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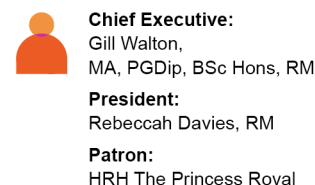
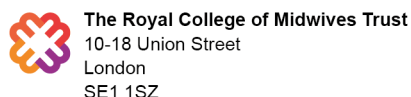
Search Pack PN194

Coronavirus (COVID-19) - postnatal health and care

Records on the impact of COVID-19 on the health and care of women and their families in the postnatal period. Includes the transition to parenthood and experiences of new parents during the pandemic. Does not include COVID-19 in pregnancy (P200), COVID-19 in the neonate or infant feeding during the pandemic (PN193); the impact of coronavirus on midwives (M95); or COVID-19 in labour, birth and the impact on intrapartum care (L69).

Date created: 04/02/2025

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**PN194 - Coronavirus (COVID-19) - postnatal health and care
(249)**

2025-03744

Exploring women's postpartum experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic: A mixed-method analysis. Maloney CA, Trimm A, Miller-Graff LE (2025), Midwifery vol 143, April 2025, 104311

Problem

While studies across the United States have explored how the perinatal period was affected by COVID-19, most studies have focused on pregnancy and delivery rather than on women's postpartum experiences.

Background

Postpartum is a critical period of development for mothers and newborns, with factors such as maternal mental health and quality of mother-infant bonding playing instrumental roles in children's socioemotional outcomes. Yet, COVID-19 served as a significant stressor for many women and acted as a barrier to receiving postpartum supports.

Aim

The current mixed-method analysis further elucidates women's postpartum experiences during COVID-19.

Method

New mothers (N = 20) completed interviews on how the pandemic impacted their postpartum experience, as well as a survey about mental health and mother-infant bonding.

Findings

Thematic analysis of interview data identified four themes: Uncertainty surrounding medical care and hospital policies; Lack of connection with social supports; Increased family bonding; Access to community resources. Survey data indicated 57.9 % of participants experienced anxiety symptoms, 68.4 % experienced depressive symptoms, and 36.8 % experienced some bonding difficulty. When evaluated together, it was found that women who endorsed time away from children during hospital stays had significantly lower postpartum anxiety and less difficulty bonding compared to women who did not endorse this subtheme, while women who reported isolation from leisure activities had significantly greater difficulty with bonding.

Conclusion

The study highlights the importance of information sharing around community resources and indicates a need for further exploration of how various forms of social support (e.g., immediate family vs. broader networks) impact the wellbeing of postpartum women. (Author)

2025-03280

I will always remember this time: supporting parents during the pandemic. Alexandra-Troy S (2021), Association for Improvements in Maternity Services (AIMS) vol 33, no 4, 2021, pp 11-14

Suzu Alexandra-Troy discusses the ups and downs of taking her sessions online during lockdown (Author)

Full URL: <https://www.aims.org.uk/journal/item/covid-pregnancy-support>

2025-02820

High-Income Postpartum Family Planning & COVID-19. FIGO Postpartum IUD (PPIUD) Initiative (2020), FIGO Newsletter 3 August 2020

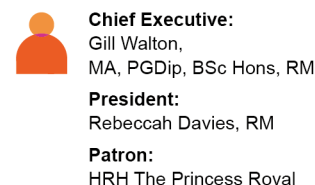
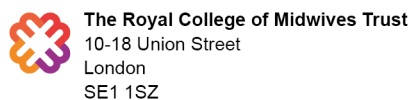
Anita Makins, Director of FIGO's Postpartum IUD (PPIUD) Initiative, argues that the provision of postpartum contraceptive services should be made a priority in high-income settings. (MB)

Full URL: <https://www.figo.org/news/high-income-postpartum-family-planning-covid-19>

2025-02139

Change in Postpartum Visit and Contraception Rates Pre-COVID-19 to Post-Lockdown in Six U.S. Federally Qualified Health Centers. Campbell RK, Gray E, Caskey R, et al (2025), Journal of Women's Health 7 February 2025, online

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Background: Postpartum care, including contraception, benefits maternal health and decreases mortality, which increased in the United States with COVID-19. Pandemic disruptions to postpartum health care access in vulnerable populations are not well understood. We utilize electronic health record (EHR) data for prenatal patients (n = 2,265) at six urban Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) from one year prepandemic (January 1, 2019) through one year after the first stay-at-home orders (“lockdown”) (March 31, 2021).

Objective: We investigated (1) changes in rates of postpartum visit (PPV) and postpartum contraception receipt in the post-lockdown versus prepandemic periods and (2) characteristics predictive of differential changes in PPV and contraception rates.

Materials and Methods: Visit and prescription records from EHR were used to classify if patients received PPV and most/moderately effective contraception within 60 days postpartum, analyzed separately and as a composite variable: PPV and contraception, PPV only, or no PPV. Risk differences comparing post-lockdown with pre-COVID-19 pandemic were estimated using binomial regression and generalized logistic regression models adjusted for age, race/ethnicity, language, and clinical site. Effect modification by sociodemographic and clinical covariates was examined.

Results: Total patient volume fell 21% in the post-lockdown versus pre-COVID-19 period. Rates of PPV decreased in absolute terms by 9.6 (95% confidence interval: -13.6, -5.6) and contraception by 8.1 (-13.3, -2.8) percentage points. After adjustment, PPV and contraception decreased by 9.3 percentage points (-13.1, -5.4), while PPV only was stable (-0.4 [-4.3, 3.6]).

Conclusions: These findings suggest a substantial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on postpartum care in FQHCs and community health centers. Supply and demand drivers require further examination to inform strategies to improve postpartum care access and subsequent maternal health outcomes. (Author)

2025-01832

Becoming a new parent during the pandemic: experiences of pregnancy, birth, and the postnatal period. Blakey E, Kuria D, McGillion M, et al (2025), BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth vol 25, no 39, January 2025

New parenthood in ordinary times can be a vulnerable and unpredictable time. The Covid-19 pandemic brought additional, unprecedented changes to policy and practice that drastically impacted on the experiences of parents. This study aimed to enhance our understanding of the experiences of new parents during the pandemic by qualitatively analysing their experiences. New parents from the UK (N = 303; female = 296; male = 7) responded to a survey conducted between 2021–2022 asking about experiences of pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period. Responses were analysed thematically, taking an interpretivist approach, and drawing across the three time periods. Parents reported conflicting feelings, negative feelings and silver linings cutting across eight themes, including: impacts on well-being, feeling without a village, changes to healthcare, atypical social experiences as a new parent, differential impacts on financial and working lives, conflicting feelings around digital technology, anger and worry regarding contradictory government guidance and recommendations for other parents. The findings offer much needed insights into the experiences of new parents during this time and provide some context to the documented elevated levels of perinatal mental health difficulties in new parents during the pandemic. We suggest key recommendations going forwards in the care of new parents now, and in times of future national crisis. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-024-07110-w>

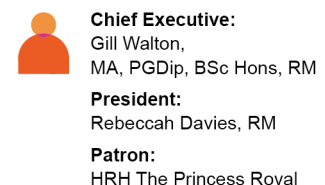
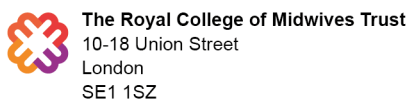
2025-01144

Effect of Covid-19 on maternal and child health services utilization in Ghana. Evidence from the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). Opoku-Boateng YN, Opoku-Asante E, Lagarde M, et al (2024), PLoS ONE vol 19, no 12, December 2024, e0311277

Introduction: Covid-19 has had devastating effect on health systems and health utilization globally. Maternal and newborn care were adversely affected but little or nothing is known about the impact it has caused to it. This study seeks to determine the effect of Covid-19 on healthcare utilization with specifics on Antenatal, Postnatal, Deliveries and Out-patient attendance.

Methods: The study uses secondary data obtained from the four (4) Claims Processing Centres of the National Health

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Insurance Authority. Through the use of convenient sampling, a total of 502 facilities were selected for inclusion in the research. The study used a longitudinal claims submitted from a cross-section of health facilities namely Community-Based Health Planning and Services, Maternity Homes, Health Centers, Clinics, Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Hospitals for Antenatal, Postnatal, Out-patient consultations and Delivery attendances from January 2018 to December 2021. Data before and during the Covid-19 pandemic were compared. Segmented regression analysis as an interrupted time series analysis was employed to assess the effect of the pandemic on utilization of services.

Results: The results indicate that Covid-19 had a significant impact on healthcare utilization in Ghana. Month-on-month, antenatal and out-patient utilization decreased by 21,948.21 and 151,342.40, respectively. Postnatal and delivery services saw an insignificant monthly increase of 37.76 and 1,795.83 from the onset of the covid-19 pandemic and the introduction of movement restrictions. This decline was observed across all care levels, except for Community-Based Health Planning and Services, which showed a slight increase. Also, the results indicate projected average misses of scheduled antenatal, postnatal, out-patient reviews, and deliveries at 21,037.75, 6,428.23, 141,395.30 and 4,745.63 patients respectively.

Conclusion: The study reveals that Covid-19 led to a decrease in utilization of healthcare which affected pregnant women and newborn care as well. It was evident from the results that community-based healthcare is more resilient and efficient in delivering healthcare amidst the pandemic. In our quest to achieve Universal Health Coverage by 2030, Ghana's health system should improve on the community-based healthcare system and include technology in its healthcare delivery for the people.

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Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0311277>

2025-01030

Everything feels just a little heavier, more wrought with implications, you know? – a mixed-methods study examining lifestyle behaviors, health, and well-being of pregnant and postpartum women during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Dube S, Asim M, Gonzalez J, et al (2025), BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth vol 25, no 9, January 2025

Background

While the striking impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health, health care access and lifestyle behaviors, including perceived health, diet, physical activity, and sleep has been reported, few studies have examined these domains jointly among pregnant and postpartum people in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

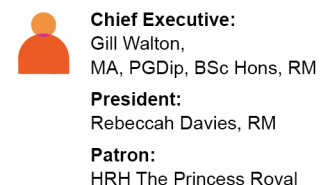
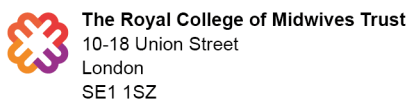
Methods

This mixed methods study was conducted among a subset of participants (n = 22) in a cohort study in Austin, Texas, who were pregnant or had recently delivered when the outbreak occurred. Measures were from the early second trimester up to 6 months postpartum. Findings from questionnaires were complemented by qualitative interviews during Spring/Summer 2020 regarding experiences during the early pandemic.

Results

From our quantitative data (n = 22), most participants reported that the pandemic generally had a negative impact on their lives (81%), that they shifted to eating more at home (71%), and that they were less physically active (62%). Five major themes emerged in our qualitative interviews (n = 22): (1) adaptation to pandemic restrictions; (2) psychosocial experiences, such as feelings of anxiety, guilt, sadness, isolation, and frustration; (3) health behavior changes; (4) health care experiences; and (5) where they obtained general and perinatal related pandemic information. Of those who completed both pregnancy and postpartum interviews (n = 8), all reported anxiety during both periods; however, those who delivered in Spring 2020 experienced more anxiety surrounding delivery and less social support than those who delivered in Summer 2020, who reported less anxiety surrounding hospital birth and greater social support,

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particularly after delivery.

Conclusions

Overall, our findings confirm prior evidence that the COVID-19 pandemic had a marked impact on stress, anxiety, and worries, as well as lifestyle behaviors among pregnant and postpartum people. Our work provides lessons for health care practitioners about support need for pregnant and postpartum persons amid societal disruption. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-024-07011-y>

2025-00895

Outcomes of pregnant and post-partum patients admitted to the intensive care unit with COVID-19 in Australia: An analysis of SPRINT-SARI Australia. Barnes E, Zhao P, Udy A, et al (2024), Australian and New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (ANZJOG) 9 December 2024, online

Background

Pregnant and post-partum (collectively peri-partum) women may be at increased risk of severe COVID-19 disease.

Aims

To describe the characteristics, interventions, and outcomes of peri-partum patients admitted to intensive care units (ICUs) in Australia with COVID-19.

Materials and methods

We conducted a prospective, multicentre observational study using the SPRINT-SARI Australia database across 63 ICUs in Australia. All women <45 years of age, admitted to a participating Australian ICU, with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 between 1 March 2020 and 1 June 2023 were included. Participants were categorised as either peri-partum, defined as pregnant or up to six weeks post-partum, or non-pregnant. The primary outcome was in-hospital mortality.

Results

A total of 737 eligible female patients were admitted to ICUs over the study period: 168/737 (23%) were peri-partum, while 569/737 (77%) were non-pregnant. The median age of peri-partum women was 31 (interquartile range (IQR) 27–36) years old, and median gestation was 28.0 (IQR 4–40) weeks. When compared to non-pregnant women, peri-partum women had lower rates of comorbidities (1.8% vs 14.4% $P < 0.001$), lower vaccination rates (27.4% vs 45.2%, $P < 0.001$), similar rates of mechanical ventilation, and greater use of tocilizumab (29.2% vs 4.0%, $P < 0.001$). Complications were low in both groups. In-hospital mortality was lower in peri-partum patients: 1/168 (0.6%) vs 24/569 (4.2%); $P = 0.04$.

Conclusions

Peri-partum patients made up ~25% of all women aged <45 years old admitted to Australian ICUs with COVID-19, and nearly 30% required mechanical ventilation. Despite lower vaccination rates in peri-partum patients, in-hospital mortality was lower than in non-pregnant patients. (Author)

2025-00787

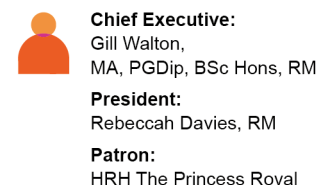
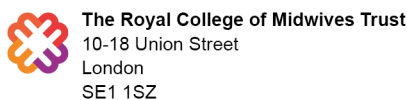
A Qualitative Study of Postpartum Women's Lived Experiences During COVID-19. Toledo C, Quidley-Rodriguez N, Cianelli R, et al (2024), Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health 3 December 2024, online

Introduction

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the state of Florida became the epicenter of the COVID-19 delta variant during the summer of 2021. There is limited knowledge on how the pandemic impacted postpartum women's lived experiences in the United States. The purpose of the study was to explore the lived experiences of postpartum women living in South Florida during the COVID-19 pandemic and their responses.

Methods

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A descriptive qualitative study design was used. Study participants included 26 postpartum women living in South Florida who had given birth to a live newborn from March 2020 to May 2022. We used purposeful sampling and social media recruitment methods. Sociodemographic information was collected using REDCap, and live face-to-face in-depth interviews were conducted on Webex using a semistructured questionnaire. Content analysis was used to analyze the research data and develop themes and subthemes.

Results

The first central theme, raising an infant during a pandemic, included 3 subthemes: (1) protecting the infant, (2) feeling isolated, and (3) food for thought. The second central theme, maternal needs during a pandemic, included 3 subthemes: (1) mental health needs, (2) support needs, and (3) health care needs.

Conclusion

Findings suggest women experienced significant challenges in caring for themselves and their infants during the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings highlight the need for policy reform that secures comprehensive and quality postpartum health care for women that includes mental health screenings. (Author)

2024-13763

Postpartum during a pandemic: Challenges of low-income individuals with healthcare interactions during COVID-19.

Gomez-Roas MV, Davis KM, Leziak K, et al (2022), PLoS ONE vol 17, no 5, May 2022, e0268698

Background

Changes to the healthcare system due to COVID-19 have altered care delivery during birth and the postpartum period, a transitional time that requires intensive healthcare support and that is complicated by well-established health disparities. Our objective was to identify additional challenges to healthcare interactions that emerged for low-income postpartum individuals during the pandemic.

Methods

This is a qualitative investigation of low-income postpartum individuals enrolled in a trial of postpartum care, who gave birth in the United States in the first three months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants completed in-depth semi-structured interviews that addressed healthcare experiences during and after birth, both for in-person and telemedicine encounters. Transcripts were analyzed using the constant comparative method.

Results

Of 46 eligible individuals, 87% (N = 40) completed an interview, with 50% identifying as non-Hispanic Black and 38% as Hispanic. Challenges were organized into three domains: unanticipated changes in the birth experience, delayed care, and perceived disadvantages of telemedicine. Changes in the birth experience addressed uncertainty about COVID-19 status, COVID-19 testing, separation from newborn, and visitor restrictions. Delayed care themes addressed logistical challenges, postpartum care, health maintenance, and pediatric care. Participants reported multiple telemedicine-related challenges, including difficulty establishing rapport with providers.

Conclusions

Understanding the challenges experienced by low-income peripartum individuals as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves is critical to informing guidelines and diminishing inequities in healthcare delivery. Potential solutions that may mitigate limitations to care in the pandemic include emphasizing shared decision-making in care processes and developing communication strategies to improve telemedicine rapport. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0268698>

2024-13453

Mothers' and caregivers' experiences of COVID-19 restrictions during postpartum hospitalisation: a cross-sectional survey in France. Louis S, Rousseau A, Mercier L, et al (2024), BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth vol 24, no 686, October 2024

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Background

Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 highlighting the importance of social distancing guidelines. Following a series of lockdowns and the widespread vaccination of the European population, many countries began to lift these restrictions. During this period, while some parents yearned for emotional support and family presence, others found that the solitude facilitated by the restrictions was beneficial for bonding and breastfeeding. In France, postnatal stays are generally longer than in other countries, and the limited availability of home-based follow-up care, combined with pandemic isolation measures, further complicated perspectives on visitation restrictions. Therefore, the objective of this study was to assess the satisfaction of mothers and caregivers regarding these visit restrictions in French maternity settings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods

We conducted two multicentre descriptive surveys across five French maternity wards (three in Paris and two in Lyon) from June 1st to July 15th, 2021. Participants included mothers, selected based on criteria such as French-speaking, at-term birth (≥ 37 weeks), and hospitalisation with their newborn, as well as caregivers working in the postpartum units. Satisfaction with visitation restrictions was assessed using a four-point Likert scale, which was then dichotomised into “mostly satisfied” versus “mostly dissatisfied” for the analysis. Multivariable logistic regression models were used to identify factors associated with satisfaction.

Results

We analysed complete responses from 430 of the 2,142 mothers (20.1%) and 221 of the 385 caregivers (57.4%) who participated during the study period. The majority of mothers (68.8%, $n = 296/430$) and caregivers (90.5%, $n = 200/221$) declare themselves satisfied with the policy of restricting visits to maternity wards. The main source of mother’s satisfaction came from a quieter stay, but they regretted the absence of their other children.

Conclusions

Maternity visit restriction policies were largely supported by mothers and caregivers, especially when partners and siblings were allowed. Revisiting these policies, along with the postpartum stay length, may improve care, though further evaluation in non-pandemic settings is needed. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-024-06854-9>

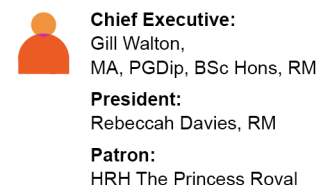
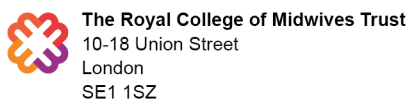
2024-12974

“Separated during the first hours”—Postnatal care for women and newborns during the COVID-19 pandemic: A mixed-methods cross-sectional study from a global online survey of maternal and newborn healthcare providers.

Semaan A, Dey T, Kikula A, et al (2022), PLoS Global Public Health vol 2, no 4, April 2022, e0000214

Routine postnatal care (PNC) allows monitoring, early detection and management of complications, and counselling to ensure immediate and long-term wellbeing of mothers and newborns; yet effective coverage is sub-optimal globally. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted availability and quality of maternal and newborn care despite established guidelines promoting continuity of essential services. We conducted a cross-sectional global online survey of 424 maternal and newborn healthcare providers from 61 countries, to explore PNC provision, availability, content and quality following the early phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. The questionnaire (11 languages), included four multiple-choice and four open-text questions on changes to PNC during the pandemic. Quantitative and qualitative responses received between July and December 2020 were analysed separately and integrated during reporting. Tightened rules for visiting postpartum women were reported in health facilities, ranging from shorter visiting hours to banning supportive companions and visitors. A quarter (26%) of respondents reported that mothers suspected/confirmed with COVID-19 were routinely separated from their newborns. Early initiation of breastfeeding was delayed due to waiting for maternal SARS-CoV-2 test results. Reduced provision of breastfeeding support was reported by 40% of respondents in high-income countries and 7% in low-income countries. Almost 60% reported that women were discharged earlier than usual and 27% perceived a reduction in attendance to outpatient PNC. Telemedicine and home visits were mostly reported in high-income countries to ensure safe care provision. Beyond the early phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, severe disruptions to content and quality of PNC continued to exist,

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whereas disruptions in availability and use were less commonly reported. Depriving women of support, reducing availability of PNC services, and mother-newborn separation could lead to negative long-term outcomes for women, newborns and families, and deny their rights to respectful care. Protecting these essential services is imperative to promoting quality woman-centred PNC during and beyond the pandemic.

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Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgph.0000214>

2024-12053

Perinatal care and breastfeeding education during the COVID-19 pandemic: Perspectives from Kenyan mothers and healthcare workers. Ickes SB, Lemein H, Arensen K, et al (2023), *Maternal & Child Nutrition* vol 19, no 4, October 2023, e13500

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on breastfeeding (BF) practices in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) is not well understood. Modifications in BF guidelines and delivery platforms for breastfeeding education during the COVID-19 pandemic are hypothesised to have affected BF practices. We aimed to understand the experiences with perinatal care, BF education and practice among Kenyan mothers who delivered infants during the COVID-19 pandemic. We conducted in-depth key informant interviews with 45 mothers who delivered infants between March 2020 and December 2021, and 26 health care workers (HCW) from four health facilities in Naivasha, Kenya. While mothers noted that HCWs provided quality care and BF counselling, individual BF counselling was cited to be less frequent than before the pandemic due to altered conditions in health facilities and COVID-19 safety protocols. Mothers stated that some HCW messages emphasised the immunologic importance of BF. However, knowledge among mothers about the safety of BF in the context of COVID-19 was limited, with few participants reporting specific counselling or educational materials on topics such as COVID-19 transmission through human milk and the safety of nursing during a COVID-19 infection. Mothers described COVID-19-related income loss and lack of support from family and friends as the major challenge to practising exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) as they wished or planned. COVID-19 restrictions limited or prevented mothers' access to familial support at facilities and at home, causing them stress and fatigue. In some cases, mothers reported job loss, time spent seeking new means of employment and food insecurity as causes for milk insufficiency, which contributed to mixed feeding before 6 months. The COVID-19 pandemic created changes to the perinatal experience for mothers. While messages about the importance of practising EBF were provided, altered HCW education delivery methods, reduced social support and food insecurity limit EBF practices for mothers in this context. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1111/mcn.13500>

2024-11346

Length of Postpartum Hospital Stays During COVID-19: Findings From a Convergent Parallel Mixed-Methods Study.

Correia RH, Greyson D, Carruthers A, et al (2024), *JOGC [Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada]* vol 46, no 10, October 2024, 102637

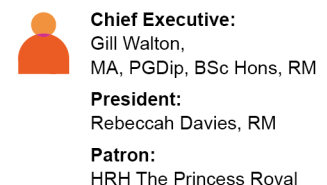
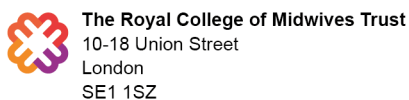
Objectives

We examined the length of postpartum hospitalization for live births during the COVID-19 pandemic and explored how pandemic circumstances influenced postpartum hospital experiences.

Methods

We conducted a cross-provincial, convergent parallel mixed-methods study in Ontario (ON) and British Columbia (BC), Canada. We included birthing persons (BPs) with an in-hospital birth in ON from 1 January to 31 March 2019, 2021, and 2022 (quantitative), and BPs (≥18 years) in ON or BC from 1 May 2020 to 1 December 2021 (qualitative). We linked multiple health administrative datasets at ICES and developed multivariable linear regression models to examine the length of hospital stay (quantitative). We conducted semi-structured interviews using qualitative descriptive to understand experiences of postpartum hospitalization (qualitative). Data integration occurred during design and interpretation.

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Results

Relative to 2019, postpartum hospital stays decreased significantly by 3.29 hours (95% CI –3.58 to –2.99; 9.2% reduction) in 2021 and 3.89 hours (95% CI –4.17 to –3.60; 9.0% reduction) in 2022. After adjustment, factors associated with shortened stays included: giving birth during COVID-19, social deprivation (more ethnocultural diversity), midwifery care, multiparity, and lower newborn birth weight. Postpartum hospital experiences were impacted by risk perception of COVID-19 infection, clinical care and hospital services/amenities, visitor policies, and duration of stay.

Conclusions

Length of postpartum hospital stays decreased during COVID-19, and qualitative findings described unmet needs for postpartum services. The integration of large administrative and interview data expanded our understanding of observed differences. Future research should investigate the impacts of shortened stays on health service outcomes and personal experiences. (Author)

2024-10451

Demographic and epidemiological characteristics of pregnant and postpartum women who died from severe acute respiratory syndrome in Brazil: A retrospective cohort study comparing COVID-19 and nonspecific etiologic causes.

Franco VF, Rodrigues AS, Junior ERR, et al (2022), PLoS ONE vol 17, no 10, October 2022, e0274797

The objective of this study is to compare the demographic characteristics and symptoms in pregnant and postpartum women who died from Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) caused by COVID-19 or by nonspecific cause in different states of Brazil. This is a retrospective cohort study and the analysis was conducted on SARS death records between 02/16/2020 and 04/17/2021, obtained from the Information System for the Epidemiological Surveillance of Influenza (Sistema de Informação da Vigilância Epidemiológica da Gripe, SIVEP-Gripe). Pregnant and postpartum women, aged between 10 and 55 years, who died from SARS, were included and classified into two groups: SARS due to confirmed COVID-19 or SARS due to nonspecific cause. The cases were analyzed according to the women's demographic and epidemiological characteristics, clinical symptoms, risk factors and disease evolution. As results, 19,333 pregnant and postpartum women were identified. From these, 1,279 died (1,026 deaths from COVID-19 and 253 deaths from SARS with nonspecific cause). The groups showed significant differences in age, education, race, and occurrence of obesity and chronic lung disease. The group of women who died from confirmed COVID-19 presented a significantly higher frequency of symptoms of fever, cough, fatigue, loss of taste, and loss of smell, as well as a higher rate of admission to the intensive care unit (ICU). Data analysis draws attention to the high number of cases of SARS without a causal diagnosis, the low access to ICU and orotracheal intubation (OTI), which might be explained by the demographic and regional inequalities in the access to healthcare. (Author)

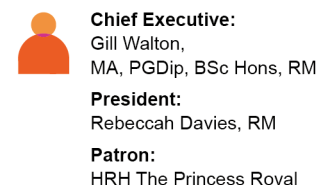
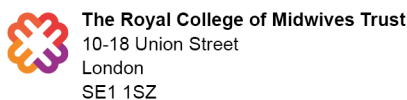
Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0274797>

2024-10304

Associations between breastfeeding intention, breastfeeding practices and post-natal depression during the COVID-19 pandemic: A multi-country cross-sectional study. Chang Y-S, Li KMC, Chien L-Y, et al (2023), Maternal & Child Nutrition vol 19, no 1, January 2023, e13450

Associations between breastfeeding intention, duration and post-natal depression (PND) have been shown in pre-COVID-19 studies. However, studies during COVID-19 have not examined the associations between breastfeeding intention, breastfeeding practices, and PND in an international sample of post-natal women, taking into consideration COVID-19 related factors. This is the first study to address this gap as both PND and breastfeeding may be affected by COVID-19, and have important long-term effects on women's and infant's health. A cross-sectional internet-based survey was conducted with 3253 post-natal women from five countries: Brazil, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and the United Kingdom from July to November 2021. The results showed that women who intended to breastfeed during pregnancy had lower odds of having PND than women who did not intend to. Women who had no breastfeeding intention but actually breastfed had greater odds (AOR 1.75) of having PND than women who intended to breastfeed and actually breastfed. While there was no statistical significance in expressed breast milk feeding in multivariable logistic regression models, women who had shorter duration of breastfeeding directly on breast than they planned had greater odds (AOR 1.58) of having PND than those who breastfed longer than they planned even after adjusting for

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covariates including COVID-19-related variables. These findings suggested the importance of working with women on their breastfeeding intention. Tailored support is required to ensure women's breastfeeding needs are met and at the same time care for maternal mental health during and beyond the pandemic. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1111/mcn.13450>

2024-10117

Diet and food insecurity among mothers, infants, and young children in Peru before and during COVID-19: A panel survey. Pradeilles R, Pareja R, Creed-Kanashiro HM, et al (2022), *Maternal & Child Nutrition* vol 18, no 3, July 2022, e13343

The COVID-19 pandemic may impact diet and nutrition through increased household food insecurity, lack of access to health services, and poorer quality diets. The primary aim of this study is to assess the impact of the pandemic on dietary outcomes of mothers and their infants and young children (IYC) in low-income urban areas of Peru. We conducted a panel study, with one survey prepandemic (n = 244) and one survey 9 months after the onset of COVID-19 (n = 254). We assessed breastfeeding and complementary feeding indicators and maternal dietary diversity in both surveys. During COVID-19, we assessed household food insecurity experience and economic impacts of the pandemic on livelihoods; receipt of financial or food assistance, and uptake of health services. Almost all respondents (98.0%) reported adverse economic impacts due to the pandemic and 46.9% of households were at risk of moderate or severe household food insecurity. The proportion of households receiving government food assistance nearly doubled between the two surveys (36.5%–59.5%). Dietary indicators, however, did not worsen in mothers or IYC. Positive changes included an increase in exclusive breastfeeding <6 months (24.2%–39.0%, $p < 0.008$) and a decrease in sweet food consumption by IYC (33.1%–18.1%, $p = 0.001$) and mothers (34.0%–14.6%, $p < 0.001$). The prevalence of sugar-sweetened beverage consumption remained high in both mothers (97%) and IYC (78%). In sum, we found dietary indicators had not significantly worsened 9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic. However, several indicators remain suboptimal and should be targeted in future interventions. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1111/mcn.13343>

2024-09843

Remote provision of breastfeeding support and education: Systematic review and meta-analysis. Gavine A, Marshall J, Buchanan P, et al (2022), *Maternal & Child Nutrition* vol 18, no 2, April 2022, e13296

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to a substantial increase in remotely provided maternity care services, including breastfeeding support. It is, therefore, important to understand whether breastfeeding support provided remotely is an effective method of support. To determine if breastfeeding support provided remotely is an effective method of support. A systematic review and meta-analysis were conducted. Twenty-nine studies were included in the review and 26 contributed data to the meta-analysis. Remotely provided breastfeeding support significantly reduced the risk of women stopping exclusive breastfeeding at 3 months by 25% (risk ratio [RR]: 0.75, 95% confidence interval [CI]: 0.63, 0.90). There was no significant difference in the number of women stopping any breastfeeding at 4–8 weeks (RR: 1.10, 95% CI: 0.74, 1.64), 3 months (RR: 0.89, 95% CI: 0.71, 1.11), or 6 months (RR: 0.91, 95% CI: 0.81, 1.03) or the number of women stopping exclusive breastfeeding at 4–8 weeks (RR: 0.86, 95% CI: 0.70, 1.07) or 6 months (RR: 0.93, 95% CI: 0.85, 1.0). There was substantial heterogeneity of interventions in terms of mode of delivery, intensity, and providers. This demonstrates that remote interventions can be effective for improving exclusive breastfeeding at 3 months but the certainty of the evidence is low. Improvements in exclusive breastfeeding at 4–8 weeks and 6 months were only found when studies at high risk of bias were excluded. They are also less likely to be effective for improving any breastfeeding. Remote provision of breastfeeding support and education could be provided when it is not possible to provide face-to-face care. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1111/mcn.13296>

2024-09392

Parental leave and returning to work during the COVID-19 pandemic: an exploratory mixed-methods study. Saab N, Holton S, Wright A, et al (2024), *Australian Health Review* vol 48, no 4, 2024, pp 396-405

Objective

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This study explored the experiences, concerns and perceptions of hospital clinical staff returning to work after parental leave during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods

An exploratory mixed-methods study was performed. Eligible staff employed at a large metropolitan tertiary health service in Melbourne, Australia, completed an ethics-approved anonymous online cross-sectional survey and/or participated in an interview between February and June 2021.

Results

Ninety-six staff completed a survey and four participated in an interview. Staff reported both positive and negative aspects of being on parental leave during the COVID-19 pandemic including disappointment their leave had not gone as planned; feeling isolated from family and friends; wanting greater communication from their health service; appreciating the increased opportunities for them and their partner to be at home and bond with their baby; and concerns about returning to work such as limited knowledge of COVID-19 workplace policies and potentially infecting their baby and family.

Conclusions

The COVID-19 pandemic had a unique impact on the parental leave and return to work experiences of hospital clinical staff. The findings suggest that staff would benefit from formal return to work policies and programs including regular contact with their manager while on parental leave and workplace reorientation on their return, especially during events such as a pandemic. (Author)

2024-09317

Care, connection, and social distancing: The challenges of baby loss during the COVID-19 pandemic in Aotearoa New Zealand. Bradford BF, Cronin RS, Popoola T, et al (2024), Women and Birth: Journal of the Australian College of Midwives vol 37, no 4, July 2024, 101622

Problem

The COVID-19 pandemic hindered access to routine healthcare globally, prompting concerns about possible increases in pregnancy loss and perinatal death.

Background

PUDDLES is an international collaboration exploring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on parents who experience pregnancy loss and perinatal death in seven countries, including Aotearoa New Zealand.

Aim

To explore parents' experiences of access to healthcare services and support following baby loss during the COVID-19 pandemic in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Methods

We conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 26 bereaved parents, including 20 birthing mothers, and six non-birthing parents (one mother and five fathers). Types of loss included 15 stillbirths, four late miscarriages, and one neonatal death. Participant ethnicities were broadly representative of Aotearoa New Zealand's multi-ethnic society. Data were analysed using Template Analysis.

Findings

Analysis revealed five themes relating to pandemic impact on bereaved parent's experiences. These were: 'Distanced and Impersonal care'; 'Navigating Hospital Rules'; 'Exclusion of Non-birthing Parents'; 'Hindered Access to Social Support'; and 'Continuity of Relational Care'.

Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated isolation of bereaved parents through perceived impersonal care by healthcare professionals and restrictions on movement hindered access to social and cultural support. Compassionate bending of the rules by healthcare professionals and community postnatal visits by continuity of care midwives following the bereavement appeared to be mitigating factors.

Conclusion

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Social isolation is an added challenge for parents experiencing baby loss during a pandemic, which may be mitigated by flexible and compassionate care from healthcare professionals, especially continuity of care midwives. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wombi.2024.101622>

2024-09257

Maternity care changes and postpartum mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic: a Spanish cross-sectional study. Fuente-Moreno M, Garcia-Terol C, Domínguez-Salas S, et al (2024), *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology* vol 42, no 4, 2024, pp 753-768

Background

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic led to abrupt changes in maternity care, but the impact of these changes has not yet been deeply evaluated. This study aimed to assess the impact of the unexpected changes in maternity care due to the COVID-19 pandemic on postpartum mental health (depression, anxiety and posttraumatic stress disorder).

Methods

A cross-sectional, web-based study was conducted in Spain during the second half of 2020. The eligibility criteria were women ≥ 18 years with a child ≤ 6 months. The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS), the Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 Screener (GAD-7) and a subset of the PTSD checklist (PCL-5) were used to assess postpartum mental health. Information regarding sociodemographic characteristics and maternity care changes was collected, and multivariate regression models were used.

Results

Among 1781 participants, 29.3% and 33% had clinically significant depressive and anxiety symptoms, respectively. The most prevalent unexpected changes reported were related to the exclusion of supportive relatives during birth and postpartum. Changes reported during birth showed a minor association with PTSD symptomatology, and those that occurred during the postpartum period were associated with clinical depression, anxiety and PTSD symptoms.

Conclusions

The unexpected changes in maternity care due to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially those that occurred during the postpartum period, increased the risk of mental health problems. (Author)

2024-09160

COVID-19: Relationship and Impact on Breastfeeding—A Systematic Review. Pérez-Bermejo M, Peris-Ochando B, Murillo-Llorente MT (2021), *Nutrients* vol 13, no 9, August 2021, p 2972

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus that was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the World Health Organization (WHO). One major problem faced is whether breastfeeding by mothers infected with the virus is safe. The objective of this work is to study the impact that the SARS-CoV-2 virus can have on breastfeeding, and whether the virus or antibodies can be transmitted from mother to child through milk. We carried out a systematic review of studies focusing on the impact of SARS-CoV-2 on breastfeeding by mothers infected with the virus. The bibliographic search was done through Medline (Pubmed), MedlinePlus and Google Scholar. From 292 records, the title and summary of each were examined according to the criteria, and whether they meet the selection criteria was also analysed. A total of 30 articles are included, of which 26 deal with the study of RNA virus in breastmilk and its involvement in breastfeeding and four on the study of SARS-CoV-2 antibodies in milk. Most studies have been conducted in China. Breastfeeding by mothers infected with SARS-CoV-2 is highly recommended for infants, if the health of the mother and the infant allow for it. Direct breastfeeding and maintaining appropriate protective measures should be encouraged. Should the mother's health condition not permit direct breastfeeding, infants should be fed with pumped breastmilk or donor milk. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu13092972>

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2024-09126

An Online Cross-Sectional Survey of Complementary Feeding Practices during the COVID-19 Restrictions in Poland.

Horvath A, Stróżyk A, Dziechciarz P, et al (2021), *Nutrients* vol 13, no 9, September 2021, p 3196

This cross-sectional online survey performed in Poland aimed to improve understanding of how COVID-19 pandemic restrictions affected complementary feeding practices among parents of infants aged 4 to 12 months. Self-selected parents were recruited through the internet. The anonymous questionnaire was opened during two intervals during COVID-19 restrictions. The primary outcome was an assessment of sources of information and infant feeding practices in the context of COVID-19 restrictions. Data from 6934 responders (92.2% mothers) were analyzed. Most responders received information from multiple sources, with other parents, family members, or friends being the most frequently reported (48.6%), followed by webinars and experts' recommendations (40.8%). COVID-19 restrictions largely did not impact the method of feeding, changes in feeding patterns, or complementary feeding introduction, although the latter was more likely to be impacted in families with average versus the best financial situations. Multivariate logistic regression analysis also most consistently showed that parents with a tertiary education and living in a city above 500 k were at higher odds of using webinars/experts' recommendations, internet/apps, and professional expert guides and lower odds of claiming no need to deepen knowledge. This study clarifies major issues associated with complementary feeding practices during the implementation of COVID-19 restrictions in Poland.

(Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu13093196>

2024-08905

Barriers to accessing post-pregnancy contraception in Brazil: The impact of COVID-19. Juliato CRT, Laporte M, Surita F, et al

(2024), *Best Practice & Research: Clinical Obstetrics and Gynaecology* vol 94, June 2024, 102482

The aim of our article is to discuss barriers associated with post-pregnancy contraception in Brazil during the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic. Socioeconomic differences in gaining access to long-acting reversible contraceptive (LARC) methods became greater during the COVID-19 pandemic. The inadequate distribution of existing resources and the reduced capacity for elective care meant that healthcare providers in family planning had to be reallocated to respond to COVID-19 emergencies. In Brazil, 74% of the population depends on the national health service (Sistema Unico de Saúde) including for the provision of free contraception. However, the only LARC method available at the public service is the copper-intrauterine device (IUD); implants and hormonal-IUDs are not available, except at some teaching hospitals. Contraceptive sales remained unmodified during the pandemic, which shows that the majority of the population used less effective or no contraceptive methods during this time. However, sales of implants and the hormonal-IUD increased significantly, indicating the inequity of the low-income portion of the society as only the wealthy can afford these. On the other hand, there was an increase in sales of emergency contraception. The uptake of postpartum IUDs and contraceptive implants at the selected teaching hospitals in which they were available was high during the COVID-19 pandemic as they were the only methods immediately available. In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic increased both inequality and social differences in gaining access to contraceptives. Postpartum and immediate post-abortion methods were also good strategies during the pandemic and were well accepted by the population. However, they were not offered by most services. (Author)


2024-08833

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on North American milk banks. Cohen M, Cassidy T (2021), *Maternal & Child Nutrition*


vol 17, no 4, October 2021, e13234

This study aims to understand the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on human milk banking services in North America, with a focus on the United States. We triangulated questionnaire data with interviews and text-based website data. Of the 30 human milk bank services from which data were obtained, the majority faced substantial internal organization change in terms of staffing and protocols and experienced financial hardship in particular because of decreases in donor human milk orders. At the same time, most banks reported an increase in their numbers of donors and in the volume of milk collected. These results show that the pandemic significantly affected the way in which many North American milk banks operate, some lactating mothers donate their milk and, at least during the first few

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months of the crisis, certain hospitals' donor human milk ordering patterns changed. It suggests in particular that stay-at-home orders and the turn to remote work created the potential for a surge in human milk available for donation as a number of parents no longer needed their surplus for their own children. Legal and policy reform should focus on replicating the positive effects of the pandemic on breastfeeding by guaranteeing paid parental leave and flexible work conditions. Initiatives should also aim at counteracting its negative effects by mandating the insurance coverage of donor human milk, supporting milk banks financially and, more generally, integrating lactation and human milk banking services within the health system. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1111/mcn.13234>

2024-08787

Relationship Between Frequency of Remote Visitation and Postpartum Depression in Mothers of Hospitalized Neonates During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Sotodate G, Onodera S, Okuyama I, et al (2024), JOGNN: Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic and Neonatal Nursing vol 53, no 5, September 2024, pp 554-561

Objective

To explore the relationship between symptoms of postpartum depression and the number of remote visitations among mothers of infants in the NICU.

Design

Retrospective cohort study.

Setting

NICU in a medical university in Iwate, Japan.

Participants

A total of 89 mothers of infants who spent more than 1 month in the NICU from June 2021 to December 2022.

Methods

Participants completed the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) at 4 days and 1 month after birth. We used a one-way analysis of variance with Tukey–Kramer or Games–Howell post hoc tests to examine differences in postpartum depression among three groups based on the frequency of remote visitation: frequent visitation, rare visitation, or no visitation.

Results

Of the 89 mothers, 41 scored 9 points or higher on the EPDS conducted 4 days after birth; among them, 14 did not visit, 13 rarely visited, and 14 frequently visited the NICU remotely through a web camera. The rare visitation group had significantly higher EPDS scores 1 month after birth ($M = 9.7$, $SD = 5.2$) than the frequent ($M = 5.3$, $SD = 3.7$) and no visitation ($M = 5.1$, $SD = 4.2$) groups ($p < .05$). The rare visitation group demonstrated lower improvement on the EPDS than the frequent and no visitation groups (nonsignificant).

Conclusion

It is unclear whether remote visitation reduces symptoms of postpartum depression; however, the frequency of remote visitation could be assessed to identify at-risk mothers in need of social support. (Author)

2024-08748

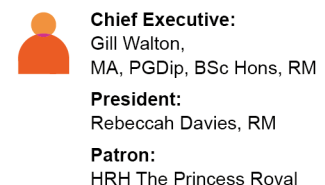
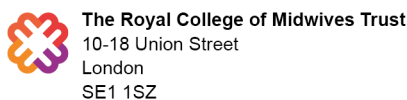
Exclusive breastfeeding practice during COVID-19 pandemic in West Java Indonesia: A cross-sectional study.

Apriningsih, Hanifah L, Nasrulloh N (2024), PLoS ONE vol 19, no 5, May 2024, e0303386

Background: The achievement towards 100% exclusive breastfeeding still a challenge in many countries despite adverse impacts due to the absence of exclusive breastfeeding. One consequence from the low practice of exclusive breastfeeding is malnutrition, including stunting that can be prevented by providing optimal food to infants, starting with providing exclusive breastfeeding from birth to 6 months of age. However, the practice of exclusive breastfeeding still low and it is suspected that this practice also decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study aims to analyze the determinants of exclusive breastfeeding in sub-urban areas during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods: This study using cross sectional design conducted from interviewing 206 mothers in 2022 who meet the inclusion criteria, consisted of breastfeeding their babies in the last 1 year and live in Sub-urban area in Depok City,

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West Java. Multiple binary logistic regression used to measure the association and strength between independent variables with the outcome variable. Independent variables with a p-value < 0.25 during the Chi-square test were included in the logistic regression model.

Results: Prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding and early initiation of breastfeeding (EIB) was 58.3% and 57.8% respectively. Factors associated with exclusive breastfeeding practices are education, employment status, knowledge and attitude about exclusive breastfeeding, self-efficacy in providing exclusive breastfeeding, EIB practice, and eating pattern. From multivariate analysis, it was found that the dominant factors to exclusive breastfeeding are EIB.

Conclusions: The study highlights the importance of improving exclusive breastfeeding practice through early initiation of breastfeeding, mother's knowledge, education and self-efficacy. Therefore, health promotion and education should emphasize the importance of those factors, supported by the health policy and massive campaign as a key success in exclusive breastfeeding.

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Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0303386>

2024-08674

Maintaining human milk bank services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic: A global response. Shenker N, Staff M, Vickers A, et al (2021), *Maternal & Child Nutrition* vol 17, no 3, July 2021, e13131

If maternal milk is unavailable, the World Health Organization recommends that the first alternative should be pasteurised donor human milk (DHM). Human milk banks (HMBs) screen and recruit milk donors, and DHM principally feeds very low birth weight babies, reducing the risk of complications and supporting maternal breastfeeding where used alongside optimal lactation support. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a range of challenges to HMBs worldwide. This study aimed to understand the impacts of the pandemic on HMB services and develop initial guidance regarding risk limitation. A Virtual Collaborative Network (VCN) comprising over 80 HMB leaders from 36 countries was formed in March 2020 and included academics and nongovernmental organisations. Individual milk banks, national networks and regional associations submitted data regarding the number of HMBs, volume of DHM produced and number of recipients in each global region. Estimates were calculated in the context of missing or incomplete data. Through open-ended questioning, the experiences of milk banks from each country in the first 2 months of the pandemic were collected and major themes identified. According to data collected from 446 individual HMBs, more than 800,000 infants receive DHM worldwide each year. Seven pandemic-related specific vulnerabilities to service provision were identified, including sufficient donors, prescreening disruption, DHM availability, logistics, communication, safe handling and contingency planning, which were highly context-dependent. The VCN now plans a formal consensus approach to the optimal response of HMBs to new pathogens using crowdsourced data, enabling the benchmarking of future strategies to support DHM access and neonatal health in future emergencies. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1111/mcn.13131>

2024-08002

Detectable Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in Human Breast Milk of a Mildly Symptomatic Patient With Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Tam PCK, Ly KM, Kernich ML, et al (2021), *Clinical Infectious Diseases* vol 72, no 1, 1 January 2021, pp 128-130

SARS-CoV-2 is a novel coronavirus and causative pathogen to the pandemic illness COVID-19. Although RNA has been detected in various clinical samples, no reports to date have documented SARS-CoV-2 in human milk. This case report describes an actively breastfeeding patient with COVID-19 infection with detectable viral RNA in human milk.

Keywords: COVID-19; SARS-CoV-2; breast-feeding; human milk.

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2024-07953

Becoming a Mother in the Shadow of COVID-19: A Grounded Theory Study. Aydin R (2022), *Journal of Psychosocial Nursing and Mental Health Services* vol 60, no 6, June 2022, pp 43-51

The current study aimed to explore the experiences and coping methods of primiparous (i.e., first-time) mothers during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. In-depth individual interviews were conducted with 17 primiparous mothers. Data were analyzed using Glaser's grounded theory analysis. A core theme emerged—Psychologically Worn Out Due to the Challenges of Becoming a Mother and Fear of Something Happening to the Baby—and was related to the following subthemes: postpartum mental health, maternal adjustment, maternal attachment, baby care, and coping methods. The study revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affects all aspects of motherhood in postpartum primiparous mothers. [*Journal of Psychosocial Nursing and Mental Health Services*, 60(6), 43-51.]. (Author)

2024-07192

Changes associated with the COVID-19 pandemic on postpartum screening results in Ontario, Canada: The healthy babies healthy children screening tool. Jin YH, Corsi DJ, Roberts NF, et al (2024), *Birth* vol 51, no 4, December 2024, pp 762-772

Background

Research on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mothers/childbearing parents has mainly been cross-sectional and focused on psychological symptoms. This study examined the impact on function using ongoing, systematic screening of a representative Ontario sample.

Methods

An interrupted time series analysis of repeated cross-sectional data from a province-wide screening program using the Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) tool assessed changes associated with the pandemic at the time of postpartum discharge from hospital. Postal codes were used to link to neighborhood-level data. The ability to parent or care for the baby/child and other psychosocial and behavioral outcomes were assessed.

Results

The co-primary outcomes of inability to parent or care for the baby/child were infrequently observed in the pre-pandemic (March 9, 2019–March 15, 2020) and initial pandemic periods (March 16, 2020–March 23, 2021) (parent 209/63,006 (0.33%)–177/56,117 (0.32%), care 537/62,955 (0.85%)–324/56,086 (0.58%)). Changes after pandemic onset were not observed for either outcome although a significant ($p = 0.02$) increase in slope was observed for inability to parent (with questionable clinical significance). For secondary outcomes, worsening was only seen for reported complications during labor/delivery. Significant improvements were observed in the likelihood of being unable to identify a support person to assist with care, need of newcomer support, and concerns about money over time.

Conclusions

There were no substantive changes in concerns about ability to parent or care for children. Adverse impacts of the pandemic may have been mitigated by accommodations for remote work and social safety net policies. (Author)

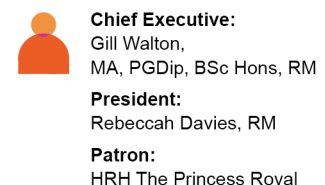
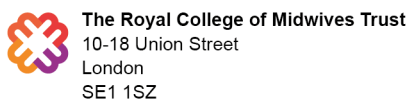
Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1111/birt.12835>

2024-06583

Distance, diffusion and the role of social media in a time of COVID contagion. Moukarzel S, del Fresno M, Bode L, et al (2020), *Maternal & Child Nutrition* vol 16, no 4, October 2020, e13025

On 11 March 2020, The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic and began announcing global

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health recommendations to decrease morbidity and mortality. Serendipitously, our team of health and social scientists captured data related to the diffusion of information about COVID-19 and breastfeeding and prompted this commentary. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1111/mcn.13025>

2024-05646

A longitudinal study of how women's prenatal and postnatal concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic predicts their infants' social–emotional development. Wiley KS, Fox MM, Gildner TE, et al (2023), *Child Development* vol 94, no 5, September/October 2023, pp 1356-1367

Infant social–emotional development may be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This study investigated associations between maternal pre- and postnatal pandemic-related concerns and social–emotional developmental risk. Data, collected in 2020–2021, came from 220 mothers (87% white, 6% Hispanic, 1% Black, 3% Asian, 1% American Indian, Mage = 32.46 years), and infants (53.18% male, Mage = 12.98 months) in the United States. Maternal postnatal pandemic-related concerns were associated with total risk scores ($B = 6.09$, p -value $< .001$) and offspring risk of scoring positive for problems related to inflexibility ($B = 4.07$, p -value = $.006$). The total score association was moderated by self-reported social support. Infants may be detrimentally impacted by the pandemic via maternal pandemic-related concerns. Maternal social support may buffer infants. (Author)

2024-05614

Postnatal care provided by UK midwifery units and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic: A survey using the UK Midwifery Study System (UKMidSS). Whyte I, Morelli A, Burns E, et al (2024), *Heliyon* vol 10, no 9, 15 May 2024, e29878

Background

Postnatal care supports healthy transitions to parenthood, mother–infant relationships, and breastfeeding establishment. Highly valued by women and families, it is often an area where parents report low satisfaction compared with other areas of maternity care. Most research about postnatal care is hospital-focused. Little is known about postnatal services provided by midwifery units, and any changes to this provision since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Aim

To describe postnatal care services provided by UK midwifery units and examine the extent to which provision was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods

We carried out a national survey online between January–June 2022 using the United Kingdom Midwifery Study System (UKMidSS). We asked about postnatal care provision in alongside midwifery units (AMU) and freestanding midwifery units (FMU), before the COVID-19 pandemic (July–December 2019) and shortly after restrictions were eased (January–June 2022).


Findings

Overall 131 (67 %) midwifery units responded to the survey, 76 (62 %) AMUs and 55 (75 %) FMUs, from 75 % of eligible NHS organisations. In 2022, 66 % of AMUs reported that women typically stayed for 6–24 h after a straightforward birth, while 70 % of FMUs reported typical postnatal stays of < 6 h. For 2019, significantly more FMUs reported providing outpatient postnatal services compared with AMUs (98 % vs 57 %, $p < 0.001$). From 2019 to 2022 there were significant reductions in partners staying overnight in midwifery units (65 %–42 %, $p < 0.001$), and in the provision of outpatient postnatal breastfeeding groups (23 %–15 %, $p < 0.01$) and other postnatal groups (7 %–2 %, $p = 0.02$).


Conclusions

The findings document the ways in which postnatal care provision differs between AMUs and FMU, with potential consequences for choice and experience for women. They are also congruent with evidence that maternity care was adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, including a reduction in postnatal visiting for partners and in postnatal

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2024-04145

Human Milk from Previously COVID-19-Infected Mothers: The Effect of Pasteurization on Specific Antibodies and Neutralization Capacity. van Keulen BJ, Romijn M, Bondt A, et al (2021), *Nutrients* vol 13, no 5, May 2021, 1645

Background: Since the outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), many put their hopes in the rapid availability of effective immunizations. Human milk, containing antibodies against syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), may serve as means of protection through passive immunization. We aimed to determine the presence and pseudovirus neutralization capacity of SARS-CoV-2 specific IgA in human milk of mothers who recovered from COVID-19, and the effect of pasteurization on these antibodies. Methods: This prospective case control study included lactating mothers, recovered from (suspected) COVID-19 and healthy controls. Human milk and serum samples were collected. To assess the presence of SARS-CoV-2 antibodies we used multiple complementary assays, namely ELISA with the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein (specific for IgA and IgG), receptor binding domain (RBD) and nucleocapsid (N) protein for IgG in serum, and bridging ELISA with the SARS-CoV-2 RBD and N protein for specific Ig (IgG, IgM and IgA in human milk and serum). To assess the effect of pasteurization, human milk was exposed to Holder (HoP) and High Pressure Pasteurization (HPP). Results: Human milk contained abundant SARS-CoV-2 antibodies in 83% of the proven cases and in 67% of the suspected cases. Unpasteurized milk with and without these antibodies was found to be capable of neutralizing a pseudovirus of SARS-CoV-2 in (97% and 85% of the samples respectively). After pasteurization, total IgA antibody levels were affected by HoP, while SARS-CoV-2 specific antibody levels were affected by HPP. Pseudovirus neutralizing capacity of the human milk samples was only retained with the HPP approach. No correlation was observed between milk antibody levels and neutralization capacity. Conclusions: Human milk from recovered COVID-19-infected mothers contains SARS-CoV-2 specific antibodies which maintained neutralization capacity after HPP. All together this may represent a safe and effective immunization strategy after HPP. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu13051645>

2024-04049

Health care providers' awareness of breastfeeding practice recommendations during COVID-19 pandemic and associated factors in Northwest Ethiopia, 2021: A multicenter study. Kebede AA, Taye BT, Wondie KY, et al (2021), *PLoS ONE* vol 16, no 12, 2021, e0260762

Background

Prevention of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) transmission to newborns is one of the basic components of perinatal care in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, scientific evidence is compulsory for evidence-based practices. However, there was a scarcity of evidence on health care providers' awareness of breastfeeding practice recommendations during the COVID-19 pandemic in Ethiopia, particularly in the study setting.

Objective

The study aimed at assessing healthcare providers' awareness of breastfeeding practice recommendations during the COVID-19 pandemic and associated factors among healthcare providers in northwest Ethiopia, 2021.

Methods

A multicenter cross-sectional study was conducted among 405 healthcare providers working in hospitals of Gondar province from November 15, 2020, to March 10, 2021. A simple random sampling technique was employed to select the study subjects. Data were collected via a structured-self-administered questionnaire. EPI INFO version 7.1.2 and SPSS version 25 were used for data entry and analysis respectively. Binary logistic regression analyses were done to identify associated factors and the adjusted odds ratio (AOR) with its 95% confidence interval (CI) at a p-value of <0.05 was used to declare significant association.

Results

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The healthcare providers' awareness of breastfeeding practice recommendations during the COVID-19 pandemic was 40.7% (95% CI: 35.9, 45.6). Working in a tertiary hospital (AOR = 3.69; 95% CI: 2.24, 6.08), using COVID-19 guideline updates (AOR = 3.34; 95% CI: 2.1, 5.3), being trained on COVID-19 (AOR = 2.78; 95% CI: 1.74, 4.47), owning a smartphone and/or a computer (AOR = 2.26; 95% CI: 1.39, 3.68), and perceiving that COVID-19 is dangerous (AOR = 1.78; 95% CI: 1.05, 3.01) were factors positively associated with healthcare providers' awareness of breastfeeding practice recommendations during the pandemic of COVID-19.

Conclusion

Only two in five healthcare providers were aware of recommendations on breastfeeding practice during the COVID-19 pandemic and related to information of accessibility information on COVID-19. Therefore, expanding COVID-19 related information through the provision of COVID-19 training and guidelines to all levels of hospitals would improve health care providers' awareness of breastfeeding practice recommendations amid the COVID-19 pandemic. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0260762>

2024-02964

Anti-SARS-CoV-2 Immunoglobulins in Human Milk after Coronavirus Disease or Vaccination—Time Frame and Duration of Detection in Human Milk and Factors That Affect Their Titers: A Systematic Review. Dimitroglou M, Sokou R, Iacovidou N, et al (2023), *Nutrients* vol 15, no 8, April 2023, 1905

Human milk (HM) of mothers infected with or vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2 contains specific immunoglobulins, which may protect their offspring against infection or severe disease. The time frame and duration after infection or vaccination, during which these immunoglobulins are detected in HM, as well as the major factors that influence their levels, have not been fully elucidated. This systematic review aimed to collect the existing literature and describe the immune response, specifically regarding the immunoglobulins in HM after COVID-19 disease or vaccination in non-immune women. We conducted a systematic search of PubMed and Scopus databases to identify studies published up until 19 March 2023. In total, 975 articles were screened, and out of which 75 were identified as being relevant and were finally included in this review. Infection by SARS-CoV-2 virus primarily induces an IgA immune response in HM, while vaccination predominantly elevates IgG levels. These immunoglobulins give HM a neutralizing capacity against SARS-CoV-2, highlighting the importance of breastfeeding during the pandemic. The mode of immune acquisition (infection or vaccination) and immunoglobulin levels in maternal serum are factors that seem to influence immunoglobulin levels in HM. Further studies are required to determine the impact of other factors, such as infection severity, lactation period, parity, maternal age and BMI on immunoglobulin level in HM. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu15081905>

2024-01821

Accessing health information during the COVID-19 pandemic: the experience of NHS maternity service users. Ambihapahan R, Chisnall G, Vindrola-Padros C, et al (2023), *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth* vol 23, no 851, December 2023

Background

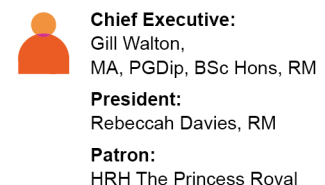
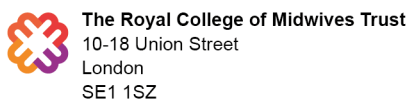
The COVID-19 pandemic caused various disruptions to NHS maternity services in England. Changes were made to antenatal and postnatal care and the way that information was shared with maternity service users during these times. Fewer face-to-face appointments, increased virtual appointments and changes in guidance about the suitability of the COVID-19 vaccine without appropriate information sharing and evidence caused concern.

Methods

This study took a blended inductive-deductive approach to secondary data analysis using a population subset of 16 from a wider study that sought to understand the impact of COVID-19 on maternity services in England. Participants of this study were aged 28–44 and gave birth using NHS maternity services in England. The data were collected and coded using Rapid Analysis Procedure sheets, which generated key themes, which are used here to structure the results.

Results

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Four main themes were generated from the analysis: 1) service restrictions to antenatal and postnatal appointments 2) access to information and changes to antenatal and postnatal care 3) inconsistencies in the implementation of government and NHS policy and 4) limited information about COVID-19 vaccine provided by NHS trusts and hesitancy in vaccine acceptance.

Conclusion

Participants experienced poor communication that affected their understanding of maternity service changes and there was limited general and maternal health information provided. Vaccine information was also inadequate, and participants expressed a desire for clearer guidance. The UK Government, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and NHS must collaborate with maternity service users to ensure that there are evidence-based guidelines and policies that can be understood and standardised across all NHS maternity trusts. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-023-06160-w>

2024-01705

The impact of exclusion due to COVID-19 restrictions on partners' satisfaction with Swedish hospital postnatal ward care: A multi-methods approach. Olander P, Berglin L, Naurin E, et al (2024), *Birth* vol 51, no 3, September 2024, pp 612-619

Background

To prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2, hospitals around the world adopted protocols that, in varying ways, resulted in the exclusion of partners from hospital postnatal care wards. The objective of this study was to examine the effect this exclusion had on partners' satisfaction with postnatal care.

Methods

An online survey (the Swedish Pregnancy Panel) including free-text comments was conducted before and during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic; partners of pregnant women were recruited at an early ultrasound appointment and followed until 2 months after childbirth. Data were linked to the Swedish Pregnancy Register.

Results

The survey was completed by 524 partners of women who gave birth during the pandemic and 203 partners of women who gave birth before. Partners' satisfaction with hospital postnatal care dropped 29.8 percent (-0.94 OLS, 95% CI = -1.17 to -0.72). The drop was largest for partners of first-time mothers (-1.40 OLS, 95% CI = -1.69 to -1.11), but unrelated to clinical outcomes such as mode of birth and most social backgrounds, except higher income. The qualitative analysis showed that partners (1) felt excluded as partners and parents, (2) thought the strain on staff led to deficiencies in the care provided, and (3) perceived the decision about partner restrictions as illogical.

Conclusions

The exclusion of partners from the hospital postnatal wards clearly impaired satisfaction with care, and partners of first-time mothers were particularly affected. Planning for future restrictions on partners from hospital wards should factor in these consequences. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1111/birt.12816>

2024-01300

Severe Covid-19 in pregnant and postpartum women admitted to an intensive care unit: A retrospective cohort study.

Melo Mendes IC, Martins de Oliveira AL, Martins Pinheiro Trindade P, et al (2023), *PLoS ONE* vol 18, no 12, December 2023, e0295444

Background: SARS-CoV-2 infection is associated with worse maternal and fetal outcomes. This study aims to describe the characteristics of pregnant and postpartum women with severe Covid-19 admitted to ICU.

Methods and findings: It's a retrospective cohort study evaluating pregnant and postpartum women referenced to a specialized ICU between May 2020 and June 2022. Covid-19 was confirmed with RT-PCR or rapid antigen test on a

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nasopharyngeal swab. Variables were described by median and IQR when numerical, and by frequency and percentage when categorical. OR with 95% CI were calculated for the evaluation of factors related to death. P-values were calculated using Pearson's χ^2 -test, Fisher's exact test, Wilcoxon rank sum test, and Kruskal-Wallis test, and statistical significance was established as < 0.05 . Missing data were excluded. All statistical analysis were performed using R software version 4.2.2. Of the 101 admissions, 85 (84.2%) were of pregnant women. Obesity (23.0%) and systemic arterial hypertension (13.0%) were the most prevalent medical conditions. Sixty-six (65.3%) were admitted using some type of oxygen support. Forty-seven (46.5%) evolved to mechanical ventilation. There were 61 events considered obstetric complications, with 8 stillbirths/fetal losses. The overall lethality was 15.8%. Pregnancy interruption, need for non-invasive mechanical ventilation, level of oxygen support at admission, prone maneuver, hemodialysis, and healthcare-related infections were factors associated with death. Evaluating the WHO 7-category ordinary scale, there was a trend of increase in the risk of death with higher punctuation, with a statistically significant difference of women with 5 (OR = 7.27; 95% IC = 1.17-194; $p = 0.031$) or 6 points (OR = 12.0; 95% IC = 1.15-391; $p = 0.038$) when compared to the ones with 3 points, i.e., of women admitted with a high-flow non-rebreathing mask or invasive mechanical ventilation, compared with the ones admitted at room air, respectively. The main limitations of this study are the relatively small number of participants, and the use of data derived of medical records-which are susceptible to misclassification and variable amounts of missing data.

Conclusions: Pregnant and postpartum women with severe Covid-19 have high lethality and a high incidence of clinical and obstetric complications. These findings support that this population should be prioritized in public health strategies that address Covid-19.

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Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0295444>

2024-00925

Efficacy and safety of hydroxychloroquine for treatment of mild SARS-CoV-2 infection and prevention of COVID-19 severity in pregnant and postpartum women: A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial. González R, Goncá A, del Mar Gil M, et al (2024), *Acta Obstetrica et Gynecologica Scandinavica* vol 103, no 3, March 2024, pp 602-610

Introduction

Pregnant women have an increased risk of severe COVID-19. Evaluation of drugs with a safety reproductive toxicity profile is a priority. At the beginning of the pandemic, hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) was recommended for COVID-19 treatment.

Material and methods

A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial was conducted in eight teaching hospitals in Spain to evaluate the safety and efficacy of HCQ in reducing viral shedding and preventing COVID-19 progression. Pregnant and postpartum women with a positive SARS-CoV-2 PCR (with or without mild COVID-19 signs/symptoms) and a normal electrocardiogram were randomized to receive either HCQ orally (400 mg/day for 3 days and 200 mg/day for 11 days) or placebo. PCR and electrocardiogram were repeated at day 21 after treatment start. Enrollment was stopped before reaching the target sample due to low recruitment rate. Trial registration EudraCT #: 2020-001587-29, on April 2, 2020. Clinical trials.gov # NCT04410562, registered on June 1, 2020.

Results

A total of 116 women (75 pregnant and 41 post-partum) were enrolled from May 2020 to June 2021. The proportion of women with a positive SARS-CoV-2 PCR at day 21 was lower in the HCQ group (21.8%, 12/55) than in the placebo group (31.6%, 18/57), although the difference was not statistically significant ($P = 0.499$). No differences were observed in COVID-19 progression, adverse events, median change in QTc, hospital admissions, preeclampsia or poor pregnancy and perinatal outcomes between groups.

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Conclusions

HCQ was found to be safe in pregnant and postpartum women with asymptomatic or mild SARS-CoV-2 infection. Although the prevalence of infection was decreased in the HCQ group, the statistical power was insufficient to confirm the potential beneficial effect of HCQ for COVID-19 treatment. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1111/aogs.14745>

2024-00901

Prenatal and postpartum care during the COVID-19 pandemic: An increase in barriers from early to mid-pandemic in the United States. Diamond-Smith N, Logan R, Adler A, et al (2024), *Birth* vol 51, no 2, June 2024, pp 450-458

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic led to changes in the provision of pregnancy and postpartum care. The purpose of this study was to describe changes in access to prenatal and postpartum care over time, from early in the pandemic (July 2020) to mid-pandemic (January 2021) and to explore socioeconomic and COVID-19-related economic factors associated with experiencing barriers to care.

Methods

We recruited two cross sections of women and birthing people in the US in July 2020 (N = 4645) and January 2021 (N = 3343) using Facebook and Instagram Ads.

Results

Three out of four women in the prenatal period and four out of five women in the postpartum period reported barriers to scheduling a visit. The likelihood of not having a visit (OR = 4.44, 95% CI 2.67–7.40), being unable to schedule a visit (OR = 2.73, 95% CI 1.71–4.35), and not being offered visits (OR = 4.26, 95% CI 2.32–7.81) increased over time. Participants were more likely to report barriers attending scheduled prenatal or postpartum appointments over time (OR = 2.72, 95% CI 2.14–3.45). Women who experienced more economic impacts from COVID-19 were older, less educated, and were Black, Indigenous, or a person of color, and were more likely to have barriers to attending appointments.

Conclusions

Certain subgroups are more at risk during COVID-19, and around 9 months into the pandemic, women were not only still facing barriers to care, but these had been amplified. Additional research using other data sources is needed to identify and ameliorate barriers and inequalities in access to prenatal and postpartum care that appear to have persisted throughout the pandemic. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1111/birt.12800>

2024-00469

“We need to be heard. We need to be seen”: A thematic analysis of black maternal experiences of birthing and postnatal care in England within the context of Covid-19. Williams C, McKail R, Arshad R (2023), *Midwifery* vol 127, December 2023, 103856

Objective

Inequalities for Black women within maternity settings are longstanding, with evidence showing higher mortality, complications and distress compared to White women. The Covid-19 pandemic saw unprecedented changes to maternity services, with emerging evidence highlighting a disproportionate impact on mothers from ethnically minoritized backgrounds. This uniquely positioned study explores Black women's experiences of services during Covid-19.

Design

The study used a qualitative design with semi-structured interviews, data were analysed using reflexive thematic

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analysis.

Setting

The study took was open to all in the UK, participants who took part were from England and were recruited via social media and community led organisations.

Participants

The study recruited 13 self-identifying Black women, aged between 23 and 41 who received maternity care across settings (NHS wards, home birth and birthing centre) across England.

Measurement and findings

Three themes were generated from the study: 'The Ripples of Covid', 'Inequality within Inequality' and 'Conscientious Change for Maternity Systems', with sub-themes including the impact of regulations, the invisibility of pain and the importance of accountability. Alongside multiple layers of inequality and emotional labour for Black women, the study found connection and advocacy as facilitators of good care.

Key conclusions

Supporting existing research, Black women's experiences of maternity services during Covid-19 evidence ongoing of structural racism within maternity provision, founded on stereotypes of strength and pain. Though moments of advocacy and connection, however, Covid-19 appeared exacerbated ongoing existing inequalities for Black women. Changes to service provision contributed to isolation, distress, and consequential inadequate care.

Implications for practice

The findings, generated by Black women, established important implications for practice and policy, including an emphasis on creating conscientious change of systems through a racialised lens, the importance of meaningful equity, representation, and the need for co-production alongside Black communities. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.midw.2023.103856>

2024-00407

Birth Hospital Length of Stay and Rehospitalization During COVID-19. Handley SC, Gallagher K, Breden A, et al (2022), Pediatrics vol 149, no 1, January 2022, e2021053498

OBJECTIVES

To determine if birth hospitalization length of stay (LOS) and infant rehospitalization changed during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) era among healthy, term infants.

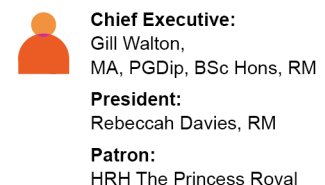
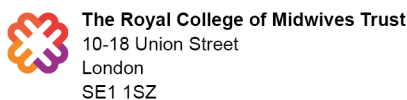
METHODS

Retrospective cohort study using Epic's Cosmos data from 35 health systems of term infants discharged ≤ 5 days of birth. Short birth hospitalization LOS (vaginal birth < 2 midnights; cesarean birth < 3 midnights) and, secondarily, infant rehospitalization ≤ 7 days after birth hospitalization discharge were compared between the COVID-19 (March 1 to August 31, 2020) and prepandemic eras (March 1 to August 31, 2017, 2018, 2019). Mixed-effects models were used to estimate adjusted odds ratios (aORs) comparing the eras.

RESULTS

Among 202 385 infants (57 110 from the COVID-19 era), short birth hospitalization LOS increased from 28.5% to 43.0% for all births (vaginal: 25.6% to 39.3%, cesarean: 40.1% to 61.0%) during the pandemic and persisted after multivariable adjustment (all: aOR 2.30, 95% confidence interval [CI] 2.25–2.36; vaginal: aOR 2.12, 95% CI 2.06–2.18; cesarean: aOR 3.01, 95% CI 2.87–3.15). Despite shorter LOS, infant rehospitalizations decreased slightly during the pandemic (1.2% to 1.1%); results were similar in adjusted analysis (all: aOR 0.83, 95% CI 0.76–0.92; vaginal: aOR 0.82, 95% CI 0.74–0.91; cesarean: aOR 0.87, 95% CI 0.69–1.10). There was no change in the proportion of rehospitalization diagnoses between eras.

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CONCLUSIONS

Short infant LOS was 51% more common in the COVID-19 era, yet infant rehospitalization within a week did not increase. This natural experiment suggests shorter birth hospitalization LOS among family- and clinician-selected, healthy term infants may be safe with respect to infant rehospitalization, although examination of additional outcomes is needed. (Author)

2024-00129

SARS-CoV-2 Antibodies in Breast Milk After Vaccination. Ramírez DSR, Pérez MML, Pérez MC, et al (2021), Pediatrics vol 148, no 5, November 2021, e2021052286

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Passive and active immunity transfer through human milk (HM) constitutes a key element in the infant's developing immunity. Certain infectious diseases and vaccines have been described to induce changes in the immune components of HM.

METHODS

We conducted a prospective cohort single-institution study from February 2 to April 4, 2021. Women who reported to be breastfeeding at the time of their coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccination were invited to participate. Blood and milk samples were collected on day 14 after their second dose of the vaccine. Immunoglobulin G (IgG) antibodies against nucleocapsid protein as well as IgG, immunoglobulin M and immunoglobulin A (IgA) antibodies against the spike 1 protein receptor-binding domain against severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (anti-SARS-CoV-2 RBD-S1) were analyzed in both serum and HM samples.

RESULTS

Most of the participants (ie, 94%) received the BNT162b2 messenger RNA COVID-19 vaccine. The mean serum concentration of anti-SARS-CoV-2 RBD-S-IgG antibodies in vaccinated individuals was 3379.6 ± 1639.5 binding antibody units per mL. All vaccinated study participants had anti-SARS-CoV-2 RBD-S1-IgG, and 89% of them had anti-SARS-CoV-2 RBD-S-IgA in their milk. The antibody concentrations in the milk of mothers who were breastfeeding 24 months were significantly higher than in mothers with breastfeeding periods <24 months ($P < .001$).

CONCLUSIONS

We found a clear association between COVID-19 vaccination and specific immunoglobulin concentrations in HM. This effect was more pronounced when lactation periods exceeded 23 months. The influence of the lactation period on immunoglobulins was specific and independent of other variables. (Author)

2024-00074

Neonatal SARS-CoV-2 Infections in Breastfeeding Mothers. Shlomai NO, Kasirer Y, Strauss T, et al (2021), Pediatrics vol 147, no 5, May 2021, e2020010918

OBJECTIVES:

To assess infection rates pre-discharge and post-discharge in breast milk-fed newborns with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)-positive mothers who were separated post-delivery from their mothers and discharged from the hospital. Also, we aim to evaluate breastfeeding rates pre-discharge and post-discharge.

METHODS:

Nasopharyngeal swabs for SARS-CoV-2 were obtained from symptomatic and high-risk women in the delivery room. Mothers with positive SARS-CoV-2 test results were separated from the newborns. Newborns were screened within 48 hours of delivery, and anti-infectious guidelines were imparted to the mothers before discharge. Rescreening took place ≥ 14 days post-discharge. Data regarding SARS-CoV-2-positive household members and breastfeeding were obtained by follow-up phone calls.

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RESULTS:

A total of 73 newborns of SARS-CoV-2–positive mothers were born in Israel during the 23-month period under study. Overall, 55 participated in this study. All neonates tested negative for the virus postdelivery. A total 74.5% of the neonates were fed unpasteurized expressed breast milk during the postpartum separation until discharge. Eighty-nine percent of the neonates were discharged from the hospital after their mothers were instructed in anti-infection measures. In 40% of the households, there were additional SARS-CoV-2–positive residents. A total of 85% of the newborns were breastfed postdischarge. Results for all 60% of the newborns retested for SARS-CoV-2 postdischarge were negative.

CONCLUSIONS:

No viral infection was identified in neonates born to and separated from their SARS-CoV-2–positive mothers at birth and subsequently fed unpasteurized breast milk. All infants breastfed at home remained SARS-CoV-2 negative. These findings may provide insights regarding the redundancy of postpartum mother–newborn separation in SARS-CoV-2–positive women and, assuming precautions are adhered to, support the safety of breast milk. (Author)

2023-13032

The Impact of COVID-19 and Policy Changes on Immediate Postpartum Contraception and Permanent Contraception at an Urban Hospital: A Retrospective Cohort Study. Jensen R, Habib A, Lenus S, et al (2023), *Journal of Women's Health* vol 32, no 12, December 2023, pp 1340–1345

Objective: At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to increased use of telemedicine visits and a temporary suspension of interval tubal ligations, providers at the University of Maryland Medical Center were encouraged to counsel patients interested in long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) about immediate postpartum placement. We assessed immediate postpartum contraception uptake following these policy changes.

Materials and Methods: In this retrospective cohort study, we compared patients who delivered a live born infant(s) before the pandemic (“pre-COVID cohort,” December 16, 2019–March 1, 2020) and at the beginning of the pandemic (“during-COVID cohort,” March 16–May 31, 2020). We collected electronic medical record data, including sociodemographic characteristics and contraception choices antenatally and through 1 year postpartum for 631 patients (321 pre-COVID, 310 during-COVID).

Results: Odds of immediate postpartum LARC use in the during-COVID cohort were 33% higher than in the pre-COVID cohort, but this was not statistically significant (adjusted odds ratio 1.33, 95% confidence interval: 0.81–2.19). We found no difference in numbers of patients who received immediate postpartum tubal ligation (10% pre-COVID vs. 11% during-COVID). No patients in the during-COVID cohort obtained interval tubal ligations within 6 months of delivery. Contraceptive choices differed at postpartum visits ($p = 0.03$), with a decrease in delayed postpartum LARC placement in the during-COVID cohort (15% pre-COVID vs. 8% during-COVID).

