



GUIDELINES AND RESEARCH UPDATES



TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS:

D1. Holding gatherings during the COVID-19 pandemic: Policy brief 2021 (WHO, 3 August) [[LINK](#)]

- This policy brief presents WHO's position on, and guidance in relation to, holding gatherings during the COVID-19 pandemic. The information is derived from WHO publications and on a review of evidence extracted from the scientific literature.

D2. Considerations for health governance: strengthening institutional capacity and connectedness through COVID-19 responses (WHO, 5 August) [[LINK](#)]

- This document suggests actions to work together to strengthen legal frameworks to support leadership and governance for the COVID-19 response and to achieve Universal Health Coverage beyond the pandemic.

D3. Guidance for surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 variants: Interim guidance, 9 August 2021 (WHO, 9 August) [[LINK](#)]

- This document describes a minimum set of surveillance activities recommended at the national level to detect and monitor the relative prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 variants and outline a set of activities for the characterization and assessment of risk posed by these variants.

D4. Interim recommendations for use of the ChAdOx1-S [recombinant] vaccine against COVID-19 (AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine AZD1222 Vaxzevria™, SII COVISHIELD™) (WHO, 30 July) [[LINK](#)]

- These interim recommendations refer to a generic group of COVID-19 Vaccine (ChAdOx1-S [recombinant]) which all rely on the AstraZeneca core clinical data for regulatory evaluation for AZD1222 and are authorized under the emergency use listing procedure by WHO.

D5. Training on handling, storing and transporting Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine COMIRNATY® (Tozinameran) (WHO, 4 August) [[LINK](#)]

- This document outlines the training modules on good cold chain planning, strong management of vaccine supply, logistics and distribution, including installation and effective monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the storage equipment and infrastructure pertaining to Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine COMIRNATY® (Tozinameran). This is the only COVID-19 vaccine that should be stored and transported at -60°C to -86°C ultra-low temperature (ULT) conditions.

D6. Operational Considerations for Community Isolation Centers (CICs) for COVID-19 in Low-Resource Settings (CDC, 9 August) [[LINK](#)]

- This document gives operational considerations for ministries of health, and other partners on establishing and operating CICs for people with suspected or laboratory-confirmed COVID-19. The guidance in this document primarily applies to low-resource settings.

D7. Testing Strategies for SARS-CoV-2 (CDC, 13 August) [[LINK](#)]

- This guidance note describes and compares different types of testing strategies for SARS-CoV-2, including their intended use and applications, regulatory requirements, and reporting requirements. This document is intended for those who offer and perform SARS-CoV-2 testing.

JOURNAL ARTICLES

J1. Vaccine effectiveness against SARS-CoV-2 transmission and infections among household and other close contacts of confirmed cases, the Netherlands, February to May 2021 (Eurosurveillance, 5 August) [[LINK](#)]

- The investigation estimated the vaccine effectiveness against transmission (VET) and the vaccine effectiveness against infection (VE) among household and other close contacts of confirmed cases of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) infection in the Netherlands. The findings suggest that the COVID-19 vaccines not only protect the vaccinee against SARS-CoV-2 infection, but also offer protection against transmission to close contacts after completing the full schedule.

J2. Effectiveness of Covid-19 Vaccines against the B.1.617.2 (Delta) Variant (New England Journal of Medicine, 12 August) [[LINK](#)]

- This study used a test-negative case-control design to estimate the effectiveness of vaccination against symptomatic disease caused by the delta variant. The findings conclude that effectiveness after one dose of vaccine (BNT162b2 or ChAdOx1 nCoV-19) was notably lower among persons with the delta variant (30.7%; 95% confidence interval (CI), 25.2 to 35.7) than among those with the alpha variant (48.7%; 95% CI, 45.5 to 51.7); the results were similar for both vaccines.

J3. SARS-CoV-2 infection and mortality during the first epidemic wave in Madurai, south India: a prospective, active surveillance study (The Lancet Infectious Disease, 13 August) [[LINK](#)]

- This study aimed to assess predictors of infection and mortality within an active surveillance study, and to probe the completeness of case and mortality surveillance. The findings highlight equal risk of asymptomatic infection among children, teenagers, and working-age adults, and increasing risk of infection and death associated with older age and comorbidities.

J4. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 and Pregnancy Outcomes According to Gestational Age at Time of Infection (CDC- Emerging Infectious Diseases, 5 August) [[LINK](#)]

- This is an international multicenter retrospective cohort study, PregOuTCOV, to examine the effect of gestational age at time of infection with SARS-CoV-2 on obstetric and neonatal outcomes. The findings highlight the prevalence of adverse obstetric and neonatal outcomes in women infected with SARS-CoV-2 relative to the timing of infection during pregnancy. SARS-CoV-2-positive patients have an increased incidence of adverse obstetric and neonatal outcomes. It appears that pregnant women are more susceptible to the adverse effects of SARS-CoV-2 infection during the late second and early third trimesters.

J5. Illness duration and symptom profile in symptomatic UK school-aged children tested for SARS-CoV-2 (The Lancet- Child & Adolescent Health, 3 August) [[LINK](#)]

- The study aimed to determine illness duration and characteristics in symptomatic UK school-aged children tested for SARS-CoV-2 using data from the COVID Symptom Study, one of the largest UK citizen participatory epidemiological studies to date. The findings demonstrate that COVID-19 in children is usually of short duration with low symptom burden, however some children with COVID-19 experience prolonged illness duration.

J6. An outbreak caused by the SARS-CoV-2 Delta variant (B.1.617.2) in a secondary care hospital in Finland, May 2021 (Eurosurveillance, 29 July) [[LINK](#)]

- The study describes an outbreak caused by the Delta variant that originated from one inpatient in a secondary care hospital and spread within the hospital and to three primary care facilities; it also highlights experiences gained while controlling it. The findings highlighted that despite full vaccination and universal masking of HCW, breakthrough infections by the Delta variant via symptomatic and asymptomatic HCW occurred, causing nosocomial infections.

J7. Clinical features of vaccine-induced immune thrombocytopenia and thrombosis (New England Journal of Medicine, 11 August) [[LINK](#)]

- This is a prospective cohort study involving patients with suspected Vaccine-induced immune thrombocytopenia and thrombosis (VITT) who presented to hospitals in the United Kingdom between March 22 and June 6, 2021. The findings suggest that high mortality associated with VITT was highest among patients with a low platelet count and intracranial hemorrhage.
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