

w/c 23rd November 2020

Produced by Health Evidence Matters

Public Health England

English Surveillance Programme for Antimicrobial Utilisation and Resistance (ESPAUR) Report 2019 to 2020

Annual report shows there were an estimated 65,162 antimicrobial resistance infections diagnosed in 2019, up from 61,946 in 2018. E. coli remains the most common bloodstream infection, rising 14% in 2015 to 77.5 in 2019, which is a significant concern.

[Details](#)

Consensus statement emphasises importance of COVID-19-secure workplaces

A consensus statement on the best approach to reduce risk for workers, including those of ethnic minority groups, has been issued by PHE, HSE and FOM.

[Details](#)

COVID-19: suggested principles of safer singing

Outlining the available evidence on virus transmission associated with singing and suggested actions to reduce the risk of transmission while singing.

[Details](#)

Review of NHS Health Checks: terms of reference

The Department of Health and Social Care has commissioned Public Health England to undertake an evidence-based review of how NHS Health Checks can evolve in the next decade to maximise the future benefits of the programme. Specifically, the review will look at how the programme can be improved to prevent ill health and reduce health inequalities.

[Details](#)

Public Health Matters: Alcohol dependence and mental health

There are an estimated 589,000 people who are dependent on alcohol in England and about a quarter of them are likely to be receiving mental health medication. This blog looks at alcohol dependence and mental health in detail.

[Details](#)

Department of Health and Social Care

Two new megalabs to open in 2021 to transform the UK's diagnostic facilities

As part of the UK's national infrastructure for diagnostic testing, two new 24/7 laboratories, based in Leamington Spa and Scotland, will open in early 2021, to increase daily capacity testing to 600,000.

[Details](#)

New film shows importance of ventilation to reduce spread of COVID-19

A new short film released by the government for the general public shows how coronavirus lingers in

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enclosed spaces, and how to keep your home ventilated. Research shows that being in a room with fresh air can reduce the risk of infection from particles by over 70%. It has been criticised by some for not stressing the importance of through ventilation

[Details](#)

DHSC announces expansion of Vivaldi study to test thousands more care home staff and residents for their immune response to coronavirus (COVID-19)

As part of the major research study led by UCL, 14,000 care home residents and staff will be tested quarterly for their immune response to COVID-19. The number of care homes taking part will increase from 100 to 340, testing ~4,500 residents and 9,500 staff.

[Details](#)

Free flu vaccinations rolled out to over 50s from December

Adults aged 50-64 will be able to get a free flu vaccine from their GP or pharmacist from 1 December 2020, as part of the expanded flu vaccination programme this winter. Flu vaccine uptake is higher in all vulnerable groups except pregnant women compared with this time last year.

[Details](#)

Homecare workers to be tested weekly for COVID-19

From Monday 23 November, registered carers will be offered weekly coronavirus tests to administer at home, to help identify more asymptomatic cases. This expansion of testing is the next phase in the rollout of mass testing across the country

[Details](#)

Government secures 5 million doses of Moderna vaccine

Vaccine could be delivered to the UK from Spring 2021.

[Details](#)

Government Office for Science

Latest R number and growth rate

Last updated on Friday 20 November 2020.

Latest R number range for the UK

1.0-1.1

Latest growth rate range for the UK

0% to +2%

[Details](#)

NHS England

NHS launches 40 'long COVID' clinics to tackle persistent symptoms

These clinics, accessed by GP or other healthcare professional referral, will open at the end of November, and bring together doctors, nurses, therapist and other NHS staff to conduct physical and psychological assessments of those experiencing enduring symptoms.

[Details](#)

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

JAMA Internal Medicine: Evaluation of Time to Benefit of Statins for the Primary Prevention of Cardiovascular Events in Adults Aged 50 to 75 Years - A Meta-analysis

Review (8 RCTs; n=65,383 adults [66.3% men]) reports use of statins may reduce cardiac events for some of these adults with a life expectancy of at least 2.5 years (treating 100 for 2.5 years prevented 1 major adverse CV event in 1 adult); no data suggest a mortality benefit.

