NUFFIELD DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY CARE HEALTH SCIENCES
RESEARCH & SURVEILLANCE CENTRE

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OXFORD-RCGP RSC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

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

Making Respiratory Virology Data Work for Primary Care

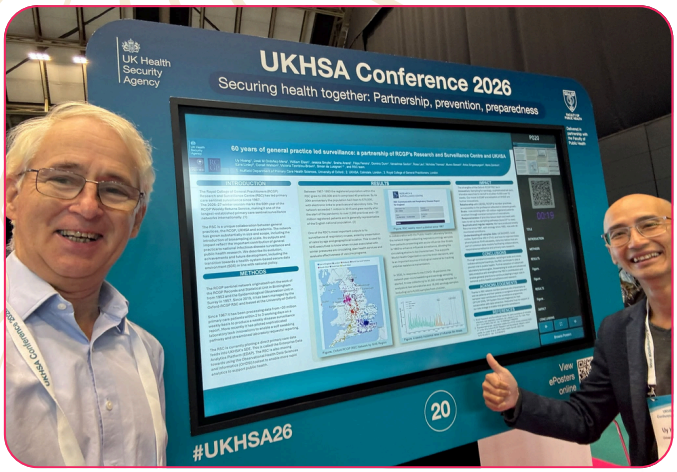
New research published in PLOS ONE, using Oxford-RCGP RSC data, describes how interactive virology dashboards are transforming respiratory virus surveillance in England, giving general practices and public health teams timely insights into which viruses are circulating, who they affect, and how data can support better health decisions.

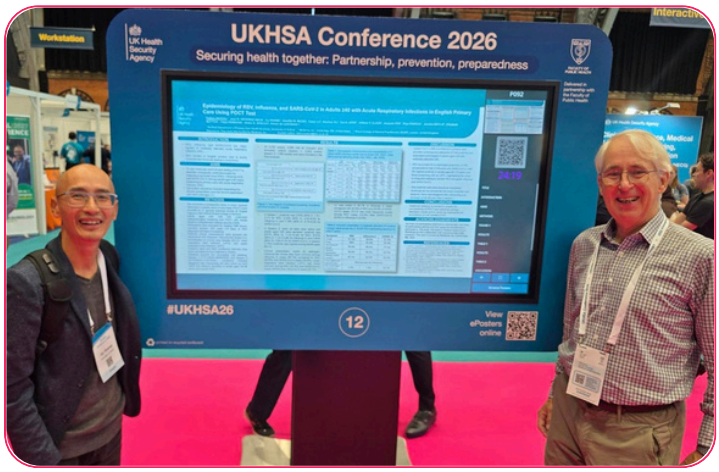
The interactive dashboards are developed using data from primary care **virology sampling**. They show which viruses are circulating, when activity is changing and which patient groups may be most affected. By turning **surveillance data** into clear, accessible visual information, they can help clinicians and public health teams **identify emerging trends** and **respond more effectively**.

This work highlights the value of the **Oxford-RCGP RSC network**. Every sample collected by participating practices contributes to a broader understanding of respiratory illness across England, helping to inform vaccination strategies, protect vulnerable patients and support evidence-based planning for seasonal and emerging infections.

If your practice is interested in becoming a sampling practice, please do contact our PLO team for more information.

Celebrating 60 Years of the Oxford-RCGP RSC at the UKHSA Conference





Our Medical Director, **Prof Simon de Lusignan** and Head of surveillance, **Dr Uy Hoang** both attended the UKHSA conference this week to present posters to the delegates celebrating the **RCGP RSC's 60th anniversary** season this year and showcasing results from the **ObservatARI study**, our recent work looking at the swab positivity for winter viruses in adults over the age of 40 years using one of the largest samples of rapid point of care swabs from primary care in the UK outside of the pandemic.

Both posters were well-received by the audience of public health professionals and health protection experts who were clearly impressed by the scale and longevity of the primary care surveillance network and the continuing contribution our members make to public health research and protecting the public's health.

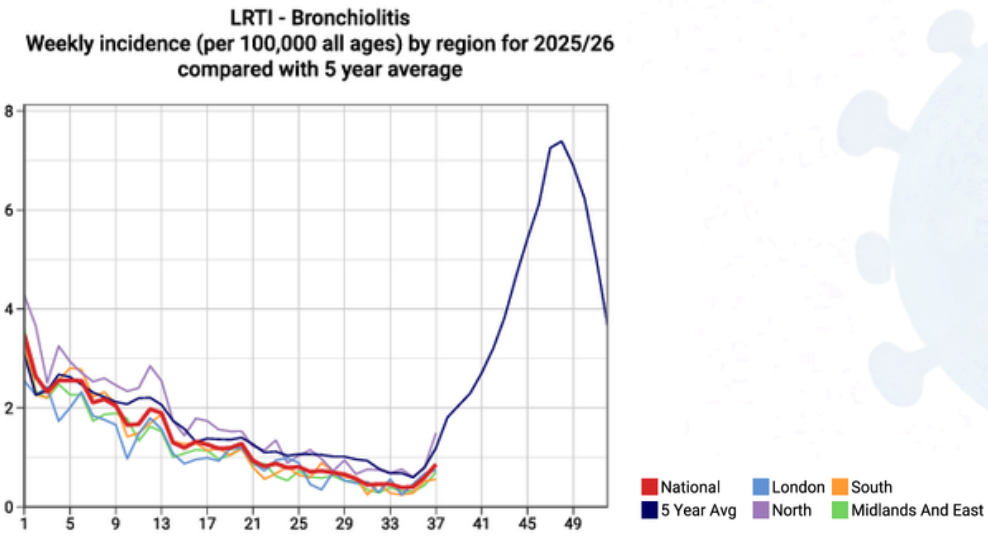
Sampling is Informing

Weekly observations from our on-team GPs

Bronchiolitis Begins to Rise as RSV Season Approaches

by Dr Rashmi Wimalaratna, MBBS

As ARI season ramps up, we noted the Bronchiolitis graph this week, showing the start of an upswing, immediately following the year's nadir around week 35. Since the RSV vaccine was introduced in autumn 2024 and offered to pregnant women, we are particularly interested in Bronchiolitis rates in young children, as RSV is the primary viral organism responsible. We can see that the rates for the national average (in red) are overall lower than the 5-year-average (in dark blue) during the year to date, and it will be interesting to see whether this continues with the higher Bronchiolitis rates expected over the coming winter season. It's too soon to extrapolate to any vaccine effectiveness trends, but we will be interested to observe the coming trends.

Most cases of Bronchiolitis can be safely managed in the community with conservative management, but dehydrated children or those with increased effort of breathing will need hospitalisation for oxygen and respiratory support. Hopefully the cohort of children protected by the RSV vaccine will result in milder cases overall, which we will evaluate over the coming weeks and winter seasons. Scenario: Bronchiolitis | Management | Cough - acute with chest signs in children | CKS | NICE

The RSV vaccine is also offered to older populations in order to prevent cases of pneumonia in this population. With winter pressures and demand escalating each year in GP and hospitals, it may that with targeted vaccination and encouraging take-up where possible, we can slowly but surely improve our local community's resilience to some of the common winter viruses! RSV vaccine - NHS