Conclusions: When COVID-19-related hospital policies prompted increased counseling on immediate postpartum LARC and suspension of interval tubal ligations, patients tended to be more likely to choose immediate postpartum LARC. Situational resource restrictions and targeted counseling may influence patient choices and access to desired contraceptive methods. (Author)

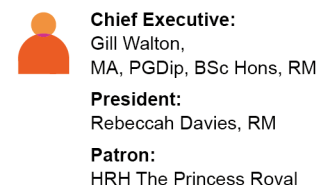
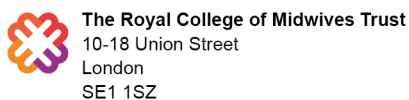
2023-12203

Community postnatal care delivery in England since Covid-19: A qualitative study of midwifery leaders’ perspectives and strategies. Cross-Sudworth F, Taylor B, Kenyon S (2024), *Women and Birth: Journal of the Australian College of Midwives* vol 37, no 1, February 2024, pp 240-247

Problem

COVID-19 impacted negatively on maternity care experiences of women and staff. Understanding the emergency

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response is key to inform future plans.

Background

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, experts highlighted concerns about UK community postnatal care, and its impact on long-term health, wellbeing, and inequalities. These appear to have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Aim

To explore community postnatal care provision during and since the pandemic across a large diverse UK region.

Methods

A descriptive qualitative approach. Virtual semi-structured interviews conducted November 2022-February 2023. All regional midwifery community postnatal care leaders were invited to participate.

Findings

11/13 midwifery leaders participated. Three main themes were identified: Changes to postnatal care (strategic response, care on the ground); Impact of postnatal care changes (staff and women's experiences); and Drivers of postnatal care changes (COVID-19, workforce issues).

Discussion

Changes to postnatal care during the pandemic included introduction of virtual care, increased role of Maternity Support Workers, and moving away from home visits to clinic appointments. This has largely continued without evaluation. The number of care episodes provided for low and high-risk families appears to have changed little. Those requiring additional support but not deemed highest risk appear to have been most impacted. Staffing levels influenced amount and type of care provided. There was little inter-organisation collaboration in the postnatal pandemic response.

Conclusion

Changes to postnatal care provision introduced more efficient working practices. However, evaluation is needed to ensure ongoing safe, equitable and individualised care provision post pandemic within limited resources. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wombi.2023.10.006>

2023-12147

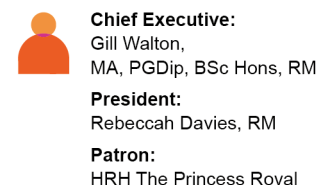
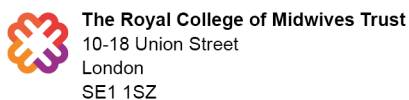
Breastfeeding rates in England during the Covid-19 pandemic and the previous decade: Analysis of national surveys and routine data. Quigley MA, Harrison S, Levene I, et al (2023), PLoS ONE vol 18, no 10, October 2023, e0291907

Background: Few studies have compared breastfeeding rates before and during the pandemic using comparable data across time. We used data from two national maternity surveys (NMS) to compare breastfeeding rates in England before and during the pandemic.

Methods: Analysis was conducted using the NMS from 2018 (pre-pandemic; n = 4,509) and 2020 (during the pandemic; n = 4,611). The prevalence of breastfeeding initiation, and 'any' breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) at 6 weeks and 6 months were compared between these surveys. Data were interpreted in the context of underlying trends in these prevalences from previous NMS (from 2010 and 2014), and annual routine data for England (from 2009-10 to 2020-21). Modified Poisson regression was used to estimate adjusted risk ratios (aRR) for the effect of birth during the pandemic (2020 versus 2018) on breastfeeding, with adjustment for sociodemographic and birth-related factors.

Results: Breastfeeding initiation and any breastfeeding at 6 weeks remained relatively constant in the NMS and the routine data. Birth during the pandemic was associated with a 3 percentage point decrease in EBF at 6 weeks in the NMS (aRR 0.92, 95%CI: 0.87, 0.98 for pandemic versus pre-pandemic), but a smaller decrease in the routine data. Birth during the pandemic was associated with a 3 percentage point increase in any breastfeeding at 6 months in the NMS

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(aRR 1.05, 95%CI: 1.00, 1.10). Breastfeeding varied across different groups of women in the NMS (i.e. marked inequalities), but the small changes observed between the pandemic and pre-pandemic NMS were broadly similar across the sociodemographic and birth-related factors examined (i.e. no change in inequalities).

Conclusion: Breastfeeding initiation and any breastfeeding at 6 weeks in England were unaffected by the pandemic, and the persistent inequalities in breastfeeding did not widen. Services should aim to reduce these inequalities in breastfeeding which have been documented since the 1970s.

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Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0291907>

2023-12124

Psychological risks to mother–infant bonding during the COVID-19 pandemic. Liu CH, Hyun S, Mittal L, et al (2022), *Pediatric Research* vol 91, no 4, March 2022, pp 816-819

Background

The purpose of this study was to examine the association between mental health symptoms, along with psychological experiences and coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) related concerns, and self-reported maternal–infant bonding experiences of postpartum women.

Methods

Using data collected from May 19 to August 17, 2020, this cross-sectional online study assessed 429 women to better understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women during the postpartum period. Enrolled respondents were asked to participate in a 30–45-min online survey about COVID-19-related experiences, pregnancy, stress, and well-being.

Results

Postpartum women’s depressive symptoms were related to lower quality maternal–infant bonding, but the anxiety symptoms were not associated with bonding. Maternal self-efficacy, but not social support, was associated with mothers’ higher quality of maternal–infant bonding. COVID-19-related grief was significantly associated with lower quality bonding. On the other hand, COVID-19-related health worries were associated with higher quality of maternal–infant bonding.

Conclusions

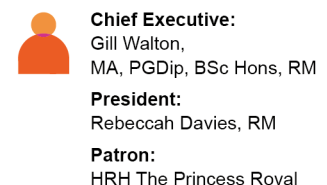
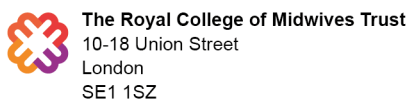
We describe potential psychological risk factors to maternal–infant bonding among postpartum women during the pandemic period. To best support the medical and psychological well-being of the mothers and infants, enhanced interdisciplinary partnerships among perinatal healthcare professionals involved in primary and/or specialty care is needed. (Author)

2023-11791

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and Venous Thromboembolism During Pregnancy and Postpartum. Bruno AM, Horns JJ, Metz TD (2024), *Obstetrics & Gynecology* vol 143, no 1, January 2024, pp 139-142

Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) infection is associated with increased risk for macro- and micro-thrombi. Consensus guidelines recommend use of thromboprophylaxis in nonobstetric patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection admitted to the hospital. National-level studies evaluating venous thromboembolism (VTE) among pregnant and postpartum individuals with and without SARS-CoV-2 infection have not been completed. We performed a retrospective cohort study of individuals aged 18 years or older delivering at more than 20 weeks of gestation with data in the MarketScan Commercial Insurance Database from 2016 through 2020. Of 811,008 deliveries,

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SARS-CoV-2 infection during pregnancy or through 6 weeks postpartum was associated with increased risk for VTE compared with no infection (1.0% vs 0.5%, adjusted hazard ratio 2.62, 95% CI 1.60–4.29). Findings support further consideration of thromboprophylaxis in the obstetric population with SARS-CoV-2 infection. (Author)

2023-11769

"Trauma, abandonment and isolation": experiences of pregnancy and maternity services in Scotland during COVID-19. Engender, Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (2023), September 2023

The report, "Trauma, abandonment and isolation": Experiences of pregnancy and maternity services in Scotland during Covid-19, draws on survey responses from over 200 women across Scotland. It documents the profound and negative impact that public health restrictions had on access to vital healthcare across all aspects of these services from antenatal care, fertility treatment, to miscarriage and baby loss, birth and the postnatal period. (Author)

Full URL: <https://www.engender.org.uk/content/publications/MATFinalNEW.pdf>

2023-10408

Impact of visiting restrictions on Edinburgh postnatal depression scale screening scores at one month postpartum during the spread of COVID-19: a single-center case-control study in Japan. Kudo S, Banno H, Itou T, et al (2023), BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth vol 23, no 655, September 2023

Background

This study aimed to evaluate whether "visiting restrictions" implemented due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic are a risk factor for postpartum depression using the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS).

Methods

This case-control study participants who gave birth during the spread of COVID-19 (COVID-19 study group) and before the spread of COVID-19 (control group). Participants completed the EPDS at 2 weeks and 1 month after childbirth.

Results

A total of 400 cases (200 in each group) were included in this study. The EPDS positivity rate was significantly lower with visiting restrictions than without (8.5% vs.18.5%, $p = 0.002$). Multivariate analysis of positive EPDS screening at the 1st month checkup as the objective variable revealed that visiting restrictions (odds ratio (OR): 0.35, 95% confidence interval (CI): 0.18–0.68), neonatal hospitalization (OR: 2.17, 95% CI: 1.08–4.35), and prolonged delivery (OR: 2.87, 95% CI: 1.20–6.85) were factors associated with an increased risk of positive EPDS screening.

Conclusion

Visiting restrictions on family during the hospitalization period for delivery during the spread of COVID-19 pandemic did not worsen EPDS screening scores 1 month postpartum, but stabilized the mental state of some mothers. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-023-05979-7>

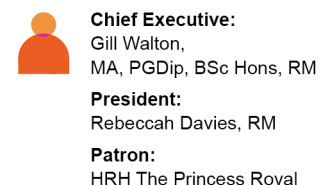
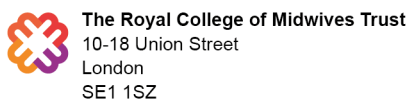
2023-09854

In uncharted territory "together each achieves more": a United Nations interagency collaboration for continuity of maternal and newborn health services during the coronavirus pandemic in the Eastern and Southern Africa region.

Bergh A-M, Gohar F, Kidula NA, et al (2023), Frontiers in Global Women's Health 31 August 2023, online

The frangible collaboration between three United Nations agencies (UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO) in the Eastern and Southern Africa Region was strengthened by the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. The aim was to combine existing resources and expertise to support countries to respond to the pandemic more effectively and efficiently regarding the provision of maternal and newborn health services. Three kinds of activities were conducted: 15 webinars on a variety of topics and issues impacted by the pandemic; virtual training on maternal and perinatal death surveillance and response as well as on quality improvement; and the development of online e-learning modules for continuous professional development. Key dimensions of the collaboration included: a common vision; commitment

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to the process; dialogue; building relationships and trust; communication and information sharing; sharing of technical and financial resources and expertise; mobilization of additional resources; celebration of intermediate outcomes; facilitative leadership; and institutional design. Start-up lessons revolved around shared risk taking, while retaining agency autonomy. Collaboration lessons included forming a “united front”, harnessing technology to accelerate results, and mitigating adverse structural and contextual factors. There are widespread perceptions that collaborative initiatives tend to yield minimum results in terms of increased efficiency or effectiveness. This particular collaborative effort demonstrated elements of feasibility, value addition, synergy, cost effectiveness and demonstrable results where UN agencies delivered as one. The emergency in healthcare as a ripple effect of the coronavirus pandemic has caused a rethink of collaboration models and levels of engagement. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.3389/frhs.2023.1230414>

2023-09712

Quality Indices and Outcomes of a Neonatology Telerounding Program in a Level II Neonatal Intensive Care Unit:

Single-Center Experience during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Cooper C, Mastroianni R, Bosque E, et al (2023), American Journal of Perinatology 29 July 2023, online

Objective The objective of this program evaluation was to describe the outcomes of daily neonatologist telerounding with the onsite advanced practice provider (APP) in a Level II neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), before and during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Study Design Bedside telerounding occurred with an onsite APP using a telehealth cart and paired Bluetooth stethoscope. Data collected by longitudinal and cross-sectional surveys and chart review before (May 2019–February 2020) and during (March 2020–February 2021) the COVID-19 pandemic were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis.

Results A total of 258 patients were admitted to the Level II NICU before (May 2019–February 2020) and during (March 2020–February 2021) the COVID-19 pandemic. Demographic characteristics and outcomes, including breastfeeding at discharge and length of stay were similar pre- and postonset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Postrounding surveys by 10 (response rate 83%) neonatologists indicated parents were present in 80 (77%) of rounds and video was at least somewhat helpful in 94% of cases. Cross-sectional survey responses of 23 neonatologists and APPs (response rate 62%) indicated satisfaction with the program. Common themes on qualitative analysis of open-ended survey responses were “need for goodness of fit” and “another set of eyes” and “opportunities for use.”

Conclusion Daily telerounding with neonatologists and APPs in a Level II NICU supported neonatal care. Quality metrics and clinical outcomes are described with no differences seen before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Author)

2023-09217

Virtual home visits during COVID-19 pandemic: mothers’ and home visitors’ perspectives. Al-Taiar A, Kekeh MA, Ewers S, et al (2023), BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth vol 23, no 577, August 2023

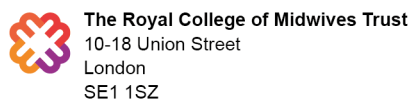
Background

The experiences of mothers enrolled in Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program with virtual home visiting (VHV) during the pandemic remain mostly unknown. This study aimed to describe in detail the experience of home visitors and mothers with VHV during COVID-19 pandemic. This is a prerequisite for guiding future efforts to optimize MIECHV services that are provided through virtual operation.

Methods

Focus groups discussion were conducted with home visitors (n = 13) and mothers (n = 30) who were enrolled in BabyCare program in Virginia from January 2019 to June 2022. This included mothers who received in-person home visiting (IPHV), VHV, or both (hybrid IPHV and VHV). Inductive analysis was used to identify emergent themes from

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the transcripts, then coding was conducted following a codebook that was developed by the research team.

Results

Both mothers and home visitors considered IPHV necessary for a proper assessment of developmental milestones of children, for the assessment of the growth of the child through measuring the weight and height/length of the child, for the mothers to open up and discuss sensitive issues like domestic violence, for building a relationship between home-visitor and the parents, and for other potential benefits (comprehensive assessment of the environment around the child inside and outside the house from home visitors' perspective and detecting abnormal health conditions in children from mothers' perspective). Both mothers and home visitors see that VHV has some role to play but not to be a replacement for IPHV. If VHV is to be used, video conference is preferred by both mothers and home visitors, as it allows for some assessment.

Conclusion

Mothers and nurses considered IPHV critical for proper and comprehensive assessment of the child and the family and also essential to build the nurse-client relationship. Both mothers and home visitors considered VHV supplementary to IPHV that can be used from time to time particularly with busy mothers. VHV may have little room with parents with intellectual disabilities and the difficulty in dealing with technology seems to be no longer a major issue. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-023-05896-9>

2023-08337

Survey of Postpartum People in the United States During the First Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic to Explore Their Perspective on Support After Discharge. Breman RB, Neerland C, Iobst SE, et al (2023), *The Journal of Perinatal and Neonatal Nursing* vol 37, no 3, July/September 2023

Introduction:

The purpose of this study was to capture the experiences of postpartum people during the first wave of COVID-19, specifically their access to contraception and lactation support.

Methods:

This cross-sectional study surveyed individuals in the United States who used the Ovia Pregnancy and Parenting app. The survey was administered via an email Web link sent to postpartum people who gave birth between March 1, 2020, and June 11, 2020. Quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted.

Results:

A total of 388 postpartum people completed the survey. Most participants had just given birth to their first baby (68.5%; n = 261) at term gestation (37-41 weeks) (92.9%; n = 355). From the qualitative data, using content analysis, we derived 6 themes and 2 subthemes: quarantine, changes in postpartum care, loneliness and isolation, stress, resource changes, and positive impact. The theme loneliness and isolation had 2 subthemes: depression/sadness/hopelessness and anxiety.

Discussion:

The experience of being postpartum during the COVID-19 pandemic brought unforeseen challenges. Providing care and support to postpartum people during a pandemic, specifically during a time of quarantine, should be reimagined. Increased use of virtual postpartum care services and expanded mental health support could serve to fill the gaps identified by participants. (Author)

2023-08303

Different impact of COVID-19 on symptomatic pregnant and postpartum women in low-income countries and low- and middle-income countries. Mahajan NN, Ansari M, Munshi H, et al (2023), *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics* vol 162, no 3, September 2023, pp 1110-1113

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The adverse outcomes of COVID-19 among pregnant women have been pronounced in the low-income countries compared with low- and middle-income countries. (Author)

2023-07870

Being pregnant and becoming a parent during the COVID-19 pandemic: a longitudinal qualitative study with women in the Born in Bradford COVID-19 research study. Jackson C, Brawner J, Ball M, et al (2023), BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth vol 23, no 494, July 2023

Background

Uncertainty around the risk of COVID-19 to pregnant women and their babies prompted precautionary restrictions on their health and care during the pandemic. Maternity services had to adapt to changing Government guidance. Coupled with the imposition of national lockdowns in England and restrictions on daily activities, women's experiences of pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period, and their access to services, changed rapidly. This study was designed to understand women's experiences of pregnancy, labour and childbirth and caring for a baby during this time.

Methods

This was an inductive longitudinal qualitative study, using in-depth interviews by telephone with women in Bradford, UK, at three timepoints during their maternity journey (18 women at timepoint one, 13 at timepoint two and 14 at timepoint three). Key topics explored were physical and mental wellbeing, experience of healthcare services, relationships with partners and general impact of the pandemic. Data were analysed using the Framework approach. A longitudinal synthesis identified over-arching themes.

Results

Three longitudinal themes captured what was important to women: (1) women feared being alone at critical points in their maternity journey, (2) the pandemic created new norms for maternity services and women's care, and (3) finding ways to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic in pregnancy and with a baby.

Conclusions

Modifications to maternity services impacted significantly on women's experiences. The findings have informed national and local decisions about how best to direct resources to reduce the impact of COVID-19 restrictions and the longer-term psychological impact on women during pregnancy and postnatally. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-023-05774-4>

2023-07555

A Pilot Study of an Educational Intervention to Increase Postpartum Medical Visit Attendance in Home-Visited Mothers. Cluxton-Keller F, Bruce ML (2023), The Journal of Perinatal Education vol 32, no 2, Spring 2023

Socioeconomically disadvantaged women experience barriers to attending postpartum medical visits (PMV). This three-phase pilot study explored the feasibility, acceptability, and preliminary effectiveness of an educational intervention to increase PMV attendance in mothers enrolled in early childhood home visiting. Phases 1 and 2 occurred prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and Phase 3 occurred during the pandemic. Home visitor implementation of the intervention with mothers was feasible and acceptable in all phases. All mothers who received the intervention reported PMV attendance. Overall, 81% of mothers reported they discussed all questions with healthcare providers at the PMV. These findings provide preliminary effectiveness for a brief educational intervention in increasing PMV attendance in home-visited mothers. (Author)

2023-06719

Babies in Lockdown: No one wants to see my baby: Challenges to building back better for babies. Best Beginnings, Home-Start UK, Parent-Infant Foundation (2021), London: Best Beginnings, Home-Start UK, and the Parent-Infant Foundation November 2021. 22 pages

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This latest report shows that COVID-19 and the measures introduced to control it are still having a significant impact on babies, their families and the services that support them. The UK Government's recent focus on, and investment in, the first 1001 days through their Best Start for Life vision and funding is very welcome. However, there remains a "baby blindspot" in COVID-19 recovery efforts and a shortage of funding for voluntary sector organisations and core services like health visiting to offer the level of support required to meet families' needs. Without urgent action to secure recovery, we fear that the pandemic will leave permanent scars on the provision of support for babies and young children. The impact of new initiatives and policies will be limited if services around the country have not recovered from the pandemic, let alone had the opportunity to build back better. (Author, edited)

Full URL: <https://parentinfantfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/211108-FINAL-No-one-wants-to-see-my-baby.pdf>

2023-06252

Born into an isolating world: family-centred care for babies born to mothers with COVID-19. Dowse G, Perkins EJ, Stein HM, et al (2023), *EClinicalMedicine* vol 56, February 2023, 101822

Background: The benefits of facilitating breastmilk feeding and close contact between mother and neonate (family-centred care; FCC) in the perinatal period are well-established. The aim of this study was to determine how the delivery of FCC practices were impacted for neonates born to mothers with perinatal SARS-CoV-2 infection during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods: Neonates born to mothers with confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection during pregnancy were identified from the 'EsPnIC Covid paediatric Neonatal REgistry' (EPICENTRE) multinational cohort between 10 March 2020 and 20 October 2021. The EPICENTRE cohort collected prospective data on FCC practices. Rooming-in and breastmilk feeding practice were the main outcomes, and factors influencing each were determined. Other outcomes included mother-baby physical contact prior to separation and the pattern of FCC components relative to time and local site guidelines.

Findings: 692 mother-baby dyads (13 sites, 10 countries) were analysed. 27 (5%) neonates were positive for SARS-CoV-2 (14 (52%) asymptomatic). Most sites had policies that encouraged FCC during perinatal SARS-CoV-2 infection for most of the reporting period. 311 (46%) neonates roomed-in with their mother during the admission. Rooming-in increased over time from 23% in March-June 2020 to 74% in January-March 2021 (boreal season). 330 (93%) of the 369 separated neonates had no FCC physical contact with their mother prior, and 319 (86%) were asymptomatic. Maternal breastmilk was used for feeding in 354 (53%) neonates, increasing from 23% to 70% between March-June 2020 and January-March 2021. FCC was most impacted when mothers had symptomatic COVID-19 at birth.

Interpretation: This is the largest report of global FCC practice during the COVID-19 pandemic to date. The COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted FCC despite low perinatal transmission rates. Fortunately, clinicians appear to have adapted to allow more FCC delivery as the COVID-19 pandemic progressed.

Funding: The National Health and Medical Research Council (Australia): Grant ID 2008212 (DGT), Royal Children's Hospital Foundation: Grant ID 2019-1155 (EJP), Victorian Government Operational Infrastructure Support Program.

Keywords: Breastfeeding; Breastmilk; COVID-19; Family-centred care; Mother-baby contact; Pandemic; Perinatal care; Rooming-in; SARS-CoV-2; Skin-to-skin care.

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Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eclinm.2022.101822>

2023-06022


Outcomes Following Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation for Severe COVID-19 in Pregnancy or Post Partum. Byrne JJ, Shamshirsaz AA, Cahill AG, et al (2023), *JAMA Network Open* vol 6, no 5, May 2023, e2314678

Importance Existing reports of pregnant patients with COVID-19 disease who require extracorporeal membrane

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oxygenation (ECMO) are limited, with variable outcomes noted for the maternal-fetal dyad.

Objective To examine maternal and perinatal outcomes associated with ECMO used for COVID-19 with respiratory failure during pregnancy.

Design, Setting, and Participants This retrospective multicenter cohort study examined pregnant and postpartum patients who required ECMO for COVID-19 respiratory failure at 25 hospitals across the US. Eligible patients included individuals who received care at one of the study sites, were diagnosed with SARS-CoV-2 infection during pregnancy or up to 6 weeks post partum by positive nucleic acid or antigen test, and for whom ECMO was initiated for respiratory failure from March 1, 2020, to October 1, 2022.

Exposures ECMO in the setting of COVID-19 respiratory failure.

Main outcome and measures The primary outcome was maternal mortality. Secondary outcomes included serious maternal morbidity, obstetrical outcomes, and neonatal outcomes. Outcomes were compared by timing of infection during pregnancy or post partum, timing of ECMO initiation during pregnancy or post partum, and periods of circulation of SARS-CoV-2 variants.

Results From March 1, 2020, to October 1, 2022, 100 pregnant or postpartum individuals were started on ECMO (29 [29.0%] Hispanic, 25 [25.0%] non-Hispanic Black, 34 [34.0%] non-Hispanic White; mean [SD] age: 31.1 [5.5] years), including 47 (47.0%) during pregnancy, 21 (21.0%) within 24 hours post partum, and 32 (32.0%) between 24 hours and 6 weeks post partum; 79 (79.0%) had obesity, 61 (61.0%) had public or no insurance, and 67 (67.0%) did not have an immunocompromising condition. The median (IQR) ECMO run was 20 (9-49) days. There were 16 maternal deaths (16.0%; 95% CI, 8.2%-23.8%) in the study cohort, and 76 patients (76.0%; 95% CI, 58.9%-93.1%) had 1 or more serious maternal morbidity events. The largest serious maternal morbidity was venous thromboembolism and occurred in 39 patients (39.0%), which was similar across ECMO timing (40.4% pregnant [19 of 47] vs 38.1% [8 of 21] immediately postpartum vs 37.5% postpartum [12 of 32]; $P > .99$).

Conclusions and Relevance In this multicenter US cohort study of pregnant and postpartum patients who required ECMO for COVID-19-associated respiratory failure, most survived but experienced a high frequency of serious maternal morbidity. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.14678>

2023-05702

The effect of COVID-19 on women's experiences of pregnancy, birth and postpartum in Indonesia: a rapid online survey. McGowan L, Astuti A, Hafidz F, et al (2023), BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth vol 23, no 304, May 2023

Background

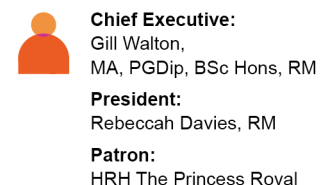
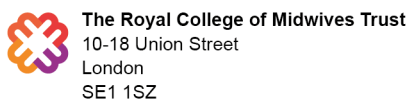
The interrelationship of psychological and social factors in the current COVID-19 pandemic has been highlighted in research mainly focused on the global north. The impact of lockdowns can exacerbate psychological distress and affect access to services. Less is known about the psychosocial impact on women in the context of lower-middle income countries (LMICs); the aim of this study was to capture the impact of COVID-19 on women's experiences of pregnancy, birth and postpartum in Indonesia.

Methods

We conducted a rapid cross-sectional online survey of women across all 34 provinces in Indonesia to capture participants' experiences. Data were collected between 10th July to 9th August 2020 including demographics, effects on general and mental health and impact on service use. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were used to analyse responses, including those women who self-identified with a pre-existing mental health problem.

Results

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Responses were obtained from 1137 women, this included pregnant women (n = 842) and postpartum women (n = 295). The majority of women (97%) had accessed antenatal care during their pregnancy, but 84% of women reporting feeling fearful and anxious about attending visits, resulting in some women not attending or changing provider. A small number (13%) were denied the presence of a birth companion, with 28% of women reporting that their babies had been removed at birth due to protocols or baby's health. Feeling anxious was a common experience among women (62%) during their pregnancy, birth or postnatal period, with a small number (9%) feeling depressed. Lockdown measures led to tensions within personal and family relationships.

Conclusions

Women in Indonesia reported that the pandemic added an increased burden in pregnancy, birth and post-partum period: physically, psychologically, spiritually and financially. Maternity services were disrupted and health insurance cover lacked responsiveness, which either directly or indirectly impacted on women's choices, and equal access to care. Given the longevity of the current pandemic there is a need to develop tailored supportive interventions for women and their families and develop bespoke training for midwives and other relevant health professionals.

(Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-023-05566-w>

2023-05269

Post-natal follow-up for women and neonates during the COVID-19 pandemic: French National Authority for Health recommendations. Vivanti AJ, Deruelle P, Picone O, et al (2020), *Journal of Gynecology, Obstetrics and Human Reproduction* vol 49, no 7, September 2020, 101805

Introduction

In the context of the stage 3 SARS-Cov-2 epidemic situation, it is necessary to put forward a method of rapid response for an HAS position statement in order to answer to the requests from the French Ministry of Solidarity and Health, healthcare professionals and/or health system users' associations, concerning post-natal follow-up for women and neonates during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods

A simplified 7-step process that favours HAS collaboration with experts (healthcare professionals, health system users' associations, scientific societies etc.), the restrictive selection of available evidence and the use of digital means of communication. A short and specific dissemination format, which can be quickly updated in view of the changes in available data has been chosen. (Author)

2023-05248

Postnatal care: new NICE guideline for the 'Cinderella service'. MacDonald C, Sharma S, Kallioinen M, et al (2021), *British Journal of General Practice* vol 71, no 710, 2021, pp. 394-395

A National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guideline for postnatal care published in 2021 supersedes its 15-year-old predecessor. NICE says 'Postnatal care has for long been regarded as a "Cinderella service" where in comparison with some other European countries, provision is scanty and inadequate. Its publication is timely with the 6–8-week postnatal maternal check now mandated in the GP contract, and the results of the 2020 MBRRACE-UK report reminding us of the continuing risk to women in the first year after giving birth when most have stopped having contact with specialist services. The postnatal mortality rate is largely unchanged over the last decade: 67% of maternal deaths occur postnatally. With suicide a leading cause between 6 weeks and 1 year, timely identification and management of perinatal mental illness is critical. Postnatal care should be sensitive and inclusive for all families and people who have given birth, and NICE highlights the importance of listening to women and parents. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.3399/bjgp21X716825>

2023-05243

Falling through the cracks: the impact of COVID-19 on postnatal care in primary care. MacGregor R, Hillman S, Bick D

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(2020), British Journal of General Practice vol 70, no 701, 2020, pp. 578-579

Postnatal care has always been the 'Cinderella' of maternity services, both in primary and secondary care. One illustration of this is that until the most recent GP contract there was no requirement for a GP practice to provide a maternal postnatal check. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the provision of services to postnatal women showed wide variation across the country.

Although we tend to think of maternal deaths occurring during pregnancy and at the time of delivery, the single biggest period of risk is the postnatal period. The effects of the pandemic on maternal death rate, and in particular in the BAME groups, are yet to be fully seen. There is emerging evidence that adverse antenatal outcomes such as stillbirth have increased dramatically; yet, we still have no evidence on the effect the pandemic has had on postnatal care. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.3399/bjgp20X713573>

2023-05237

A Journey of Hope and Human Milk Amidst COVID-19. Keith LR (2022), Clinical Lactation vol 13, no 3, 2022

Objective

In a global pandemic, access to lactation care may be limited necessitating collaboration across healthcare systems to maximize support for hospitalized COVID-19 positive lactating patients, while aligning resources to ensure complete nourishment for the infant throughout maternal/infant separation.

Case Report

This case report depicts the experience of a primiparous mother and her exclusively breastfed four-month-old infant with a history oral/motor weakness and feeding difficulty, diagnosed with a devastating COVID pneumonia resulting in near complete lactation cessation. Discussion includes pasteurized donor human milk and facilitation of relactation following acute illness necessitating hospitalization.

Conclusion

In collaboration across healthcare networks, close and consistent communication using digital means plus informed choice offered to a gravely ill lactating mother, options for resuming exclusive breastfeeding for total infant nourishment are described to offer hope to both the lactation professionals and those lactating parents in similar scenarios who desire exclusive human milk fed nourishment for their infant amidst a global pandemic. (Author)

2023-05226

Lessons Learned from the Pandemic—We Can Do Better. Komaroff AR, Forest S (2022), Clinical Lactation vol 13, no 2, 2022

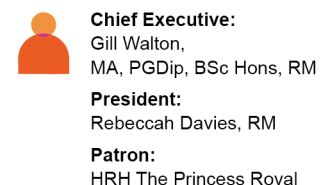
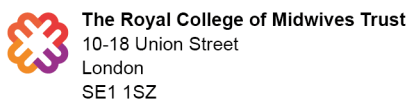
Many breastfeeding issues can be addressed with postpartum lactation support. However, COVID-19 presented new challenges for the breastfeeding dyad with a disruption in normal healthcare practices. The objective of the study was to examine new mothers' breastfeeding intentions and practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. A 40-question survey was administered to a convenience sample of 50 new mothers during April–June 2020. Findings revealed most mothers (52%) had the intention to breastfeed for one year or longer. However, at the time of hospital discharge only 34% of mothers were exclusively breastfeeding and 60% of mothers were supplementing with formula within the first four days of life. Recommendations for bridging the gap between the hospital and primary care setting include educating providers and nurses on breastfeeding management practices, increasing hospital lactation support, and using telelactation to provide remote support to mothers. (Author)

2023-05198

Comparing the human milk antibody response after vaccination with four COVID-19 vaccines: A prospective, longitudinal cohort study in the Netherlands. Juncker HG, Mulleners SJ, Ruhé EJM, et al (2022), EClinicalMedicine vol 47, May 2022, 101393

Background: Vaccination of lactating women against COVID-19 may protect not only themselves but also their

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breastfed infant through human milk. Therefore, it is important to gain insight into the human milk antibody response after immunization with the various vaccines that are currently widely used. The aim of this study is to determine and compare the antibody response in human milk following vaccination with mRNA- and vector-based vaccines up to over two months post-vaccination.

Methods: This prospective cohort study was conducted in the Netherlands between January 06, 2021 and July 31, 2021. Participants were recruited through social media. Human milk samples were collected longitudinally during a period of 70 days from women receiving one of the four different severe acute respiratory coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) vaccines: Pfizer-BioNTech (BNT162b2), Moderna (mRNA-1273), Oxford/AstraZeneca (AZD1222) and Johnson&Johnson (Ad26.COVS2). SARS-CoV-2-specific antibodies were measured using an enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay. The area under the curve (AUC) of the Immunoglobulins A (IgA) and G (IgG) antibody response was determined over 15 and 70 days following the first vaccination and compared between the different vaccines.

Findings: This study enrolled 134 vaccinated lactating women of whom 97 participated the entire study period. In total, 1887 human milk samples were provided. The human milk antibody response differed between SARS-CoV-2 vaccines over the study period. The mean AUC of SARS-CoV-2-specific IgA, but not IgG, in human milk over 15 days was higher after vaccination with an mRNA-based vaccine than a vector-based vaccine (AUC with respect to ground [AUC_g] ± the standard error of the mean [SEM] for IgA was 6.09 ± 0.89 in the BNT162b2 group, 7.48 ± 1.03 in the mRNA-1273 group, 4.17 ± 0.73 in the AZD1222 group, and 5.71 ± 0.70 in the Ad26.COVS2 group). Over a period of 70 days, the mean AUC of both IgA and IgG was higher after vaccination with an mRNA-based vaccine than a vector-based vaccine (AUC_g ± SEM for IgA was 38.77 ± 6.51 in the BNT162b2 group, 50.13 ± 7.41 in the mRNA-1273 group, 24.12 ± 5.47 in the AZD1222 group, and 28.15 ± 6.69 in the Ad26.COVS2 group; AUC_g ± SEM for IgG was 40.43 ± 2.67 in the BNT162b2 group, 37.01 ± 2.38 in the mRNA-1273 group, 16.04 ± 5.09 in the AZD1222 group, and 10.44 ± 2.50 in the Ad26.COVS2 group).

Interpretation: Overall, maternal vaccination during lactation with an mRNA-based vaccine resulted in higher SARS-CoV-2 antibody responses in human milk compared to vector-based vaccines. Therefore, vaccination with mRNA-based vaccines, preferably with the mRNA-1273 vaccine, might not only provide better immunological protection for the mother but also for her breastfed infant.

Funding: Stichting Steun Emma Kinderziekenhuis and the Amsterdam Infection and Immunity Institute (grant 24175).

Keywords: Antibodies; COVID-19; Human milk; SARS-CoV-2; Vaccination.

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Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eclinm.2022.101393>

2023-04762

COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among pregnant and postpartum Kenyan women. Marwa MM, Kinuthia J, Larsen A, et al (2023), International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics vol 162, no 1, July 2023, pp 147-153

Objective

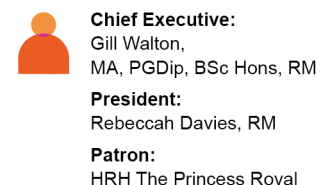
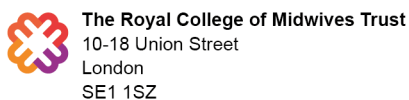
The authors evaluated factors contributing to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccine hesitancy among pregnant and postpartum women to inform vaccine scale-up strategies.

Methods

This observational study utilized data from pregnant and postpartum women attending four public maternal child health (MCH) clinics in Western Kenya. From October 2020 to July 2022, nurses assessed COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy, defined as reporting “unlikely” or “very unlikely” to the question, “If a vaccine for COVID-19 were available today, what is the likelihood that you would get vaccinated?”

Results

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Among 1023 women (235 pregnant, 788 postpartum), 20% reported worsened MCH care during the pandemic and most (92%) perceived themselves or family members to be at risk for COVID-19, yet 54% of women reported COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy. Vaccine hesitancy was more frequent among women reporting worsened MCH care ($P < 0.001$) since the pandemic and those who did not trust the government as a source of COVID-19 information ($P = 0.016$). Over the 2-year period, willingness to receive the vaccine almost doubled (38% to 71%, $P < 0.001$).

Conclusions

Our findings suggest that sustaining access to quality MCH services may decrease COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy. Willingness to receive the vaccine doubled over the 2-year period in our cohort, suggesting increased trust for use and acceptance in the unique context of the pregnancy/postpartum period. (Author)

2023-04751

Comparison of Postpartum Opioid Prescriptions Before vs During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Steuart SR, Lawler EC, Adams GB, et al (2023), JAMA Network Open vol 6, no 4, April 2023, e236438

Importance The COVID-19 pandemic substantially disrupted routine health care and exacerbated existing barriers to health care access. Although postpartum women frequently experience pain that interferes with activities of daily living, which is often successfully treated with prescription opioid analgesics, they are also at high risk for opioid misuse.

Objective To compare postpartum opioid prescription fills after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 with fills before the pandemic.

Design, Setting, and Participants In this cross-sectional study of 460 371 privately insured postpartum women who delivered a singleton live newborn between July 1, 2018, and December 31, 2020, postpartum opioid fills before March 1, 2020, were compared with fills after March 1, 2020. Statistical analysis was performed from December 1, 2021, to September 15, 2022.

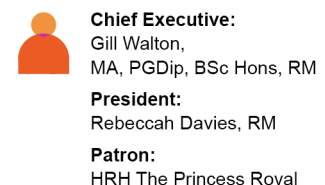
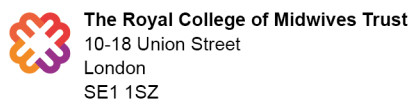
Exposure COVID-19 pandemic onset in March 2020.

Main Outcomes and Measures The main outcome was postpartum opioid fills, defined as patient fills of opioid prescriptions during the 6 months after birth. Opioid prescriptions were explored in terms of 5 measures: mean number of fills per person, mean filled morphine milligram equivalents (MMEs) per day, mean days supplied, percentage of patients filling a prescription for a schedule II opioid, and percentage of patients filling a prescription for a schedule III or higher opioid.

Results Among 460 371 postpartum women (mean [SD] age at delivery, 29.0 [10.8] years), those who gave birth to a single, live newborn after March 2020 were 2.8 percentage points more likely to fill an opioid prescription than expected based on the preexisting trend (forecasted, 35.0% [95% CI, 34.0%-35.9%]; actual, 37.8% [95% CI, 36.8%-38.7%]). The COVID-19 period was also associated with an increase in MMEs per day (forecasted mean [SD], 34.1 [2.0] [95% CI, 33.6-34.7]; actual mean [SD], 35.8 [1.8] [95% CI, 35.3-36.3]), number of opioid fills per patient (forecasted, 0.49 [95% CI, 0.48-0.51]; actual, 0.54 [95% CI, 0.51-0.55]), and percentage of patients filling a schedule II opioid prescription (forecasted, 28.7% [95% CI, 27.9%-29.6%]; actual, 31.5% [95% CI, 30.6%-32.3%]). There was no significant association with days' supply of opioids per prescription or percentage of patients filling a prescription for a schedule III or higher opioid. Results stratified by delivery modality showed that the observed increases were larger for patients who delivered by cesarean birth than those delivering vaginally.

Conclusions and Relevance This cross-sectional study suggests that the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic was associated with significant increases in postpartum opioid fills. Increases in opioid prescriptions may be associated with increased risk of opioid misuse, opioid use disorder, and opioid-related overdose among postpartum women. (Author)

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2023-04657

Vaccination Beliefs and Attitudes of Lactating People During the SARS-CoV-2 Pandemic. Mark EG, Demirci JR, Megli C, et al (2023), vol 39, no 3, August 2023, pp 415–425

Background:

Pregnant and recently pregnant people have lower vaccination rates against SARS-CoV-2 than the general population, despite increased risk of adverse outcomes from infection. Little is known about vaccine hesitancy in this population.

Research Aim:

To characterize SARS-CoV-2 and other vaccine attitudes of lactating people who accepted the SARS-CoV-2 vaccine, describing their vaccine experiences to further contextualize their beliefs.

Methods:

A prospective cross-sectional online survey design was used. We administered the survey to 100 lactating people in Pennsylvania from April to August 2021, upon enrollment into a longitudinal study investigating SARS-CoV-2 vaccine antibodies in human milk. This survey assessed SARS-CoV-2 vaccine attitudes, vaccine counseling from providers, and vaccine decision making. Associations between vaccination timing and beliefs were analyzed by Pearson chi-square.

Results:

Of 100 respondents, all received ≥ 1 SARS-CoV-2 vaccine before or shortly after enrollment, with 44% ($n = 44$) vaccinated in pregnancy and 56% ($n = 56$) while lactating. Participants reported vaccination counseling by obstetric ($n = 48$; 70%) and pediatric ($n = 25$; 36%) providers. Thirty-two percent ($n = 32$) received no advice on SARS-CoV-2 vaccination from healthcare providers, while 69% ($n = 69$) were counseled that vaccination was safe and beneficial. While 6% ($n = 6$) and 5% ($n = 5$) reported concerns about the safety of maternal vaccines for lactating people or their infants, respectively, 12% ($n = 12$) and 9% ($n = 9$) expressed concerns about the safety of maternal SARS-CoV-2 vaccination in particular.

Conclusions:

Despite high uptake of SARS-CoV-2 vaccine among participants, safety concerns persisted, with many reporting a lack of direct counseling from providers. Future research should investigate how variability in provider counseling affects SARS-CoV-2 vaccine uptake in perinatal populations. (Author)

2023-04469

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on maternal delivery experiences and breastfeeding practices in China: data from a cross-sectional study. Yu J, Gao M, Wei Z, et al (2022), BMC Pediatrics vol 22, no 104, February 2022

Background

The COVID-2019 pandemic has placed extensive pressure on health systems and posed a severe public health challenge worldwide. Lockdown measures implemented in many countries have delayed virus spread. However, a considerable number of people have faced unprecedented pressure, especially pregnant and breast-feeding women, because face-to-face professional support has been reduced during the lockdown in many countries.

Objectives

To compare the delivery and infant feeding experiences of women who delivered before (BL) versus during (DL) the Covid-19 pandemic in Beijing, China and to investigate predictors of breastfeeding at 6-months.

Methods

Women aged ≥ 18 years with an infant ≤ 18 months of age completed an anonymous survey. Information/links were shared online and via local clinics in Beijing. Logistic regression was performed to assess predictors of breastfeeding during the first 6-months.

Results

One thousand eight hundred seven women provided data; BL 1231 (68.1%), DL 576 (31.9%). Significantly more mothers

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in DL group reported the lockdown had moderate to high impact to their household income ($p = 0.013$) and the convenience of purchasing daily necessities ($p = 0.014$). Compared to BL mothers, significantly more mothers in the DL groups thought their birth location and breastfeeding intention had been effected by the COVID-19 ($p < 0.001$, $p = 0.036$ respectively). Mostly breastfeeding (MBF, mainly breastfeeding with few non-formula fluids added) at 6 months was predicted by delivery during the lockdown period (OR 1.43, 95% confidence interval (CI) 1.08, 1.90), younger maternal age (OR 0.96, 95%CI 0.93, 0.99), getting support from friends or relatives (OR 1.95, 95%CI 1.06, 3.59), and discussing health issues in online groups > four times a week (OR 1.66, 95%CI 1.09, 2.53).

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown measures influenced mothers' planned birth location and breastfeeding intention. However, breastfeeding practice was maintained during the pandemic. Our results highlight the importance of feeding support as well as potential beneficial effects of increased mother-infant contact during the lockdown period which is relevant even under normal circumstances. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12887-022-03155-y>

2023-04099

“It was just one moment that I felt like I was being judged”: Pregnant and postpartum black Women's experiences of personal and group-based racism during the COVID-19 pandemic. Chambers BD, Fontenot J, McKenzie-Sampson S, et al (2023), Social Science and Medicine vol 322, April 2023, 115813

Background

Racial inequities in maternal and child health outcomes persist: Black women and birthing people experience higher rates of adverse outcomes than their white counterparts. Similar inequities are seen in coronavirus disease (COVID-19) mortality rates. In response, we sought to explore the intersections of racism and the COVID-19 pandemic impact on the daily lives and perinatal care experiences of Black birthing people.

Methods

We used an intrinsic case study approach grounded in an intersectional lens to collect stories from Black pregnant and postpartum people residing in Fresno County (July–September 2020). All interviews were conducted on Zoom without video and were audio recorded and transcribed. Thematic analysis was used to group codes into larger themes.

Results

Of the 34 participants included in this analysis, 76.5% identified as Black only, and 23.5% identified as multiracial including Black. Their mean age was 27.2 years [SD, 5.8]. Nearly half (47%) reported being married or living with their partner; all were eligible for Medi-Cal insurance. Interview times ranged from 23 to 96 min. Five themes emerged: (1) Tensions about Heightened Exposure of Black Lives Matter Movement during the pandemic; (2) Fear for Black Son's Safety; (3) Lack of Communication from Health Care Professionals; (4) Disrespect from Health Care Professionals; and (5) Misunderstood or Judged by Health Care Professionals. Participants stressed that the Black Lives Matter Movement is necessary and highlighted that society views their Black sons as a threat. They also reported experiencing unfair treatment and harassment while seeking perinatal care.

Conclusions

Black women and birthing people shared that exposure to racism has heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing their levels of stress and anxiety. Understanding how racism impacts Black birthing people's lives and care experiences is critical to reforming the police force and revising enhanced prenatal care models to better address their needs. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2023.115813>

2023-03913

“I am scared, I do not want to lie”: exploring the impacts of COVID-19 on engagement in care, perceived health,

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Background

COVID-19 and efforts to manage widespread infection may compromise HIV care engagement. The COVID-19-related factors linked to reduced HIV engagement have not been assessed among postpartum women with HIV, who are at heightened risk of attrition under non-pandemic circumstances. To mitigate the effects of the pandemic on care engagement and to prepare for future public health crises, it is critical to understand how COVID-19 has impacted (1) engagement in care and (2) factors that may act as barriers to care engagement.

Methods

A quantitative assessment of COVID-19-related experiences was added to a longitudinal cohort study assessing predictors of postpartum attrition from HIV care among women in South Africa. Participants (N = 266) completed the assessment at 6, 12, 18, or 24 months postpartum between June and November of 2020. Those who endorsed one or more challenge related to engagement in care (making or keeping HIV care appointments, procuring HIV medications, procuring contraception, and/or accessing immunization services for infants; n = 55) were invited to complete a brief qualitative interview, which explored the specific factors driving these challenges, as well as other impacts of COVID-19 on care engagement. Within this subset, 53 participants completed an interview; qualitative data were analyzed via rapid analysis.

Results

Participants described key challenges that reduced their engagement in HIV care and identified four other domains of COVID-19-related impacts: physical health, mental health, relationship with a partner or with the father of the baby, and motherhood/caring for the new baby. Within these domains, specific themes and subthemes emerged, with some positive impacts of COVID-19 also reported (e.g., increased quality time, improved communication with partner, HIV disclosure). Coping strategies for COVID-19-related challenges (e.g., acceptance, spirituality, distraction) were also discussed.

Conclusions

About one in five participants reported challenges accessing HIV care, medications, or services, and they faced complex, multilayered barriers to remaining engaged. Physical health, mental health, relationships with partners, and ability to care for their infant were also affected. Given the dynamic nature of the pandemic and general uncertainty about its course, ongoing assessment of pandemic-related challenges among postpartum women is needed to avoid HIV care disruptions and to support wellbeing. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-023-05520-w>

2023-03395

Association of Antenatal COVID-19–Related Stress With Postpartum Maternal Mental Health and Negative Affectivity in Infants. Schweizer S, Andrews JL, Grunewald K, et al (2023), JAMA Network Open vol 6, no 3, March 2023, 232969

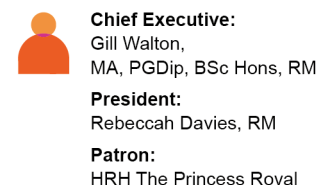
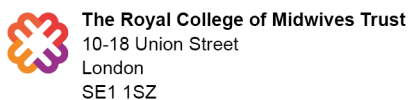
Importance Antenatal stress is a significant risk factor for poor postpartum mental health. The association of pandemic-related stress with postpartum outcomes among mothers and infants is, however, less well understood.

Objective To examine the association of antenatal COVID-19–related stress with postpartum maternal mental health and infant outcomes.

Design, Setting, and Participants This cohort study was conducted among 318 participants in the COVID-19 Risks Across the Lifespan study, which took place in Australia, the UK, and the US. Eligible participants reported being pregnant at the first assessment wave between May 5 and September 30, 2020, and completed a follow-up assessment between October 28, 2021, and April 24, 2022.

Main Outcomes and Measures COVID-19–related stress was assessed with the Pandemic Anxiety Scale (score range,

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0-4, with higher scores indicating greater COVID-19–related stress). The 8-item Patient Health Questionnaire (score range, 0-3, with higher scores indicating more frequent symptoms of depression) was used to measure maternal depression at each time point, and the 7-item General Anxiety Disorder scale (score range, 0-3, with higher scores indicating more frequent symptoms of anxiety) was used to measure generalized anxiety at each time point. At follow-up, postpartum distress was assessed with the 10-item Postpartum Distress Measure (score range, 0-3, with higher scores indicating greater postpartum distress), and infant outcomes (negative and positive affectivity and orienting behavior) were captured with the Infant Behavior Questionnaire (score range, 1-7, with higher scores indicating that the infant exhibited that affect/behavior more frequently).

Results The study included 318 women (mean [SD] age, 32.0 [4.6] years) from Australia (88 [28%]), the US (94 [30%]), and the UK (136 [43%]). Antenatal COVID-19–related stress was significantly associated with maternal postpartum distress ($\beta = 0.40$ [95% CI, 0.28-0.53]), depression ($\beta = 0.32$ [95% CI, 0.23-0.41]), and generalized anxiety ($\beta = 0.35$ [95% CI, 0.26-0.44]), as well as infant negative affectivity ($\beta = 0.45$ [95% CI, 0.14-0.76]). The findings remained consistent across a range of sensitivity analyses.

Conclusions and Relevance The findings of this cohort study suggest that targeting pandemic-related stressors in the antenatal period may improve maternal and infant outcomes. Pregnant individuals should be classified as a vulnerable group during pandemics and should be considered a public health priority, not only in terms of physical health but also mental health. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.2969>

2023-03308

Assessing the impact of telehealth implementation on postpartum outcomes for Black birthing people. Kumar NR, Arias MP, Leitner K, et al (2023), American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology MFM vol 5, no 2, February 2023, 100831

BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 pandemic led to the rapid uptake of telemedicine services, which have been shown to be potentially cost-saving and of comparable quality to in-person care for certain populations. However, there are some concerns regarding the feasibility of implementation for marginalized populations, and the impact of widespread implementation of these services on health disparities has not been well studied.

OBJECTIVE

This study aimed to assess the impact of telehealth implementation on postpartum care during the COVID-19 pandemic on racial disparities in visit attendance and completion of postpartum care goals.

STUDY DESIGN

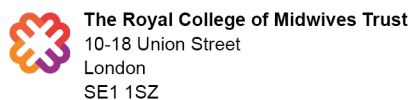
In this retrospective cohort study at a single tertiary care center, differences in outcomes between all Black and non-Black patients who had scheduled postpartum visits before and after telehealth implementation for postpartum care were compared. The primary outcome was postpartum visit attendance. The secondary outcomes included postpartum depression screening, contraception selection, breastfeeding status, completion of postpartum 2-hour glucose tolerance test, and cardiology follow-up for hypertensive disorders of pregnancy. In multivariable analysis, interaction terms were used to evaluate the differential impact of telehealth implementation by race.

RESULTS

Of 1579 patients meeting the inclusion criteria (780 in the preimplementation group and 799 in the postimplementation group), 995 (63%) self-identified as Black. In the preimplementation period, Black patients were less likely to attend a postpartum visit than non-Black patients (63.9% in Black patients vs 88.7% in non-Black patients; adjusted odds ratio, 0.48; 95% confidence interval, 0.29–0.79). In the postimplementation period, there was no difference in postpartum visit attendance by race (79.1% in Black patients vs 88.6% in non-Black patients; adjusted odds ratio, 0.74; 95% confidence interval, 0.45–1.21). In addition, significant differences across races in postpartum depression screening during the preimplementation period became nonsignificant in the postimplementation period. Telehealth implementation for postpartum care significantly reduced racial disparities in postpartum visit attendance (interaction $P = .005$).

CONCLUSION

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2023-02964

Adopting international recommendations to design a model for maternal health service to cope with pandemic disruption for Indonesian primary care. Ekawati FM, Muchlis M, Tuteja A (2023), *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth* vol 23, no 132, March 2023

Background

Limited evidence is available as the reference for the model of care on providing maternity care in low-and-middle-income countries (LMICs) to cope with pandemic disruption. This study aimed to adopt international recommendations to develop the model of care with the context of Indonesian settings.

Methods

Four codesign workshops and substitute interviews with stakeholders, covering the (i) exploration of service provision during the pandemic, (ii) adoption of international recommendations, (iii) designing and (iv) finalising model of care for maternal health services in primary care under the COVID-19 pandemic. The study took place in Yogyakarta Province Indonesia from July-November 2021. The participants were general practitioners, midwives, nurses, patients, and obstetricians. The data were analysed thematically.

Results

Twenty-three participants were recruited. As many as 23, 16, 14 and 16 participants participated in the first to fourth codesign workshops or substitute interviews. Key recommendations agreed upon in the workshop were health screening, maintaining antenatal-postnatal breastfeeding care, limiting visitors, using telemedicine, and creating a multidisciplinary team to provide the care. A model of care for improving maternal service was also agreed and received suggestions from the participants. Identified barriers to the recommendation implementation, such as the available clinical resources and negotiating providers' authority in practice.

Conclusion

Recommendations and the model of care for improving maternity care in Indonesia are beneficial to be implemented in Indonesian primary care during the COVID-19 pandemic. Further research includes pilot studies to explore the acceptability of the model and recommendation implementation in practice. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-023-05433-8>

2023-02567

Pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum experience in pregnant women infected with SARS-CoV-2 in 2020 in Paris: a qualitative phenomenological study. Cadwallader JS, Berlingo L, Rémy V, et al (2023), *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth* vol 23, no 83, January 2023

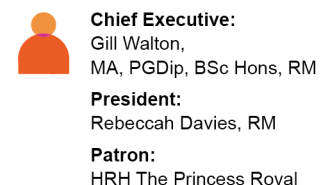
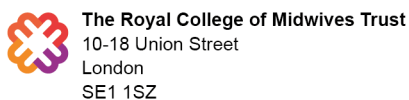
Background

The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdowns triggered social discontent on an unprecedented scale. Descriptive phenomenological studies showed that pregnant women were under intense stress during the COVID-19 outbreak, even though they remained uninfected. The purpose of this study was to report on the experiences of pregnant women affected by mild COVID-19 during the first wave of the pandemic.

Methods

In this non- interventional qualitative study, we analyzed pregnant women's experiences using an interpretive phenomenological analysis approach. We conducted semi-structured interviews with women who had had a mild COVID-19 during their pregnancy, and gave birth or planned to give birth in the maternity units of Sorbonne University in Paris, France.

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Results

Participants reported that at the time they had COVID-19, they were not afraid of being seriously ill, but of transmitting COVID-19 to their close relatives. Their main concern was being pregnant and becoming a parent in a world where the pandemic deeply altered social environment. This included uncertainty about the future and an acute feeling of isolation related to lockdown. The idea that their partner might not be allowed to attend childbirth was almost unanimously felt as intolerable. In contrast, women had positive feelings regarding the fact that lockdown resulted in a de facto paternity leave leading to a certain degree of equality in the couple regarding baby care and household chores. Unexpectedly, the pandemic social distancing measures helped participants escaping from behavioral constraints, including the unspoken rule that they should welcome greetings from friends and family, despite being exhausted by the recent birth.

Conclusions

Our results suggest that avoiding separation from their partner is a key to benevolent medical care for pregnant women in times of health crises. The unexpected benefits women reported in a world of lockdown cast a new light on their expectation regarding parenthood today. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-023-05406-x>

2023-02321

Food insecurity and its socioeconomic and health determinants in pregnant women and mothers of children under 2 years of age, during the COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Azevedo FM, de Morais NS, Silva DLF, et al (2023), *Frontiers in Public Health* 24 January 2023, online

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic has reduced access to adequate food in terms of quality and quantity, especially for the most vulnerable population groups. The objective of this study was to evaluate the prevalence of Food Insecurity and its main socioeconomic and health determinants in pregnant women and mothers of children under 2 years of age, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods: This systematic review was conducted in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses (PRISMA) and registered in the International Prospective Register of Systematic Reviews (PROSPERO) (CRD42021278033). The descriptors "Pregnant Woman", "Postpartum Women", "Breastfeeding Women", "COVID-19", "Food Insecurity", "Food Security" were combined in Scopus (Elsevier), Medline/PubMed (via National Library of Medicine), Embase (Elsevier), Web of Science and Science Direct independently by two researchers in September 2022. Original articles about Food Insecurity in households with pregnant women and mothers of children under 2 years of age during the COVID-19 pandemic were included. The meta-analysis of the prevalence of Food Insecurity was conducted using the RStudio software (4.0.4).

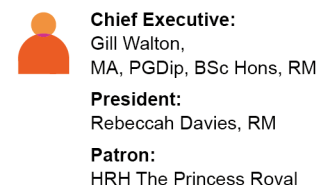
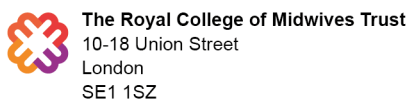
Results: The initial search resulted in 539 records, and 10 articles met the proposed criteria and were included in this review. The prevalence of Food Insecurity ranged from 11.5 to 80.3% and in the meta-analysis it was 51% (IC: 30–71) (I2 = 100.0%). The main socioeconomic and health determinants were ethnicity, domain language, low education, low income, informal employment, unemployment, occurrence of mental disorders, domestic violence, in addition to the unavailability of food in markets and lack of transport. The inclusion of studies with data collection by telephone stands out as a limitation, due to the non-inclusion of vulnerable groups without access to this means of communication.

Conclusion: It is necessary to implement and strengthen specific public policies for the maternal and child group with the objective of protecting and strengthening the rights of women to maintain the physical and mental integrity of this group and guarantee Food Security. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1087955>

2023-02073

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Losing Connection: Experiences of Virtual Pregnancy and Postpartum Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Altman MR, Mohammed SA, Eagen-Torkko MK, et al (2023), *The Journal of Perinatal and Neonatal Nursing* vol 37, no 1, January 2023, pp 44-49

Introduction:

The rapid uptake of telehealth for perinatal care during the coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has led to mixed evidence as to its effectiveness, with limited research demonstrating satisfaction and appropriateness for communities at risk for poor birth outcomes. The purpose of this article is to describe the experiences of virtual care during pregnancy and postpartum among a diverse group of pregnant/birthing people in Washington State during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods:

We conducted a thematic analysis study exploring experiences of care during the COVID-19 pandemic for 15 pregnant and birthing people in Washington State. This secondary analysis utilized data specific to experiences receiving care via telehealth.

Results:

Three dominant themes were identified: loss of connection and relationships with providers; need for hands-on interactions for reassurance; and virtual care is good for some things but not all—desire for immediate, accessible care when appropriate. The majority of participants felt that it was subpar to in-person care due to a lack of connection and the inability to receive necessary tests and hands-on reassurance.

Discussion/Conclusions:

Our study findings encourage very judicious use of virtual care for communities that are at high risk for birth disparities to avoid impacting relationship building between patient and provider. (Author)

2023-01747

Influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on self-reported urinary incontinence during pregnancy and postpartum: A prospective study. Ferrari A, Corazza I, Mannella P, et al (2023), *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics* vol 160, suppl 1, January 2023, pp 187-194

Objective

To explore how the COVID-19 pandemic influenced self-reported occurrence and severity of pregnancy-related urinary incontinence (UI) in the maternity pathways of Tuscany, Italy.

Methods

In this prospective pre-post cohort study, we selected a pre-pandemic (n = 1018) and a post-pandemic (n = 3911) cohorts of women that completed, from the first trimester until 3 months postpartum, three surveys including validated patient-reported outcome measures for UI. Data were obtained from systematic surveys on the maternity pathways of Tuscany from March 2019 to June 2021. We performed panel regression models to explore how UI risk differed between COVID-19 groups.

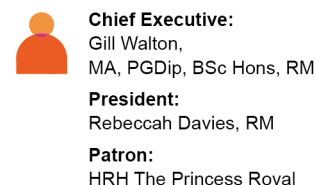
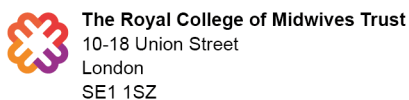
Results

UI occurred less frequently and less severely in post-pandemic patients—especially stress/mixed UI in women never performing pelvic floor muscle training (PFMT)—whereas no difference emerged in women performing during-pregnancy PFMT. During COVID-19, obese women had higher risk of UI, whereas women undergoing operative delivery had lower risk. The post-pandemic group reported more severe UI symptoms at the third trimester, but less severe UI postpartum in women suffering from UI during pregnancy.

Conclusions

During the COVID-19 pandemic, women reported fewer UI symptoms because they might have lacked chances to identify UI symptoms as a result of pandemic-related sedentarism and inactivity. The risk in women performing during-pregnancy PFMT was not increased, but just six of 26 health districts organized remote PFMT sessions, thus

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revealing limited resilience to the pandemic in Tuscany. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijgo.14522>

2023-01588

Patient Satisfaction With a COVID-19 Telehealth Lactation Care Model. Oggero MK, Capello RB, Clay PC, et al (2021), Clinical Lactation vol 12, no 2, 2021

Objective

The objective of this study was to determine if patient satisfaction with teleconsults during the COVID-19 pandemic, both with and without corresponding car-side weight measurements, was different from satisfaction with in-person visits prior to the pandemic.

Methods

Retrospective descriptive and quantitative analysis was used to examine existing patient satisfaction data collected via email survey from patients who completed at least one in-person visit from March 2019 to February 2020 or at least one teleconsult during April or May 2020.

Results

Respondents reported high levels of satisfaction with teleconsults. Approximately 97% of respondents found teleconsults helpful. Satisfaction with teleconsults during the pandemic, both with and without car-side weight measurements, was similar to satisfaction with in-person visits prior to the pandemic.

Conclusion

Providing families with teleconsults in conjunction with car-side weight measurements was a successful model for providing lactation services to patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Author)

2023-01585

Lactation Support Case Report During COVID-19. Parajon C (2021), Clinical Lactation vol 12, no 1, 2021

Objective

To highlight a new format, a newborn clinic is providing lactation care during the pandemic. COVID-19 is affecting many families, and lactation consultants can adapt during these times. Families are staying isolated in their homes to reduce exposure to the virus, but problems concerning lactation still exist, and in-person appointments are discouraged. Families continue to get lactation advice and care through scheduled telephone appointments and simultaneous viewing of Global Health Media breastfeeding videos sent through secure message emails.

Case Report

Details the specific response at the newborn clinic which include discussion of videos and answering questions through no-cost telephone appointments until the family reaches their goals.

Conclusions

Infant- and mother-related lactation problems continue to exist during the pandemic, but because of in-person restrictions, families are not able to attend clinic appointments. The scheduled telephone appointments and the simultaneous video viewing addresses many lactation problems with great success and satisfaction among the families. (Author)

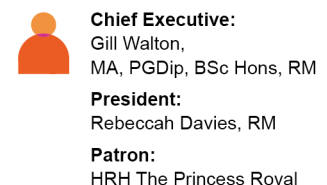
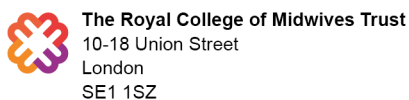
2023-01581

Lactation Support During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Keeping Our Distance but Remaining Connected. Pasadino F, Ellett GV, Demarco K (2021), Clinical Lactation vol 12, no 1, 2021

Objective

The Center for Perinatal Education and Lactation at NYU Langone Hospitals, in one of the initial epicenters of the

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COVID-19 pandemic in New York City, due to state and local mandates, had to abruptly cancel all in-person educational sessions and support groups. Determining how to best provide prenatal and postnatal breastfeeding support became a major challenge and we had to expediently identify innovative avenues to continue to provide guidance and support for our expectant and new families.

Discussion

This article discusses how the NYU Langone Hospitals Lactation Department creatively revised the approach to prenatal and post discharge breastfeeding support by implementing a telehealth format which commenced in March of 2020 and by expanding post discharge telephone support. We were able to successfully transition rapidly into providing lactation education and post discharge via a virtual framework during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic and we increased our telephone support for vulnerable dyads.

Conclusion

A virtual technology format is a viable alternative means of providing lactation education and supporting optimal infant feeding within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual platforms could reasonably become the permanent way of delivering lactation guidance and support for the foreseeable future. (Author)

2023-01580

COVID-19 Illness: Mother–Baby Separation, Viruses, and Breastfeeding. Duran D, Johnston JT (2021), Clinical Lactation vol 12, no 1, 2021

Objectives

Some hospitals have instituted separation of mothers and their newborn(s) when SARS-CoV-2 is suspected or confirmed in the mother. Limited data are available for SARS-CoV-2 vertical transmission, including studies on breast milk. This article looks at SARS CoV-2 case studies and data to date as well as prior pertinent research.

Methods

Informal searches of PUBMED, CINAHL and Ovid Emtree were used to identify early reports of vertical transmissions of the novel Coronavirus, case reports, and population based reports of early evolving protocols and their outcomes. As this is a novel virus the authors used previously identified anti-infectivity and antiviral mechanisms of human milk on other similar viruses to guide analysis. Further this article reviewed the well established literature regarding the risks of undue infant separation which negatively affect nearly every aspect of infant and maternal health.

Results

Informal searches conducted in the spring and early summer of 2020 identified 14 early reports attempting to analyze the initial and evolving global response to SARS-CoV-2 and the effects of the virus on the maternal-infant dyad.

Conclusion

The feasibility of single-family rooms and support for breastfeeding as an alternative approach that addresses many of the risks favorably and reduces economic cost, both in lifetime disease burden and direct care are discussed. Initial reports seem to indicate that immediate separation of the mother from her newborn is likely to increase the risk to both mother and infant. (Author)

2023-01577

Enhancing Lactation Support in the NICU During the COVID-19 Pandemic by Implementing a Primary Care Model.

Wagner J, Delaney C, Baines S (2020), Clinical Lactation vol 11, no 4, 2020

Objective

Meet the needs for additional lactation support in the NICU during the Covid-19 pandemic due to restriction in visitors, hours, and other stressors impacting the Mother and infant dyad.

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Method

During the Covid-19 pandemic, a large southeast U.S. research hospital implemented a new model of providing Lactation Consultation in a Level IV NICU. The Primary Care nursing model utilized in the NICU focuses on the infant and mother's individual needs and assists in the development of a caring and supportive environment.

Results

The response to the Primary Care Lactation Consultant has well received and has resulted in the early identification of any Lactation concerns. Parents are reassured, knowing whom to contact with questions. The Lactation Consultant can set mutually agreed upon goals with the mother and include input from the other family members and the healthcare team.

Conclusions

In the future, the model and outcomes of Primary Care by Lactation Consultants in the NICU will focus on additional study and evaluation. In the interim, the parents at this facility have benefited from the family-centered care that focuses on the infant and parents. (Author)

2023-01576

Breastfeeding Via Zoom. Wysocki-Emery K (2020), Clinical Lactation vol 11, no 4, 2020

This article describes how lactation consulting changed during the COVID-19 pandemic for a private practice lactation consultant. (Author)

2023-01575

Lactation Care of Families in the Community Health Setting During the COVID Pandemic. Altman D (2020), Clinical Lactation vol 11, no 4, 2020

Background

The COVID pandemic challenged IBCLCs and other healthcare providers to determine how to meet the needs of new families while maintaining safety for both patients and caregivers. In addition, both workplace and personal stressors triggered by ongoing changes increased the risk of compassion fatigue.

Program

Initial patient support was offered at a free-standing lactation medicine clinic. After office closure, lactation services moved to multiple pediatric offices.

Result

Although the worksite changed after the first six weeks of the pandemic, direct patient care providing lactation support remained uninterrupted, and continues to this day. The IBCLCs are addressing the issue of compassion fatigue with awareness along with peer to peer support. (Author)

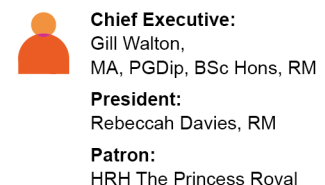
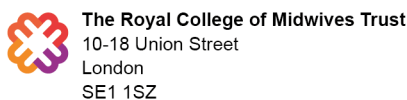
2023-01546

The effect of counseling with stress management approach on postpartum anxiety and distress and breastfeeding self-efficacy during COVID-19 pandemic: a randomized controlled trial. Shamsdanesh S, Nourizadeh R, Hakimi S, et al (2023), BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth vol 23, no 26, January 2023

Background

Successful breastfeeding is related to the psychosocial conditions of the mother. Covid19 pandemic resulted in psychological consequences in women during postpartum period. Maternal anxiety and distress reduce the chances of exclusive breastfeeding. The present study aimed to investigate the effect of counseling with stress management approach on postpartum anxiety and distress and breastfeeding self-efficacy (BSE) during COVID-19 pandemic.

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Method

This randomized controlled clinical trial was conducted on 64 breastfeeding mothers referred to health care centers in Tabriz, Iran in 2021. Participants were assigned into the intervention and control groups in a ratio of 1: 1 using block randomization in a block size of 4 and 6. The intervention group participated in six individual 60–90 min sessions. Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), postpartum distress (PMD), and BSE questionnaires were completed before and 4-week after the intervention by the control and intervention groups. Independent t-test and ANCOVA were used to compare the outcomes between two groups.

Results

According to the ANCOVA results by controlling the baseline values and after the intervention, the mean score of anxiety in the intervention group was lower than that in the control group [Adjusted Mean Difference (AMD): -13.82, 95% confidence interval (CI): -12.35 to -15.29, ($p < 0.001$)]. Further, the mean score of postpartum distress after intervention was lower in the intervention group compared with that in the control group [AMD:5.31 95% CI: -3.00 to -7.37 ($p < 0.001$)]. After the intervention, the mean score of BSE in the intervention group was significantly higher than that in the control group [AMD: 25.57, 95% CI: 22.85 to 28.29 ($p < 0.001$)].

Conclusion

Stress management counseling can improve postpartum anxiety and distress and BSE and increase breastfeeding. However, more studies are needed for a definitive conclusion.

Trial registration

Iranian Registry of Clinical Trials (IRCT): IRCT20171007036615N6. Date of registration: 15/09/2021. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-023-05356-4>

2023-01448

Quality of prenatal and postpartum telehealth visits during COVID-19 and preferences for future care. Marshall C, Gutierrez S, Hecht H, et al (2023), AJOG Global Reports vol 3, no 1, February 2023, 100139

BACKGROUND

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth practices for pregnancy-related care were rapidly implemented. Telehealth for pregnancy-related care is likely to continue after the pandemic. In order for health systems and clinicians to provide person-centered pregnancy-related care via telehealth, it is critical to understand patients' telehealth experiences and their preferences regarding the use of telehealth moving forward.

OBJECTIVE

This study aimed to describe perceived quality of prenatal and postpartum telehealth visits during COVID-19 and to examine the association between telehealth quality during the pandemic and future telehealth preferences.

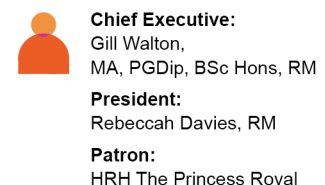
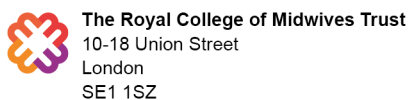
STUDY DESIGN

We used data from of an online sample of US women aged 18 to 45 years seeking reproductive health care during COVID-19. Two cross-sections of survey data were collected in July 2020 and January 2021. This analysis included those who sought prenatal (n=1496) or postpartum (n=482) care during the pandemic. Among those who had a prenatal or postpartum telehealth visit, we used multivariable logistic regression to examine the association between a measure of perceived telehealth quality and openness to future telehealth visits, adjusting for sociodemographic characteristics.

RESULTS

A total of 57.5% of prenatal and 52.9% of postpartum respondents had a telehealth appointment. Respondents agreed with most statements about the quality of their telehealth appointments, with $\geq 80\%$ reporting that they were convenient, easy, safe, and provided good information. Lower-ranked quality items were related to visits feeling personal and the patient feeling cared for. A total of 35.2% of prenatal (n=816) and 43.3% of postpartum (n=231)

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respondents expressed openness to telehealth visits in the future. Prenatal and postpartum respondents reporting higher telehealth quality had increased odds of being open to telehealth in the future (prenatal: adjusted odds ratio, 1.2; 95% confidence interval, 1.2–1.3; postpartum: adjusted odds ratio, 1.2; 95% confidence interval, 1.1–1.3).

CONCLUSION

Prenatal and postpartum respondents with better telehealth experiences were more likely to express openness to telehealth in the future, although most preferred future in-person visits. As pregnancy-related telehealth continues, it is important to offer appointment options that match patient preferences, especially populations that face barriers in access to care, and to explore ways to personalize care and support positive patient–provider relationships.

(Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.xagr.2022.100139>

2023-01150

Association Between the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic and National Disparities in Postpartum Visit

Attendance. Bellerose M, Steenland MW (2023), *Obstetrics & Gynecology* vol 141, no 1, pp 170-172, January 2023

This study used data from PRAMS (Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System) between 2016 and 2020 and found that postpartum visit attendance declined by 5.8 (95% CI –6.4 to –5.2) percentage points in the first 9 months of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The greatest declines occurred among non-Hispanic Black individuals (–9.9, 95% CI –11.6 to –8.1 percentage points), individuals aged 19 years or younger (–9.9, 95% CI –13.5 to –6.2 percentage points), and individuals without postpartum insurance (–11.4, 95% CI –14.5 to –8.3 percentage points). Although the pandemic was associated with a decrease in reporting common barriers to attendance, including lack of transportation and not being able to leave work, it introduced new barriers that potentially contributed to widened disparities in postpartum care. A combination of health policy and health system approaches are needed to increase postpartum visit attendance and reduce disparities in use. (Author)

Full URL: https://journals.lww.com/greenjournal/Fulltext/2023/01000/Association_Between_the_Coronavirus_Disease_2019.18.aspx

2023-00988

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on expectant and new parents' experience of pregnancy, childbirth, breast feeding, parental responsiveness and sensitivity, and bonding and attunement in high-income countries: a systematic review of the evidence.

Adesanya AM, Barrett S, Moffat M, et al (2022), *BMJ Open* vol 12, no 12, December 2022, e066963

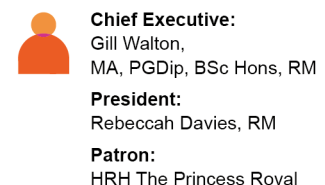
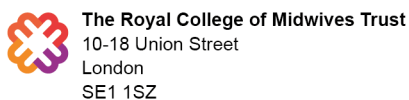
Objectives To review the evidence on how pregnancy, birth experience, breast feeding, parental responsiveness and sensitivity, and bonding and attunement were impacted by COVID-19.

Methods We searched eight literature databases and websites of relevant UK-based organisations. The review focused on evidence during pregnancy and the early years (0–5 years). Studies of any study design published in English from 1 March 2020 to 15 March 2021 and conducted in high-income countries were included. Screening and data extraction were undertaken in duplicate. Evidence was synthesised using a narrative approach. Study quality of included studies was assessed using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool.

Results The search yielded 9776 publications, of which 26 met our inclusion criteria. Significant knowledge gaps on how COVID-19 affected pregnancy and breast feeding limited healthcare providers' ability to provide consistent evidence-based information and care at the start of the pandemic. There was an enduring sense of loss about loved ones being restricted from taking part in key moments. Parents were concerned about the limitations of virtual healthcare provision. Some parents reported more opportunities for responsive breast feeding and improved parent–infant bonding due to reduced social and work pressures. Women from minoritised ethnic groups were less likely to continue breast feeding and attributed this to a lack of face-to-face support.

Conclusions The evidence suggests that new and expectant families have been both negatively and positively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting restrictions. The impacts on parents' opportunities to bond with

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their young children and to be attuned to their needs were felt unequally. It is important that emergency response policies consider the mother and the partner as a family unit when making changes to the delivery of maternal and child health and care services, so as to mitigate the impact on the family and existing health inequalities.

PROSPERO registration number CRD42021236769. (Author)

Full URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2022-066963>

2023-00976

Breastfeeding During COVID-19: Where Did Parents Get Their Information and What Were They Told to Do?. Hilliard E, Westrom S, Klein B (2022), *Clinical Lactation* vol 13, no 4, 2022, pp 203-213

Introduction:

The COVID pandemic may have affected breastfeeding rates through hospital policies and practices and misinformation. This study examines how COVID-19 policies and information affected parent breastfeeding decisions.

Methods:

Parents who delivered infants after March 2020 completed an anonymous, online questionnaire about breastfeeding intention, and COVID related infant feeding recommendations and hospital practices.

Results:

Of 84 participants, most were white, had intended to breastfeed, and were still doing so. Twelve reported that COVID increased their desire to breastfeed, and none indicated it decreased their desire. While in the hospital, 54 parents spoke with a lactation consultant. Parents were told to wash hands before and after infant care and wear a mask if symptomatic.

Conclusions:

Parents consulted with lactation consultations in the hospital, were given consistent recommendations about limiting transmission of COVID during infant feeding and were not discouraged from breastfeeding. This study should be replicated with more diverse participants. (Author)

2023-00789

Early human milk lactoferrin during SARS-CoV-2 infection. Briana DD, Papadopoulou A, Syridou G, et al (2022), *Journal of Maternal-Fetal and Neonatal Medicine* vol 35, no 25, 2022, pp 6704-6707

Background/aim

Early human milk provides protection against viral infections due to its high nutritional value, abundance of maternal antibodies and the specific role of lactoferrin (Lf). Lf blocks the early interaction between SARS-CoV-2 and host cells by binding to specific cell receptors and has been proposed as a preventative and adjunct treatment for COVID-19. This preliminary report aimed to investigate concentrations of Lf in early milk of SARS-CoV-2 positive mothers versus non-infected controls.

Material and methods

In a cohort of 13 SARS-CoV-2 positive mothers and 15 controls, breast milk concentrations of Lf were determined by ELISA on day 3 postpartum. Additionally, colostrum samples of infected mothers were analyzed for SARS-CoV-2 RNA detection and anti-SARS-CoV-2 IgA and IgG determination using RT-qPCR and ELISA, respectively.

Results

No differences were found in breast milk Lf concentrations between SARS-CoV-2 positive mothers and controls. In a subgroup analysis, however, symptomatic mothers (n = 7) presented with lower breast milk Lf concentrations, as compared to asymptomatic mothers (p = .041) and healthy controls (p = .029). All milk samples tested negative for SARS-CoV-2 RNA. Early human milk of infected mothers displayed IgA and IgG SARS-CoV-2 specific reactivity.

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Conclusions

Our data showed a different early breast milk Lf “profile” between COVID-19 symptomatic and asymptomatic mothers with the latter being at non-COVID levels (control group). SARS-CoV-2 RNA was not detected in any breast milk sample. Early human milk Lf levels are potentially influenced by the severity of maternal COVID-19 infection during pregnancy. (Author)

2023-00761

Parent organizations’ experiences of the pandemic response in maternity care in thirteen European countries.

Drandić D, Hartmann K, Barata C, et al (2022), *European Journal of Midwifery* vol 6, December 2022, p 71

We surveyed changes to maternity care services in the first 17 months of the COVID-19 pandemic in 13 different European countries, from the perspective of national maternity service (parent) organizations advocating for a human rights approach to maternity services. A qualitative study was conducted in November 2020. An open-question survey was sent to national maternity service (parent) organizations and members of COST Action 18211 in Europe, asking about COVID-19 measures in maternity services (antenatally, intrapartum, postnatally, and overall satisfaction). From the open answers, 16 core issues were extracted. Between February and August 2021, semi-structured interviews with the national representatives of 14 parent member organizations in Europe were conducted, collecting details on overall national situations and changes due to COVID-19 measures. The reported experiences of parent organizations from 13 European countries show wide variations in epidemiological containment measures during the first 17 months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Practices differed between facilities, resulting in emotional disquiet and confusion for parent-patients. Most countries maintained antenatal and postnatal care but restricted psychosocial support (antenatal and birth companions, visitors). Organizations from nine countries reported that women had to wear masks during labor, and all but two countries saw separations of mothers and babies. Most parent organizations described a need for more reliable information for new parents. During the pandemic, non-evidence-based practices were (re-) established in many settings, depriving women and families of many factors which evidence has shown to be essential for a positive birthing experience. Based on the findings, we consider the challenges in maternity services and propose a strategy for future crises. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.18332/ejm/156902>

2022-10721

Postnatal mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic: Impact on mothers’ postnatal sense of security and on mother-to-infant bonding.

Schaming C, Wendland J (2023), *Midwifery* vol 117, February 2023, 103557

Background

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic context imposed new living conditions which greatly modified women's experience of the postpartum period and brought significant changes to postnatal care.

Objective

The main objective of this study was to evaluate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic context on maternal sense of security and on mother-to-child bonding in the postpartum.

Design

This study had a mixed research design. We compared levels of mother-child bonding disturbances and of maternal emotional security amongst two samples of postnatal women recruited before and during the pandemic. Postnatal depression was also evaluated. A qualitative analysis of the participants' comments on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was performed with an open-coding approach.

Participants

Two samples of French-speaking mothers in the first six months after their childbirth, recruited before the pandemic (N=874) and during the pandemic (N=721).

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Findings

Mother-child bonding disturbances measured with PBQ and levels of emotional security levels evaluated with PPSSI did not differ significantly between the samples. A high prevalence of women at risk of postnatal depression was found in both samples. However, participants' comments on their postnatal experience during the pandemic contrasted with their quantitative data. Fears of contamination, social isolation, and lack of support were the main factors of insecurity. Lack of closeness with relatives and friends, limited presence of the partner in the maternity ward, and early interactions with the newborn with a mask appear to have altered mother-child bonding during this pandemic period.

Conclusions and implications for practice

The findings highlight the importance of considering social and environmental factors and needs when evaluating postnatal mental health and providing postnatal care to new mothers during a health crisis. Health services and professionals should pay particular attention to mothers' mental health and well-being and guarantee continuity of care to avoid parents' isolation in the sensitive postpartum period. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.midw.2022.103557>

2022-10255

Reducing risks for infant mortality in the Midlands, UK: a qualitative study identifying areas for improvement in the delivery of key public health messages in the perinatal period. Pillay T, Freeney J, Walters C, et al (2022), BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth vol 22, no 774, 17 October 2022

Background:

The Midlands has amongst the highest rates of neonatal and infant mortality in the UK. A public health parent education and empowerment programme, aimed at reducing key risks associated with this mortality was established and evaluated in the region. This was undertaken in an attempt to identify areas for optimal delivery of the public health messages around reducing risks for neonatal and infant mortality.

Method:

Qualitatively assessment, using the software package Dedoose®, was undertaken. This involved analysis of reflections by the programme trainers, after the delivery of their training sessions to parents, families and carers, between 01 January and 31 December 2021. These were intended to capture insights from the trainers on parent, family, carer and staff perspectives, perceptions/misperceptions around reducing risks for infant mortality. Potential areas for improvement in delivery of the programme were identified from this analysis.

Results:

A total of 323 programmes, comprising 524 parents, family members and carers were offered the programme. Analysis of 167 reflections around these interactions and those of staff (n = 29) are reported. The programme was positively received across parents, families, carers and staff. Four overall themes were identified: (a) reach and inclusion, (b) knowledge, (c) practical and emotional support and (d) challenges for delivery of the programme. Recommendations for improved delivery of the programme were identified, based on qualitative analysis.

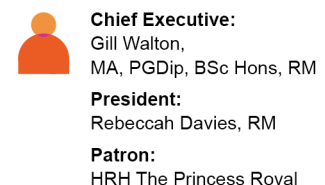
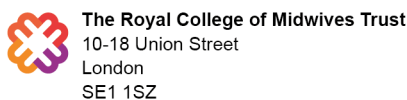
Conclusion:

This novel approach to empowerment and education around neonatal public health messaging is a valuable tool for parents, families, carers and staff in the Midlands. Key practical recommendations for enhancing delivery of these critical public health messages were identified from this qualitative research. These are likely to be of value in other parts of the UK and globally. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-022-05092-1>

2022-09511

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The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Postpartum Readmission Rates at a Single Tertiary Care Center in New York City. DeBolt CA, Roig JC, Spiera E, et al (2022), American Journal of Perinatology vol 39, no 11, August 2022, pp 1145-1150

Objective The aim of this study was to mitigate transmission of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) infection and decrease exposure to the hospital setting, Mount Sinai Hospital implemented new protocols, including early postpartum discharge. Early discharge would allow for more single-bedded rooms, limiting exposure to other patients and their support persons. During the pandemic, patients were discharged to home on postpartum day 1 or 2 after vaginal or cesarean delivery, respectively, instead of day 2 or 3, unless longer hospitalization was needed for medical indications. We aim to determine if the readmission rate was increased in the setting of earlier discharge during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Study Design Historical cohort study comparing the readmission rate in SARS-CoV-2 negative women who presented to Mount Sinai Hospital for delivery admission from March to May 2019 versus March to May 2020. The primary outcome was readmission rate within 6 weeks of discharge day. Maternal and neonatal characteristics and outcomes were compared between groups using t-tests or Wilcoxon's rank-sum test for continuous measures and chi-squared or Fisher's exact tests for categorical measures, as appropriate. Primary and secondary outcomes were assessed using linear and logistic univariable and multivariable regression.

Results Patients in the 2020 cohort (n = 1,078) were significantly less likely to have public/state insurance (p = 0.02), more likely to have pregestational diabetes (p = 0.02), gestational diabetes (p = 0.04), gestational hypertension (p < 0.01), and an operative vaginal or cesarean delivery (vs. spontaneous vaginal delivery, p = 0.01) compared with 2019 cohort patients (n = 1,910). Patients in the 2020 cohort were significantly more likely to have an earlier postpartum day of discharge and a shorter median length of stay compared with 2019 cohort patients (both p < 0.01). Despite differences in length of stay, the rate of readmission was similar between the two groups (p = 0.45).

Conclusion During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was no difference in readmission rate despite shorter hospital stays. (Author)

2022-09436

How Education Level Affects Risk of Post-Partum Depression: A Comparison Before and During Covid-19. Madera P, Zanetti S, Dal Maso F, et al (2022), Journal of Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Health (JPPPH) vol 36, no 2, Summer 2022, pp 42-54

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between education level and risk of postnatal depression before and during the Covid-19 pandemic in a sample of gestational parents in Northern Italy. In this case-control study, two groups were compared: the pre and mid- Covid-19 pandemic period groups. Mothers included gave birth between January 2018 and October 2020 and completed the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) within two days of delivery. Before administering the questionnaire, the sociodemographic and labor and delivery characteristics were collected through a brief anamnestic interview. The analyses based on the EPDS outcomes show a significant increase in the risk of developing postpartum depression in women who have given birth during the pandemic period. Additionally, a higher education level may be an overall protective factor against the development of depressive symptoms, especially in the Covid period. (Author)

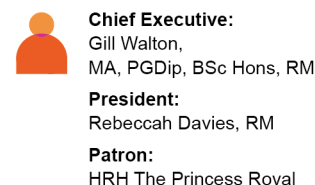
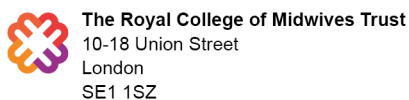
2022-09116

Barriers and facilitators of access to maternal, newborn and child health services during the first wave of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria: findings from a qualitative study. Akaba GO, Dirisu O, Okunade KS, et al (2022), BMC Health Services Research vol 22, no 611, 6 May 2022

Background

COVID-19 pandemic may have affected the utilization of maternal and newborn child health services in Nigeria but the extent, directions, contextual factors at all the levels of healthcare service delivery in Nigeria is yet to be fully explored.

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The objective of the study was to explore the barriers and facilitators of access to MNCH services during the first wave of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria.

Methods

A qualitative study was conducted among different stakeholder groups in 18 public health facilities in Nigeria between May and July, 2020. In-depth interviews were conducted among 54 study participants (service users, service providers and policymakers) selected from across the three tiers of public health service delivery system in Nigeria (primary health centers, secondary health centers and tertiary health centers). Coding of the qualitative data and identification of themes from the transcripts were carried out and thematic approach was used for data analyses.

Results

Barriers to accessing MNCH services during the first wave of COVID-19-pandemic in Nigeria include fear of contracting COVID-19 infection at health facilities, transportation difficulties, stigmatization of sick persons, lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) /medical commodities, long waiting times at hospitals, shortage of manpower, lack of preparedness by health workers, and prioritization of essential services.

Enablers to access include the COVID-19 non-pharmacological measures instituted at the health facilities, community sensitization on healthcare access during the pandemic, and alternative strategies for administering immunization service at the clinics.

Conclusion

Access to MNCH services were negatively affected by lockdown during the first wave of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria particularly due to challenges resulting from restrictions in movements which affected patients/healthcare providers ability to reach the hospitals as well as patients' ability to pay for health care services. Additionally, there was fear of contracting COVID-19 infection at health facilities and the health systems inability to provide enabling conditions for sustained utilization of MNCH services. There is need for government to institute alternative measures to halt the spread of diseases instead of lockdowns so as to ensure unhindered access to MNCH services during future pandemics. This may include immediate sensitization of the general public on modes of transmission of any emergent infectious disease as well as training of health workers on emergency preparedness and alternative service delivery models. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-022-07996-2>

2022-08655

Factors influencing physical activity in postpartum women during the COVID-19 pandemic: a cross-sectional survey in Japan.

Nomura Y, Araki T (2022), BMC Women's Health vol 22, no 371, 8 September 2022

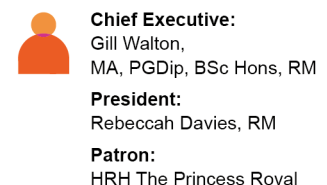
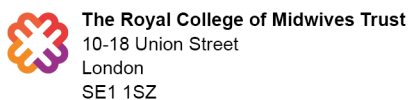
Background

The aim of this study was to investigate factors influencing postpartum physical activity (PA), taking into consideration psychosocial perceptions during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic by comparing health-related quality of life (HRQoL) scores.

Methods

A web-based cross-sectional survey of 787 postpartum women was conducted between March and October 2021. After applying the exclusion criteria, 590 women were analyzed. The International Physical Activity Questionnaire Short Form, was used to assess the level and amount of PA. The Short Form-12 Health Survey version 2 (SF-12v2) was used to measure HRQoL. Logistic regression analyses were used to determine whether sociodemographic factors and psychosocial perceptions during the COVID-19 pandemic were associated with the level of PA. Based on the current national guidelines for exercise in Japan, respondents were classified by weekly PA level as an Inactive group and an Active group to assess the influence of PA on HRQoL.

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Results

Mean total PA was 19.3 total metabolic equivalents hour/week, and the prevalence of an inactive lifestyle was 45.9% among respondents. Each year of age was associated with an odds ratio (OR) of 0.92 (95% CI 0.87–0.97) for becoming physical inactivity during postpartum. Factors positively associated with more active levels were greater number of days for delivery (OR = 1.00; 95% CI 1.00–1.01), multiparity (OR = 1.50; 95% CI 1.00–2.23), having someone to talk about childcare and the individual's partner (OR = 2.04; 95% CI 0.96–4.36) and not having anxiety symptoms (OR = 0.58; 95% CI 0.35–0.97). The Active group had significantly higher HRQoL scores than the Inactive group in the following scales: physical component summary ($p < 0.001$), mental component summary ($p = 0.041$).

Conclusions

The influential factors for postpartum PA level were younger age, longer duration after childbirth, multiparity and not having anxiety symptoms, which correlated positively with PA. The presence of someone with whom can talk to about childcare and partner issues was associated with the maintenance of higher PA among postpartum women, suggesting that factor as a positive influence on PA under unsettled conditions. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-022-01959-9>

2022-08159

Importance of inclusion of pregnant/lactating women in research, COVID-19 vaccination and shared-decision making.

Kam R (2021), *Essence* [Magazine of the Australian Breastfeeding Association] vol 57, no 1, March 2021, pp 18-19

Examines the inclusion of pregnant/lactating women in research, including risks of excluding women, breastfeeding and medications and covid-19 vaccination. (MB)

2022-07157

'Beyond the Bump': an online wellbeing and lifestyle pilot program during COVID-19 for first year postpartum

mothers: a research article. Christie HE, Roach LA, Kennedy M, et al (2022), *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth* vol 22, no 591, 25 July 2022

Background

Establishing a healthy lifestyle post-delivery is pivotal to reduce the incidence of chronic diseases. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, access to postpartum health programs has been increasingly difficult. The aim of this study was to inform, develop and evaluate Beyond the Bump (BtB); an online program to improve access to health and wellbeing education and support for physical activity in the postpartum.

Methods

A three-phase mixed-methods design of a 10-week Australia-wide online pilot program during COVID-19 with women less than 1 year postpartum and their primary care health professionals was utilised. Phase-one: needs assessment focus groups and interviews. Phase-two: BtB program implementation pre-post health measures survey, attendance and engagement with the program. Phase-three: program evaluation with feedback surveys and interviews.

Results

Women ($n = 12$) and health professionals ($n = 16$) expressed strong need for a postpartum program with access to education from experts on exercise, pelvic floor, sleep and baby nutrition. Despite BtB being developed from women's suggestions (including time-of-day 'morning'), attendance to all ten sessions was poor (of 162 registrations; 23% participated in the first session and 5% in the last session). Barriers to attendance included 'too busy', 'forgot' and 'topic not relevant for age of child'. 88% of women reported the education as the most enjoyable component of the program. 100% ($n = 26$) of women interviewed would recommend the program to a friend.

Conclusions

There is a continuing need for postpartum support. Online programs with access to expert education and exercise were reported to be of significant interest and value. However, more research is needed to improve the uptake and

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2022-07042

Infant sleep during COVID-19: Longitudinal analysis of infants of US mothers in home confinement versus working as usual. Kahn M, Barnett N, Glazer A, et al (2021), *Sleep Health* vol 7, no 1, February 2021, pp 19-23

Objectives

This study longitudinally compared the sleep of infants in the United States whose mothers were in home confinement to those whose mothers were working as usual throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods

Mothers of 572 infants (46% girls) aged 1-12 months ($M = 5.9$, standard deviation = 2.9) participated. Assessments were conducted on 4 occasions from late March to May 2020. Infant sleep was measured objectively using auto-videosomnography. Mothers reported their sheltering status, demographic characteristics, and infant sleep.

Results

Infants of mothers in home confinement had later sleep offset times and longer nighttime sleep durations, compared to infants of mothers who were working as usual. At the end of March, these infants also had earlier bedtimes, more nighttime awakenings, and more parental nighttime visits, but differences were not apparent during April and May.

Conclusions

Living restrictions issued in the United States may have led to longer sleep durations and temporary delays in sleep consolidation for infants of mothers in home confinement. (Author)

2022-06927

Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Postpartum Care in the Greater Boston Area During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Mi T, Hung P, Li X, et al (2022), *JAMA Network Open* vol 5, no 6, June 2022, e2216355

Importance Racial and ethnic disparities in postpartum care access have been well identified in the United States. Such disparities could be exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic because of amplified economic distress and compromised social capital among pregnant women who belong to racial or ethnic minority groups.

Objective To examine whether the COVID-19 pandemic is associated with an increase in the existing racial and ethnic disparity in postpartum care access.

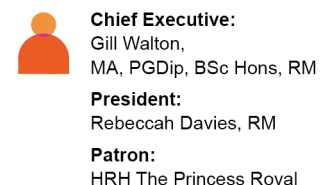
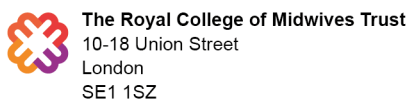
Design, Setting, and Participants This was a retrospective cohort study using electronic health records data. Multinomial logistic regressions in an interrupted time series approach were used to assess monthly changes in postpartum care access across Asian, Hispanic, non-Hispanic Black (hereafter, Black), non-Hispanic White (hereafter, White) women, and women of other racial groups, controlling for maternal demographic and clinical characteristics. Eligible participants were women who gave live birth at 8 hospitals in the greater Boston, Massachusetts, area from January 1, 2019, to November 30, 2021, allowing for tracking 90-day postpartum access until March 1, 2022.

Exposures Delivery period: prepandemic (January to December 2019), early pandemic (January to March 2020), and late pandemic (April 2020 to November 2021).

Main Outcomes and Measures Postpartum care within 90 days after childbirth was categorized into 3 groups: attended, canceled, and nonscheduled.

Results A total of 45 588 women were included. Participants were racially and ethnically diverse (4735 [10.4%] Asian women, 3399 [7.5%] Black women, 6950 [15.2%] Hispanic women, 28 529 [62.6%] White women, and 1269 [2.8%] women of other race or ethnicity). The majority were between 25 and 34 years of age and married and had a full-term pregnancy, vaginal delivery, and no clinical conditions. In the prepandemic period, the overall postpartum care

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attendance rate was 75.2%, dropping to 41.7% during the early pandemic period, and rebounding back to 60.9% in the late pandemic period. During the months in the late pandemic, the probability of not scheduling postpartum care among Black (average marginal effect [AME], 1.1; 95% CI, 0.6-1.6) and Hispanic women (AME, 1.3; 95% CI, 0.9-1.6) increased more than among their White counterparts.

Conclusions and Relevance In this cohort study of postpartum care access before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, racial and ethnic disparities in postpartum care were exacerbated following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, when postpartum care access recovered more slowly among Black and Hispanic women than White women. These disparities require swift attention and amelioration to address barriers for these women to obtain much needed postpartum care during this pandemic. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.16355>

2022-06918

Continuing essential Sexual Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health services during COVID-19 pandemic. World Health Organization, UNFPA, UNICEF (2020), April 2020. 10 pages

This document has been prepared to provide generic operational guidance to countries in the regions for preparing a continuity plan for maintaining good quality and equitable sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health (SRMNCAH) services during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is commonly observed that response to a pandemic stresses the health systems in the countries and poses the risk of disruption in provision and use of ongoing health services that are essential for population groups that are particularly vulnerable.

This document builds upon the global guidance issued by WHO and UN agencies and encourages countries to adapt the guidance, based on local conditions to sustain essential SRMNCAH and nutrition services, while implementing prevention, infection control and curative services for COVID-19. This guidance shall be updated as the new information and evidence emerges on the nature and stage of the pandemic. (Author)

Full URL: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/SRMNCAH-Covid>

2022-06779

'I had so many life-changing decisions I had to make without support': a qualitative analysis of women's pregnant and postpartum experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ashby GB, Riggan KA, Huang L, et al (2022), BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth vol 22, no 537, 4 July 2022

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed profound challenges for pregnant patients and their families. Studies conducted early in the pandemic found that pregnant individuals reported increased mental health concerns in response to pandemic-related stress. Many obstetric practices changed their healthcare delivery models, further impacting the experiences of pregnant patients. We conducted a survey study to explore the ways in which COVID-19 impacted the lives of pregnant and newly postpartum people.

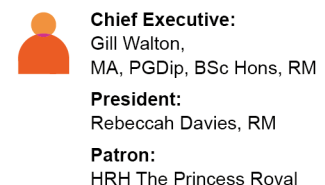
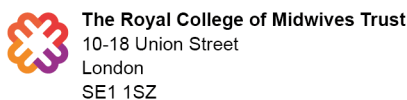
Methods

A mixed-methods survey was distributed to all patients ≥ 18 years old who were pregnant between January 1st, 2020 – April 28, 2021 in a large Midwest health system. Open-ended survey responses were analyzed for common themes using standard qualitative methodology.

Results

Among the 1182 survey respondents, 647 women provided an open-ended response. Of these, 77% were in the postpartum period. The majority of respondents identified as white, were partnered or married, and owned their own home. Respondents reported feeling greater uncertainty, social isolation, as though they had limited social and practical support, and negative mental health effects as a result of the pandemic. Many cited sudden or arbitrary changes to their medical care as a contributing factor. Though in the minority, some respondents also reported

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benefits from the changes to daily life, including perceived improvements to medical care, better work-life balance, and opportunities for new perspectives.

Conclusions

This large qualitative dataset provides insight into how healthcare policy and lifestyle changes impacted pregnant and postpartum people. Respondents expressed similar levels of uncertainty and mental health concerns compared to other cohorts but less overall positivity. Our findings suggest greater attention be given to the impact of pandemic-related stress on pregnant and postpartum women. As the pandemic continues, these data identify areas where investment in additional support may have the greatest impact. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-022-04816-7>

2022-05865

Association between health literacy and COVID-19 prevention behaviors among pregnant and postpartum women.

Shigemi D, Tabuchi T, Okawa S, et al (2022), Journal of Maternal-Fetal and Neonatal Medicine vol 35, no 25, 2022, pp 9971-9977

Objective

To investigate the association between health literacy and COVID-19 prevention behaviors among pregnant and postpartum women in Japan.

Methods

In this cross-sectional, web-based, self-reported questionnaire survey, we investigated the association between health literacy and COVID-19 prevention behaviors among pregnant and postpartum women in Japan. A multivariable logistic regression analysis was performed to evaluate the association with adjustment for socioeconomic characteristics.

Results

There were 926 respondents, comprising 368 pregnant and 558 postpartum women. Women with high health literacy scores accounted for 42% of the respondents. This group had a significantly higher proportion of actively adopting preventive behaviors than the low health literacy group (33.5 vs. 25.4%, $p = .008$). The multivariable logistic regression analysis showed high health literacy was significantly associated with high preventive behaviors scores compared to low health literacy (adjusted odds ratio, 1.66; 95% confidence interval, 1.22–2.27).

Conclusion

Higher health literacy was significantly associated with a higher proportion of COVID-19 prevention behaviors among women who are pregnant or postpartum. (Author)

2022-05652

Experiences of women who gave birth during the pandemic. Hancock D (2022), Journal of Health Visiting vol 10, no 5, May 2022, pp 195-198

The Care Quality Commission surveyed women who had gone through pregnancy and birth during the national lockdown in 2021. Dave Hancock looks at some positive results and key areas for improvement in maternity care. (Author)

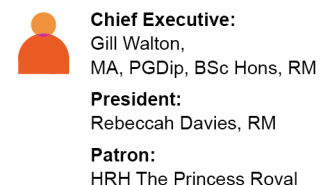
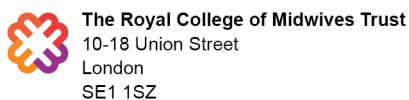
2022-04733

Lockdown fathers: the untold story. Full Report. Burgess A, Goldman R (2021), 94 pages. 2021

Presents the results of a study grounded in a representative sample of 2045 fathers of children aged under 12, supplemented by analysis of others' recent studies – charted the changes.

Funded by the Nuffield Foundation and undertaken by the Fatherhood Institute together with polling organisation BritainThinks, Lockdown Fathers explored the lockdown experiences of fathers in two parent households; separated

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fathers; Asian and Black fathers; gay fathers; and fathers in different socio-economic groups. Changes in fathers' and partner's working and caretaking patterns were recorded, as well as perceived impacts on mental and physical wellbeing and couple relationships.

There was strong focus on changes in father-child time together and father-child relationship quality, including closeness and understanding; perceived impacts on fathers' parenting skills, including their capacity to manage anger and irritation; and their ability to support their children's schoolwork going forward. Fathers' joy in parenting, their self-confidence as parents and their aspirations for the future were also studied. Implications for government and employers, schools and nurseries, child and family wellbeing and gender equality are discussed. (Publisher, edited)

Full URL: <http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Lockdown-Fathers-Full-Report.pdf>

2022-04429

Working for babies. Lockdown lessons from local systems. Reed J, Parish N (2021), 58 pages. 2021

Commissioned by the Parent-Infant Foundation, this report looks at the impacts of COVID-19 and the Spring 2020 national lockdown on babies in the UK, and explores how local systems and services responded to the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic. It seeks to understand the factors which have shaped and driven local lockdown responses, drawing lessons for the future. (CI)

Full URL: <https://parentinfantfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/210115-F1001D-Working-for-Babies-Report-FINAL-v1.0-compressed.pdf>

2022-03950

Covid: YouTube star Grace Victory reunites with nurse. Jones C (2022), BBC News 12 May 2022

YouTube star Grace Victory has been reunited and able to say thank you to student nurse, Alice Finnigan, who cared for her for three months after she was placed in an induced coma, having contracted COVID-19. The day before she was placed in a coma, her baby son, Cyprus, had been born two months early by elective caesarean section, on Christmas Eve 2020. (JSM)

Full URL: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-61395404?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=KARANGA

2022-03819

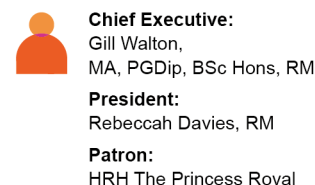
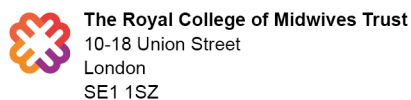
Early indirect impact of COVID-19 pandemic on utilisation and outcomes of reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health services in Kenya: A cross-sectional study. Shikuku DN, Nyaake IK, Nyaga LN, et al (2021), African Journal of Reproductive Health vol 25, no 6, December 2021, pp 76-87

The paper determined the initial impact of COVID-19 pandemic on reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH) services in Kenya. Hospital data for the first four months (March-June 2020) of the pandemic and the equivalent period in 2019 were compared using two-sample test of proportions. Despite the global projections for worse indicators, there were no differences in monthly mean (\pm SD) attendance between March-June 2019 vs 2020 for antenatal care (400,191.2 \pm 12,700.0 vs 384,697.3 \pm 20,838.6), hospital births (98,713.0 \pm 4,117.0 vs 99,634.5 \pm 3,215.5), family planning attendance (431,930.5 \pm 19,059.9 vs 448,168.3 \pm 31,559.8), post-abortion care (3,206.5 \pm 111.7 vs 448,168.3 \pm 31,559.8) and pentavalent 1 immunisation (114,701.0 \pm 3,701.1 vs 110,915.8 \pm 7,209.4), $p > 0.05$. However, there were significant increases in FP utilisation among young people (25.7% to 27.0%), injectable (short-term) FP method uptake (58.2% to 62.3%), caesarean section rate (14.6% to 15.8%), adolescent maternal deaths (6.2% to 10.9%) and fresh stillbirths (0.9% to 1.0%) with a reduction in implants (long-term) uptake (16.5% to 13.0%) ($p < 0.05$). With uncertainty around the duration of the pandemic, strategies to mitigate against catastrophic indirect maternal health outcomes are urgently needed. (Author)

2022-03581

"Never let a good crisis go to waste": Positives from disrupted maternity care in Australia during COVID-19. Kluwгант D, Homer C, Dahlen H (2022), Midwifery vol 110, July 2022, 103340

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Objective

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of changes to maternity care were rapidly introduced in all countries, including Australia, to reduce the risk of infection for pregnant women and their care providers. While many studies have reported on the negative effects of these changes, there is a paucity of evidence on factors which women and their providers perceived as positive and useful for future maternity care.

Design

Data was analysed from the Birth in the time of COVID-19 (BITTOC 2020) study survey. Conventional content analysis and descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data and examine which aspects of COVID-amended care women experienced as positive. Data from women were compared to data from midwives.

Setting

This project took place in Australia in 2020-2021.

Participants

The survey was distributed to women who gave birth and midwives who worked in Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020 onwards).

Measurements and findings

Women reported a variety of positives from their maternity care during COVID-19. These included both care-related factors as well as contextual factors. The most commonly mentioned positives for pregnant and postnatal women were care-related, namely fewer visitors in hospital, having increased access to telehealth services. These were also the most commonly reported positives by midwives. Having midwifery continuity of care models, giving birth at home and having their partner work from home were also highlighted by women as positives.

Key conclusions

Despite the negative effect of COVID-19-related restrictions on maternity care, a variety of changes were viewed as positive by both women and midwives, with strong agreement between the two groups.

Implications for practice

These findings provide evidence to support the inclusion of these positive elements of care and ensure that the lessons learned from the pandemic are utilised to improve maternity care in Australia going forward. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.midw.2022.103340>

2022-02124

Giving birth and becoming a parent during the COVID-19 pandemic: A qualitative analysis of 806 women's responses to three open-ended questions in an online survey. Eri TS, Blix E, Downe S, et al (2022), *Midwifery* vol 109, June 2022, 103321

Background

When Europe was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, changes were made in maternity care to reduce infections. In Norway, hospital maternity wards, postnatal wards, and neonatal units' companions and visitors were restricted. We aimed to explore the experiences of being pregnant, giving birth and becoming a parent in Norway during the COVID-19 pandemic.

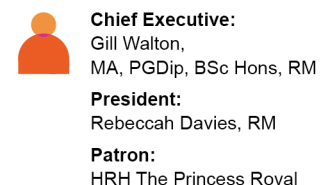
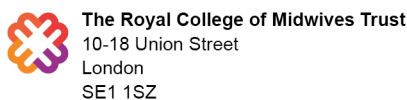
Methods

The study is based on the responses from women who provided in-depth qualitative accounts to the ongoing Babies Born Better survey version 3 during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The responses were analysed with inductive thematic analysis.

Results

In all, 806 women were included, regardless of parity and mode of birth. They gave birth in 42 of 45 available birthing

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units across Norway. The analysis resulted in four themes: 1) Pregnancy as a stressful waiting period; 2) Feeling lonely, isolated, and disempowered without their partner; 3) Sharing experiences and becoming a family; and 4) Busy postnatal care without compassion.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic seems to have affected women's experiences of giving birth and becoming a parent in Norway. The restrictions placed on companionship by the healthcare facilities varied between hospitals. However, the restrictions seem to have affected a range of aspects related to women's experiences of late pregnancy, early labour and birth and the early postpartum period. Postnatal care was already poor, and the pandemic has highlighted the shortcomings, especially where companionship was banned. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.midw.2022.103321>

2022-02118

“It's always hard being a mom, but the pandemic has made everything harder”: A qualitative exploration of the experiences of perinatal women during the COVID-19 pandemic. Kinser P, Jallo N, Moyer S, et al (2022), *Midwifery* vol 109, June 2022, 103313

Background

Understanding the psychosocial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in vulnerable groups, such as pregnant and parenting women, is a critical research and clinical imperative. Although many survey-based perinatal health studies have contributed important information about mental health, few have given full voice about the experiences of pregnant and postpartum women during the prolonged worldwide pandemic using a qualitative approach.

Objective

The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experience of pregnant and postpartum women in the United States during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Design

Qualitative phenomenological study.

Setting

This study was conducted in the community, by recruiting women throughout the U.S.

Participants

Fifty-four pregnant and postpartum women participated in qualitative interviews.

Methods

Data from one-on-one semi-structured interviews were analyzed using a team-based phenomenological qualitative approach.

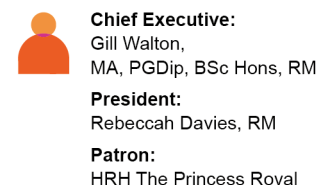
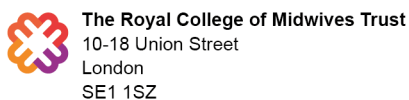
Results

Two key themes were apparent: the pandemic has shined a light on the many typical struggles of motherhood; and, there is a lack of consistent, community-based or healthcare system resources available to address the complex needs of pregnant and postpartum women, both in general and during the pandemic.

Conclusions

Going forward, as the world continues to deal with the current pandemic and possible future global health crises, health care systems and providers are encouraged to consider the suggestions provided by these participants: talk early and often to women about mental health; help pregnant and postpartum women create and institute a personal plan for early support of their mental health needs and create an easily accessible mental health network; conceptualize practice methods that enhance coping and resilience; practice in community-based and interdisciplinary

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teams (e.g., midwives, doulas, perinatal social workers/ psychotherapists) to ensure continuity of care and to foster relationships between providers and pregnant/ postpartum women; and consider learning from other countries' successful perinatal healthcare practices.

Registration

Number (& date of first recruitment): not applicable.

Tweetable abstract

Pregnant and postpartum women insist that mental health care must be overhauled, stating the pandemic has highlighted inherent cracks in the system. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.midw.2022.103313>

2022-01976

Expedited postpartum discharge during the COVID-19 pandemic and acute postpartum care utilization. Panzer A, Reed-Weston A, Friedman A, et al (2022), *Journal of Maternal-Fetal and Neonatal Medicine* vol 35, no 25, 2022, pp 9585-9592

Background

Early postpartum discharges increased organically during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is not known if this 'natural experiment' of shorter postpartum hospital stays resulted in increased risk for postpartum readmissions and other acute postpartum care utilization such as emergency room encounters.

Objective

The objectives of this study were to determine which clinical factors were associated with expedited postpartum discharge and whether the expedited postpartum discharge was associated with increased risk for acute postpartum care utilization.

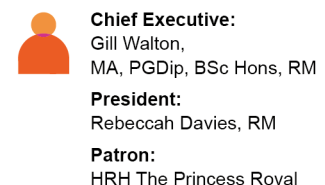
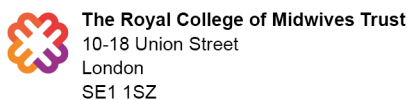
Methods

This retrospective cohort study evaluated birth hospitalizations at affiliated hospitals during two periods: (i) the apex of the 'first wave' of the COVID-19 pandemic in New York City (3/22/20 to 4/30/20) and (ii) a historical control period of one year earlier (3/22/19 to 4/30/19). Routine postpartum discharge was defined as ≥ 2 d after vaginal birth and ≥ 3 d after cesarean birth. Expedited discharge was defined as < 2 d after vaginal birth and < 3 d after cesarean birth. Acute postpartum care utilization was defined as any emergency room visit, obstetric triage visit, or postpartum readmission ≤ 6 weeks after birth hospitalization discharge. Demographic and clinical variables were compared based on routine versus expedited postpartum discharge. Unadjusted and adjusted logistic regression models were performed to analyze factors associated with (i) expedited discharge and (ii) acute postpartum care utilization. Unadjusted (ORs) and adjusted odds ratios (aORs) with 95% CIs were used as measures of association. Stratified analysis was performed restricted to patients with chronic hypertension, preeclampsia, and gestational hypertension.

Results

A total of 1,358 birth hospitalizations were included in the analysis, 715 (52.7%) from 2019 and 643 (47.3%) from 2020. Expedited discharge was more common in 2020 than in 2019 (60.3% versus 5.0% of deliveries, $p < .01$). For 2020, clinical factors significantly associated with a decreased likelihood of expedited discharge included hypertensive disorders of pregnancy (OR 0.40, 95% CI 0.27–0.60), chronic hypertension (OR 0.14, 95% CI 0.06–0.29), and COVID-19 infection (OR 0.51, 95% CI 0.34–0.77). Cesarean (OR 3.00, 95% CI 2.14–4.19) and term birth (OR 3.34, 95% CI 2.03, 5.49) were associated with an increased likelihood of expedited discharge. Most of the associations retained significance in adjusted models. Expedited compared to routine discharge was not associated with significantly different odds of acute postpartum care utilization for 2020 deliveries (5.4% versus 5.9%; OR 0.92, 95% CI 0.47–1.82). Medicaid insurance (OR 2.30, 95% CI 1.06–4.98) and HDP (OR 5.16, 95% CI: 2.60–10.26) were associated with a higher risk of acute postpartum care utilization and retained significance in adjusted analyses. In the stratified analysis restricted to women with hypertensive diagnoses, expedited discharge was associated with significantly increased risk for postpartum readmission (OR 6.09, 95% CI 2.14, 17.33) but not overall acute postpartum care utilization (OR 2.17, 95% CI 1.00, 4.74).

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Conclusion

Expedited postpartum discharge was not associated with increased risk for acute postpartum care utilization. Among women with hypertensive diagnoses, expedited discharge was associated with a higher risk for readmission despite expedited discharge occurring less frequently. (Author)

2022-01825

Disruptions in maternal and child health service utilization during COVID-19: analysis from eight sub-Saharan African countries. Shapira G, Ahmed T, Drouard SHP, et al (2021), Health Policy and Planning vol 36, no 7, August 2021, pp 1140-1151

The coronavirus-19 pandemic and its secondary effects threaten the continuity of essential health services delivery, which may lead to worsened population health and a protracted public health crisis. We quantify such disruptions, focusing on maternal and child health, in eight sub-Saharan countries. Service volumes are extracted from administrative systems for 63 954 facilities in eight countries: Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Somalia. Using an interrupted time series design and an ordinary least squares regression model with facility-level fixed effects, we analyze data from January 2018 to February 2020 to predict what service utilization levels would have been in March–July 2020 in the absence of the pandemic, accounting for both secular trends and seasonality. Estimates of disruption are derived by comparing the predicted and observed service utilization levels during the pandemic period. All countries experienced service disruptions for at least 1 month, but the magnitude and duration of the disruptions vary. Outpatient consultations and child vaccinations were the most commonly affected services and fell by the largest margins. We estimate a cumulative shortfall of 5 149 491 outpatient consultations and 328 961 third-dose pentavalent vaccinations during the 5 months in these eight countries. Decreases in maternal health service utilization are less generalized, although significant declines in institutional deliveries, antenatal care and postnatal care were detected in some countries. There is a need to better understand the factors determining the magnitude and duration of such disruptions in order to design interventions that would respond to the shortfall in care. Service delivery modifications need to be both highly contextualized and integrated as a core component of future epidemic response and planning. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czab064>

2022-01564

COVID-19 Restrictions and Maternal Experience and Infant Feeding. Mohd S, Nurul H, Gan WY, et al (2022), Nursing Research vol 71, no 2, February 2022, pp E10-E20

Background

The Movement Control Order (MCO), also known as the partial lockdown, was introduced in Malaysia in March 2020 to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, changing many public sector protocols and regulations. This may have implications for neonatal and maternity care and services, especially among new mothers.

Objective

The aim of this study was to compare the postnatal experiences and feeding practices between mothers who gave birth before MCO (B-MCO) and during MCO (D-MCO).

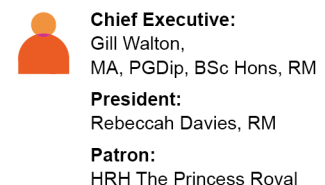
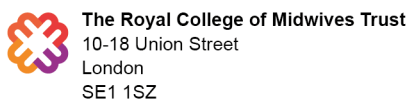
Method

One thousand fifty-one mothers with an infant under 18 months in Malaysia completed an online survey between July 2020 and October 2020. The survey advertisement was disseminated online via various social media platforms.

Results

More D-MCO mothers faced a significant effect on the ability to pay rent/mortgage, with their spouses facing a higher impact on employment. D-MCO mothers were more likely to have changed their birth plans, perceived insufficient breastfeeding support, and experienced changes in postnatal services since MCO. In contrast, more B-MCO mothers had stopped breastfeeding during the MCO and started complementary feeding earlier than planned. Many mothers

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reported feeling down and lonely and having trouble sleeping and a poor appetite. D-MCO mothers had more time to focus on their health, whereas B-MCO mothers spent more time outdoors.

Discussion

MCO affected mothers' livelihood and postnatal experiences, potentially causing emotional distress. Hence, improved breastfeeding support, particularly at birth, is recommended, as is routine mental health screening during the postnatal checkup. Furthermore, because online contact was readily accessible during the pandemic, the efficacy of online breastfeeding support should be evaluated. (Author)

2022-01106

The validity of self-reported SARS-CoV-2 results among postpartum respondents. McCarthy K, Maru S, Nowlin S, et al (2022), Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology vol 36, no 4, July 2022, pp 518-524

Background

Rapid and reliable health data on SARS-CoV-2 infection among pregnant individuals are needed to understand the influence of the virus on maternal health and child development, yet the validity of self-reported COVID-19 testing and diagnosis remains unknown.

Objectives

We assessed the validity of self-reported COVID-19 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing and diagnosis during delivery among postpartum respondents as well as how diagnostic accuracy varied by respondent characteristics.

Methods

We validated receipt of a COVID-19 PCR test and test results by comparing self-reported results obtained through an electronic survey to electronic medical record data (gold standard) among a cross-sectional sample of postpartum respondents who delivered at four New York City hospitals between March 2020 and January 2021. To assess validity, we calculated each indicator's sensitivity, specificity and the area under the receiver-operating curve (AUC). We examined respondent characteristics (age, race/ethnicity, education level, health insurance, nativity, pre-pregnancy obesity and birth characteristics) as predictors of reporting accuracy using modified Poisson regression.

Results

A total of 276 respondents had matched electronic record and survey data. The majority, 83.7% of respondents received a SARS-CoV-2 PCR test during their delivery stay. Of these, 12.1% had detected SARS-CoV-2. Among those tested, sensitivity (90.5%) and specificity (96.5%) were high for SARS-CoV-2 detection. The adjusted risk ratio (aRR) of accurate result reporting was somewhat lower among Hispanic women relative to white non-Hispanic women (aRR 0.90 (95% CI 0.80, 1.00)) and among those who had public or no insurance vs. private (aRR 0.91 (95% CI 0.82, 1.01)), controlling for recall time.

Conclusion(s)

High recall accuracy result reporting for COVID-19 PCR tests administered during labour and delivery suggest the potential for population-based surveys as a rapid mechanism to obtain accurate data on COVID-19 diagnostic history. Additional psychometric research is warranted to ensure accurate recall across respondent subgroups. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1111/ppe.12874>

2021-14127

Postpartum Length of Stay and Hospital Readmission Before and During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Pandemic. Handley SC, Gallagher K, Lindgren E-C, et al (2022), Obstetrics & Gynecology vol 139, no 3, March 2022, pp 381-390

OBJECTIVE:

To compare postpartum hospitalization length of stay (LOS) and hospital readmission among obstetric patients before (March 2017–February 2020; prepandemic) and during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic (March

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METHODS:

We conducted a retrospective cohort study, using Epic Systems' Cosmos research platform, of obstetric patients who delivered between March 1, 2017, and February 28, 2021, at 20–44 weeks of gestation and were discharged within 7 days of delivery. The primary outcome was short postpartum hospitalization LOS (less than two midnights for vaginal births and less than three midnights for cesarean births) and secondary outcome was hospital readmission within 6 weeks of postpartum hospitalization discharge. Analyses compared outcomes before and during the pandemic using standardized differences and Bayesian logistic mixed-effects models, among all births and stratified by mode of delivery.

RESULTS:

Of the 994,268 obstetric patients in the study cohort, 742,113 (74.6%) delivered prepandemic and 252,155 (25.4%) delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the percentage of short postpartum hospitalizations increased among all births (28.7–44.5%), vaginal births (25.4–39.5%), and cesarean births (35.3–55.1%), which was consistent with the adjusted analysis (all births: adjusted odds ratio [aOR] 2.35, 99% credible interval 2.32–2.39; vaginal births: aOR 2.14, 99% credible interval 2.11–2.18; cesarean births aOR 2.90, 99% credible interval 2.83–2.98). Although short postpartum hospitalizations were more common during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was no change in readmission in the unadjusted (1.4% vs 1.6%, standardized difference=0.009) or adjusted (aOR 1.02, 99% credible interval 0.97–1.08) analyses for all births or when stratified by mode of delivery.

CONCLUSION:

Short postpartum hospitalization LOS was significantly more common during the COVID-19 pandemic for obstetric patients with no change in hospital readmissions within 6 weeks of postpartum hospitalization discharge. The COVID-19 pandemic created a natural experiment, suggesting shorter postpartum hospitalization may be reasonable for patients who are self-identified or health care professional-identified as appropriate for discharge. (Author)

2021-13790

The Risk of Readmission after Early Postpartum Discharge during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Gulersen M, Husk G, Lenchner E, et al (2022), American Journal of Perinatology vol 39, no 4, March 2022, pp 354-360

Objective To determine whether early postpartum discharge during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic was associated with a change in the odds of maternal postpartum readmissions.

Study Design This is a retrospective analysis of uncomplicated postpartum low-risk women in seven obstetrical units within a large New York health system. We compared the rate of postpartum readmissions within 6 weeks of delivery between two groups: low-risk women who had early postpartum discharge as part of our protocol during the COVID-19 pandemic (April 1–June 15, 2020) and similar low-risk patients with routine postpartum discharge from the same study centers 1 year prior. Statistical analysis included the use of Wilcoxon's rank-sum and chi-squared tests, Nelson–Aalen cumulative hazard curves, and multivariate logistic regression.

Results Of the 8,206 patients included, 4,038 (49.2%) were patients who had early postpartum discharge during the COVID-19 pandemic and 4,168 (50.8%) were patients with routine postpartum discharge prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The rates of postpartum readmissions after vaginal delivery (1.0 vs. 0.9%; adjusted odds ratio [OR]: 0.75, 95% confidence interval [CI]: 0.39–1.45) and cesarean delivery (1.5 vs. 1.9%; adjusted OR: 0.65, 95% CI: 0.29–1.45) were similar between the two groups. Demographic risk factors for postpartum readmission included Medicaid insurance and obesity.

Conclusion Early postpartum discharge during the COVID-19 pandemic was associated with no change in the odds of maternal postpartum readmissions after low-risk vaginal or cesarean deliveries. Early postpartum discharge for low-risk patients to shorten hospital length of stay should be considered in the face of public health crises.

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2021-13753

Large gaps in the quality of healthcare experienced by Swedish mothers during the COVID-19 pandemic: a cross-sectional study based on WHO standards. Zaigham M, Linden K, Sengpiel V, et al (2022), *Women and Birth: Journal of the Australian College of Midwives* vol 35, no 6, November 2022, pp 619-627

Background and Problem

Existing healthcare systems have been put under immense pressure during the COVID-19 pandemic. Disruptions in essential maternal and newborn services have come from even high-income countries within the World Health Organization (WHO) European Region.

Aim

To describe the quality of care during pregnancy and childbirth, as reported by the women themselves, during the COVID-19 pandemic in Sweden, using the WHO 'Standards for improving quality of maternal and newborn care in health facilities'.

Methods

Using an anonymous, online questionnaire, women ≥ 18 years were invited to participate if they had given birth in Sweden from March 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. The quality of maternal and newborn care was measured using 40 questions across four domains: provision of care, experience of care, availability of human/physical resources, and organisational changes due to COVID-19.

Findings

Of the 5003 women included, $n = 4528$ experienced labour. Of these, 46.7% perceived a poorer quality of maternal and newborn care due to the COVID-19. Fundal pressure was applied in 22.2% of instrumental vaginal births, 36.8% received inadequate breastfeeding support and 6.9% reported some form of abuse. Findings were worse in women undergoing prelabour Caesarean section (CS) ($n = 475$). Multivariate analysis showed significant associations of the quality of maternal and newborn care to year of birth ($P < 0.001$), parity ($P < 0.001$), no pharmacological pain relief ($P < 0.001$), prelabour CS ($P < 0.001$), emergency CS ($P < 0.001$) and overall satisfaction ($P < 0.001$).

Conclusion

Considerable gaps over many key quality measures and deviations from women-centred care were noted. Findings were worse in women with prelabour CS. Actions to promote high-quality, evidence-based and respectful care during childbirth for all mothers are urgently needed. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wombi.2022.01.007>

2021-13131

Preliminary findings on the experiences of care for parents who suffered perinatal bereavement during the COVID-19 pandemic. Silverio SA, Easter A, Storey C, et al (2021), *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth* vol 21, no 840, 22 December 2021

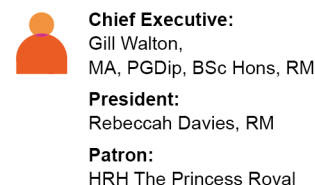
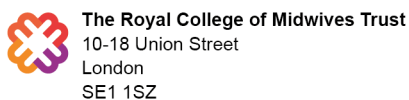
Background

The COVID-19 pandemic poses an unprecedented risk to the global population. Maternity care in the UK was subject to many iterations of guidance on how best to reconfigure services to keep women, their families and babies, and healthcare professionals safe. Parents who experience a pregnancy loss or perinatal death require particular care and support. PUDDLES is an international collaboration investigating the experiences of recently bereaved parents who suffered a late miscarriage, stillbirth, or neonatal death during the global COVID-19 pandemic, in seven countries. In this study, we aim to present early findings from qualitative work undertaken with recently bereaved parents in the United Kingdom about how access to healthcare and support services was negotiated during the pandemic.

Methods

In-depth semi-structured interviews were undertaken with parents ($N = 24$) who had suffered a late miscarriage ($n = 5$; all mothers), stillbirth ($n = 16$; 13 mothers, 1 father, 1 joint interview involving both parents), or neonatal death ($n = 3$; all mothers). Data were analysed using a template analysis with the aim of investigating bereaved parents' access to services, care, and networks of support, during the pandemic after their bereavement.

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Results

All parents had experience of utilising reconfigured maternity and/or neonatal, and bereavement care services during the pandemic. The themes utilised in the template analysis were: 1) The Shock & Confusion Associated with Necessary Restrictions to Daily Life; 2) Fragmented Care and Far Away Families; 3) Keeping Safe by Staying Away; and 4) Impersonal Care and Support Through a Screen. Results suggest access to maternity, neonatal, and bereavement care services were all significantly reduced, and parents' experiences were notably affected by service reconfigurations.

Conclusions

Our findings, whilst preliminary, are important to document now, to help inform care and service provision as the pandemic continues and to provide learning for ongoing and future health system shocks. We draw conclusions on how to enable development of safe and appropriate services during this pandemic and any future health crises, to best support parents who experience a pregnancy loss or whose babies die. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-021-04292-5>

2021-13127

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on perinatal care and outcomes in the United States: An interrupted time series analysis. Riley T, Nethery E, Chung EK, et al (2022), *Birth* vol 49, no 2, June 2022, pp 298-309

Background

Hospitals quickly adapted perinatal care to mitigate SARS-CoV-2 transmission at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The objective of this study was to estimate the impact of pandemic-related hospital policy changes on perinatal care and outcomes in one region of the United States.

Methods

This interrupted time series analysis used retrospective data from consecutive singleton births at 15 hospitals in the Pacific Northwest from 2017 to 2020. The primary outcomes were those hypothesized to be affected by pandemic-related hospital policies and included labor induction, epidural use, oxytocin augmentation, mode of delivery, and early discharge (<48 hours after cesarean and <24 hours after vaginal births). Secondary outcomes included preterm birth, severe maternal morbidity, low 5-minute Apgar score, neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) admission, and 30-day readmission. Segmented Poisson regression models estimated the outcome level shift changes after the pandemic onset, controlling for underlying trends, seasonality, and stratifying by parity.

Results

No statistically significant changes were detected in intrapartum interventions or mode of delivery after onset of the pandemic. Early discharge increased for all births following cesarean and vaginal birth. Newborn readmission rates increased but only among nulliparas (aRR: 1.49, 95%CI: 1.17, 1.91). Among multiparas, decreases were observed in preterm birth (aRR: 0.90, 95%CI: 0.84, 0.96), low 5-minute Apgar score (aRR: 0.75, 95%CI: 0.68, 0.81), and term NICU admission rates (aRR: 0.85, 95%CI: 0.80, 0.91).

Conclusions

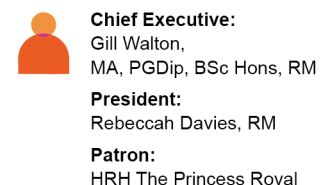
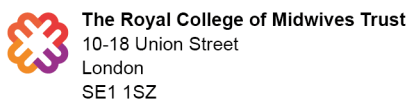
Increases in early discharge and newborn readmission rates among nulliparas suggest a need for more postpartum support during the pandemic. Decreases in preterm birth and term NICU admission among multiparas may have implications beyond the pandemic and deserve further study. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1111/birt.12606>

2021-12682

Perinatal Experiences of Asian American Women During COVID-19. Goyal D, Han M, Feldman-Schwartz T, et al (2022), *MCN - American Journal of Maternal/Child Nursing* vol 47, no 2, March/April 2022, pp 71-76

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Purpose: To explore the wellbeing and pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum experiences of Asian American women who gave birth during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Study Design: Qualitative exploratory design.

Methods: Using convenience and snowball sampling, we recruited Asian American women who gave birth during the COVID-19 pandemic via social media. Participants completed sociodemographic and depressive symptom questionnaires and took part in a virtual semistructured interview where they were asked to describe their pregnancy, birth, and postpartum experiences in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Qualitative content analysis methods were used to identify themes from participant narratives.

Results: Thirty-eight Asian American women representing several racial ethnic subgroups (Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Laotian, Vietnamese) participated in our study. Participants were on average 34 (SD = 3.5) years of age; the majority were married and lived in California. At the time of data collection, participants were 3.7 (SD = 2.07) months postpartum and 5.3 to 10.5 months into the COVID-19 pandemic. Qualitative content analysis revealed two main themes: 1) unexpected perinatal journey, and 2) the emotional and psychological consequences of COVID-19.

Clinical Implications: Our findings are not unique to Asian American women, but they offer insight for nurses taking care of all childbearing women. Nurses can provide individually tailored anticipatory guidance to help women navigate perinatal changes to help them manage expectations during future public health crises. Nurses can also encourage and help perinatal women find ways to increase their own social support networks during the pregnancy and postpartum period. (Author)

2021-12600

You and your baby: a national survey of health and care during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic. Harrison S, Alderdice F, Mcleish J, et al (2021), Oxford: National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit, University of Oxford December 2021, 97 pages

You and Your Baby 2020 explored the health and experiences of maternity care for women who gave birth during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. The study included a survey of 4,611 women recruited through the register of all births in England (the 2020 National Maternity Survey (NMS)). The women in the 2020 NMS gave birth in England during May 2020.

The study also included a parallel survey of 1,622 women recruited through social media. The women in the social media survey gave birth in the UK between March and August 2020.

The findings indicate that some aspects of women's health and maternity care remained consistent or even improved during Covid-19, compared with findings from before the pandemic. Overall levels of satisfaction with care during pregnancy and birth remained high. The findings also indicate, however, that other aspects of women's health and care were negatively impacted by Covid-19, particularly after giving birth. Overall levels of satisfaction with care during the postnatal period fell considerably compared with findings from before the pandemic.

Taken together the survey findings suggest that giving birth during the Covid-19 pandemic may have brought additional stresses for women and families at what can already be a challenging time. Covid-19 may have introduced new challenges to maternity services and also amplified some of the existing problems in parts of the system.


(Author)

Full URL: https://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/assets/downloads/maternity-surveys/reports/You_and_Your_Baby_2020_Survey_Report.pdf


2021-11588

Frequency and source of worries in an International sample of pregnant and postpartum women during the Covid-19 pandemic. Wyszynski DF, Hernandez-Diaz S, Gordon-Dseagu V, et al (2021), BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth vol 21, no 768, 12

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November 2021

Background

Pregnant and postpartum women face unique challenges and concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus far, no studies have explored the factors associated with increased levels of worry in this population globally. The current study sought to assess the frequency and sources of worry during the COVID-19 pandemic in an international sample of pregnant and postpartum women.

Methods

We conducted an anonymous, online, cross-sectional survey in 64 countries between May and June 2020. The survey was available in 12 languages and hosted on the Pregistry platform for COVID-19 studies. Participants were sought mainly on social media platforms and online parenting forums. The survey included questions related to demographics, level of worry, support, stress, COVID-19 exposure, frequency of media usage, and mental health indicators.

Results

The study included 7561 participants. Eighty-three percent of all participants indicated that they were either 'somewhat' or 'very' worried. Women 13–28 weeks pregnant were significantly more likely to indicate that they were 'very worried' compared to those who were postpartum or at other stages of pregnancy. When compared with women living in Europe, those in Africa, Asia and Pacific, North America and South/Latin America were more likely to have increased levels of worry, as were those who more frequently interacted with social media. Different forms of support and stress also had an impact upon level of worry, while indicators of stress and anxiety were positively associated with worry level.

Conclusion

Pregnant and postpartum women are vulnerable to the changes in societal norms brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding the factors associated with levels of worry within this population will enable society to address potential unmet needs and improve the current and future mental health of parents and children. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-021-04241-2>

2021-11519

Pregnancy Watch: remote monitoring of pregnant and postpartum patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

McCabe MG, Gerson KD, Srinivas SK, et al (2022), American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology MFM vol 4, no 1, January 2022, 100525

To facilitate symptom monitoring for non-pregnant patients with COVID-19 in our health system, Penn Medicine developed an automated text-based surveillance program (COVID WATCH) and paired it with full-time clinician support. We concurrently developed a companion program, called Pregnancy Watch, for the obstetric population. The objective of this study was to describe implementation of this remote COVID-19 symptom monitoring program.

(Author, edited)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajogmf.2021.100525>

2021-10653

Perinatal and postpartum care during the COVID-19 pandemic: A nationwide cohort study. Wagner M, Falcone V,

Neururer SB, et al (2022), Birth vol 49, no 2, June 2022, pp 243-252

Background

This study aimed to analyze perinatal outcomes and adverse events during the COVID-19 pandemic's first wave to help direct decision making in future waves.

Methods

This study was an epidemiological cohort study analyzing comprehensive birth registry data among all 80 obstetric departments in Austria. Out of 469 771 records, 468 348 were considered eligible, whereof those with preterm

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delivery, birthweight <500 g, multiple fetuses, fetal malformations and chromosomal anomalies, intrauterine fetal death, maternal cancer, HIV infection, and/or inter-hospital transfers were excluded. Women who delivered between January and June 2020 were then classified as cases, whereas those who delivered between January and June 2015-2019 were classified as controls. Perinatal outcomes, postpartum hospitalization, and adverse events served as outcome measures.

Results

Of 33 198 cases and 188 225 controls, data analysis showed significantly increased rates of labor induction, instrumental delivery, obstetric anesthesia, NICU transfer, and 5-min Apgar score below 7 during the COVID-19 period. There was a significantly shorter length of postpartum hospitalization during the COVID-19 period compared with the non-COVID-19 period (3.1 ± 1.4 vs 3.5 ± 1.5 days; $P < .001$). Significantly more women opted for short-stay delivery during the COVID-19 period (3.7% vs 2.4%; $P < .001$). Those who delivered during the COVID-19 period were also more likely to experience postpartum adverse events (3.0% vs 2.6%; $P < .001$), which was confirmed in the logistic regression model (odds ratio, 2.137; 95% confidence interval, 1.805-2.530; $P < .001$).

Conclusions

Perinatal and postpartum care during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic differed significantly from that provided before. Increased rates of adverse events underline the need to ensure access to high-quality obstetric care to prevent collateral damage. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1111/birt.12594>

2021-10590

Impact of Covid-19 on new parents: one year on. First Report of Session 2021–22. House of Commons Petitions Committee (2021), London: House of Commons 7 October 2021. 38 pages

This report presents our updated findings on how covid-19 has continued to affect new parents and further recommendations for how the Government can better support this group. These include calling on the Government to:

- Provide additional funding and resources to allow catch-up mental health support for new parents impacted by covid-19 and accelerate planned capacitybuilding in perinatal mental health services;
- Fund local authorities to arrange in-person visits to new parents by appropriate local authority, voluntary organisation or health visiting staff before the end of the year;
- Review monitoring and enforcement activity relating to employers' health and safety obligations to pregnant women;
- Legislate as soon as possible to introduce the planned extension of redundancy protections for new and expectant mothers; and
- Commission a review into the funding and affordability of childcare, to consider how to provide greater financial security to the sector following the pandemic and ensure childcare provision meets the needs of new parents seeking to return to work. (Author, edited)

Full URL: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/7477/documents/78447/default/>

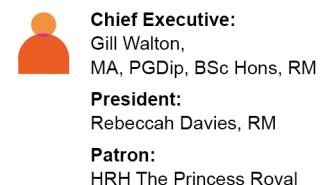
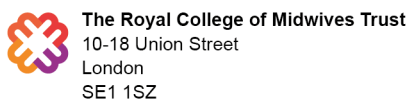
2021-10070

MBRRACE-UK Perinatal Mortality Surveillance Report Summary 2019. MBRRACE-UK (2021), Leicester: The Infant Mortality and Morbidity Studies, Department of Health Sciences, University of Leicester October 2021. 8 pages

Summary of the main report (1) and infographic of data regarding perinatal mortality in the UK for 2019. 1. Draper ES. MBRRACE-UK Perinatal Mortality Surveillance Report UK Perinatal Deaths for Births from January to December 2019. Leicester: The Infant Mortality and Morbidity Studies, Department of Health Studies, University of Leicester. (JSM)

Full URL: https://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/assets/downloads/mbrpace-uk/reports/perinatal-surveillance-report-2019/MBRRACE-UK_Perinatal_Surveillance_Report_2019_-_infographic_summary.pdf

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2021-09812

Health Visitor Appointments: Scotland [written answer]. Scottish Parliament (2021), Official Report Written question S6W-03268, 23 September 2021

Maree Todd responds to a written question from Alexander Burnett to the Scottish Government, regarding what plans it has to reintroduce face-to-face health visitor appointments for new mothers, in light of reports that NHS boards are currently only offering telephone and video appointments. (JSM)

Full URL: <https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S6W-03268>

2021-09660

Dental Treatment: New Mothers [written answer]. Scottish Parliament (2021), Official Report Written question S6W-03035, 16 September 2021

Maree Todd responds to a written question from Jackson Carlaw, in light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, what consideration it has given to extending immediately the 12-month period, starting from the day a baby is born, within which new mothers are able to receive free NHS dental treatment. (JSM)

Full URL: <https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S6W-03035>

2021-09659

Dental Treatment: New Mothers [written answer]. Scottish Parliament (2021), Official Report Written question S6W-03034, 16 September 2021

Maree Todd responds to a written question from Jackson Carlaw, regarding what assessment it has made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the accessibility of NHS dental care for mothers who have sought treatment during the first year of their child's life. (JSM)

Full URL: <https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S6W-03034>

2021-09635

Motherhood and medicine in the time of COVID-19. Fleetwood J (2021), Medical Journal of Australia vol 214, no 11, 21 June 2021, pp 508-509.e1

Navigating parenthood and pandemics: uncertainty is the new normal. (Author)

Full URL: <https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2021/214/11/motherhood-and-medicine-time-covid-19>

2021-09361

Lockdown babies: Birth and new parenting experiences during the 2020 Covid-19 lockdown in South Africa, a cross-sectional study. Farley E, Edwards A, Numanoglu E, et al (2022), Women and Birth: Journal of the Australian College of Midwives vol 35, no 4, July 2022, pp 394-402

Background

Perceived birth experiences of parents can have a lasting impact on children. We explored the birth and new parenting experiences of South African parents in 2020 during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Methods

We conducted a cross-sectional online survey with consenting parents of babies born in South Africa during 2020. Factors associated with negative birth emotions and probable depression were estimated using logistic regression.

Results

Most of the 520 respondents were females (n = 496, 95%) who gave birth at private hospitals (n = 426, 86%). Mothers reported having overall positive birth emotions (n = 399, 80%). Multivariable analysis showed that having a preterm baby (aOR 2.89; CI 1.51–5.53) and the mother self-reporting that Covid-19 affected her birth experience (aOR 4.25; CI 2.08–8.68) increased the odds of mothers reporting predominantly negative emotions about their birth. The mother having her preferred delivery method reduced the odds of having negative birth emotions (aOR 0.41; CI 0.25–0.66).

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Multivariable analysis showed that having predominantly negative emotions about the birth increased the odds of probable minor depression (aOR 3.60; CI 1.93–6.70). Being older reduced the odds of having probable minor depression (25–34 years aOR 0.36; CI 0.10–1.32; 35 years or older aOR 0.25; CI 0.06–0.91).

Conclusions

Lockdown exacerbated many birth and parenting challenges including mental health and health care access. However, overall experiences were positive and there was a strong sense of resilience amongst parents. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wombi.2021.09.001>

2021-08051

Use of postpartum contraception during coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): A retrospective cohort study. Das KJH, Fuerst M, Brown C, et al (2021), International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics vol 155, no 1, October 2021, pp 64-71

Objective

To assess how use of postpartum contraception (PPC) changed during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Methods

Billing and coding data from a single urban institution (n = 1797) were used to compare use of PPC in patients who delivered from March to June 2020 (COVID Cohort, n = 927) and from March to June 2019 (Comparison Cohort, n = 895). χ^2 and multivariable logistic regression models assessed relationships between cohorts, use of contraception, and interactions with postpartum visits and race/ethnicity.

Results

In the COVID Cohort, 585 women (64%) attended postpartum visits (n = 488, 83.4%, via telemedicine) compared to 660 (74.7%, in-person) in the Comparison Cohort (P < 0.01). Total use of PPC remained similar: 30.4% (n = 261) in the COVID Cohort and 29.6% (n = 278) in the Comparison Cohort (P = 0.69). Compared to in-person visits in the Comparison Cohort, telemedicine visits in the COVID Cohort had similar odds of insertion of long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) (adjusted odds ratio [aOR] 1.13, 95% confidence interval [CI] 0.78–1.6), but higher odds of inpatient insertion (aOR 6.4, 95% CI 1.7–24.9). Black patients compared to white patients were more likely to initiate inpatient LARC (aOR 7.29, 95% CI 1.81–29.4) compared to the Comparison Cohort (aOR 3.63, 95% CI 0.29–46.19).

Conclusion

Use of PPC remained similar during COVID-19 with a decrease of in-person postpartum visits, new adoption of postpartum telemedicine visits, and an increase in inpatient insertion of LARC with higher odds of inpatient placement among black patients. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijgo.13805>

2021-08037

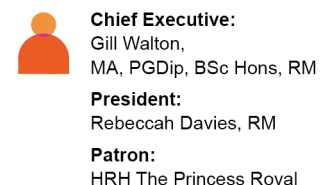
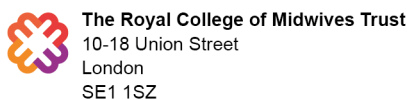
Mortality in pregnancy and the postpartum period in women with severe acute respiratory distress syndrome related to COVID-19 in Brazil, 2020. Scheler CA, Discacciati MG, Vale DM, et al (2021), International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics vol 155, no 3, December 2021, pp 475-482

Objective: To estimate fatality rates due to severe acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) related to COVID-19 in Brazilian women, comparing pregnant and postpartum women with nonpregnant women.

Methods: A cross-sectional study of 12,566 pregnant and postpartum women (obstetric group) and 90,025 nonpregnant women (nonobstetric group) aged 15-49 years reported with severe ARDS in 2020. The Brazilian ARDS Surveillance System was used to compare the outcome (death or cure) between the groups, considering age, race or comorbidities.

Results: The mortality rate related to ARDS/COVID-19 in the obstetric group was 7.8% (377/4853) compared with 13.9% (5946/42915) in the nonobstetric group. Comorbidity was associated with increased fatality cases for both groups, but higher in the nonobstetric group (22.8% vs 13.3%). In the obstetric group, deaths related to COVID-19 were concentrated in the third trimester or postpartum period. If comorbidity was present, deaths by COVID-19 were 4.4 times higher than ARDS due to other etiologies, and twice higher in women who self-reported as black (13.7%) than

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white women (6.7%). Considering ARDS etiology, deaths by COVID-19 were 3.4-6.7 times higher than any other etiology.

Conclusion: ARDS related to COVID-19 in obstetric patients was an important factor for worse clinical outcomes, with 3-6 times higher death rates than other ARDS etiologies. Pregnant and postpartum women with severe ARDS related to COVID-19 had a lower fatality rate than nonpregnant women, even with associated comorbidity. (Author)

2021-08035

COVID-19-related deaths among women of reproductive age in Brazil: The burden of postpartum. Knobel R, Takemoto MLS, Nakamura-Pereira M, et al (2021), International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics vol 155, no 1, October 2021, pp 101-109

Objective

To compare risk of death due to COVID-19 among pregnant, postpartum, and non-pregnant women of reproductive age in Brazil, using the severe acute respiratory syndrome surveillance system (SARS-SS).

Methods

A secondary analysis was performed of the Brazilian official SARS-SS, with data retrieved up to August 17, 2020. Cases were stratified by pregnancy status, risk factors or co-morbidities, and outcome (death or recovery). Multiple logistic regression was employed to examine associations between independent variables and risk of death.

Results

A total of 24 805 cases were included, with 3129 deaths (12.6%), including 271 maternal deaths. Postpartum was associated with increased risk of death, admission to the intensive care unit (ICU), and mechanical ventilation. Co-morbidities with higher impact on case fatality rate among non-obstetric cases were cancer and neurological and kidney diseases. Among pregnant women, cancer, diabetes mellitus, obesity, and rheumatology diseases were associated with risk of death. In the postpartum subgroup, age over 35 years and diabetes mellitus were independently associated with higher chance of death.

Conclusion

Postpartum was associated with worse outcomes among the obstetric population, despite lower risk of dying without accessing ICU care. Non-pregnant women with cancer, neurological diseases, and kidney diseases have a higher risk of death due to COVID-19. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijgo.13811>

2021-07383

Coagulation assessment with viscoelastic testing in asymptomatic postpartum patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection: a pilot study. Pacheco LD, Berry M, Saad AF, et al (2021), American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology (AJOG) vol 225, no 5, November 2021, pp 575-577

Research letter evaluating the coagulation profile of SARS-CoV-2 infected asymptomatic patients during the immediate postnatal period using viscoelastic testing. Results suggest that asymptomatic patients are no more hypercoagulable compared with non-infected individuals. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajog.2021.07.012>


2021-07374

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on postpartum contraception planning. Miller HE, Henkel A, Leonard SA, et al (2021), American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology MFM vol 3, no 5, September 2021, 100412


Research letter exploring postnatal contraception planning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Results demonstrate a significant decrease in people arriving to hospital with a contraception plan and an overall decrease in people being discharged with top-tier contraception. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajogmf.2021.100412>

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2021-06947

Maternity Services: Coronavirus [written answer]. House of Commons (2021), Hansard Written question 28997, 7 July 2021

Ms Nadine Dorries responds to a written question from Mrs Sharon Hodgson to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, regarding what data his Department is collecting to monitor the effectiveness of NHS England guidance, 'Supporting pregnant women using maternity services during the coronavirus pandemic', updated in April 2021; and what steps he is taking to ensure that parents have full access to their babies on neonatal units. (JSM)

Full URL: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-07/28997>

2021-06230

The perception of Italian pregnant women and new mothers about their psychological wellbeing, lifestyle, delivery, and neonatal management experience during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown: a web-based survey. Stampini V, Monzani A, Caristia S, et al (2021), BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth vol 21, no 473, 1 July 2021

Background

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, drastic measures for social distancing have been introduced also in Italy, likely with a substantial impact in delicate conditions like pregnancy and puerperium. The study aimed to investigate the changes in lifestyle, access to health services, and mental wellbeing during the first Italian lockdown in a sample of Italian pregnant women and new mothers.

Methods

We carried out a web-based survey to evaluate how pregnant women and new mothers were coping with the lockdown. We collected data about healthy habits (physical exercise and dietary habits), access to health services (care access, delivery and obstetric care, neonatal care, and breastfeeding), and mental wellbeing (psychological well-being and emotive support). Descriptive analysis was performed for both groups of participants, whereas a Poisson analysis was used to measure the association between some structural variables (age, education, socio-economic data, partner support, contact, free time, previous children, and pregnancy trimester) and anxiety or depression, difficulties in healthy eating and reduction in physical activity after lockdown started. Chi2 and Adjusted Prevalence Ratios were estimated only for pregnant women.

Results

We included 739 respondents (response rate 85.8 %), 600 were pregnant (81.2 %), and 139 (18.8 %) had delivered during lockdown (new mothers). We found a high score for anxiety and depression in 62.8 % of pregnant women and 61.9 % of new mothers. During the lockdown, 61.8 % of pregnant women reduced their physical exercise, and 44.3 % reported eating in a healthier way. 94.0 % of new mothers reported to have breastfed their babies during the hospital stay. Regarding the perceived impact of restrictive measures on breastfeeding, no impact was reported by 56.1 % of new mothers, whereas a negative one by 36.7 %.

Conclusions

The high prevalence of anxiety and depressive symptoms in pregnant women and new mothers should be a public health issue. Clinicians might also recommend and encourage "home" physical exercise. On the other hand, about half of the sample improved their approach towards healthy eating and a very high breastfeeding rate was reported soon after birth: these data are an interesting starting point to develop new strategies for public health. (Author)


Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-021-03904-4>

2021-06154


Dental care: Coronavirus [written answer]. Scottish Parliament (2021), Official Report Written question S6W-00961, 21 June 2021

Maree Todd responds to a written question asked by Alexander Burnett to the Scottish Government, regarding its position on providing vouchers for one free NHS dental check-up for new mothers that can be redeemed after the

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baby's first birthday, if the mothers were unable to access this service before the birthday because of COVID-19 restrictions. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://www.parlmaid-alba.scot/chamber-and-committees/written-questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-00961>

2021-06114

Maternity Services: Coronavirus [written answer]. House of Commons (2021), Hansard Written question 24878, 30 June 2021

Ms Nadine Dorries responds to a written question asked by Tim Loughton to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, regarding what assessment his department has made of the effectiveness of the guidance entitled 'Supporting pregnant women using maternity services during the coronavirus pandemic: actions for NHS providers' in enabling parents' full access together to their baby in neonatal units. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-30/24878>

2021-05595

Contraceptives: Coronavirus [written answer]. House of Commons (2021), Hansard Written question 21167, 23 June 2021

Jo Churchill responds to a written question from Dame Diana Johnson to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, regarding what steps his Department is taking to ensure immediate postpartum contraception is made available in all maternity settings as part of service restoration in a covid-19 recovery context. (MB)

Full URL: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-23/21167>

2021-05527

COVID-19 and perinatal intimate partner violence: a cross-sectional survey of pregnant and postpartum individuals in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Muldoon KA, Denize KM, Talarico R, et al (2021), BMJ Open Vol 11, no 5, May 2021, e049295

Objective The objectives of this study were to: (1) document violent and controlling behaviours within intimate partnerships during the perinatal period; and (2) determine individual, interpersonal and household-level factors influencing the risk of perinatal intimate partner violence (IPV).

Design Cross-sectional survey.

Setting The Ottawa Hospital, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Participants Patients who gave birth at The Ottawa Hospital and were >20 days post partum between 17 March and 16 June 2020.

Main outcomes and measures Perinatal IPV was defined as regular controlling behaviours or act-based forms of emotional/physical/sexual abuse in the 12 months before pregnancy, during pregnancy and/or post partum. Log-binomial multivariable regression models were used to compute adjusted risk ratios (aRRs) and 95% CIs to identify potential risk factors for IPV: maternal age, postpartum depression, parity, increase in partner substance use and household income.

