

NIHR Greater Manchester PSTRC

Plain English Publication Summary

Publication: [Beyond the control of the care home: A meta-ethnography of qualitative studies of Infection Prevention and Control in residential and nursing homes for older people](#)

Publication details (Vancouver format)

Daker-White, G, Panagioti, M, Giles, S, et al. Beyond the control of the care home: A meta-ethnography of qualitative studies of Infection Prevention and Control in residential and nursing homes for older people. *Health Expect.* 2021; 1- 12.

What are the most important findings/conclusions in this paper? Why are they important?

This research identified that one of the challenges faced by care homes is uncovering how an outbreak of infection begins. Also, once the infection begins to spread, it is not always easy to identify who is responsible for controlling it. High staff turnover was also found to be an additional challenge. The need to bring in external healthcare professionals, such as GPs, to diagnose or treat an infection affects Infection Prevention and Control.

Regular training of staff could support them to make sure Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) is practiced properly in care homes. However, the success of this would depend on commitment from care home managers, as well as improvements being made within care homes.

What did you do?

Our new study looked at the ways infection is controlled in care homes for older people. It involved analysing data and research that was done between 2007 and 2020, before the COVID-19 pandemic. We wanted to understand how viruses spread in care homes and to find out how this can be changed, both now and in the future. We also looked at reasons why IPC doesn't always stop viral infections from spreading in care homes and how IPC can be improved to make care homes safer places for older people.

Why did you conduct this research?

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how important it is to manage the spread of infection in care homes. Care homes provide care to some of the oldest, frailest and most vulnerable members of society, who are already at a higher risk of developing infections. Understanding what care homes can do to try and reduce the risk of developing infections is important. It is also important to make sure they can find an acceptable balance between safety and quality of life for those living in care facilities. This is not only in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, but for the future when some of the current restrictions end.

What was known before your paper was published?

In England, the government's policy on the discharge of patients from hospitals into care homes has been used to explain how COVID-19 spreads through care homes. However, we believe this is only part of the story, as less attention has been given to the role of IPC.

What is next? What is the potential impact of the work in this paper? What will change as a result of this paper (or the study it describes)?

The findings from this study show that if effective IPC is followed by owners, managers and the staff working in care home settings, there should be an improvement in the safety and welfare of care home residents.

Our research has identified how important it is to understand the unique challenges care homes face regarding IPC. We believe that frequent staff training in IPC is essential to help improve safety for care home residents and we look forward to seeing these recommendations being acted upon.

A strength of the study was that the voices of people with lived experience of care homes and their family members or carers were listened to, and their suggestions were included in the recommendations.

Does this paper link in to a particular study / project? If so, please summarise the study and explain how this paper has improved understanding, or will move the study forward.

This study is one part of a larger piece of work that aims to make hospital transfers safer for older people living in care homes. This study has improved our understanding of how to prevent infections when people that live in care homes are transferred to or from hospitals. This understanding will help us to design an intervention that will make hospital transfers safer.