessment or management, what pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions improve physical or mental health symptoms following acute COVID-19, and how best to deliver post-COVID syndrome recovery and rehabilitation services.

[Details](#)

Research and analysis from academic journals – non-coronavirus-related

BJOG: Associations between social and behavioural factors and the risk of late stillbirth—findings from the Midland and North of England stillbirth case-control study

Case-control study including more than 1000 pregnancies from 41 maternity units around the UK from 2014 to 2016 showed pregnant women who experience psychological stress, domestic abuse, deprivation, or unemployment are more likely to have a stillborn baby. Attending more antenatal appointments than currently recommended could reduce the odds of stillbirth

[Full text](#)

The Lancet Infectious Diseases: Summary of evidence to reduce the two-dose infant priming schedule to a single dose of the 13-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine in the national immunisation programme in the UK

This review summarises the epidemiology of pneumococcal disease in the UK, the evidence supporting the decision to implement a reduced schedule, and the national and global implications of the proposed schedule.

[Summary](#)

Research and analysis from academic journals and preprints – coronavirus-related

Imperial College: Declining prevalence of antibody positivity to SARS-CoV-2: a community study of 365,000 adults

Tests on more than 365,000 people in England have shown that the antibody response to the virus that causes COVID-19 wanes over time.

Analysis of finger-prick tests carried out at home between 20 June and 28 September found that the number of people testing positive dropped by 26.5% across the study period, from almost 6% to 4.4%.

[Press release](#)

[Full text](#)

MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep: Transmission of SARS-COV-2 Infections in Households — Tennessee and Wisconsin, April–September 2020

CDC study finds children pass on SARS-CoV-2 to household members just as frequently as adults do. Underscores importance of containing the virus among all populations

[Full text](#)

BMJ: Risk of hospital admission with coronavirus disease 2019 in healthcare workers and their households: nationwide linkage cohort study

Scottish study found patient facing healthcare workers, compared with non-patient facing healthcare workers, were at higher risk (HR 3.30, 2.13 to 5.13), as were household members of patient facing healthcare workers (1.79, 1.10 to 2.91) of admission with covid-19. Researchers note that healthcare workers and their households contributed a sixth of covid-19 cases admitted to hospital, although the absolute risk of admission was low overall.

[Full text](#)

A linked editorial notes that previous work reported similar risks for covid-19 among healthcare workers, but this new study provides the most comprehensive estimate to date of the risk of more serious disease, and it is the first to report risk to household members.

[Editorial](#)

Caveat: Content of these briefings has not been critically appraised! Apply your appraisal skills to articles referenced!
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The Lancet: Scientific consensus on the COVID-19 pandemic: we need to act now

Letter reiterates controlling community spread of COVID-19 is best way to protect societies and economies until safe and effective vaccines and therapeutics arrive within coming months; action should be based on evidence and not current distractions undermine an effective response

[Full text](#)

The Lancet: The UK Government's Vaccine Taskforce: strategy for protecting the UK and the world

According to this account, the strategy has focused on vaccines that are expected to elicit immune responses in the population > 65 years and scalability of vaccine manufacture; with the goal being to manufacture in the UK, to secure supply and create long-term resilience.

[Full text](#)

The Lancet Infectious Diseases: What defines an efficacious COVID-19 vaccine? A review of the challenges assessing the clinical efficacy of vaccines against SARS-CoV-2

In this review, authors' discuss the challenges and caveats needed to interpret reported efficacy endpoints; stating the most important efficacy endpoint, protection against severe disease and death, is very difficult to assess in phase 3 clinical trials.

[Full text](#)

The Lancet Respiratory Medicine: COVID-19 transmission—up in the air

Editorial notes with rising cases and continued debate about how SARS-CoV-2 is transmitted, new research needs to be embraced rather than relying on recommendations based on old data so clearer and more effective infection control guidance can be provided in face of pandemic fatigue.

[Full text](#)

BMJ: The Lawrence Review - Covid-19: More must be done to protect ethnic minority communities in the second wave

In a review commissioned by the Labour Party to investigate why the BAME population was disproportionately affected by the pandemic, Lawrence called for a wider package of immediate measures to tackle the problem, which should include further steps to protect frontline staff and improve public health communication.

[Full text](#)

[The Lawrence Review](#)

BMJ Feature: Covid-19: Is a second wave hitting Europe?