[Abstract](#)

BMJ Open: Treatment of hypertension reduces cognitive decline in older adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis

Review of 9 RCTs (n=34,994) found treatment of hypertension in older adults may reduce cognitive decline. Authors estimate from their data that 16 mild cognitive impairment/probable dementia events would be prevented in 1000 patients followed for 10 years

[Full text](#)

Lancet Gastroenterology and Hepatology: Prevalence and incidence of hepatitis C virus infection in men who have sex with men: a systematic review and meta-analysis

Review (194 studies) found higher HCV prevalence in HIV-ve men who have sex with men (MSM) (Prevalence Ratio 1.58;95% CI,1.14–2.01) & even higher (6.22, 5.14–7.29) in HIV+ve MSM vs general population. Some studies suggest as PrEP use increases, greater HCV transmission might occur

[Abstract](#)

British Journal of Psychiatry: Psychological interventions as an alternative and add-on to antidepressant medication to prevent depressive relapse: systematic review and meta-analysis

Review (11 trials; n=1559) found no evidence to suggest adding a psychological intervention (PI) to tapering increases risk of relapse vs. antidepressants (ADs) alone; and adding a PI to AD use reduces relapse risk significantly vs. ADs alone (RR 0.85, 95% CI 0.74–0.97; p= 0.01).

[Abstract](#)

BMJ: First line drug treatment for hypertension and reductions in blood pressure according to age and ethnicity: cohort study in UK primary care

Study of 87 440 new users of ACEI/ARB, 67,274 new users of CCB, and 22,040 new users of thiazides followed up for 1 year suggests that the current UK algorithmic approach to first line antihypertensive treatment might not lead to greater reductions in blood pressure.

Read SPS commentary

[Full text](#)

Evidence & Policy: Mobilising knowledge in public health: reflections on ten years of collaborative working in Fuse, the Centre for Translational Research in Public Health

Four steps in the knowledge exchange process that are concurrent, iterative and vary in intensity over time: awareness raising; knowledge sharing; making evidence fit for purpose; and supporting uptake and implementation of evidence. Relationship building and maintenance is essential for all stages.

[Abstract](#)

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

Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR): Multiple COVID-19 Outbreaks Linked to a Wedding Reception in Rural Maine — August 7–September 14, 2020

A wedding reception was attended by 55 persons including 1 who tested positive for Covid-19 one day later. Overall, 177 COVID-19 cases were linked to the event, including seven hospitalizations and seven deaths (four in hospitalised persons). None of the deaths were in wedding guests. Investigation revealed noncompliance with CDC's recommended mitigation measures.

[Full text](#)

BioRxiv (preprint): Immunological memory to SARS-CoV-2 assessed for greater than six months after infection

Immune memory consisting of at least three immunological compartments was measurable in about 90% of participants after over 5 months post-symptom onset. Durable immunity in most individuals is a possibility

[Full text](#)

MedRxiv (preprint): Antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 are associated with protection against reinfection

This research in healthcare workers (not yet peer reviewed) found the presence of SARS-CoV-2 antibodies at baseline was associated with lower rates of PCR-positive results during 30-week follow-up (adjusted rate ratio 0.24; 95% CI 0.08-0.76; p=0.015).

The authors say their results suggest that prior SARS-CoV-2 infection that generated an antibody response (either anti-spike or antinucleocapsid antibodies) offers protection from reinfection for most people in the six months following infection. However as there is still a lack of knowledge in this area, for example regarding the extent of protection and long-term immune responses, there is at present no support for exempting those positive for antibodies from infection control and public health measures.

[Full text](#)

Annals of Internal Medicine: Effectiveness of Adding a Mask Recommendation to Other Public Health Measures to Prevent SARS-CoV-2 Infection in Danish Mask Wearers: A Randomized Controlled Trial

RCT (n=3030) found recommendation to wear surgical masks to supplement other public health measures did not reduce SARS-CoV-2 infection rate among wearers by >50% in community with modest infection rates, some degree of social distancing, and uncommon general mask use.

