

How many COVID-19 related deaths were there among care home residents between 2020-2023?

SUMMARY

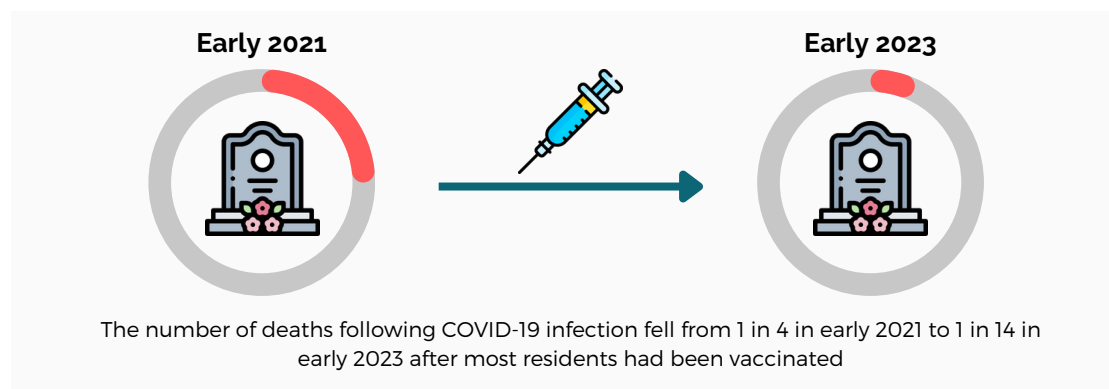
Care homes in England had high numbers of COVID-19 infections and related deaths early in the pandemic before COVID-19 vaccines were widely available. This study looked at how many people in care homes died because of COVID-19 between October 2020 to March 2023.

We looked at over 26,000 residents aged 65 or older in over 300 care homes that took part in the VIVALDI study. We checked how many people died or were hospitalised for COVID-19 in each three-month period and calculated the chances of these events happening after a positive COVID-19 test.

KEY FINDINGS

Around a third of residents had at least one positive COVID-19 test. The virus had peaks of infection in early 2021 when the Alpha variant was spreading quickly, and again in early 2022 with the Omicron variant. COVID-19 vaccinations were brought in from December 2020 onwards.

Deaths related to COVID-19 were highest in early 2021 and early 2022. But even though there were more infections in early 2022, the death rate was lower compared to early 2021, suggesting that fewer people died from the virus despite more people getting infected.



While fewer deaths overall were linked to COVID-19 over time, the severity of the virus for older people in care homes remained at a similar level to flu with around 7% of those infected dying in 2022 and early 2023.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the study showed that the risk of dying from COVID-19 decreased over time, largely because of the high uptake of vaccination against the virus. The study also noted that as policies and virus variants changed, so did the impact on the number of deaths, showing the importance of continuously monitoring and adapting health measures. Therefore, keeping track of hospital admissions and deaths after COVID-19 and other infections in care homes could help in deciding whether we need extra measures to stop diseases from spreading.

GLOSSARY

Care Home

A residential facility for people who need extra help with looking after themselves.

Care Home Resident

A person who lives in a care home.

COVID-19

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a highly contagious respiratory infection caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

COVID-19 Related Death

Death within 28 days of a positive swab test for COVID-19.

Infection

The invasion of the body by an infectious agent like bacteria or a virus.

Older Adult

A person aged 65 years and over.

Vaccine

A product which stimulates a person's immune system to protect them from a specific disease.

Variant

A variation of a virus that has its own unique genetic makeup, but isn't different enough to be considered a completely separate type of virus.

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READ THE FULL REPORT (PUBLISHED JANUARY 2024)

COVID-19-related mortality and hospital admissions in the VIVALDI study cohort: October 2020 to March 2023
[https://www.journalofhospitalinfection.com/article/S0195-6701\(23\)00357-2/fulltext](https://www.journalofhospitalinfection.com/article/S0195-6701(23)00357-2/fulltext)