The Covid-19 Pivot

Optimizing care of the elderly and long-term care residents during the pandemic

Elise Levinoff, MD FRCP(C)
Andrea Moser, MD MSc CCFP CCPE
Michael Schwandt, MD MPH CCFP FRCPC
Allan Grill, MD CCFP(COE) MPH FCFP CCPE
Disclosure of Financial Support

**Faculty/Speaker: Elise Levinoff**
- Associate member of the Department of Medicine at the Jewish General Hospital

**Faculty/Speaker: Andrea Moser**
- Co-Lead Antibiotics Wisely in Long-term Care, Choosing Wisely Canada

**Faculty/Speaker: Michael Schwandt**
- Board Member for Basics For Health
- Research Grant Team Member for the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research

**Faculty/Speaker: Allan Grill**
- Relationship with financial sponsors:
  - Physician Advisor for the College of Family Physicians of Canada.
  - Chief of Family Medicine, Markham Stouffville Hospital
  - Primary Care Provincial Medical Lead for CCO – Ontario Renal Network
  - Member of the Canadian Drug Expert Committee for the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health
  - Speaker for the 2019 Annual Scientific Assembly, OCFP
  - Member of the Scientific Planning Committee, Ontario Lung Association
Mitigating Potential Bias

This program has not received financial or in-kind support.

The questions posed in today’s webinar were developed by staff from the CFPC.

Recommendations are based on the evolving evidence and situation with the COVID-19 pandemic.
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Learning Objectives

After this webinar presentation, the participant will be able to:

• Identify factors that make elderly patients in LTC settings more vulnerable to infections with COVID-19.

• Describe infection prevention & control protocols designed for LTC homes to prevent an outbreak and minimize the spread of infection.

• Explore the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health and well-being of elderly residents, physicians and staff associated with LTC homes.

• Recognize the importance of advance care planning and goals of care discussions to guide treatment decisions among frail elderly patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.
**Recommendations for staff:**
- Restrict staff to essential workers (e.g. basic personal care, phlebotomy)
- Staff to work in only one LTC facility during the pandemic*
- **Protection:**
  - All staff to wear masks
  - Staff training for proper use of PPE, hand hygiene, physical distancing in the workplace
- **Staff screening and illness:**
  - Daily temperature check
  - Test all symptomatic staff suspected of COVID-19 infection
  - Encourage staff to report if they are feeling unwell and to stay home/self-isolate
- **Patient care:**
  - Review site’s ability to isolate residents suspected of infection
  - Post clear signage to indicate which patients are on isolation
  - Organize staff to work only with suspect/confirmed residents with COVID-19 or non-infected residents; not both
  - Minimize # of visits to patient by clustering tasks
- Regular communication with staff (e.g. team huddles)
- Liaise with local hospital when LTC residents need hospitalization and how the process of transfer will work

**Recommendations for patients:**
- Isolate symptomatic patients and have them tested for COVID-19
- Test all incoming patients prior to transfer to LTC if coming from another HC facility; isolate for 14 days
- Restrict patients to their rooms – including dining
- Cancel non-essential outings
- Essential group activities should be restricted to a single unit
- Ensure immunizations are up to date (influenza, pneumonia)

**Recommendations for visitors:**
- Restrict all visitors (unless patient is receiving end of life care)
- Limit entry points to the building
- Conduct screening at entrances and provide masks

**Environmental considerations:**
- Regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces
- Appropriate number and placement of alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers (e.g. in hallways, at entry to each resident’s room and at points of care, communal areas)
- Post signage reminding everyone about physical distancing and hand hygiene
- Materials (e.g. craft supplies, books, etc.) should not be shared unless cleaned and disinfected

* may not extend to all physicians depending on their local hospital policies.
Preventing Staff Burnout

Staffing Considerations

- Alternate assignments
- Routine acknowledgement of the important role staff plays in LTC homes
- Mental health support program
- Mandatory days off
- Partner inexperienced workers with more experienced colleagues.
- Implement flexible schedules for workers who are directly impacted or have a family member affected by a stressful event.
- Buddy system
- Team meets/huddles (with physical distancing) at the start/end of shifts to share and prepare.

Personal

- Encourage rest and respite during work or between shifts; regular meals with healthy food; engage in physical activity; stay in contact with family and friends
- Minimize watching, reading or listening to news about COVID-19 that causes anxiety or distress
- Seek information only from trusted sources
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The COVID-19 Pivot:
Acute management in the emergency department and ongoing hospital care

May 7, 2020 at 12 p.m. (ET):

The COVID-19 Pivot: PEER’s review of the evidence for COVID-19

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Resources:

The CFP journal recently published this blog on Elderly and LTC homes: https://www.cfp.ca/news/2020/04/17/04-17

References

Slide 6:

Slide 7:
https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf