



Weekly update

Through our research, community outreach and expert commentary, the University of Birmingham is taking an active role in the fightback against COVID-19. You can read our latest statements and follow our research updates at www.birmingham.ac.uk/coronavirus.

Through Birmingham Health Partners, a strategic alliance between the University and two NHS Foundation Trusts, we are working to support frontline healthcare professionals. For the latest updates visit their [website](#).

Research

'Unpaid' carers going hungry during COVID lockdown says study

Unpaid carers are twice as likely as the general public to have relied on a food bank during the Covid-19 pandemic says a new study.



106,000 adults in the UK currently caring for someone outside of their household who is older, disabled or seriously ill, have used a foodbank.

The research, carried out by the Universities of Birmingham and Sheffield in partnership with charity Carers UK, adds to an already worrying picture of unpaid carers facing intolerable pressures during the Covid-19 pandemic.

It shows that 106,000 adults in the UK currently caring for someone outside of their household who is older, disabled or seriously ill, have used a foodbank.

The analysis also reveals that, among this group of unpaid carers, almost 229,000 have had someone in

their household go hungry during lockdown. Younger carers were more likely to live in a household with someone who experienced hunger; this affected 55,153 (12.2%) of those aged 17-30, compared with 9,294 (0.7%) carers aged 66 or older.

Research carried out by Carers UK in April showed that 70% of people caring for more than 50 hours a week are providing even more care during the pandemic, and 55% told the charity they feel overwhelmed managing their caring responsibilities and are worried about the weeks ahead. 81% of carers had to spend more money on necessities such as food and household bills. ([More information](#))

Clinical research updates

Researchers from across Birmingham Health Partners are collaborating to analyse and summarise the latest COVID-19 literature to help inform clinical colleagues. The latest updates provide an analysis of paediatrics statistics and also the latest understanding of the viral biology – including genetics, infection pathway, viral loads and serology.

(Paediatrics - [more information](#))

(Viral biology - [more information](#))

Community

Experts support maternal health professionals during COVID-19 pandemic

Health professionals around the globe can join a series of online expert workshops aimed at improving the care of pregnant women during the current COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in low- and middle- income countries.

Experts at the University of Birmingham joined the international women's health charity Elly to launch the first in the free webinar series on Saturday 20 June. The launch webinar on Antenatal Care during the COVID-19 pandemic offered insights into antenatal care and COVID-19 management in pregnancy underpinned by the latest evidence. It will be followed by further workshops on:

- Intrapartum Care during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Postnatal and neonatal Care during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Women's Health Research during the COVID-19 pandemic

[\(More information\)](#)

Student volunteering stories

Many of our students have volunteered to help their local community or emergency during the COVID-19 pandemic. You can read some of their stories by following the links below:

- [My placement experience on a COVID ward at the Children's Hospital](#) | Sarah Cribben | Child's Nursing Student
- [Assisting in the fight against COVID-19; my experience on a liver ward](#) | Uchenna Odunukwe | Medical Student
- [My experience volunteering at Birmingham City Eye Hospital](#) | Neha Mehta | Dentistry Student
- [My experience of working in R&D](#) | Lylah Irshad | Medical Student
- [My volunteer story at Pyramid Pharmacy](#) | Aneesa Ahmed | Pharmacy Student
- [My experience as a 2020 response volunteer](#) | Delan Hadad | Dentistry Student

Students in the Helping Hands volunteer group have also produced a video with updates on how their members have been supporting key workers and vulnerable people. [\(More information\)](#)

Comment

All work and no play? Why children need play during Covid-19

Dr Anita Soni from the School of Education and Oliver Wilson, Headteacher of Woodhouse Primary School and Birmingham alumnus, look at the impact of Covid-19 on young children and the important role of play in supporting children's wellbeing and development.

At the time of writing, many children will have spent three months at home rather than going to school or nursery. It now looks, for some, like this will extend to nearly six months as the limited available places in settings continue to be filled by those deemed to be in priority groups. There is widespread understanding that

all of this had to happen due to the Covid-19 crisis, but there are also concerns about the impact this will have had on all children. While much of the focus has been on those in Year 10 and 12 who are due to sit exams next year, it is important to not overlook the very youngest, many of whom had just started their journey through the education system when lockdown was implemented. [\(More information\)](#)

The new cold war post Covid-19

Professor Xiaohui Liu writes about the strained relationship between the US and China with academics and commentators warning that a 'new cold war' between the two countries may be inevitable post Covid-19.



The consequences of Covid-19 are reaching far beyond our imagination. It has not only caused human life crises, a global supply chain breakdown and an economic crisis, but also escalated the geopolitical tension between the US and China. The recent announcement by the US Department of Commerce imposing further restrictions on Huawei's semiconductor chips has been seen as a sign of the new cold (technology) war. It reinforces speculation concerning the decoupling of the two countries in terms of technological development and economic cooperation. Academics and commentators have warned that a 'new cold war' between the two countries may be inevitable post Covid-19.

[\(More information\)](#)

Carers and COVID-19: Hunger and mental health

Dr Matthew Bennett writes how many carers are silently facing hardships, even while their profile has risen during the pandemic. [\(More information\)](#)

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