Results Among 216 participants, the median maternal age was 33 years (IQR: 30–36). In total, 52 (24.07%) reported some form of perinatal IPV, 37 (17.13%) reported regular controlling behaviour and 9 (4.17%) reported both. Household income below the municipal median was the strongest risk factor for perinatal IPV (aRR: 3.24, 95% CI: 1.87 to 5.59). There was no apparent association between maternal age (aRR: 0.99, 95% CI: 0.94 to 1.04), postpartum depression (aRR: 1.03, 95% CI: 1.00 to 1.07), nulliparity (aRR: 1.18, 95% CI: 0.71 to 1.97) or increases in partner substance use (aRR: 0.73, 95% CI: 0.42 to 1.25) with IPV.

Conclusion One in four individuals in this study experienced perinatal IPV. Household income was the strongest risk factor, and surprisingly, many hypothesised risk factors (eg, mental health, partner substance use, etc) were not

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significantly associated with perinatal IPV in this sample. This highlights the challenges in both measuring IPV and identifying individuals exposed to perinatal IPV during the high stress of the COVID-19 pandemic. (Author)

Full URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2021-049295>

2021-05191

Coronavirus: Disease Control [written answer]. House of Commons (2020), Hansard Written question 131353, 17 December 2020

Ms Nadine Dorries responds to a written question from Tulip Siddiq to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, regarding what steps his Department is taking to provide secure indoor spaces for new mothers outside of private dwellings in areas of Tier 3 covid-19 restrictions. (JSM)

Full URL: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-17/131353>

2021-05131

Human milk banks in the response to COVID-19: a statement of the regional human milk bank network for Southeast Asia and beyond. Olanon-Jusi E, Zambrano PG, Duong VH, et al (2021), International Breastfeeding Journal vol 16, no 29, 29 March 2021

Background

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations on infant feeding in the context of COVID-19 uphold standing recommendations for breastfeeding, non-separation, and skin-to-skin contact, including the use of donor human milk when mother's own milk is not available.

Insufficient guidance on the use of donor human milk and the role of human milk banks in the pandemic response COVID-19 clinical management guidelines in seven countries in Southeast Asia are not aligned with WHO recommendations despite the lack of evidence of transmission through either breastmilk or breastfeeding. The use of safe donor human milk accessed through human milk banks is also insufficiently recommended, even in countries with an existing human milk bank, leading to a gap in evidence-based management of COVID-19. This highlights long-standing challenges as well as opportunities in the safe, equitable, and resilient implementation of human milk banks in the region.

Conclusions

This statement reflects the expert opinion of the Regional Human Milk Bank Network for Southeast Asia and Beyond on the need to revisit national guidelines based on the best evidence for breastfeeding during the COVID-19 pandemic, to incorporate human milk bank services in national obstetric and newborn care guidelines for COVID-19 where possible, and to ensure that operations of human milk banks are adapted to meet the needs of the current pandemic and to sustain donor human milk supply in the long-term. The Network also recommends sustained engagement with the global human milk bank community. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13006-021-00376-2>

2021-05130

The impact of coronavirus outbreak on breastfeeding guidelines among Brazilian hospitals and maternity services: a cross-sectional study. Gonçalves-Ferri WA, Pereira-Cellini FM, Coca KP, et al (2021), International Breastfeeding Journal vol 16, no 30, 31 March 2021

Background

The World Health Organization recognizes exclusive breastfeeding a safe source of nutrition available for children in most humanitarian emergencies, as in the current pandemic caused by the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Despite the Brazilian national guideline protecting breastfeeding practices, there are many concerns about protecting infants from their infected mothers. This study aimed to analyze how the Brazilian hospitals and maternity services promote and support mothers suspected or diagnosed with coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

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Methods

This is a descriptive cross-sectional and multicenter study which collected data from 24 Brazilian hospitals and maternity services between March and July 2020. Representatives of the institutions completed a questionnaire based on acts to promote and support breastfeeding, the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, and Brazil's federal law recommendations.

Results

The results showed that in delivery rooms, 98.5% of the services prohibited immediate and uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact between mothers and their infants and did not support mothers to initiate breastfeeding in the first hour. On the postnatal ward, 98.5% of the services allowed breastfeeding while implementing respiratory hygiene practices to prevent transmission of COVID-19. Companions for mothers were forbidden in 83.3% of the hospitals. Hospital discharge was mostly between 24 and 28 h (79.1%); discharge guidelines were not individualized. Additionally, a lack of support was noticed from the home environment's health community network (83.3%). Hospital and home breast pumping were allowed (87.5%), but breast milk donation was not accepted (95.8%). There was a lack of guidance regarding the use of infant comforting strategies. Guidelines specific for vulnerable populations were not covered in the material evaluated.

Conclusions

In Brazil, hospitals have not followed recommendations to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding during the COVID-19 outbreak. The disagreement between international guidelines has been a major issue. The absence of recommendations on breastfeeding support during the pandemic led to difficulties in developing standards among hospitals in different regions of Brazil and other countries worldwide. The scientific community needs to discuss how to improve maternal and infant care services to protect breastfeeding in the current pandemic. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13006-021-00377-1>

2021-05117

Impact of COVID-19 pandemic lockdown on exclusive breastfeeding in non-infected mothers. Latorre G, Martinelli D, Guida P, et al (2021), *International Breastfeeding Journal* vol 16, no 36, 17 April 2021

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed several challenges to the provision of newborn nutrition and care interventions including maternal support, breastfeeding and family participatory care. Italy was the first country to be exposed to SARS-CoV-2 in Europe. One of the measures adopted by the Italian government during COVID-19 pandemic was the total lockdown of the cities with complete confinement at home. We aimed to examine the impact of the lockdown caused by COVID-19 pandemic on exclusive breastfeeding in non-infected mothers.

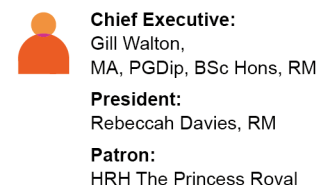
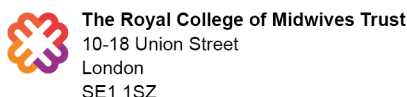
Methods

We prospectively enrolled 204 mother-baby dyads during lockdown (9 March to 8 May 2020) that we compared to previously studied 306 mother-baby dyads admitted during the year 2018. To reduce the possible effect of confounding factors on exclusive breastfeeding, a 1:1 matching was performed by using an automatized procedure of stratification that paired 173 mother-baby dyads. Feeding modality was collected at discharge, 30 and 90 days of newborn's life. Exclusive breastfeeding was considered when the infant received only breast milk and no other liquids or solids were given with the exception of vitamins, minerals or medicines.

Results

At discharge 69.4% of infants were exclusively breastfed during lockdown versus 97.7% of control group, 54.3% at 30 days vs 76.3 and 31.8% vs 70.5% at 90 days ($p < 0.001$). The proportion of breastfeeding remaining exclusive from discharge to 30-day was similar between groups (about 80%), but it was lower in lockdown group than in control cohort (58.5% vs 92.4%, $p < 0.001$) from 30- to 90-days.

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Conclusions

Lockdown and home confinement led to a decrease of exclusively breastfeeding in the studied population.

Considering the timing to shift from exclusive to non-exclusive breastfeeding, differences between study groups were concentrated during hospital stay and from 30- to 90 days of a newborn's life, confirming that the hospital stay period is crucial in continuing exclusive breastfeeding at least for the first 30 days, but no longer relevant at 90 days of life.

(Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13006-021-00382-4>

2021-05077

Role of human milk banks amid COVID 19: perspective from a milk bank in India. Bhasin M, Nangia S, Goel S, et al (2020), International Breastfeeding Journal vol 15, no 104, 2 December 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the operation of donor human milk banks in various countries such as China, Italy and India. It is understandable that this impact on operations of donor human milk might hamper the capability of these milk banks to provide sufficient pasteurized donor milk to neonates who need it. Contrary to developed world, predominant donors in developing nations are mothers of hospitalised neonates who have a relatively long period of hospital stay. This longer maternal hospital stay enhances the feasibility of milk donation by providing mothers with access to breast pumps to express their milk. Any excess milk a mother expresses which is above the needs of their own infant can be voluntarily donated. This physical proximity of milk banks to donors may help continuation of human milk donation in developing nations during the pandemic. Nevertheless, protocols need to be implemented to i) ensure the microbiological quality of the milk collected and ii) consider steps to mitigate potential consequences related to the possibility of the donor being an asymptomatic carrier of COVID-19. We present the procedural modifications implemented at the Comprehensive Lactation Management Centre at Lady Hardinge Medical College in India to promote breastfeeding and human milk donation during the pandemic which comply with International and National guidelines. This commentary provides a perspective from a milk bank in India which might differ from the perspective of the international donor human milk banking societies. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13006-020-00346-0>

2021-05011

Maternity Services: Face-to-Face Visits [written answer]. Northern Ireland Assembly (2021), Hansard Written question AQW 17181/17-22, 13 April 2021

The Minister of Health responds to a written question from Ms Sinéad Bradley to the Northern Ireland Assembly, asking for the most up to date guidance issued to residential and social care sector providers in order to facilitate face-to-face visits for residents and their families. The advice includes guidance for maternity services. (JSM)

Full URL: <http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/questions/printquestionssummary.aspx?docid=333501>

2021-04713

Maternity Services: Coronavirus [written answer]. House of Commons (2021), Hansard Written question 10600, 4 June 2021

Ms Nadine Dorries responds to a written question asked by Emma Hardy to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care regarding whether he plans to review guidance on postnatal visits during the covid-19 outbreak to remove restrictions on visiting times. (MB)

Full URL: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-04/10600>

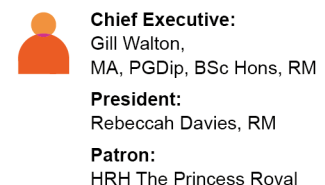
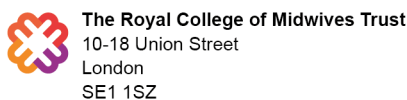
2021-04629

Mistakes from the HIV pandemic should inform the COVID-19 response for maternal and newborn care. Gribble K, Mathisen R, Ververs M, et al (2020), International Breastfeeding Journal vol 15, no 67, 25 July 2020

Background

In an effort to prevent infants being infected with SARS-CoV-2, some governments, professional organisations, and health facilities are instituting policies that isolate newborns from their mothers and otherwise prevent or impede

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breastfeeding.

Weighing of risks is necessary in policy development

Such policies are risky as was shown in the early response to the HIV pandemic where efforts to prevent mother to child transmission by replacing breastfeeding with infant formula feeding ultimately resulted in more infant deaths. In the COVID-19 pandemic, the risk of maternal SARS-CoV-2 transmission needs to be weighed against the protection skin-to-skin contact, maternal proximity, and breastfeeding affords infants.

Conclusion

Policy makers and practitioners need to learn from the mistakes of the HIV pandemic and not undermine breastfeeding in the COVID-19 pandemic. It is clear that in order to maximise infant health and wellbeing, COVID-19 policies should support skin-to-skin contact, maternal proximity, and breastfeeding. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13006-020-00306-8>

2021-04625

Breastfeeding mothers with COVID-19 infection: a case series. Pereira A, Cruz-Melguizo S, Adrien M, et al (2020), International Breastfeeding Journal vol 15, no 69, 8 August 2020

Background

The first reports of the Chinese experience in the management of newborns of mothers with SARS-CoV 2 infection did not recommend mother-baby contact or breastfeeding. At present, the most important International Societies, such as WHO and UNICEF, promote breastfeeding and mother-baby contact as long as adequate measures to control COVID-19 infection are followed. In cases where maternal general health conditions impede direct breastfeeding or in cases of separation between mother and baby, health organizations encourage and support expressing milk and safely providing it to the infants.

Methods

A series of 22 case studies of newborns to mothers with COVID-19 infection from March 14th to April 14th, 2020 was conducted. Mothers and newborns were followed for a median period of 1.8 consecutive months.

Results

Out of 22 mothers, 20 (90.9%) chose to breastfeed their babies during hospital admission. Timely initiation and skin to skin contact at delivery room was performed in 54.5 and 59.1%, respectively. Eighty two percent of newborns to mothers with COVID-19 were fed with breast milk after 1 month, decreasing to 77% at 1.8 months. Six of 22 (37.5%) mothers with COVID-19 required transitory complementary feeding until exclusive breastfeeding was achieved. During follow-up period, there were no major complications, and no neonates were infected during breastfeeding.

Conclusions

Our experience shows that breastfeeding in newborns of mothers with COVID-19 is safe with the adequate infection control measures to avoid mother-baby contagion. Supplementing feeding with pasteurized donor human milk or infant formula may be effective, until exclusive breastfeeding is achieved. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13006-020-00314-8>

2021-04555

COVID-19 guidelines for pregnant women and new mothers: A systematic evidence review. DiLorenzo MA, O'Connor SK, Ezekwesili C, et al (2021), International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics Vol 153, no 3, June 2021, pp 373-382

Background

Nearly a year after COVID-19 was initially detected, guidance for pregnant and new mothers remains varied.

Objective

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The goal of this systematic review is to summarize recommendations for three areas of maternal and fetal care—breastfeeding, post-partum social distancing, and decontamination.

Search strategy

We searched PubMed, Embase and Web of Science spanning from inception to November 9, 2020.

Selection criteria

Articles were included if they focused on COVID-positive mothers, commented on at least one of the three areas of interest, and were published in English.

Data collection and analysis

Our combined database search yielded 385 articles. After removing duplicates and articles that did not cover the correct populations or subject matter, a total of 74 articles remained in our analysis.

Main results

Most articles recommended direct breastfeeding with enhanced precaution measures. Recommendations regarding post-partum social distancing varied, although articles published more recently often recommended keeping the mother and newborn in the same room when possible. Decontamination recommendations emphasized mask wearing, good hand hygiene, and proper cleaning of surfaces.

Conclusion

In general, there was a focus on shared decision making when approaching topics such as breastfeeding and post-partum social distancing. Guidelines for decontamination were fairly uniform. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijgo.13668>

2021-04548

Acceptability of ENG-releasing subdermal implants among postpartum Brazilian young women during the COVID-19 pandemic. Barbieri MM, Herculano TB, Silva AD, et al (2021), International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics vol 154, no 1, July 2021, pp 106-112

Objective

To evaluate etonogestrel (ENG)-implant acceptance during the immediate postnatal period among adolescents and young women during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to compare variables according to choice and discuss possible implications of this measure during the pandemic period.

Methods

A cross-sectional study was designed. All women aged up to 24 years, who delivered between April 25, 2020, and June 24, 2020, at Women's Hospital, University of Campinas, São Paulo, Brazil were considered. The ENG-implant or other contraceptive methods were offered prior to hospital discharge. The participants were split into two groups: (1) those who chose the ENG-implant and (2) those that refused the implant. Descriptive, bivariate, and multivariate analyses were performed.

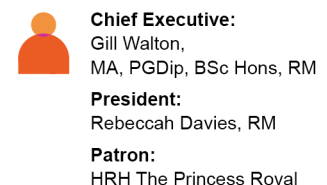
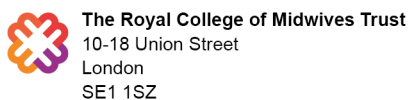
Results

151 women were included, with 76.2% selecting the ENG-implant. The average age was 19.5 years; 73.2% of pregnancies were unplanned, 32.5% already had a previous pregnancy, 74% were single, and 75.5% were not in full time education. Further, 70.5% had previously used contraceptives, with 89.1% unsatisfied with their previous method that opted for the ENG-implant ($P = 0.07$).

Conclusion

Offering the ENG-implant to youths during the immediate postnatal period is evidence-based care, and contraceptive provision is an essential health promotion tool, even during a pandemic. Thinking quickly about public policies in

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2021-04537

Health-related quality of life and quality of care in pregnant and postnatal women during the coronavirus disease

2019 pandemic: A cohort study. Alaya F, Worrall A, O'Toole F, et al (2021), International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics vol 154, no 1, July 2021, pp 100-105

Objective

Health-related quality of life (HRQoL) and the delivery of high-quality care are ongoing concerns when caring for pregnant women during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. We compared self-reported HRQoL and hospital quality of care among perinatal women with and without COVID-19.

Methods

This is a prospective cohort study of perinatal women attending a tertiary maternity unit during the pandemic. Eighteen women who tested positive for severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and 20 SARS-CoV-2-negative women were recruited. Participants completed the Short Form Health Survey (SF-12), Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation-Outcome Measure, and Quality from the Patient's Perspective questionnaires. Mean scores were compared.

Results

Of the Non-COVID-19 cohort, 95% (n = 19) were Caucasian, whereas 67% (n = 12) of the COVID-19 cohort were not Caucasian ($\chi^2 = 16.01$, $P < 0.001$). The mean SF-12 for physical health in the COVID-19 cohort had significantly lower scores ($P < 0.002$). There was no difference in mental health and well-being between cohorts. The quality of care experienced was notably similar and very positive.

Conclusion

There was a significantly greater burden on physical health among pregnant women with COVID-19. Mental health and psychological status were similar in both groups. High quality of care during a pandemic is possible to deliver in a maternity setting, irrespective of COVID-19 status. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijgo.13711>

2021-04527

Does mild thrombocytopenia increase peripartum hemorrhage in elective cesarean deliveries? A retrospective

cohort study. Işıkalan MM, Özkaya EB, Özkaya B, et al (2021), International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics Vol 153, no 1, April 2021, pp 89-94

Objective

To investigate the effect of mild thrombocytopenia (platelet count: 100 000–149 000/ μ l) on peripartum hemorrhage in elective cesarean deliveries.

Methods

This study was conducted between January 2018 and May 2019 in a hospital, located in Konya, Turkey. Uncomplicated pregnancies undergoing elective cesarean section were included. Of 1992 eligible patients, 201 women were determined as the mild thrombocytopenia group, 48 women as the severe thrombocytopenia group, and 1743 women as the control group. The estimated blood loss volume (EBLV), the need for blood transfusion, and excessive blood loss rates were compared among groups. Logistic regression analysis was performed for potential confounding factors.

Results

The EBLV and excessive blood loss ratios were significantly higher in the mild thrombocytopenia group compared with the control group ($P < 0.001$ and $P < 0.05$, respectively). There was no significant difference between the mild thrombocytopenia and control groups in terms of the number of patients receiving a blood transfusion. The

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probability of excessive blood loss was significantly higher in the mild thrombocytopenia group, even after adjusting the odds ratio for confounding factors (adjusted odds ratio 1.94, 95% confidence interval 1.27–2.95, P = 0.002).

Conclusion

Mild thrombocytopenia appears to increase the likelihood of peripartum hemorrhage in elective cesarean deliveries in uncomplicated pregnancies. (Author)

2021-04510

Families holding on: how will they bounce back after Covid?. Waters J (2021), Community Practitioner vol 94, no 3, May/June 2021, pp 36-41

Young families have been under tremendous pressure from all directions during the Covid-19 pandemic. Journalist Jo Waters investigates what new parents, babies and toddlers, and parents of young children have been experiencing and asks what support they will need. (Author)

2021-03645

Maternity Hospitals: Visiting [written answer]. Northern Ireland Assembly (2021), Hansard Written question AQW 18305/17-22, 20 May 2021

The Minister of Health responds to a written question from Claire Sugden to the Northern Ireland Assembly, detail his plans to recommence normal visitation rights of partners to expectant and new mothers in hospitals. (JSM)

Full URL: <http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/questions/searchresults.aspx?&qf=0&asb=86&tbm=0&anb=0&abp=0&sp=1&qfv=1&asbv=4145&tbm=1&anbv=0&abpv=0&spv=23&ss=HBTpOUVOBh74FABlUy0XzQ==&per=1&fd=&td=&pm=0&asbt=Sugden,%20Claire&anbt=All%20Ministers&abpt=All%20Parties&spt=2020-2021>

2021-03644

Maternity Services, General Visiting Services, Care Homes: COVID-19 [written answer]. Northern Ireland Assembly (2021), Hansard Written question AQW 18578/17-22, 7 May 2021

The Minister of Health responds to a written question from Colm Gildernew to the Northern Ireland Assembly, regarding how many (i) maternity services; (ii) general visiting services; and (iii) care homes are COVID-19 secure as per the definition in the visiting guidance. (JSM)

Full URL: <http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/questions/searchresults.aspx?&qf=0&asb=39&tbm=0&anb=0&abp=0&sp=1&qfv=1&asbv=6161&tbm=1&anbv=0&abpv=0&spv=23&ss=kb6VxFzTND6KbF7sKMzJvg==&per=1&fd=&td=&pm=0&asbt=Gildernew,%20Colm&anbt=All%20Ministers&abpt=All%20Parties&spt=2020-2021>

2021-03396

Covid: YouTuber's 'miracle' survival after post-natal coma. Anon (2021), BBC News 12 May 2021

A YouTuber who was in a coma for three months with Covid-19 has said it was a "miracle" she survived. (Author)

Full URL: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-57071645>

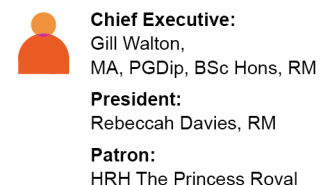
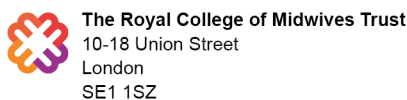
2021-02986

Protecting Milk Supply During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Spatz DL (2020), MCN - American Journal of Maternal/Child Nursing vol 45, no 5, September-October 2020, p 310

During the pandemic, supporting needs of childbearing families and the role of human milk as a lifesaving medical intervention should not be forgotten. International organizations such as the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Health Organization have recommended early, exclusive breastfeeding and skin-to-skin contact during COVID-19 including women who are positive for the virus. Our breastfeeding expert, Dr. Spatz, offers details of these recommendations. (Author)

2021-02330

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Forgotten fathers: The impact of service reduction during Covid-19. Menzies J (2021), Journal of Health Visiting vol 9, no 4, April 2021, pp 150-153

Health service restrictions and redeployment of health visitors during the Covid-19 pandemic has left families and fathers without vital home visits and face-to-face support in pregnancy and parenting. What will be the consequences? (Author)

2021-01926

Consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the postpartum course: Lessons learnt from a large-scale comparative study in a teaching hospital. Kugelman N, Toledano-Hacohen M, Karmaker D, et al (2021), International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics vol 153, no 2, May 2021, pp 315-321

Objective

To evaluate the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on the postpartum course.

Methods

A retrospective cross-sectional study compared women who gave birth between March and April 2020 (first wave), between July to September 2020 (second wave), and a matched historical cohort throughout 2017–2019 (groups A, B, and C, respectively). Primary outcomes were postpartum length of stay (LOS), presentations to the emergency department (ED), and readmissions 30 days or longer after discharge. Following Bonferroni correction, $p < 0.016$ was considered statistically significant.

Results

In total, 3377 women were included: 640, 914, and 1823 in groups A, B, and C, respectively. LOS after birth (both vaginal and cesarean) was shorter in groups A and B compared to the control group (2.28 ± 1.01 and 2.25 ± 0.93 vs 2.55 ± 1.10 days, $p < 0.001$). Rates of ED presentations 30 days after discharge were higher in groups C and B compared to group A (6.63% and 6.45% vs 3.12%, $p = 0.006$). Rates of readmissions 30 days after discharge were 0.78%, 1.42%, and 1.09% (groups A, B, and C, respectively), demonstrating no statistical difference ($p = 0.408$).

Conclusion

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a reduction or no change in rates of ED presentations and readmissions, despite the shortened LOS after delivery. A shift in policy regarding the postpartum LOS could be considered.

2021-01599

Nurse meets her baby for first time after 76-day coronavirus ordeal. Ford M (2021), Nursing Times 29 January 2021

A nurse who has no memory of giving birth while fighting for her life in hospital with Covid-19 has told of the “special moment” she was able to hold her daughter for the first time after almost three months. (Author)

20210120-25*

Behind a screen: Supporting first-time parents in Casey during COVID-19. Byrne R (2020), Australian Nursing and Midwifery Journal vol 26, no 11, July-September 2020, pp 16-17

Located in Melbourne's outer South East, the City of Casey is one of the most populous municipalities in Victoria with more than 350,000 residents from over 150 different cultural backgrounds, speaking over 140 languages and following over 120 faiths. Last financial year (2018-2019) over 5,300 new babies were born in Casey, with approximately 2,140 of these babies born to first time parents. (Author)

Full URL: https://anmj.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/UPDATED_ANMJ-JUL-SEP-2020.pdf

2021-00964

Coronavirus: Screening [written answer]. House of Commons (2021), Hansard Written question 164355, 8 March 2021

Ms Nadine Dorries responds to a written question from Sir Mark Hendrick to the Secretary of State for Health and

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Social Care, regarding whether newborns can be discharged to the care of (a) fathers, (b) partners and (c) family members in the event that a mother is awaiting test results for covid-19 after birth. (MB)

Full URL: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-08/164355>

2021-00708

When support stops. Warr P (2020), Association for Improvements in Maternity Services (AIMS) vol 32, no 2, June 2020

Polly Warr's postnatal care was hugely reduced during the Covid-19 pandemic. (Author)

Full URL: <https://www.aims.org.uk/journal/item/covid-19-polly-warr>

2021-00504

Prison: Health visiting [written answer]. Scottish Government (2021), Official Report Written question S5W-35169, 11 February 2021

Jeane Freeman responds to a written question from Alex Cole-Hamilton to the Scottish Government, regarding what guidance it has published for health visitors regarding in-person visits to see new babies under the current COVID-19 restrictions, and what its response is to reports that there is a variance across the country in the number of home visits that are being made. (JSM)

Full URL: <https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-35169>

2021-00456

Born in Lockdown: Mothers' stories of giving birth in 2020. Hallett E (2021), BBC News 23 February 2021

It is a book with 277 authors but with one shared experience - becoming a new mother in 2020. The mothers speak about their isolation, uncertainty and the pressure placed on their mental health by the pandemic, but some say they were also able to find "silver linings" and positives that have come out of an extraordinary joint experience. (Author)

Full URL: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-55999977>

2021-00337

Coronavirus (COVID-19) infection in pregnancy: Information for healthcare professionals [Version 13] [Superseded by Version 14, 25 August 2021]. Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Royal College of Midwives, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, et al (2021), London: RCOG 19 February 2021. 97 pages

NB: This version has now been superseded by version 14, 25 August 2021.

This document aims to provide guidance to healthcare professionals who care for pregnant women during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is not intended to replace existing clinical guidelines, but to act as a supplement with additional advice on how to implement standard practice during this time. The advice in this document is provided as a resource for UK healthcare professionals based on a combination of available evidence, good practice and expert consensus opinion. The priorities are: (i) The reduction of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 to pregnant women, their family members and healthcare workers. (ii) The provision of safe, personalised and woman-centred care during pregnancy, birth and the early postnatal period, during the COVID-19 pandemic. (iii) The provision of safe, personalised and woman-centred care to pregnant and postnatal women with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. This is very much an evolving situation requiring this guidance to be a living document that is under regular review and updated as new information and evidence emerges. (Author, edited)

2021-00209

Parental Leave [written answer]. House of Commons (2021), Hansard Written question 149262, 4 February 2021

Paul Scully responds to a written question from Chris Stephens to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, regarding what steps he has taken to (a) identify the main challenges that new parents face during

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parental leave and (b) make an assessment of the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on parental leave. (Author)

Full URL: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-04/149262>

2021-00119

Parental Leave: Coronavirus [written answer]. House of Commons (2021), Hansard Written question 149263, 4 February 2021

Paul Scully responds to a written question from Chris Stephens to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, regarding whether he will extend paternal leave to support people who have lost access to health services, baby groups and childcare support as a result of the covid-19 outbreak. (JSM)

Full URL: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-04/149263>

20201221-60*

Clinical manifestations, prevalence, risk factors, outcomes, transmission, diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19 in pregnancy and postpartum: a living systematic review protocol. Yap M, Debenham L, Kew T, et al (2020), BMJ Open vol 10, no 12, December 2020

Introduction Rapid, robust and continually updated evidence synthesis is required to inform management of COVID-19 in pregnant and postpartum women and to keep pace with the emerging evidence during the pandemic.

Methods and analysis We plan to undertake a living systematic review to assess the prevalence, clinical manifestations, risk factors, rates of maternal and perinatal complications, potential for mother-to-child transmission, accuracy of diagnostic tests and effectiveness of treatment for COVID-19 in pregnant and postpartum women (including after miscarriage or abortion). We will search Medline, Embase, WHO COVID-19 database, preprint servers, the China National Knowledge Infrastructure system and Wanfang databases from 1 December 2019. We will supplement our search with studies mapped by Cochrane Fertility and Gynaecology group, Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre), COVID-19 study repositories, reference lists and social media blogs. The search will be updated every week and not be restricted by language. We will include observational cohort (≥ 10 participants) and randomised studies reporting on prevalence of COVID-19 in pregnant and postpartum women, the rates of clinical manifestations and outcomes, risk factors in pregnant and postpartum women alone or in comparison with non-pregnant women with COVID-19 or pregnant women without COVID-19 and studies on tests and treatments for COVID-19. We will additionally include case reports and series with evidence on mother-to-child transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in utero, intrapartum or postpartum. We will appraise the quality of the included studies using appropriate tools to assess the risk of bias. At least two independent reviewers will undertake study selection, quality assessment and data extraction every 2 weeks. We will synthesise the findings using quantitative random effects meta-analysis and report OR or proportions with 95% CIs and prediction intervals. Case reports and series will be reported as qualitative narrative synthesis. Heterogeneity will be reported as I^2 and τ^2 statistics.

Ethics and dissemination Ethical approval is not required as this is a synthesis of primary data. Regular updates of the results will be published on a dedicated website (<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/who-collaborating-centre/pregcov/index.aspx>) and disseminated through publications, social media and webinars.

PROSPERO registration number CRD42020178076. (Author)

Full URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-041868>

20201208-18*

Maternity Services: Coronavirus [written answer]. House of Commons (2020), Hansard Written question 120038, 24 November 2020

Ms Nadine Dorries responds to a written question asked by Esther McVey to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, regarding what steps his Department took to put in place precautionary measures to help protect (a) antenatal care, (b) maternity units and (c) post-natal care from the effects of the covid-19 outbreak during the covid-19 lockdown announced in (i) March 2020 and (ii) November 2020. (MB)

Full URL: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-24/120038>

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20201124-2*

Prescriptions: Mothers [written answer]. House of Commons (2020), Hansard Written question 115523, 16 November 2020

Jo Churchill responds to a written question asked by Andrew Gwynne to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care regarding what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending maternity exemption certificates for people who have not been able to use them during the covid-19 lockdowns. (MB)

Full URL: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-16/115523>

20201117-53*

Dangerous shortage of blood banks as an indirect effect of SARS-CoV-2: An obstetrics perspective. Nieto-Calvache AJ, Quintero-Santacruz M, Macia-Mejia C, et al (2020), International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics vol 151, no 3, December 2020, pp 424-430

Objective

To describe the impact of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic on the frequency of blood donation (BD) in a Latin American hospital and how the social isolation policy implemented during the pandemic jeopardizes the quality of postpartum hemorrhage (PPH) care due to shortages at blood banks (BB).

Methods

A retrospective, descriptive study was conducted, lasting for 31 months, including the start of the pandemic.

Frequency of BD and the use of obstetric emergency services was observed.

Results

A direct relationship was observed between the pandemic and a decrease in BD. Although emergency obstetric visits decreased, the frequency of deliveries and cases of PPH remained unchanged. After applying strategies to promote voluntary BD, a very slight increase was observed in the frequency of BD, with a negative indicator persisting between donation and blood demand.

Conclusion

The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has led to shortages at BBs. In this context, typical measures to encourage an altruistic attitude toward BD have not had a significant impact. As causes of PPH continue, quality of care may be affected by the current situation at BBs. Governments and institutions must implement new strategies to motivate BD.

Synopsis

The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has led to shortages at blood banks. As causes of postpartum hemorrhage continue, governments and institutions must implement strategies to motivate donations. (Author)

20201117-51*

Risk factors for adverse outcomes among pregnant and postpartum women with acute respiratory distress syndrome due to COVID-19 in Brazil. Menezes MO, Takemoto MLS, Nakamura-Pereira M, et al (2020), International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics vol 151, no 3, December 2020, pp 415-423

Objective

To evaluate whether clinical and social risk factors are associated with negative outcomes for COVID-19 disease among Brazilian pregnant and postpartum women.

Methods

A secondary analysis was conducted of the official Acute Respiratory Syndrome Surveillance System database.

Pregnant and postpartum women diagnosed with COVID-19 ARDS until July 14, 2020, were included. Adverse outcomes were a composite endpoint of either death, admission to the intensive care unit (ICU), or mechanical ventilation. Risk factors were examined by multiple logistic regression.

Results

There were 2475 cases of COVID-19 ARDS. Among them, 23.8% of women had the composite endpoint and 8.2% died. Of those who died, 5.9% were not hospitalized, 39.7% were not admitted to the ICU, 42.6% did not receive mechanical ventilation, and 25.5% did not have access to respiratory support. Multivariate analysis showed that postpartum period, age over 35 years, obesity, diabetes, black ethnicity, living in a peri-urban area, no access to Family Health Strategy, or living more than 100 km from the notification hospital were associated with an increased risk of adverse

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outcomes.

Conclusion

Clinical and social risk factors and barriers to access health care are associated with adverse outcomes among maternal cases of COVID-19 ARDS in Brazil. (Author)

20201116-94*

Clinical care of pregnant and postpartum women with COVID-19: Living recommendations from the National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce. Vogel JP, Tendal B, Giles M, et al (2020), Australian and New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (ANZJOG) vol 60, no 6, December 2020, pp 840-851

To date, 18 living recommendations for the clinical care of pregnant and postpartum women with COVID-19 have been issued by the National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce. This includes recommendations on mode of birth, delayed umbilical cord clamping, skin-to-skin contact, breastfeeding, rooming-in, antenatal corticosteroids, angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors, disease-modifying treatments (including dexamethasone, remdesivir and hydroxychloroquine), venous thromboembolism prophylaxis and advanced respiratory support interventions (prone positioning and extracorporeal membrane oxygenation). Through continuous evidence surveillance, these living recommendations are updated in near real-time to ensure clinicians in Australia have reliable, evidence-based guidelines for clinical decision-making. Please visit <https://covid19evidence.net.au/> for the latest recommendation updates. (Author)

20201116-60*

An initiative to evaluate the safety of maternal bonding in patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection. Cojocaru L, Crimmins S, Sundararajan S, et al (2022), Journal of Maternal-Fetal and Neonatal Medicine vol 35, no 18, 2022, pp 3540-3546

Background

In the last two decades, the world faced three epidemics caused by novel coronaviruses, namely, SARS-CoV in 2002, MERS-CoV in 2012, and the ongoing SARS-CoV-2 that started in late 2019. Despite a growing understanding of SARS-CoV-2 virology, epidemiology, and clinical management strategies, other aspects, such as mode of delivery, vertical transmission, and maternal bonding, remain controversial. The question we faced upon the decision to separate the neonates of SARS-CoV-2 positive mother is whether we follow the principle of 'do no harm'?

Methods

This is a quality improvement project that analyzed all cases of SARS-CoV-2 positive pregnancies that delivered at a major health care system from March 1, 2020 to June, 1 2020. The article was prepared following Standards for Quality Improvement Reporting Excellence (SQUIRE) 2.0 guidelines. Data were prospectively collected and entered into the Research Electronic Data Capture (REDCap). Maternal bonding was defined by events such as rooming-in, skin to skin contact (STSC), and breastfeeding. Descriptive analysis was performed using the same software platform.

Intervention

We compared neonatal transmission rates between those neonates who experienced bonding versus those who were separated.

Results

A total of 1989 women were screened for SARS-CoV-2, from which 86 tested positive. Out of 31 analyzed pregnancies, five women (16%) were admitted to ICU and required mechanical ventilation. From the remaining 26 (84%), 17 (65%) opted for rooming-in, 12 (46%) for STSC, and 16 (61%) fed the infants with breastmilk (11 direct breastfeedings and five pumped the breast milk). All neonatal tests for SARS-CoV-2 returned negative.

Conclusion

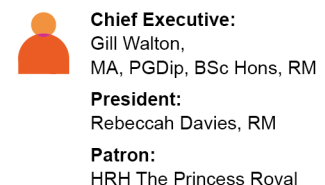
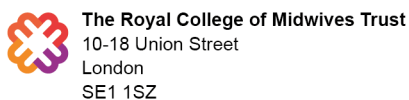
Our results have illustrated that maternal bonding appears safe in neonates born to mothers that are SARS-CoV-2 positive. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767058.2020.1828335>

20201109-23*

Breastfeeding: Coronavirus [written answer]. House of Commons (2020), Hansard Written question 106372, 20 October 2020

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Jo Churchill responds to a written question from Colleen Fletcher to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, regarding whether he has made an assessment of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on (a) access to breastfeeding support services and (b) trends in the level of breastfeeding among new mothers. (JSM)

Full URL: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-20/106372>

20201105-21*

Coronavirus: Maternity Services [written answer]. Northern Ireland Assembly (2020), Hansard Written question AQW 8969/17-22, 19 October 2020

The Minister of Health responds to a written question asked by Mr Gerry Carroll, regarding whether he plans to review the current arrangements that prevent partners attending maternity and neonatal appointments. (LDO)

Full URL: <http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/questions/printquestionssummary.aspx?docid=312491>

20201028-29*

Coronavirus (COVID-19) infection in pregnancy: Information for healthcare professionals [Version 12] [Superseded by Version 13, 19 February 2021]. Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Royal College of Midwives, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, et al (2020), London: RCOG 14 October 2020. 77 pages

NB: This version has been superseded by version 13, 19 February 2021.