Relaxation of lockdowns and public's loosening of precautionary behaviours has seen recorded cases and deaths rise across Europe. This BMJ Feature looks at what is happening in Belgium, France, Spain, Germany, Ireland, and Czech Republic.

[Full text](#)

BMJ: Virology, transmission, and pathogenesis of SARS-CoV-2

This review is an update on the emerging understanding of SARS-CoV-2 pathophysiology, including virology, transmission dynamics, and the immune response to the virus.

[Full text](#)

BMJ: Covid-19: Why are age and obesity risk factors for serious disease?

In this Viewpoint, authors' suggest reduction of adiponectin (which directly protects the lungs) in obesity; and the increased likelihood of co-morbidities in older age, could be one of the many causes of poorer covid-19 outcomes in these patients.

[Details](#)

BMJ: Learning from a pandemic: how the post-covid NHS can reach its full potential

In this Viewpoint, authors' suggest three main areas of focus to accelerate reform in the NHS including; health and care delivery model redesign such as specialisation of services, a more agile multidisciplinary workforce and greater ambition in the NHS on digitalisation

[Full text](#)

JAMA: Preventing the Spread of SARS-CoV-2 with Masks and Other “Low-tech” Interventions

In this Viewpoint, authors' emphasise the continued importance of wearing masks, limiting large gatherings, hand washing and physical distancing, even after vaccines become available until distribution and uptake of vaccines confer herd immunity on a population level

[Details](#)

BMJ news: Covid-19: High risk patients who don't need immediate hospital attention to use pulse oximetry at home to spot serious deterioration

NHS England is believed to have purchased around 200 000 pulse oximeters for the scheme, which clinical commissioning groups across England will be able to access.

[Full text](#)

BMJ Webinar: COVID 19: Known Unknowns- Handling scientific uncertainty in a pandemic

Tune in for all or part of this 1-day event hosted by Dr Fiona Godlee of The BMJ and Professor George Davey Smith, MRC Integrative Epidemiology Unit (IEU) at the University of Bristol.

Read [The BMJ editorial](#) by Professor Davey Smith for useful background. Speakers from the UK, USA, India, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Norway and Sweden for a diverse global perspectives as well as a detailed look at modelling, testing, vaccines and non-pharma interventions too.

[Details](#)

Biospace Inc

Pfizer enters final stretch of late-stage COVID-19 vaccine trial

Phase III trial of 44,000 volunteers now needs fewer than 2000 people to be fully enrolled. The vaccine, which requires 2 doses 28 days apart, has been tested in 36,000 people. Potential for submission of Emergency Use Authorization with FDA in November is still a possibility.

[Details](#)

Office for National Statistics

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Review: data and analysis, March to October 2020

The Compendium contains ONS data and analysis on the health, social and economic impact of COVID-19 for the period of March to October 2020. It is a stocktake of the pandemic since it began, on a thematic basis, of how society and the economy has responded so far.

[Details](#)

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Characteristics of people testing positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) (published 27th October)

Analysis of the characteristics of people in the community who tested positive for the coronavirus (COVID-19) has shown a higher percentage of people reporting symptoms at or around the time of their test in recent weeks, compared with a low point in the summer months.

From 28 September to 11 October 2020, 34% of participants in the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey who tested positive for COVID-19 reported any evidence of symptoms at the time of the test. A smaller proportion of those who tested positive, 24%, reported experiencing a cough, fever or anosmia (loss of taste or smell) at the time of the test.

Overall, during late June to late July, very few people who tested positive reported any evidence of symptoms at the time of their positive test (as low as 0%), compared with up to 38% at other times.

[Details](#)

Deaths involving COVID-19 (published 27th October)

There were 670 [deaths involving the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in England and Wales in the week ending 16 October 2020](#), the highest weekly figure since the week ending 19 June 2020.

However, this remains below numbers seen at the peak of the pandemic, and accounts for just 6.4% of all deaths in the latest week.

By region, the highest number of COVID-19 deaths was reported in the North West (229 deaths), followed by the North East (93) and Yorkshire and the Humber (87).

The total number of deaths across England and Wales in the week ending 16 October 2020 was 10,534 (above the five-year average for the ninth time in the past ten weeks).

Since the start of the pandemic, there have been 54,325 COVID-19 deaths registered in England and Wales, up to 16 October 2020 (29,969 men and 24,356 women).

The majority of deaths involving COVID-19 have been among people aged 65 years and over (48,530 out of 54,325).

[Details](#)

Number of COVID-19 infections continues to increase across UK (published 30th October)

The number of people with the coronavirus (COVID-19) in England has risen to around 568,100 in the most recent week, or around 1 in 100 people.

There has been growth in infection rates in all age groups over the past two weeks; older teenagers and young adults continue to have the highest current rates while rates appear to be steeply increasing among secondary school children.

By English region, the highest infection rates continue to be in the North West and Yorkshire and The Humber. Rates in the North East have levelled off.

[Details](#)

BBC Health News

Boots to offer 12-minute Covid nasal swab test

The test, developed by UK-based life sciences company LumiraDx, will cost £120 and be available in > 50 UK stores to asymptomatic pts. In trials on > 500 pts, the test has detected presence of a Covid-19 antigen protein in > 97% cases and been approved by European/US authorities.

[Details](#)

Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH)

Explainer: Test and Trace Service

Latest in the ADPH 'explainer' series outlines the perspective of Directors of Public Health on the purpose of the Test and Trace Service, progress made and today's challenges

[Details](#)

NHS Digital

National Child Measurement Programme, England 2019/20 School Year

Children living in the most deprived areas are more than twice as likely to be obese as those in the least deprived.

Findings from the Government's National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) for England show that more than a quarter (27.5%) of Year 6 children living in the most deprived areas were obese compared to 11.9% of these living in the least deprived. For Reception children, this figure was 12.3% compared to 6%.

Overall, childhood obesity has increased for both age groups in the past year, although boys have a higher obesity prevalence than girls.

[Details](#)

Royal College of Physicians

RCP joins with nearly 80 organisations to call for action on health inequalities

A coalition of nearly 80 organisations has been launched in order to pressure the Government into tackling health inequalities.

A survey commissioned by the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) found that 65% of respondents felt that governments across the UK should be doing more to address health inequalities.

Over 80% agreed that there should be a UK Government strategy to reduce inequalities in health.

[Details](#)

Care Quality Commission

Children and young people's mental health review: findings from a questionnaire to health and wellbeing boards on local actions

This report contains an update on work carried out in 2018 looking at the quality of mental health services for children and young people, as well as the access to these services. It sets out the findings of a 2019 independent follow-up self-assessment questionnaire, to find out the extent to which health and wellbeing board areas in England had progressed with implementing the local recommendations made.

[Details](#)

Health and Social Care Committee

Social care: funding and workforce

This report calls for a £7 billion annual increase in social care funding as a starting point for reform. It backs the introduction of a lifetime cap to protect against potentially high care costs as originally proposed by the Dilnot Commission and endorses further consideration of free personal care.

[Details](#)

Cancer Research UK

GPs say elderly are not seeking help for potential cancer symptoms

Findings from a September survey of 1,000 UK GPs show 53% of GPs are concerned that fewer older adults are contacting them with potential cancer symptoms, compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Details](#)

Healthwatch England

Hospital discharge must be improved to manage COVID-19 second peak - 590 people's stories of leaving hospital during COVID-19

In Mar 2020, Government introduced new hospital discharge policy to help NHS free up beds by getting people out of hospital quickly. This new Healthwatch report with British Red Cross looks at how well this policy is working for patients, carers and healthcare professionals.

The survey (n=590) showed 82% of respondents did not receive a follow-up visit and assessment at home and almost one in five of these reported an unmet care need, exposing where the current government 'discharge to assess' policy is creating gaps in care.

[Details](#)

Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch

National report charts challenges of managing COVID-19 transmission in hospitals

Report charts 4-month patient safety investigation that was launched following concern patients were contracting COVID-19 after being admitted to hospital. Report references data presented to SAGE in mid-May suggesting ~20% patients were reporting symptoms 7 days after admission.

[Details](#)

The Strategy Unit

Working together for a healthier post-Covid future

This analysis, commissioned by the Healthier Futures Academy in the Black Country and West Birmingham, illustrates the effects that a Covid-driven recession could have on population health. It frames a discussion about how the NHS, with other local organisations, can more effectively address the causes as well as the effects of ill health.

[Details](#)