

OXFORD-RCGP RSC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



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

Using Oxford-RCGP RSC resources to stay informed

Recent media coverage surrounding Hantavirus and Ebola has understandably prompted questions and concerns among patients. As practices continue to navigate public anxiety around emerging infectious diseases, access to reliable and timely information remains essential.

As part of your RSC membership, you have access to a range of resources designed to support you in staying informed about disease emergence and spread across the UK. In particular, many member practices find the RSC Weekly Reports especially useful for monitoring current national and regional trends in circulating infections. These reports provide up-to-date insights drawn from primary care surveillance data, helping practices contextualise media coverage and respond confidently to patient queries.

The Weekly Reports can also support wider practice planning by highlighting changes in seasonal activity, emerging patterns, and public health developments relevant to frontline care. Whether you are looking for a quick overview of current trends or more detailed surveillance information, these resources are available to help your team remain informed and prepared.

If you have not accessed the Weekly Reports recently, we encourage you to take a look and make use of the resources available through your RSC membership.

Our Weekly Reports can be found [here](#)



A message from the Royal College of General Practitioners

Research Engagement Hub

RCGP are pleased to relaunch their Research Engagement Hub which has now been updated to include a **new section on research delivery**. This follows on from the recent release of the **GPs with extended roles in research delivery framework**.

The hub is a great way for GPs to explore the exciting and varied career paths research has to offer.

If you are new to research, unsure where to start or how it could impact your practice, this blog on the Research Engagement Hub will be of interest to you: [Growing a non-commercial research delivery portfolio](#).

'We are pleased to relaunch the RCGP Research Engagement Hub, which showcases the many ways GPs can get involved with research. This hub now contains a new section around research delivery with useful tips and resources provided by GPs across the UK. Visit the [Research Engagement Hub](#) to find out more.' - Dr Victoria Tzortziou Brown, RCGP President

Available sampling pathways

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

It's not too late to sign up for one or more of our sampling pathways. Contact our Practice Liaison Team today to learn more.

Sampling Is Informing

Welcome to the newest segment of our weekly newsletter

Ebola

Ebola has hit the news again, with the WHO declaring an outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is rare but severe viral illness, with no approved vaccines or treatments, and a high fatality rate. Early recognition and supportive treatment is vital to improve survival outcomes.

Of the six species, three are known to cause large outbreaks, and the Bundibugyo virus (BDBV) is implicated in the May 2026 outbreak. WHO has characterised it as a public health emergency of international concern, noting a case in bordering Uganda as well.

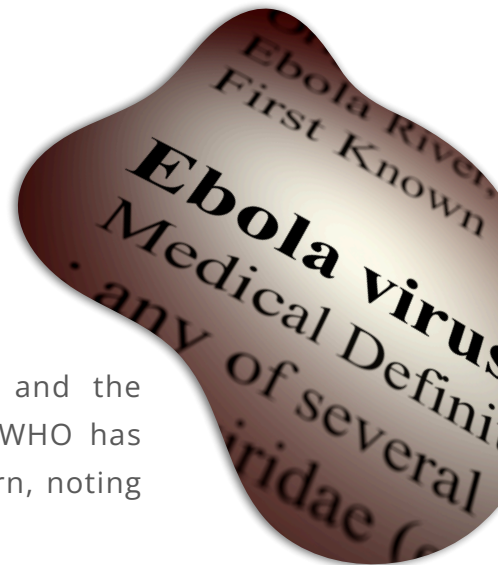
With global travel, it's increasingly important for us to consider and enquire about travel history in our patients with fevers. While it would be unlikely for the UK to see cases here (currently there are **only 2 counts** on our entire database), maintaining professional curiosity will help us to identify possible cases as early as possible.

COVID-19

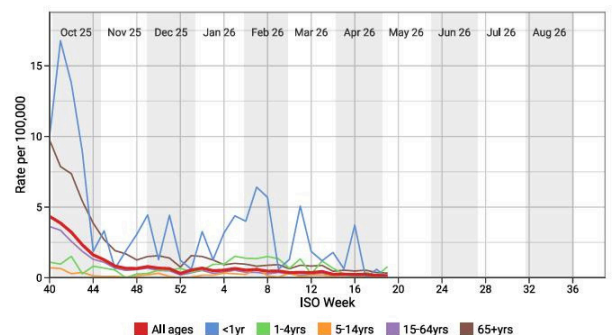
Some of our member practices have noticed local spikes in Covid infections in their area, with varying and atypical presentations. The recent data shows low Covid infection rates as expected for this time of year, but Covid is still circulating as can be seen by the pink graph in the swab surveillance charts.

We have noted some interesting spikes in Covid infections for the under-1-year-olds, perhaps due to their unvaccinated status and new exposures to all viruses at this age, which hasn't been seen in any other age groups.

We will wait to see in coming weeks whether these anecdotal observations are borne out in the national rates.



(H) COVID-19: national incidence rate by age band



(C) RCGP/UKHSA RSV, influenza and SARS-CoV-2 virology swab surveillance (by strain)