This document aims to provide guidance to healthcare professionals who care for pregnant women during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is not intended to replace existing clinical guidelines, but to act as a supplement with additional advice on how to implement standard practice during this time. The advice in this document is provided as a resource for UK healthcare professionals based on a combination of available evidence, good practice and expert consensus opinion. The priorities are: (i) The reduction of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 to pregnant women. (ii) The provision of safe, personalised and woman-centred care during pregnancy, birth and the early postnatal period, during the COVID-19 pandemic. (iii) The provision of safe, personalised and woman-centred care to pregnant and postnatal women with suspected/confirmed COVID-19. This is very much an evolving situation requiring this guidance to be a living document that is under regular review and updated as new information and evidence emerges. (Author, edited)

Full URL: <https://www.rcm.org.uk/media/4383/2020-10-14-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-in-pregnancy-v12.pdf>

20201027-22*

Coronavirus: Visitors to Maternity and Postnatal Wards [written answer]. Scottish Parliament (2020), Official Report Written question S5W-32205, 30 September 2020

Jeane Freeman responds to a written question from Mark Griffin to the Scottish Government, regarding what the intended impact is of the new household visiting ban and coronavirus restrictions on the fathers and partners, considered as essential and designated visitors, from visiting their partner and child in maternity and post-natal wards. (JSM)

Full URL: <https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-32205>

20201026-31*

Antivirals for COVID-19 and Breastfeeding. Anderson PO (2020), Breastfeeding Medicine vol 15, no 10, October 2020, pp 605-607

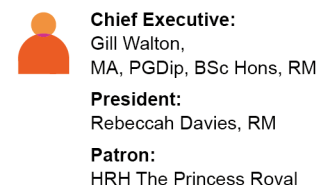
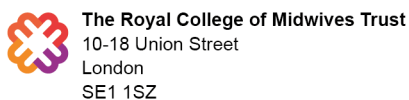
Review the use in breastfeeding of drugs that might be used against the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19. (MB)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1089/bfm.2020.0268>

20201022-3*

Perinatal Mortality: Health Services [written answer]. House of Commons (2020), Hansard Written question 104743, 16 October 2020

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Ms Nadine Dorries responds to a written question asked by Colleen Fletcher to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, regarding the support available for (a) women and (b) partners who have experienced pregnancy loss or baby loss; the steps his department is taking to improve (i) funding for, (ii) provision of and (iii) access to support services for those who have experienced such losses; and the assessment he has made of the effect of the COVID-19 outbreak on access to support services for pregnancy loss and baby loss for (A) women and (B) their partners. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-16/104743>

20200930-16*

Building resilient societies after COVID-19: the case for investing in maternal, neonatal, and child health. Jacob CM, Briana DP, Di Renzo GP, et al (2020), *The Lancet Public Health* vol 5, no 11, November 2020, pp e624-e627

Resilient societies respond rapidly and effectively to health challenges and the associated economic consequences, and adapt to be more responsive to future challenges. Although it is only possible to recognise resilience retrospectively, the COVID-19 pandemic has occurred at a point in human history when, uniquely, sufficient knowledge is available on the early-life determinants of health to indicate clearly that a focus on maternal, neonatal, and child health (MNCH) will promote later resilience. This knowledge offers an unprecedented opportunity to disrupt entrenched strategies and to reinvest in MNCH in the post-COVID-19 so-called new normal. Furthermore, analysis of the short-term, medium-term, and longer-term consequences of previous socioeconomic shocks provides important insights into those domains of MNCH, such as neurocognitive development and nutrition, for which investment will generate the greatest benefit. Such considerations apply to high-income countries (HICs) and low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs). However, implementing appropriate policies in the post-COVID-19 recovery period will be challenging and requires political commitment and public engagement. (Author)

Full URL: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667\(20\)30200-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(20)30200-0)

20200928-7*

Pandemic birth: women's own stories during COVID-19. Various (2020), *Association for Improvements in Maternity Services (AIMS)* vol 32, no 2, June 2020

In this issue of AIMS Journal, women share their own personal experiences, giving a snapshot of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the pregnancies and births of women and pregnant people in the UK. (Author, edited)

Full URL: <https://www.aims.org.uk/journal/index/32/2>

20200909-1*

Framework to assist NHS trusts to reintroduce access for partners, visitors and other supporters of pregnant women in English maternity services. Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists, Royal College of Midwives, Society & College of Radiographers, et al (2020), London: NHS England 8 September 2020, 7 pages

This framework has been designed to assist NHS trusts to reintroduce access for partners, visitors and other supporters of pregnant women in English maternity services. It applies to inpatient and outpatient settings. (Author)

20200908-17*

Overview of the care of mothers and newborns with COVID-19; joint position statement. National Association of Neonatal Nurses, National Perinatal Association (2020), *Advances in Neonatal Care* vol 20, no 4, August 2020, p 268

A joint position statement from the National Association of Neonatal Nurses (NANN), and the National Perinatal Association (NPA) on the care of the mother-infant dyad during the COVID-19 pandemic. (JSM)


Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1097/ANC.0000000000000776>

20200907-38*


Tandem Nursing after a Caesarean During Lockdown. Carne J (2020), *Breastfeeding Matters* no 239, September/October 2020, pp 20-21

The author shares her experience of breastfeeding her toddler and newborn without being able to attend face to face

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20200902-51*

Breast Milk: Donors [written answer]. House of Commons (2020), Hansard Written question 78725, 22 July 2020

Jo Churchill responds to a written question from Alison Thewliss to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, regarding what additional support he is providing to human milk bank services during the covid-19 outbreak. (JSM)

Full URL: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-07-22/78725/>

20200901-22*

Inpatient obstetric management of COVID-19. Aubey J, Zork N, Sheen J-J (2020), Seminars in Perinatology vol 44, no 7, November 2020, 151280

Objective

To describe inpatient management strategies and considerations for pregnant patients with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 infection.

Findings

The novel coronavirus has posed challenges to both obstetric patients and the staff caring for them, due to its variable presentation and current limited knowledge about the disease. Inpatient antepartum, intrapartum and postpartum management can be informed by risk stratification, severity of disease, and gestational age. Careful planning and anticipation of emergent situations can prevent unnecessary exposures to patients and clinical staff.

Conclusion

As new data arises, management recommendations will evolve, thus practitioners must maintain a low threshold for adaptation of their clinical practice during obstetric care for patients with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 infection. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.semperi.2020.151280>

20200820-12*

Pregnancy and postpartum outcomes in a universally tested population for SARS-CoV-2 in New York City: a prospective cohort study. Prabhu M, Cagino K, Matthews KC, et al (2020), BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology vol 127, no 12, November 2020, pp 1548-1556

Objective

To describe differences in outcomes between pregnant women with and without coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Design

Prospective cohort study of pregnant women consecutively admitted for delivery, and universally tested via nasopharyngeal (NP) swab for severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) using reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction. All infants of mothers with COVID-19 underwent SARS-CoV-2 testing.

Setting

Three New York City hospitals.

Population

Pregnant women >20 weeks of gestation admitted for delivery.

Methods

Data were stratified by SARS-CoV-2 result and symptomatic status, and were summarised using parametric and nonparametric tests.

Main outcome measures

Prevalence and outcomes of maternal COVID-19, obstetric outcomes, neonatal SARS-CoV-2, placental pathology.

Results

Of 675 women admitted for delivery, 10.4% were positive for SARS-CoV-2, of whom 78.6% were asymptomatic. We observed differences in sociodemographics and comorbidities among women with symptomatic COVID-19 versus asymptomatic COVID-19 versus no COVID-19. Caesarean delivery rates were 46.7% in symptomatic COVID-19, 45.5% in

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asymptomatic COVID-19 and 30.9% in women without COVID-19 ($P = 0.044$). Postpartum complications (fever, hypoxia, readmission) occurred in 12.9% of women with COVID-19 versus 4.5% of women without COVID-19 ($P < 0.001$). No woman required mechanical ventilation, and no maternal deaths occurred. Among 71 infants tested, none were positive for SARS-CoV-2. Placental pathology demonstrated increased frequency of fetal vascular malperfusion, indicative of thrombi in fetal vessels, in women with COVID-19 versus women without COVID-19 (48.3% versus 11.3%, $P < 0.001$).

Conclusion

Among pregnant women with COVID-19 at delivery, we observed increased caesarean delivery rates and increased frequency of maternal complications in the postpartum period. Additionally, intraplacental thrombi may have maternal and fetal implications for COVID-19 remote from delivery.

Tweetable abstract

COVID-19 at delivery: more caesarean deliveries, postpartum complications and intraplacental thrombi. (Author)

20200819-68*

A multidisciplinary telemedicine model for management of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in obstetrical patients.

Reforma LG, Duffy C, Collier A-Y, et al (2020), American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology MFM vol 2, no 4, suppl, November 2020, 100180

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus has increased the demand for inpatient healthcare resources; however, approximately 80% of patients with COVID-19 have a mild clinical presentation and can be managed at home.

Objective

To describe the feasibility, clinical and process outcomes associated with a multidisciplinary telemedicine surveillance model to triage and manage obstetric patients with known exposures and/or symptoms concerning for COVID-19.

Study Design

We implemented a multidisciplinary telemedicine surveillance model with obstetric physicians and nurses to standardize ambulatory care for obstetric patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 based on symptoms or exposures at an urban academic tertiary care center with multiple hospital and community-based affiliated practices. All pregnant or postpartum patients with COVID-19 symptoms, exposures or hospitalization were eligible for inclusion in the program. Patients were assessed via regular nursing phone calls and were managed according to illness severity. Patient characteristics, clinical and process outcomes were abstracted from the electronic medical record.

Results

A total of 135 patients were enrolled in the multidisciplinary telemedicine model from March 17-April 19, 2020, of whom 130 were pregnant and 5 recently postpartum. The majority ($N=116$, 86%) were managed solely in the outpatient setting and did not require in-person evaluation; 9 were ultimately admitted after ambulatory or urgent evaluation and 10 patients were followed after hospital discharge. Although only 50% of the patients were tested secondary to limitations in ambulatory testing, 1 in 3 of those was PCR-positive for SARS-CoV-2 ($N=22$, 16% of entire cohort). Patients were enrolled in the telemedicine model for a median of 7 days (IQR 4-8) and averaged one phone call daily, resulting in 891 nursing calls and 20 physician calls over 1 month.

Conclusion

A multidisciplinary telemedicine surveillance model for outpatient management of obstetric patients with COVID-19 symptoms and/or exposures is feasible and resulted in rates of ambulatory management similar to those seen in non-pregnant patients. A centralized model for telemedicine surveillance of obstetric patients with COVID-19 symptoms may preserve inpatient resources and prevent avoidable staff and patient exposures, particularly in centers with multiple ambulatory practice settings. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajogmf.2020.100180>

20200819-4*

What does COVID-19 mean for new mothers in prison?. Delap N (2020), British Journal of Midwifery vol 28, no 8, August

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Naomi Delap, Director of Birth Companions, discusses the charity's work with pregnant women and new mothers in prison. (Author)

20200819-130*

Maternal mortality and COVID-19. Takemoto MLS, Menezes MO, Andreucci CB, et al (2022), Journal of Maternal-Fetal and Neonatal Medicine vol 35, no 12, 2022, pp 2355-2361

Objective

The aim of this study was to collect and analyze data from different sources to have a general overview of COVID-19-related maternal deaths in Brazil, as well as to compare data with worldwide reports.

Study design

We systematically searched data about COVID-19 maternal deaths from the Brazilian Ministry of Health surveillance system, State Departments of Health epidemiological reports, and media coverage. Data about timing of symptom onset and death (pregnancy or postpartum), gestational age, mode of birth, maternal age, comorbidities and/or risk factors, date of death, and place of death were retrieved when available.

Results

We identified 20 COVID-19-related maternal deaths, age range 20-43 years. Symptoms onset was reported as on pregnancy for 12 cases, postpartum for 3 cases, and during the cesarean section for 1 case (missing data for 4). In 16 cases, death occurred in the postpartum period. At least one comorbidity or risk factor was present in 11 cases (missing data for 4). Asthma was the most common risk factor (5/11). Ten cases occurred in the Northeast region, and nine cases occurred in the Southeast region (5 of them in São Paulo, the first epicenter of COVID-19 in the country).

Conclusions

To the best of our knowledge, this is the largest available series of maternal deaths due to COVID-19. Barriers to access healthcare, differences in pandemic containment measures in the country and high prevalence of concomitant risk factors for COVID-19 severe disease may play a role in the observed disparity compared to worldwide reports on maternal outcomes. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767058.2020.1786056>

20200810-28*

Virtual consultations [Version 2]. Royal College of Midwives (2020), London: RCM 24 July 2020. 5 pages

Gives guidance on the appropriate application for virtual consultations and practical tips for effective use.

N.B.: this guidance should be read in conjunction with the RCM guidance on Antenatal and Postnatal care during COVID-19

<https://www.rcm.org.uk/media/4132/2020-06-18-guidance-for-antenatal-and-postnatal-services-in-theevolving-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic.pdf>

A 'virtual' consultation in this guidance refers to one that is undertaken over the telephone or via video as opposed to the traditional consultation format in person, normally referred to as 'face to face'. (Author, edited)

Full URL: <https://www.rcm.org.uk/media/4192/virtual-consultations-v20-24-july-2020-review-24-august-2020-1.pdf>

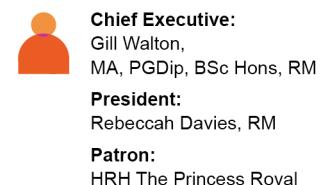
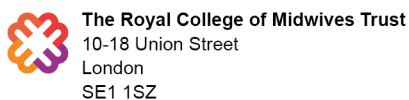
20200805-46*

Babies in Lockdown: listening to parents to build back better. Best Beginnings, Home-Start UK, Parent-Infant Foundation (2020), London: Best Beginnings, Home-Start UK, and the Parent-Infant Foundation August 2020. 92 pages

Joint research report from charities Best Beginnings, Home Start UK and the Parent-Infant Foundation, drawing on the experiences of expectant and new parents, looking at the effect lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the first months and years of their babies' development. Reveals a great deal of variation in parents experiences, with some welcoming the extra time to spend with their families, while others, already at greater risk of poorer outcomes, such as those on lower incomes or from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds (BAME) have been hardest hit during the crisis. Includes the experiences of those working on the frontline while pregnant. (JSM)

Full URL: <https://babiesinlockdown.files.wordpress.com/2020/08/babies-in-lockdown-main-report-final-version.pdf>

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20200804-15*

The tragedy of COVID-19 in Brazil: 124 maternal deaths and counting. Takemoto MLS, Menezes MO, Andreucci CB, et al (2020), International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics vol 151, no 1, October 2020, pp 154-156

At the time of writing 124 pregnant or postpartum women in Brazil have died due to COVID-19 (representing a mortality rate of 12.7%), a figure that currently surpasses the total number of COVID-19-related maternal deaths reported throughout the rest of the world. (Author)

20200803-2*

Caring for Women Who Are Planning a Pregnancy, Pregnant, or Postpartum During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Rasmussen SA, Jamieson DJ (2020), JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association) vol 324, no 2, 14 July 2020, pp 190-191

Discusses the effects of COVID-19 on pregnancy and the risk of intrauterine transmission to the neonate. Provides an overview of guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other organisations, including the use of early epidural analgesia, adequate hygiene and face masks when breastfeeding, and the temporary separation of mothers and newborns. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2020.8883>

20200731-6*

The negative impact of COVID-19 on contraception and sexual and reproductive health: Could immediate postpartum

LARCs be the solution?. Makins A, Arulkumaran, on behalf of the FIGO Contraception and Family Planning Committee (2020), International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics vol 150, no 2, August 2020, pp 141-143

Editorial on the benefits of postpartum long-acting reversible contraception during the COVID-19 outbreak. The immediate postpartum period may be the only opportunity for health care providers to discuss contraception with women during the pandemic. The copper IUD is highlighted as the most appropriate option as it is cost-effective for those in low- and middle-income countries. (LDO)

20200731-4*

Postnatal care for women with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 [Version 1.1]. Royal College of Midwives (2020), London: RCM 22 May 2020, 4 pages

Briefing paper from the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) for health care professionals caring for women and their babies in cases of suspected or confirmed COVID-19, in the immediate and early postnatal period. (JSM)

Full URL: https://www.rcm.org.uk/media/4097/briefing-no-9-postnatal_clinical_advice_with-covid_220520.pdf

20200731-3*

Clinical briefing: Postnatal care for women without suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and living in a symptom free household [Reviewed September 2021]. Royal College of Midwives (2020), London: RCM 29 May 2020. 4 pages

Briefing paper from the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) for health care professionals caring for women and their babies in cases where no symptoms of coronavirus are present, in the immediate and early postnatal period during the current COVID-19 pandemic. (JSM)

Full URL: <https://www.rcm.org.uk/media/5455/cb-postnatal-care-for-women-without-suspected-or-confirmed-covid.pdf>

20200729-5*

Pregnancy, Birth, and Breastfeeding with Covid-19. Smith CK (2020), Midwifery Today no 134, Summer 2020

Provides an overview of existing guidelines on pregnancy, labour, the postpartum period and breastfeeding during the COVID-19 pandemic. Includes guidelines from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). (LDO)

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20200723-13*

Breastfeeding: Coronavirus [written answer]. House of Commons (2020), Hansard Written question 74646, 15 July 2020

Jo Churchill responds to a written question asked by Alison Thewliss to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, regarding the date that breastfeeding support groups will be permitted to restart as COVID-19 lockdown restrictions are eased. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-07-15/74646/>

20200723-12*

Parental Leave and Parental Pay: Coronavirus [written answer]. House of Commons (2020), Hansard Written question 72851, 13 July 2020

Paul Scully responds to a written question asked by Mrs Sharon Hodgson to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, regarding if he will to introduce neonatal (a) leave and (b) pay for families affected by COVID-19. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-07-13/72851/>

20200722-89*

Maintaining certainty in the most uncertain of times. Dethier D, Abernathy A (2020), Birth vol 47, no 3, September 2020, pp 257-258

Personal experience of a physician caring for a mother in the early postnatal period during the COVID-19 pandemic. Discusses the disproportionate effect of the virus on marginalised women, universal testing at admission to the labour and delivery ward, and the separation of the mother and newborn after birth. (LDO)

20200720-9*

Maternal mortality among women with coronavirus disease 2019 admitted to the intensive care unit. Blitz MJ, Rochelson B, Minkoff H, et al (2020), American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology (AJOG) vol 223, no 4, October 2020, pp 595-599.e5

Research letter discussing the rate of maternal death among pregnant and postpartum women with COVID-19 admitted to intensive care units in the New York area. Out of 70 patients classified as having severe disease, 19% were admitted to intensive care units and 15% of those died. Half of the patients admitted to intensive care units had no baseline comorbidities and most were older, multiparous and from minority ethnic groups. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajog.2020.06.020>

20200716-32*

From the trenches: inpatient management of coronavirus disease 2019 in pregnancy. Vega M, Hughes F, Bernstein PS, et al (2020), American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology MFM vol 2, no 3, suppl, August 2020, 100154

The novel coronavirus disease 2019 caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 has become a pandemic. It has quickly swept across the globe, leaving many clinicians to care for infected patients with limited information about the disease and best practices for care. Our goal is to share our experiences of caring for pregnant and postpartum women with novel coronavirus disease 2019 in New York, which is the coronavirus disease 2019 epicenter in the United States, and review current guidelines. We offer a guide, focusing on inpatient management, including testing policies, admission criteria, medical management, care for the decompensating patient, and practical tips for inpatient antepartum service management. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajogmf.2020.100154>

20200714-3*

Severe maternal morbidity and mortality associated with COVID-19: The risk should not be downplayed. Westgren M,

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Editorial on the increased risks of maternal morbidity and mortality during the COVID-19 pandemic. Suggests that the risks of severe disease in pregnant women cannot be properly determined without analysing large-scale population-based data from several countries. (LDO)

20200713-8*

Maternal postnatal health during the COVID-19 pandemic: Vigilance is needed. Bick D, Cheyne H, Chang Y-S, et al (2020), Midwifery vol 88, September 2020, 102781

Editorial on the impact of COVID-19 on women during pregnancy and the postnatal period. The authors argue that more attention should be given to maternal morbidity following birth in restructured maternity systems during the pandemic. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.midw.2020.102781>

20200713-7*

The impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on maternity care in Europe. Coxon K, Turienzo CF, Kweekel L, et al (2020), Midwifery vol 88, September 2020, 102779

Editorial on the impact of COVID-19 on maternity care in Europe and the different responses among European countries. Discusses the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and changes to the provision of maternity services in the antenatal, perinatal and postnatal periods. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.midw.2020.102779>

20200707-11*

Coronavirus (COVID-19) infection in pregnancy: Information for healthcare professionals [Version 11] [Superseded by Version 12, 14 October 2020]. Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Royal College of Midwives, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, et al (2020), Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) 24 July 2020. 68 pages

NB: This version has been superseded by Version 12, 14 October 2020]

Guidance for healthcare professionals on Coronavirus (COVID-19) infection in pregnancy, published by the RCOG, Royal College of Midwives, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, Public Health England and Health Protection Scotland. The guidance, which will be updated on a regular basis, covers: epidemiology; transmission; effect of COVID-19 on pregnant women; effect of COVID-19 on the fetus; travel advice for pregnant women; advice for women who may have been exposed; diagnosis; advice for women who have been advised to self-isolate; management of pregnant women with confirmed COVID-19; postnatal management: neonatal care and infant feeding; admissions flowchart; information for women and their families. (Publisher). [This version of the guidance has now been superseded by Version 12:

<https://www.rcm.org.uk/media/4383/2020-10-14-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-in-pregnancy-v12.pdf>]

Full URL: <https://www.rcm.org.uk/media/4181/2020-07-24-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-in-pregnancyv11.pdf>

20200706-45*

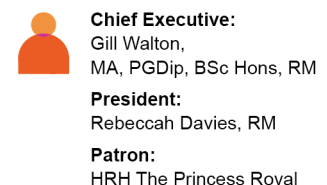
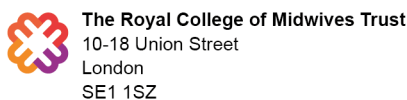
Guidance for antenatal and postnatal services in the evolving coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Information for healthcare professionals. Version 2.1. Royal College of Midwives, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (2020), London: RCOG 19 June 2020. 17 pages

This guidance is for antenatal and postnatal services to support them during the evolving coronavirus pandemic. This document intends to outline which elements of routine antenatal and postnatal care are essential and which could be modified, given national recommendations for social distancing of pregnant women. (Author)

20200706-1*

Getting ready for a visit from your midwife. Royal College of Midwives (2020), London: RCM 2020. 1 page

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20200703-27*

COVID-19 and maternal and infant health: are we getting the balance right? A rapid scoping review. Topalidou A, Thomson G, Downe S (2020), *The Practising Midwife* vol 23, no 7, July/August 2020, pp 36-45

Aim: The purpose of this study was to summarise the evidence of the clinical and psychological impacts of COVID-19 on perinatal women and their infants.

Methods: A rapid scoping review was conducted based on methods proposed by Arksey and O'Malley, and the World Health Organization's (WHO) practical guide for rapid reviews. We searched EMBASE, MEDLINE(R) and MIDIRS.

Results: From 1,319 hits, 26 met the inclusion criteria and were included. Most of the studies (n=22) were from China. The majority of the publications are single case studies or case reports. The findings were analysed narratively, and six broad themes emerged. These were: Vertical transmission and transmission during birth, mother-baby separation, breastmilk, likelihood of infection and clinical picture, analgesia or anaesthesia, and infants and young children. The literature search revealed that there is very little formal evidence on the impact of COVID-19 on pregnant, labouring and postnatal women, or their babies. The clinical evidence to date suggests that pregnant and childbearing women, and their babies, are not at increased risk of either getting infected, or of having severe symptoms or consequences, when compared to the population as a whole, which contrasts with outcomes for this group in other viral pandemics. There is no evidence on the short- and longer-term psychological impacts on childbearing women during COVID-19.

Conclusion: Despite this lack of evidence, many maternity services have been imposing severe restrictions on aspects of maternity care previously acknowledged as vital to optimum health (including birth companionship, breastfeeding, and contact between mother and baby). There is a critical research gap relating to the clinical and psychological consequences of both COVID-19 and of maternity service responses to the pandemic. (Author)

20200701-14*

Pregnancy: Finance [written answer]. House of Commons (2020), Hansard Written question 62387, 22 June 2020

Ms Nadine Dorries responds to a written question asked by Henry Smith to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, regarding whether his Department plans to introduce financial support to cover subsistence costs for parents with a baby receiving neonatal care during the COVID-19 outbreak. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-22/62387/>

20200629-22*

A Postpartum Death Due to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the United States. Vallejo V, Ilagan JG (2020), *Obstetrics & Gynecology* vol 136, no 1, July 2020, pp 52-55

BACKGROUND:

Limited U.S. reports of pregnant women with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) infection describe a few critical cases and no maternal mortality.

CASE:

A 36-year-old patient at 37 weeks of gestation presented with shortness of breath, fever, cough, and sore throat for 1 week. Within 3 hours of admission, she experienced respiratory distress, required intubation, and underwent cesarean delivery and transfer to the intensive care unit. She subsequently decompensated, with multiorgan failure, sepsis, and cardiopulmonary arrest within 36 hours, despite aggressive supportive care and investigational therapies.

CONCLUSION:

A pregnant patient with COVID-19 infection can experience a rapid onset of critical complications that may prove fatal, despite an indolent presentation. The pathogenesis leading to rapid deterioration is unknown. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1097/AOG.0000000000003950>

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20200626-55*

Postnatal care: Coronavirus [written answer]. House of Commons (2020), Hansard Written question 60870, 17 June 2020

Ms Nadine Dorries responds to a written question from Munira Wilson to the Secretary of Health and Social Care, regarding what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the (a) physical health, (b) mental health, and (c) safety of new mothers. (JSM)

Full URL: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-17/60870/>

20200623-19*

General Practitioners: Postnatal Care [written answer]. House of Commons (2020), Hansard Written question 60869, 17 June 2020

Jo Churchill responds to a written question asked by Munira Wilson to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, regarding the assessment his Department has made of the effect of the COVID-19 outbreak on six week postnatal health checks for new mothers at GPs surgeries. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-17/60869/>

20200623-16*

General Practitioners: Postnatal Care [written answer]. House of Commons (2020), Hansard Written question 60871, 17 June 2020

Jo Churchill responds to a written question asked by Munira Wilson to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, regarding guidance to GPs on resuming face-to-face six week postnatal health checks for new mothers. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-17/60871/>

20200623-11*

Postnatal Care: Coronavirus [written answer]. House of Commons (2020), Hansard Written question 60870, 17 June 2020

Ms Nadine Dorries responds to a written question asked by Munira Wilson to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, regarding the assessment his Department has made of the effect of the COVID-19 outbreak on the (a) physical health, (b) mental health, and (c) safety of new mothers. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-17/60870/>

20200619-17*

Preserving and advocating for essential care for women during the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic. Robinson EF, Moulder JK, Zerden ML, et al (2020), American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology (AJOG) vol 223, no 2, August 2020, pp 219-220.e1

The coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic has redefined 'essential care,' and reproductive healthcare has become a frequently targeted and debated topic. As obstetricians and gynecologists, we stand with our patients and others as advocates for women's reproductive health. With the medical and surgical training to provide all aspects of reproductive healthcare, obstetricians and gynecologists are indispensable and uniquely positioned to advocate for the full spectrum of care that our patients need right now. All patients have a right to these services. Contraception and abortion care remain essential, and we need to work at the local, state, and federal levels on policies that preserve these critical services. We must also support policies that will promote expansion of care, including lengthening Medicaid pregnancy and postpartum coverage. Although we continue to see patients, this is the time to engage outside clinical encounters by participating in lobbying and other advocacy efforts to preserve essential services, protecting the health, life, and welfare of our patients during the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic.

(Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajog.2020.05.022>

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20200618-51*

Maternity Services: Coronavirus [written answer]. House of Commons (2020), Hansard Written question 59268, 12 June 2020

Ms Nadine Dorries responds to a written question asked by Olivia Blake to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, regarding the postnatal care procedures he has put in place for people who gave birth during the COVID-19 lockdown; and what assessment he has made of the effect of the COVID-19 outbreak on the provision of postnatal care. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-12/59268/>

20200615-45*

The outbreak of coronavirus disease in China: Risk perceptions, knowledge, and information sources among prenatal and postnatal women. Lee T-Y, Zhong Y, Zhou J, et al (2021), Women and Birth: Journal of the Australian College of Midwives vol 34, no 3, May 2021, pp 212-218

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has created anxiety among members of the public, including all women over the childbirth continuum, who are considered to be at a greater risk of contracting most infectious diseases. Understanding the perspectives of health care consumers on COVID-19 will play a crucial role in the development of effective risk communication strategies. This study aimed to examine COVID-19-related risk perceptions, knowledge, and information sources among prenatal and postnatal Chinese women during the initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods

A cross-sectional survey design was adopted, and a four-section online questionnaire was used to collect data. Using a social media platform, the online survey was administered to 161 participants during the outbreak of COVID-19 in Nanjing, China, in February 2020.

Results

The participants perceived their risk of contracting and dying from COVID-19 to be lower than their risk of contracting influenza, however many of them were worried that they might contract COVID-19. The participants demonstrated adequate knowledge about COVID-19. The three major sources from which they obtained information about COVID-19 were doctors, nurses/midwives, and the television, and they placed a high level of confidence in these sources. There was no significant relationship between the perceived risk of contracting COVID-19 and knowledge about this disease.

Conclusion

The present findings offer valuable insights to healthcare professionals, including midwives, who serve on the frontline and provide care to pregnant women. Although the participants were adequately knowledgeable about COVID-19, they had misunderstood some of the recommendations of the World Health Organisation. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wombi.2020.05.010>

20200609-11*

Maternity Services: Coronavirus [written answer]. House of Commons (2020), Hansard Written question 52002, 1 June 2020

Ms Nadine Dorries responds to a written question asked by Jonathan Ashworth to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, regarding the availability of postnatal care for new parents during the COVID-19 outbreak. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-01/52002/>


20200519-20*

Parental Leave: Coronavirus [written answer]. House of Commons (2020), Hansard Written question 45426, 11 May 2020


Paul Scully responds to a written question asked by Afzal Khan to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, regarding the support his Department provides to workers coming to the end of their statutory (a) maternity and (b) paternity entitlement on returning to work during the COVID-19 outbreak. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-11/45426/>

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20200519-11*

Breast Milk: Coronavirus [written answer]. House of Commons (2020), Hansard Written question 46097, 12 May 2020

Ms Nadine Dorries responds to a written question asked by Alison Thewliss to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, regarding the assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of antibodies in human breast milk in the treatment of COVID-19, as reported in a study by Alisa Fox and colleagues (1). 1. Fox A et al. Evidence of a significant secretory-IgA-dominant SARS-CoV-2 immune response in human milk following recovery from COVID-19. medRxiv, 8 May 2020, online. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.05.04.20089995>. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-12/46097/>

20200515-11*

Postpartum exacerbation of antenatal COVID-19 pneumonia in 3 women. An P, Wood BJ, Li W, et al (2020), Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ) vol 192, no 22, 1 June 2020, pp E603-E606

KEY POINTS • Postpartum exacerbation of coronavirus disease 2019 symptoms may be sudden, within hours of delivery. • Acute clinical deterioration of the condition of women with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) infection who have recently given birth may be associated with changes in findings on chest computed tomography. • Delayed hospital discharge or close community follow-up should be considered for women with SARS-CoV-2 infection who have recently given birth. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.200553>

20200514-72*

Breastfeeding: Donors [written answer]. House of Commons (2020), Hansard Written question 37944, 20 April 2020

Jo Churchill responds to a written question asked by Daisy Cooper to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, regarding additional funding to scale up milk banks to help meet demand for donor milk during the COVID-19 outbreak. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-20/37944/>

20200506-87*

Parental Leave: Coronavirus [written answer]. House of Commons (2020), Hansard Written question 41574, 28 April 2020

Paul Scully responds to a written question from Ben Lake to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy regarding what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of extending (a) maternity and (b) paternity leave in response to the covid-19 outbreak and associated social distancing guidance. (MB)


Full URL: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-28/41574/>

20200427-24*


Coronavirus disease 2019 infection among asymptomatic and symptomatic pregnant women: two weeks of confirmed presentations to an affiliated pair of New York City hospitals. Breslin N, Baptiste C, Gyamfi-Bannerman C, et al (2020), American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology MFM vol 2, no 2, suppl, May 2020, 100118

The novel coronavirus 2019, or COVID-19, infection has rapidly spread through the New York metropolitan area since the first reported case in the state on March 1, 2020. New York currently represents an epicenter for COVID-19 infection in the United States, with 84,735 cases reported as of April 2, 2020. We previously presented an early experience with seven COVID-positive patients in pregnancy, including two women who were diagnosed with COVID-19 following an asymptomatic initial presentation. We now describe a series of 43 test-confirmed cases of COVID-19 presenting to a pair of affiliated New York City hospitals over two weeks from March 13 to 27, 2020. Fourteen (32.6%) patients presented without any COVID-associated viral symptoms, and were identified either after developing

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symptoms during admission or following the implementation of universal testing for all obstetrical admissions on March 22. Of these, 10/14 (71.4%) developed symptoms or signs of COVID-19 infection over the course of their delivery admission or early after postpartum discharge. Of the other 29 (67.4%) patients who presented with symptomatic COVID-19 infection, three women ultimately required antenatal admission for viral symptoms, and an additional patient represented six days postpartum after a successful labor induction with worsening respiratory status that required oxygen supplementation. There were no confirmed cases of COVID-19 detected in neonates upon initial testing on the first day of life. Applying COVID-19 disease severity characteristics as described by Wu et al, 37 (86%) women possessed mild disease, four (9.3%) exhibited severe disease, and two (4.7%) developed critical disease; these percentages are similar to those described for non-pregnant adults with COVID-19 infections (about 80% mild, 15% severe, and 5% critical disease). (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajogmf.2020.100118>

20200422-43*

SOGC Committee Opinion - COVID-19 in Pregnancy. Elwood C, Boucoiran I, VanSchalkwyk J, et al (2020), JOGC [Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada] 31 March 2020, online

Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) guidelines on COVID-19 in pregnancy. Includes recommendations on the antepartum, intrapartum and postpartum periods. Discusses appointments, protective equipment, fetal monitoring, caesarean delivery, skin-to-skin contact and breastfeeding. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jogc.2020.03.012>

20200421-3*

Provision of contraception by maternity services after childbirth during the Covid-19 outbreak. Faculty of Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare, Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists (2020), London: FSRH 9 April 2020

Guidance on the provision of contraception after childbirth during the Covid-19 pandemic. Recommends that long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARC) should continue to be offered and should be inserted prior to discharge from maternity services. In cases where LARC is unsuitable, women should be given a 6-12 month supply of desogestrel progestogen-only pill (POP) prior to discharge. Also discusses other contraceptive methods including intrauterine contraception, combined hormonal contraception and lactational amenorrhoea. (LDO)

Full URL: <https://www.fsrh.org/standards-and-guidance/documents/fsrh-ceu-provision-of-contraception-by-maternity-services-after/>

20200417-6

A new normal for health visiting. Forbes L (2020), Journal of Health Visiting vol 8, no 4, April 2020

In this time of focus on public health, what role will community based workers play? How will we carry on our professional duties in a time of social distancing? (Author)

20200417-5

Newly qualified health visitor: COVID-19 - a public health crisis. Boddy B (2020), Journal of Health Visiting vol 8, no 4, April 2020

Bethany Boddy explores the fast-changing public health emergency of COVID-19 and the health visitor response. (Author)

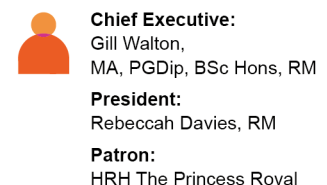
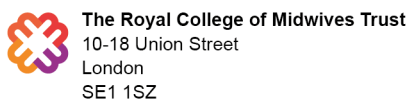
20200414-6*

Coronavirus and your maternity care. AIMS (2020), Association for Improvements in Maternity Services (AIMS) 11 April 2020

Information from the Association for Improvements in the Maternity Services (AIMS) for pregnant women concerned about their maternity care in the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. (JSM)

Full URL: <https://www.aims.org.uk/information/item/coronavirus>

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20200414-1*

Clinical Features and Outcomes of Pregnant Women Suspected of Coronavirus Disease 2019. Yang H, Sun G, Tang F, et al (2020), Journal of Infection vol 81, no 1, July 2020, pp E40-E44

Background

2019 novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has become a worldwide pandemic. Under such circumstance pregnant women are also affected significantly.

Objective

This study aims to observe the clinical features and outcomes of pregnant women who have been confirmed with COVID-19.

Methods

The research objects were 55 cases of suspected COVID-19 pregnant women who gave a birth from Jan 20th 2020 to Mar 5th 2020 in our hospital-a big birth center delivering about 30,000 babies in the last 3 years. These cases were subjected to pulmonary CT scan and routine blood test, manifested symptoms of fever, cough, chest tightness or gastrointestinal symptoms. They were admitted to an isolated suite, with clinical features and newborn babies being carefully observed. Among the 55 cases, 13 patients were assigned into the confirmed COVID-19 group for being tested positive severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2(SARS-CoV-2) via maternal throat swab test, and the other 42 patients were assigned into the control group for being ruled out COVID-19 pneumonia based on new coronavirus pneumonia prevention and control program(the 7th edition).

Results

There were 2 fever patients during the prenatal period and 8 fever patients during the postpartum period in the confirmed COVID-19 group. In contrast, there were 11 prenatal fever patients and 20 postpartum fever patients in the control group ($p>0.05$). Among 55 cases, only 2 case had cough in the confirmed group. The imaging of pulmonary CT scan showed ground-glass opacity (46.2%, 6/13), patch-like shadows(38.5%, 5/13), fiber shadow(23.1%, 3/13), pleural effusion (38.5%, 5/13)and pleural thickening(7.7%, 1/13), and there was no statistical difference between the confirmed COVID-19 group and the control group ($p>0.05$). During the prenatal and postpartum period, there was no difference in the count of WBC, Neutrophils and Lymphocyte, the ratio of Neutrophils and Lymphocyte and the level of CRP between the confirmed COVID-19 group and the control group($p<0.05$). 20 babies (from confirmed mother and from normal mother) were subjected to SARS-CoV-2 examination by throat swab samples in 24 hours after birth and no case was tested positive.

Conclusion

The clinical symptoms and laboratory indicators are not obvious for asymptomatic and mild COVID-19 pregnant women. Pulmonary CT scan plus blood routine examination are more suitable for finding pregnancy women with asymptomatic or mild COVID-19 infection, and can be used screening COVID-19 pregnant women in the outbreak area of COVID-19 infection. (Author)

Full URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jinf.2020.04.003>

20200402-32*

Pregnancy and coronavirus: information for pregnant women and new mums. Anon (2020), Tommy's Pregnancy Hub 1 April 2020

Consumer information from Tommy's presented in a question and answer format, aimed at pregnant women and new mothers, based on the latest guidance on coronavirus (COVID-19), from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG). (JSM)

Full URL: <https://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/im-pregnant/pregnancy-and-coronavirus-information-pregnant-women-and-new-mums>

20200331-7*

Guidance for antenatal and postnatal services in the evolving coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Version 1. [Last updated 24 April 2020]. Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Royal College of Midwives (2020), Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) 30 March 2020

This guidance is for antenatal and postnatal services to support them during the evolving coronavirus pandemic. This

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document intends to outline which elements of routine antenatal and postnatal care are essential and which could be modified, given national recommendations for social distancing of pregnant women. (Publisher)

20200327-12*

Solo childbirth, halted fertility treatments: women's healthcare takes hit from coronavirus. Bernstein S, Becker A (2020), World News 26 March 2020

Reports the ways in which the global coronavirus pandemic is affecting the care of women in the United States, including; giving birth without their partner being present; restrictive access to reproductive healthcare and having to stay at home with an abusive partner. (JSM)

Full URL: <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-usa-women/solo-childbirth-halted-fertility-treatments-womens-health-care-takes-hit-from-coronavirus-idUKKBN21D3NQ>

20200327-1*

Coronavirus: Infant Foods [written answer]. House of Commons (2020), Hansard Written question 30064, 16 March 2020

Jo Churchill responds to a written question asked by Alison Thewliss to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, regarding what plans he has to ensure the maintenance of the supply of infant formula during the covid-19 outbreak. (MB)

Full URL: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-03-16/30064/>

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