

COVID-19 Evidence Bulletin

26th May 2021

Details of new guidance and evidence relating to the response to COVID-19. Please check SaTH, NHS and Government guidance in conjunction with these resources where necessary.

Cancer Care

COVID-19: Cancer screening, diagnosis, post-treatment surveillance in uninfected patients during the pandemic and issues related to COVID-19 vaccination in cancer patients [evidence summary from UpToDate]

[This topic will discuss issues related to safe outpatient care, cancer screening, diagnosis, post-treatment surveillance and other issues in cancer survivors during the pandemic, and issues related to COVID-19 vaccination in cancer patients.]

Available [here](#). Last updated 12th May

COVID-19: Cancer treatment in uninfected patients during the pandemic, issues related to telemedicine, and resource allocation [evidence summary from UpToDate]

[This topic will discuss issues related to cancer treatment during the pandemic, including issues related to balancing the risk from treatment delay versus risks from COVID-19 during the pandemic, recommendations from expert groups, and issues related to telemedicine and resource allocation]

Available [here](#). Last updated 12th May

Convalescent Plasma

Convalescent plasma in patients admitted to hospital with COVID-19 (RECOVERY): a randomised controlled, open-label, platform trial [RECOVERY Collaborative Group. *The Lancet*]

[Many patients with COVID-19 have been treated with plasma containing anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibodies. In patients hospitalised with COVID-19, high-titre convalescent plasma did not improve survival or other prespecified clinical outcomes.]

Available [here](#)

Mortality Benefit of Convalescent Plasma in COVID-19: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis [Bansal V. *Frontiers in Medicine*]

[Systemic review and meta-analysis suggests that CPT could be an effective therapeutic option with promising evidence on the safety and reduced mortality in concomitant treatment for COVID-19 along with antiviral/antimicrobial drugs, steroids, and other supportive care.]

Available [here](#)

Convalescent plasma or hyperimmune immunoglobulin for people with COVID-19: a living systematic review [Piechotta V. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*]

[OBJECTIVES: Using a living systematic review approach, to assess whether convalescent plasma or hyperimmune immunoglobulin transfusion is effective and safe in the treatment of people with COVID-19; and to maintain the currency of the evidence.]

Available [here](#)

Drug Therapy

Use of repurposed and adjuvant drugs in hospital patients with covid-19: multinational network cohort study [Prats-Uribe A. *BMJ*]

[Multiple drugs were used in the first few months of the covid-19 pandemic, with substantial geographical and temporal variation. Hydroxychloroquine, azithromycin, lopinavir-ritonavir, and umifenovir (in China only) were the most prescribed repurposed drugs. Antithrombotics, antibiotics, H2 receptor antagonists, and corticosteroids were often used as adjunctive treatments. Research is needed on the comparative risk and benefit of these treatments in the management of covid-19.]

Available [here](#)

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug use and outcomes of COVID-19 in the ISARIC Clinical Characterisation Protocol UK cohort: a matched, prospective cohort study [Drake TM. *The Lancet Rheumatology*]

[Early in the pandemic it was suggested that pre-existing use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) could lead to increased disease severity in patients with COVID-19. NSAID use is not associated with higher mortality or increased severity of COVID-19. Policy makers should consider reviewing issued advice around NSAID prescribing and COVID-19 severity.]

Available [here](#)

Education

Qualitative exploration of medical student experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic: implications for medical education [Nolan H. *BMC Medical Education*]

[During the Covid-19 pandemic medical students were offered paid roles as medical student healthcare assistants. Anecdotal reports suggested that students found this experience rich for learning. Previous studies have explored alternative models of student service, however this defined medical student support role is novel.]

Available [here](#)

Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO)

Cytokine adsorption in patients with severe COVID-19 pneumonia requiring extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (CYCOV): a single centre, open-label, randomised, controlled trial [Supady A. *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine*]

[We sought to clarify the benefit of cytokine adsorption in patients with COVID-19 supported with venovenous extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO). Early initiation of cytokine adsorption in patients with severe COVID-19 and venovenous ECMO did not reduce serum IL-6 and had a negative effect on survival. Cytokine adsorption should not be used during the first days of ECMO support in COVID-19.]

Available [here](#)

Health Services Restoration and Renewal

LSE–Lancet Commission on the future of the NHS: re-laying the foundations for an equitable and efficient health and care service after COVID-19 [London School of Economics and Political Science]

[Reporting after three years, the Commission describes how although the NHS is internationally held up as a leading example of universal health care, the health of the UK population lags behind that of other high-income countries. Their report makes seven core recommendations, setting out a long-term vision for the NHS that re-lays the foundations for a better, fairer health and care service.]

