



Royal College of
General Practitioners
Research & Surveillance Centre

RCGP Research & Surveillance Centre
Eagle House, Walton Well Rd, Oxford
OX26ED

Telephone: 01483 682758

practiceenquiries@phc.ox.ac.uk

<https://orchid.phc.ox.ac.uk>

1st December 2020

RCGP RSC Newsletter: 1st December 2020

1. *Thanks to Practices for their Fantastic Support through 2020 – exciting new studies and extended surveillance*
2. *New Website, New Starters*
3. *Virology sampling over the festive period*
4. *New featured publications*
5. *New Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Study for Virology Practices*

Dear RCGP RSC network member,

1. Thanks to Practices for their Fantastic Support through 2020

The value of what we do in the RSC has never been greater. Thanks to all for sharing data and for participating in surveillance, quality improvement and research. We are being asked to extend our surveillance further. Many practices may have had invitations about this already.

- *We want to recruit additional virology sampling practices:* Please can every practice involved in our virology sampling scheme take a few more? If your practice is not involved but would like to be, do get in touch! We are looking for 100 more sites.
- *We are looking to recruit 100 more serology sampling practices:* If you are in a region where our sampling levels are lower such as London or the Midlands we would like to recruit your practice, please! All this involves is taking an additional blood sample when a patient attends for a blood test for any reason. We want to collect 5,000 tests between now and the date COVID vaccination starts, with a matched sample 3 to 6 months after. Please find further information [here](#).
- *New areas of surveillance:* New projects starting in February: Oral swabs from children with a rash and fever – could it be measles? Pregnancy outcomes from patients exposed to chicken pox. More details before Christmas!

2. New Website and New Starters

In line with the move to Oxford and the launch of the ORCHID platform we now have a new website. You can now find us at <https://orchid.phc.ox.ac.uk/> for all of your study information, material requests and practice dashboards.

We would also like to welcome our three new starters into the Practice Liaison team, Jack Macartney, Lizzy Button and Helen Bohan. They have shown themselves to be fantastic additions to the team in the short time they've been with us and they are looking forward to getting to know all of you and supporting you across your projects.

3. Virology sampling over the festive period.

We are asking all practices taking part in our virology surveillance or any of our swabbing-based studies such as PRINCIPLE or RAPTOR to increase their sampling over the winter period.

We would like to remind practices that patients can take part in both local COVID testing and surveillance. Our swabs are tested for not only COVID19 but also influenza and RSV. Previous surveillance has shown that RSV tends to peak around the Christmas period so it's vital that we continue to sample in large numbers. *A second swab for surveillance (if your patient has already done a Pillar 2/drive-through test) is never a waste!*

With ever changing lockdown restrictions, we would encourage you to use this time to utilise the new TakeaTest voucher codes which are issued to practices on a weekly basis. These codes will allow patients to order an at home testing kit. We hope this will minimise unnecessary contact with suspected COVID19 cases to keep our practice staff and communities safe over the festive period.

Please find further information [here](#). Materials can be ordered through the form on our website.

4. Research using RCGP RSC data – new featured publications

Household presentation of influenza and acute respiratory illnesses to a primary care sentinel network: retrospective database studies (2013–2018).

Direct observation of the household spread of influenza and respiratory infections is limited; much of our understanding comes from mathematical models. The study aims to determine household incidence of influenza-like illness (ILI), lower (LRTI) and upper (URTI) respiratory infections within a primary care routine data and identify factors associated with the diseases' incidence. Read more [here](#).

COVID-19 Surveillance in a Primary Care Sentinel Network: In-Pandemic Development of an Application Ontology

Creating an ontology for COVID-19 surveillance should help ensure transparency and consistency. Ontologies formalize conceptualizations at either the domain or application level. Application ontologies cross domains and are specified through testable use cases. Our use case was an extension of the role of the Oxford Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) Research and Surveillance Centre (RSC) to monitor the current pandemic and become an in-pandemic research platform. Read more [here](#).

5. New Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Study for Virology Practices - Expressions of Interest Welcome

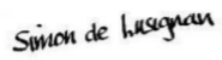
The RCGP RSC will shortly be starting a new study to understand the burden of RSV amongst children in primary care.

RSV is associated with a high rate of illness in children aged 5 years and under, and it is important to understand which children develop symptoms requiring further healthcare usage including primary care and to identify which groups are at risk of more severe RSV infection requiring hospitalization or intensive care. This includes extracting information from routinely collected swabs taken from children with respiratory symptoms as part of national surveillance and performing two telephone surveys with parents in the month following their child's presentation in primary care.

This study is funded and sponsored by Nivel, the Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research and will include equivalent studies in Italy and the Netherlands for comparison. We will shortly be contacting virology practices in the RCGP RSC network for expressions of interest.

We hope the next year will bring as many opportunities for collaboration within the network. We can't thank you enough for all you and your teams have contributed at such a difficult time. Wishing you a happy and healthy holidays from all at the Oxford-RCGP RSC.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simon de Lusignan". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Simon de Lusignan

On behalf of the Oxford-RCGP RSC Team

Professor of Primary Care and Clinical Informatics

Director, RCGP RSC