BUT this trial has been heavily criticised – suggest [reading this critique](#)

[Full text](#)

The Lancet: Safety and immunogenicity of ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 vaccine administered in a prime-boost regimen in young and old adults (COV002): a single-blind, randomised, controlled, phase 2/3 trial

RCT (n=560) found antibody responses against SARS-CoV-2 spike protein were induced in all age groups and were boosted and maintained at 28 days after booster vaccination, including in ≥70 years group. Cellular immune responses were also induced in all age and dose groups. The vaccine causes few side effects and is better tolerated in older people compared to younger adults, and produces a similar immune response in old and young adults.

[Full text](#)

[Editorial](#)

[Challenges in creating herd immunity to SARS-CoV-2 infection by mass vaccination](#)

JAMA: A Proposed Framework and Timeline of the Spectrum of Disease Due to SARS-CoV-2 Infection: Illness Beyond Acute Infection and Public Health Implications

This Viewpoint uses clinical observations of natural course of SARS-CoV-2 infection to propose 3 phases of illness: acute infection, postacute hyperinflammatory illness and late inflammatory sequelae, manifesting as enduring cardiac, neurological, and psychological symptoms.

[Full text](#)

BMJ Open: Modifiable and non-modifiable risk factors for COVID-19, and comparison to risk factors for influenza and pneumonia: results from a UK Biobank prospective cohort study

This cohort study found modifiable risk factors for Covid-19 included higher BMI and higher HbA1C, smoking, slow walking pace (proxy for physical fitness) and use of blood pressure medications (proxy for hypertension), suggesting modification of lifestyle may help to reduce risk.

[Full text](#)

BMJ Open: COVID-19 outcomes in UK centre within highest health and wealth band: a prospective cohort study

Findings from a centre in Surrey, an affluent and high life expectancy region, show similar complication and mortality rates due to COVID-19 to those in deprived regions.

[Full text](#)

BMJ Open: Estimated impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on cancer services and excess 1-year mortality in people with cancer and multimorbidity: near real-time data on cancer care, cancer deaths and a population-based cohort study

Registry study (database of 3,862,012 adults in England) found declines of 70.4% for urgent referrals for cancer, & 41.5% for chemotherapy attendances during the pandemic. There were also short term excess death registrations for cancer (peak RR of 1.17 at week ending 3rd April).

[Full text](#)

JECH: Scaling COVID-19 against inequalities: should the policy response consistently match the mortality challenge?

Calibrates the scale of the modelled mortality impact of COVID-19 using age-standardised mortality rates and life expectancy contribution against other, socially determined, causes of death. Fully mitigating COVID-19 is estimated to prevent a loss of 5.63 years of life expectancy for the UK. Over 10 years, there is a greater negative life expectancy contribution from inequality than around six unmitigated COVID-19 pandemics.

[Full text](#)

Circulation: Association of Body Mass Index and Age With Morbidity and Mortality in Patients Hospitalized With COVID-19: Results From the American Heart Association COVID-19 Cardiovascular Disease Registry

US registry study (7,606 patients hospitalised with COVID-19) found classes I to III obesity were associated with higher risks of in-hospital death or mechanical ventilation (OR, 1.28, 95% CI, 1.09–1.51; 1.57, 1.29–1.91; and 1.80, 1.47–2.20 respectively).

[Full text](#)

Circulation: Racial and Ethnic Differences in Presentation and Outcomes for Patients Hospitalized with COVID-19: Findings from the American Heart Association's COVID-19 Cardiovascular Disease Registry
US registry study (7,868 patients hospitalised with COVID) found that although in-hospital mortality did not differ by race/ethnicity, Black and Hispanic patients bore a greater burden of mortality and morbidity due to disproportionate representation in COVID-19 hospitalisations.

[Full text](#)

BMJ: Long Covid: Damage to multiple organs presents in young, low risk patients

Brief review provides a summary of a study currently at preprint stage (n=201) which found that 70% of participants had impairments in one or more organs four months after their initial symptoms of SARS-CoV-2 infection. The most common reported ongoing symptom was fatigue (98%).

[Full text](#)

BMJ analysis: Covid-19: Government ramps up “Moonshot” mass testing

Last week the UK government announced that 67 more areas in England will be given access to rapid diagnostic tests for covid-19, however this article highlights that the benefits and ethics of mass testing remains unclear.