Available [here](#)

Questions of fairness: how should the NHS prioritise people waiting for care? [Nuffield Trust]

[Before Covid-19, the NHS waiting list was not insignificant, but the effects of the pandemic have led to record numbers waiting for treatment – including many more waiting over a year. With an accompanying blog from Rebecca Rosen looking at the practical challenges involved in managing and prioritising the waiting list, Rachel Hutchings and Dr Polly Mitchell argue the importance of ethics in the decisions that are taken.]

Available [here](#)

Covid-19: NHS to trial rapid diagnostics and Saturday clinics to tackle elective care backlog [BMJ]

[NHS England is to invest £160m to test new initiatives to reduce the hospital waiting lists that have soared to 4.7 million people during the covid-19 pandemic.]

Available [here](#). NHS OpenAthens account required

Using covid crisis recovery to transform the NHS [HSJ]

[The covid-19 crisis has brought with it disruptive transformation. Dr Ben Horner, Stephen Sutherland and John Gooch explore ways to ensure that the positive transformative changes are not lost, and ways in which the NHS can take steps to lock-in these improvements]

Available [here](#)

Infection Control

Updated statement on transparent face masks [Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists]

[In England, if you are contacted by a company with a transparent face mask outside of the national procurement, SLTs should seek support from local procurement teams to review the mask certifications and documentation. RCSLT will continue to lobby for transparent masks that are of the right standard and right quality to protect speech and language therapists and those with whom we work at all times.]

Available [here](#)

Knowledge Mobilisation

Systematically capturing and acting on insights from front-line staff: the 'Bedside Learning Coordinator' [Shand J. *BMJ Quality & Safety*]

[The Bedside Learning Coordinator' (BLC) role at the Nightingale provided a mechanism to add additional internal data from front-line staff to be analysed alongside routine data to create richer insights for improvement. Investing in a mechanism to gather, act on and learn from staff, patient and relative insights can provide voice and agency for staff and deliver tangible improvement as part of a wider system of rapid, reliable learning.]

Available [here](#)

Building learning organizational culture during COVID-19 outbreak: a national study [Alonazi WB. *BMC Health Services Research*]

[Data were collected via official emails sent to 1500 healthcare professionals working in front line at four sets of hospitals in Saudi Arabia. The findings concluded that although intrinsic factors like staff empowerment, dialogues and inquiry, and internal learning culture, revealed central roles, still the most crucial factors toward the development of learning organization culture were extrinsic ones including connections, embed system and collaborations.]

Available [here](#)

LGBT+ Community

Supporting the LGBTQ+ population through COVID-19 and beyond [NHS Confederation]

[Following a scoping roundtable and consultation with the Health and Care LGBTQ+ Leaders Network members NHS Confederation Mental Health Network have developed a series of recommendations to help healthcare leaders, service designers and commissioners ensure their services and workplaces meet the needs of the LGBTQ+ population.]

Available [here](#)

Long COVID

Post-acute effects of SARS-CoV-2 infection in individuals not requiring hospital admission: a Danish population-based cohort study [Lund LC. *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*]

[Individuals admitted to hospital for COVID-19 might have persisting symptoms (so-called long COVID) and delayed complications after discharge. The absolute risk of severe post-acute complications after SARS-CoV-2 infection not requiring hospital admission is low. However, increases in visits to general practitioners and outpatient hospital visits could indicate COVID-19 sequelae.]

Available [here](#)

3-month, 6-month, 9-month, and 12-month respiratory outcomes in patients following COVID-19-related hospitalisation: a prospective study [Wu X. *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine*]

[The consequences of COVID-19 in those who recover from acute infection requiring hospitalisation have yet to be clearly defined. In most patients who recovered from severe COVID-19, dyspnoea scores and exercise capacity improved over time; however, in a subgroup of patients at 12 months we found evidence of persistent physiological and radiographic change. A unified pathway for the respiratory follow-up of patients with COVID-19 is required.]

Available [here](#)

Addressing nutrition in the road map of recovery for those with long COVID-19.

Holdoway A. *British Journal of Community Nursing* 2021;26(5):218-222.

[Key Points: Poor nutrition is reflected in the high incidence of unintentional weight loss among COVID-19 survivors; Nutrition screening for patients with COVID-19 should not be overlooked; it is paramount to identifying malnutrition risk associated with unintentional weight loss and guiding subsequent advice; Dietary advice combined with strength training for those with muscle loss and weakness, should be an integral part of the care for those severely affected by COVID-19...]

Available [here](#). NHS OpenAthens account required

National guidance for post-COVID syndrome assessment clinics [NHS England and NHS Improvement]

[Commissioning guidance to assist local healthcare systems to establish post-COVID assessment clinics for patients experiencing long-term health effects following COVID-19 infection.]

