

OXFORD-RCGP RSC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



YOUR WEEKLY UPDATE FROM PROF. SIMON DE LUSIGNAN,
DIRECTOR OF THE OXFORD-RCGP RSC

Meet your Oxford-RCGP RSC team - Jeremy Craven

I recently joined the RSC as Clinical Data Mapping Manager, to help with various initiatives that are planned at the RSC around making our analysis methods and data resources more widely accessible. I have a background in handling SNOMED CT Value Set data with NHS England and drug safety data and mechanistic modelling with Certara UK.

Prior to that I was a lecturer in the Department of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology at the University of Sheffield, with a focus on protein structure and interactions, and also cellular modelling.

My computational background is mainly with Python and web technologies. I am based in Sheffield, and work mostly out of a home built garden micro-office, that started life as a den building project with one of my children, and morphed through summer house to office when Covid hit.

I enjoy backing up my wife's horticultural skills by taking on the civil engineering works in our garden and allotment. I am also a keen singer, taking part in musicals and light opera as opportunities arise.



Sampling Opportunities - We still have capacity.

RSC Virology & Serology Sampling Pathways 2026-27

Commissioned by UKHSA

LabReach In-Practice Swabbing AVAILABLE - NEW!	Serology In-Practice Sampling AVAILABLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Latest Pathway (from Dec 2025)👤 All age groups eligible📄 Swab MUST be taken within 7 days of onset of symptoms📦 Swab kits supplied directly to practices🌿 Tested for Flu A/B, Covid and RSV💷 £12.50 per valid sample received by the laboratory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Established Pathway⚠️ Paediatric sampling priority (under 18s) Adult sampling capacity currently full📦 Sample kits supplied directly to practices🩸 Practice collects the blood sample🏷️ Tiered remuneration by age bands: 0-8 years old : £30 9-17 years old : £15 (previously £11) 18 years and above: £5.50

Interested in joining or learning more?

Contact the Practice Liaison Team: practiceenquiries@phc.ox.ac.uk to get started

Articles of the week

This week we are taking a look at two articles relating to Mental Health and COVID-19.

Our first article is [Mental Health Presentations Across Health Care Settings During the First 9 Months of the COVID-19 Pandemic in England: Retrospective Observational Study](#) (published 2022). This study investigated the impact of the pandemic and control measures on mental health conditions presenting to a spectrum of national health care services monitored using real-time syndromic surveillance in England.

Our second article is [Utilisation of mental health services before, during, and after COVID-19 restrictions: interrupted time-series analysis in England](#) (published 2026). During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the World Health Organisation reported a 25% increase in anxiety and depression, and multiple studies indicated that COVID-19 experiences might increase the prevalence of mental illness with subsequent high demands on mental health (MH) services. However, few studies have focussed upon MH across the entire period of pandemic restrictions within England or considered implications for pandemic preparedness.

Upcoming webinar series

We have planned a webinar series for our network practices.

The first webinar will take place on **22nd April 2026**, titled:
A Reintroduction to the RSC

If you are interested in attending, please use this [form](#) to express your interest.



Sampling Is Informing

Welcome to the newest segment of our weekly newsletter

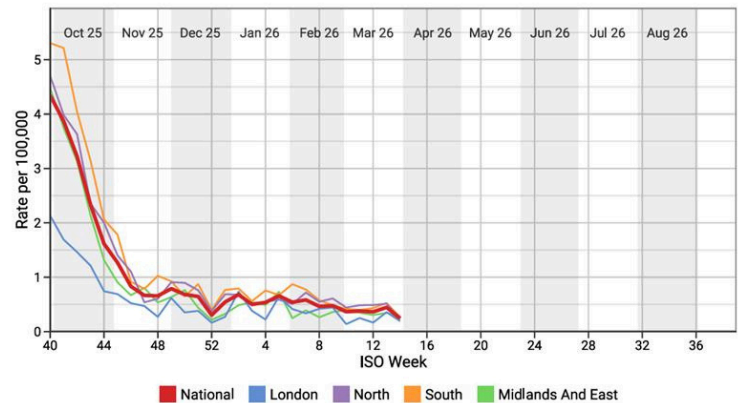
Covid-19 Levels and Vaccination Campaign

The Spring Covid-19 vaccination campaign will start on Monday targeting people over 75 years old, care home residents and patients with immunosuppression.

Covid levels have been quite low over the winter following a small surge in the Autumn, but we have not seen a seasonal pattern to this virus.

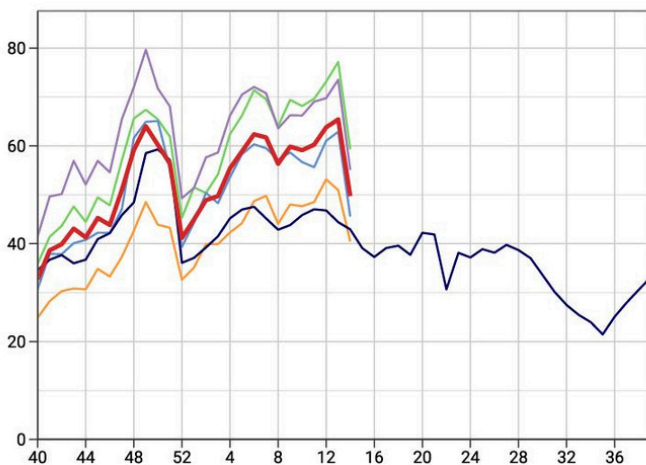
Previous peaks have been in the summer and it remains a potentially significant disease in more vulnerable patients. Data that is collected from practices, along with swab results, are important factors when planning these vaccination campaigns. and your continued coding is vital. Thank you.

(G) COVID-19: national incidence rate by region



URTI - Tonsillitis/Pharyngitis

URTI - Tonsillitis/Pharyngitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



Most respiratory infections are around what would be typical for this time of year, or even a little below. One exception is pharyngitis and tonsillitis which have been high since the start of the year. More patients seem to be presenting with a sore throat than usual.

We do see an apparent drop in the last week but this is complicated by the two bank holidays over Easter which reduces the number of consultations. We may see it increase again next week. As we come into warmer weather with generally less respiratory disease we will watch to see if this returns to the seasonal average.