[Full text](#)

BMJ news: Covid-19: UK government faces legal action after awarding £250m in PPE contracts to jewellery company

The UK government is facing another legal challenge after it awarded £250m (€279.5m; \$332.3m) worth of personal protective equipment (PPE) contracts to a US jewellery company.

The not-for-profit legal organisation the Good Law Project and EveryDoctor, a doctor led campaigning organisation, claimed that one of the contracts was awarded to the jewellery company without any advertisement or competitive tender process. The case is one of a number of lawsuits launched against the government by the legal campaigning group over contracts and positions awarded during the pandemic.

[Full text](#)

BMJ news: Trial involving high risk and elderly people shows Moderna’s Covid-19: vaccine is nearly 95% effective

UK government has secured 5 million doses of the covid-19 vaccine candidate (mRNA-1273) from US biotech company Moderna after interim analysis of its phase III trial showed it was 94.5% effective and could be delivered to UK spring 2021.

This news comes just over a week after Pfizer announced that its covid-19 vaccine candidate was more than 90% effective, following its interim analysis. Neither Pfizer nor Moderna have published their full results yet, not even as preprints, only releasing information through press releases.

The European Medicine Agency is also set to start rolling review of mRNA-1273 COVID-19 vaccine. The decision to start rolling review is based on this first interim analysis. Moderna expects marketing authorisation to be based on a final analysis of 151 cases and median follow-up of > 2 months.

[Full text](#)

BMJ news: Third Covid-19 candidate vaccine developed by Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies will be tested in clinical trials involving patients in the UK

Phase 3 placebo controlled RCT will involve 30,000 patients and assess a two dose regimen of the

vaccine 57 days apart, using the same human adenovirus that provided the vector for Janssen's Ebola virus vaccine. A trial of a single dose by Janssen is already underway in the US.

[Full text](#)

BMJ blog: Will the public accept a covid-19 vaccine?

Listening and engaging with the public in building and sustaining vaccine confidence will be crucial, argues Pauline Paterson

[Full text](#)

Pharmaceutical Journal: Public Health England to review guidance against the use of rapid COVID-19 tests in community pharmacies

This comes as NHS England announces plans to pilot the supply of lab-based COVID-19 antigen tests in community pharmacies before assessing the use of other testing technologies in the longer term. The pilot would be targeting people who would otherwise not go through the standard booking process for tests at home or at a regional testing site, and that individuals showing COVID-19 symptoms would not be encouraged to visit a community pharmacy in order to obtain a test.

[Full text](#)

NIHR Dissemination Centre

NIHR Alert: Teenagers' use of antidepressants is rising with variations across regions and ethnic groups

Expert commentary is provided for new study into use of antidepressants by children and young people, which found number of 12-17 year olds prescribed them in England had more than doubled between 2005 & 2017 whilst prescriptions for 5-11 year olds decreased between 1999 & 2017.

[Details](#)

Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Deaths registered in England and Wales, provisional: week ending 6 November 2020

- There were 11,812 deaths registered in England and Wales in the week ending 6 November 2020. This was 925 more deaths than in the previous week.
- In this week the number of deaths registered was 14.3% above the five-year average (1,481 deaths higher).
- Of the deaths registered in this week, 1,937 mentioned "novel coronavirus (COVID-19)", accounting for 16.4% of all deaths in England and Wales; this is an increase of 558 deaths compared with the previous week (when there were 1,379 deaths involving COVID-19, accounting for 12.7% of all deaths).
- Of the 1,937 deaths that involved COVID-19, 1,743 had this recorded as the underlying cause of death (90.0%); of the 2,267 deaths that involved Influenza and Pneumonia, 307 had this recorded as the underlying cause of death (13.5%)..

[Details](#)

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey, UK: 20 November 2020

Although there are substantial differences in rates by region, the overall national Covid-19 positivity rate in the community in England during the 8-14 November (around 1 in 80 people) was similar to the previous week, with early indications that rates may be levelling off

[Details](#)

World Health Organization

Worldwide measles deaths climb 50% from 2016 to 2019 claiming over 207 500 lives in 2019.