Available [here](#). Last updated 26th April

Midwifery

Part 2: COVID-19 and knowledge for midwifery practice—impact and care of the baby [Green J. *British Journal of Midwifery*]

[It is well-known that newborn infants are more susceptible to infection due to their immature host defence mechanisms. However, in relation to the COVID-19 virus, it appears that the naivete of the neonatal immune system has afforded some protection against the inflammatory response experienced by adolescents and adults. That said, COVID-19 and the associated changes in practice and policies implemented in response to the pandemic, has had an impact on the care of the baby.]

Available [here](#). NHS OpenAthens account required

Minimising Risks of COVID-19 across Maternity Services [case study published by NICE]

[This project aims to share the challenges and learning in developing local strategies to minimise the risks of COVID-19 across Maternity Services in Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB), North Wales. COVID-19 is a major public health threat and many asymptomatic infected pregnant women will present for care.]

Available [here](#)

Mortality

Changes in in-hospital mortality in the first wave of COVID-19: a multicentre prospective observational cohort study using the WHO Clinical Characterisation Protocol UK [Docherty AB. *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine*]

[The reduction in in-hospital mortality in patients with COVID-19 during the first wave in the UK was partly accounted for by changes in the case-mix and illness severity. A significant reduction in in-hospital mortality was associated with differences in respiratory support and critical care use. The remaining improvement in in-hospital mortality is not explained by these factors, and could be associated with changes in community behaviour, inoculum dose, and hospital capacity strain.]

Available [here](#)

Prognosis

Biomarkers and outcomes of COVID-19 hospitalisations: systematic review and meta-analysis [Malik P. *BMJ Evidence-Based Medicine*]

[Our study found a significant association between lymphopenia, thrombocytopenia and elevated levels of CRP, PCT, LDH, D-dimer and COVID-19 severity. The results have the potential to be used as an early biomarker to improve the management of COVID-19 patients, by identification of high-risk patients and appropriate allocation of healthcare resources in the pandemic.]

Available [here](#). NHS OpenAthens account required.

Speech and Language Therapy

Speech and language therapist-led endoscopic procedures: considerations for all patients during the COVID-19 pandemic [Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists]

[This SLT-led endoscopy guidance has been revised further (following the previous October 2020 update). Through the pandemic our knowledge and understanding of the risks associated with endoscopy has now facilitated a return to ‘business as usual’ with key additional precautions in place. These mainly relate to personal protective equipment (PPE), infection, prevention and control (IPC) and training needs.]

Available [here](#). Updated April

Vaccination

Management of vaccine-induced thrombosis and thrombocytopenia [Royal College of Surgeons]

[There are increasing reports of a rare adverse event of thrombosis and thrombocytopenia following the first dose of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, a syndrome labelled vaccine-induced thrombotic thrombocytopenia syndrome (VITT). The colleges and surgical specialty associations have produced guidance on the features and management of VITT, taking into account vascular, gastrointestinal and neurosurgical considerations.]

Available [here](#)

New research into Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy: Family conversations could be key to increasing take up in B.A.M.E communities, suggests poll [British Red Cross]

[The British Red Cross has published new research exploring the issue of vaccine hesitancy in the UK, in particular among BAME communities.]

Available [here](#)

Effectiveness of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines on covid-19 related symptoms, hospital admissions, and mortality in older adults in England: test negative case-control study [Lopez Bernal J. BMJ]

[Vaccination with either one dose of BNT162b2 or ChAdOx1-S was associated with a significant reduction in symptomatic covid-19 in older adults, and with further protection against severe disease. Both vaccines showed similar effects. Protection was maintained for the duration of follow-up (>6 weeks). A second dose of BNT162b2 was associated with further protection against symptomatic disease. A clear effect of the vaccines against the B.1.1.7 variant was found.]

Available [here](#)

COVID-19: Vaccine-induced immune thrombotic thrombocytopenia (VITT) [evidence summary from UpToDate]

[The exact incidence of VITT is unknown, but it appears to be rare. Despite the very low incidence, mass vaccination of many millions of individuals has resulted in several hundred patients developing this condition, as discussed below. Thus, clinicians need to be aware of presenting features and appropriate evaluation and management, which are rapidly evolving and are discussed here.

Available [here](#). Last updated 7th May

Vaccines highly effective against B.1.617.2 variant after 2 doses [Public Health England]

[New study by PHE shows for the first time that 2 doses of the COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective against the B.1.617.2 variant first identified in India.]

Available [here](#)

KnowledgeShare Evidence Alerts

KnowledgeShare contains many updates on COVID-19 that can be accessed from the KnowledgeShare website without a password. If you'd like to receive these by email (along with updates on any other topics of interest) please complete the [form](#).

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