A report from the World Health Organization and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that measles cases and deaths surged worldwide last year to the highest number of cases in 23 years.

Measles cases declined globally from 2010 to 2016 but have increased since then. In 2019 there were 869 770 cases of measles, the highest number since 1996, and an estimated 207 500 deaths, a 50% increase since 2016.

The report authors say that “the fundamental cause of the resurgence was a failure to vaccinate.”

[Details](#)

Alcohol and cancer in the WHO European Region: an appeal for better prevention

This factsheet provides information and guidance on the links between alcohol and a range of cancers for those involved in designing and implementing policies that affect public health. It sets out policy options to reduce the alcohol-attributable cancer burden, making clear that there is strong evidence that the implementation of cost-effective alcohol control policies including pricing policies (or policies that increase the price of alcohol) will achieve this.

[Details](#)

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

European Antibiotic Awareness Day

18th November was European Antibiotic Awareness Day, an initiative to raise awareness of antimicrobial resistance as an increasing global public health threat and to promote the prudent use of antibiotics.

[Details](#)

National Audit Office

Investigation into government procurement during the COVID-19 pandemic

This report finds a lack of transparency and adequate documentation of some key decisions (such as why particular suppliers were chosen or how the government identified and managed potential conflicts of interest) in the awarding of some contracts while the government was procuring large volumes of goods and services at high speed to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic.

[Details](#)

[BMJ article](#)

Centre for Ageing Better

The state of ageing in 2020

This online, interactive report captures a snapshot of how people in the UK are ageing today, while looking at past trends and our prospects if action isn't taken. It warns that the Covid-19 pandemic risks setting people in mid-life on a path to poverty and ill health in old age.

[Details](#)

Local Government Association

Lessons learnt from councils' response to rough sleeping during the COVID-19 pandemic

The success of Everyone In demonstrates that, given the mandate and funding, councils, working with

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their partners, have the means to end the vast majority of rough sleeping.

[Details](#)

House of Lords Public Services Committee

A critical juncture for public services: lessons from Covid-19

This report discusses lessons to be learnt from the pandemic and recommends a number of principles to transform public service delivery. It finds that decisions were made much more quickly and concludes that many public service providers and councils developed 'remarkable innovations' to meet the Covid-19 challenge. However, the Committee raises concerns about public service provision during the pandemic for black, Asian and minority ethnic people and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people, homeless people, and people with complex needs.

[Details](#)

Joint Committee on Human Rights

Black people, racism and human rights

This report concludes that the government must urgently take action to protect the human rights of black people and set out a comprehensive cross-government race equality strategy. This must have at its heart improved data collection on racial inequality. The report focuses on four issues where inequality in the protection of human rights is of particular concern: health; criminal justice; nationality and immigration; and democracy.

[Details](#)

Care Quality Commission

How care homes managed infection prevention and control during the coronavirus pandemic 2020

This report sets out findings from 440 care home inspections between August and beginning Sept 2020. The two areas with the most gaps in assurance were effective use of personal protective equipment and having up-to-date policies.

[Details](#)

Nuffield Trust

Hospital-acquired Covid-19

Chart of the week looks at the problem of Covid-19 infections occurring when patients are already in hospital for other reasons. The analysis finds that in the first two weeks of November, some 23% of those being treated for coronavirus were infected within the hospital. International evidence suggests it is not inevitable that hospital-acquired infections rise with overall infection rates.

[Details](#)

NHS Digital

National Diabetes Audit, Non-Diabetic Hyperglycaemia, 2019- 2020, Diabetes Prevention Programme, Data Release

From Jan 2019 to March 2020, 2.1 million people in England were recorded as having non-diabetic hyperglycaemia, an increase from 1.8 million in 2018-19. The difference is most likely due to an increase in the recording of the diagnosis during 2019-20.

[Details](#)

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Royal Society for Public Health

Take back controllers: three quarters of young gamers want an end to the 'gablification' of video games

Alliance launches #LidOnLoots campaign and calls for Christmas boycott of video games featuring loot boxes

[Details](#)