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School of Nursing



Rapid Review: Are any jurisdictions using isolation periods other than 14 days in response to COVID-19? If yes, what is their rate of COVID-19 cases?

Prepared by: The National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools

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Executive Summary

Background

International jurisdictions have established guidance on COVID-19 quarantine and self-isolation periods for individuals exposed, or potentially exposed, to the virus, and for people infected with COVID-19, respectively. The extent to which quarantine and isolation periods vary, and the implications of varied periods for COVID-19 disease rates, may be of interest to jurisdictions seeking to provide the most prudent guidance based on emerging information.

This rapid review was produced to support public health decision makers' response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. This review seeks to identify, appraise, and summarize emerging research evidence to support evidence-informed decision making.

This rapid review includes evidence available up to June 2, 2020.

In this rapid review, we provide the most recent evidence to answer the question: **Are any jurisdictions using isolation periods other than 14 days in response to COVID-19? If yes, what is their rate of COVID-19 cases?**

Key Points

- The majority of jurisdictions recommended or required a 14-day quarantine for people exposed, or thought to have been exposed, to COVID-19.
- Among jurisdictions with a 14-day quarantine or self-isolation period, the number of cases ranges from 58 to 6125 per million.
- Three jurisdictions have quarantine guidance other than for a 14-day period: Switzerland and Norway require a 10-day quarantine period; Sweden does not recommend a period of quarantine for people who may have been exposed to COVID-19. Two of these jurisdictions have a higher total number of cases per million than Canada (for June 3, 2020, Canada: 2448 cases/million; Norway: 1557 cases/million; Switzerland: 3557 cases/million; Sweden: 3820 cases/million.) In addition to different quarantine or self-isolation periods, jurisdictions vary in their application of other public health measures and the timing of the implementation of public health measures relative to the occurrence of cases.
- There is variability in the prescribed self-isolation period for people who are infected and able to self-isolate at home, ranging from 5-14 days post-symptom onset and/or 1-7 days after the end of fever or other symptoms.

Overview of Evidence and Knowledge Gaps

- The extent to which quarantine periods of shorter than 14 days affect rates of COVID-19 is not known, given the small number of jurisdictions deviating from a 14-day period.
- The extent to which self-isolation periods of shorter than 14 days affect rates of COVID-19 is not known, given the wide variability in prescribed self-isolation periods.

Methods

Research Questions

Are any jurisdictions using isolation periods other than 14 days in response to COVID-19? If yes, what is their rate of COVID-19 cases?

Search

On June 2, 2020 the following government and public health websites were searched for information regarding international and national guidelines for the length of time required for COVID-19 quarantine or self-isolation. Research databases were also searched for guidelines related to self-isolation or quarantine duration.

- International: [World Health Organization](#)
- International: [World Health Organization: Regional Office for Europe](#)
- International: [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#)
- Australia: [The Australian Government](#)
- Canada: [Government of Canada](#)
- China: [National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China](#)
- China: [The State Council: The People's Republic of China](#)
- Germany: [Federal Ministry of Health](#)
- Iceland: [Government of Iceland](#)
- India: [Ministry of Health and Family Welfare](#)
- Italy: [Government of Italy](#)
- Ireland: [Health Information and Quality Authority](#)
- New Zealand: [Ministry of Health](#)
- Northern Ireland: [Public Health Agency](#)
- Norway: [The Norwegian Institute of Public Health](#)
- Scotland: [Health Protection Scotland](#)
- Singapore: [Ministry of Health](#)
- South Korea: [Korean Centres for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- Sweden: [Public Health Agency of Sweden](#)
- Switzerland: [Federal Office of Public Health](#)
- UK: [United Kingdom Government](#)
- USA: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- USA: [National Institutes of Health](#)
- Pubmed's curated COVID-19 literature hub: [LitCovid](#)
- [Trip Medical Database](#)
- World Health Organization's [Global literature on coronavirus disease](#)

A copy of the search strategy is available on request.

Selection Criteria

The search results were first screened for recent guidelines and syntheses. Single studies were included if no syntheses were available, or if single studies were published after the search was conducted in the included syntheses. English-language, peer-reviewed sources and sources published ahead-of-print before peer review were included. Guidance documents, jurisdictional policies, and expert opinion were included as relevant to the question. Surveillance sources were excluded. When available, findings from syntheses and clinical practice guidelines are presented first, as these take into account the available body of evidence and, therefore, can be applied broadly to populations and settings.

Data Extraction and Synthesis

Data on release date, country, and the nature of the policy considerations or jurisdictional guidance were extracted when reported.

A narrative description of the nature of the policy or guidance is provided.

Quality assessment was not relevant for these jurisdictional sources, other than the syntheses. The quality of the syntheses was evaluated using the critical appraisal tool indicated below. Quality assessment was completed by one reviewer and verified by a second reviewer. Conflicts were resolved through discussion.

Study Design

Synthesis

Critical Appraisal Tool

[Health Evidence™ Quality Appraisal Tool](#)

Completed quality assessments for each included study are available on request.

Data on release date, country and the nature of the policy considerations were extracted when reported. We have provided a narrative description of the nature of the policy or guidance.

Quality assessment was not done on these sources, given the very limited policy-relevant evidence

Findings

Quality of Evidence

This document includes two completed syntheses, 17 jurisdictional policies or recommendations and two international organization policies or recommendations for a total of 21 publications included in this evidence review addressing two distinct questions. The quality of the evidence included in this review is as follows:

	Total	Quality of Evidence
Policies or recommendations - jurisdictions	17	N/A
Policies or recommendations – international organizations	2	N/A
Syntheses	2	2 Low

Warning

Given the need to make emerging COVID-19 evidence quickly available, many emerging studies have not been peer reviewed. As such, we advise caution when using and interpreting the evidence included in this rapid review. We have provided a summary of the quality of the evidence as low, moderate or high to support the process of decision making. Where possible, make decisions using the highest quality evidence available.

Table 1: Jurisdictional Scan

Jurisdiction	Organization	Reference	Date Released	Contact Quarantine Period	Post-Infection Isolation Period	Case Rate/ Million on June 3 2020 (Our World in Data, 2020)
Canada	Government of Canada	How to quarantine (self-isolate) at home when you may have been exposed to COVID-19 and have no symptoms.	May 28, 2020	14 days	Once advised by public health	2448
		How to isolate at home when you may have COVID-19	May 1, 2020			
International	WHO	Contact tracing in the context of COVID-19	May 10, 2020	14 days	10 days after symptom onset + 3 days after end of symptoms	-
		Clinical management of COVID-19	May 27, 2020			
International	ECDC	Contact tracing: public health management of persons, including healthcare workers, having had contact with COVID-19 cases in the European Union – second update	April 8, 2020	14 days	14 days	-
		Novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) – Discharge criteria for confirmed COVID-19 cases	March 10, 2020			
Australia	Australian Government	Quarantine for coronavirus (COVID-19)	May 22, 2020	14 days	Once advised by public health	283
China	National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China	Protocol on Prevention and Control of Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia (Edition 6)	March 7, 2020	14 days	14 days isolation + 3 days no fever	58
Germany	Federal Ministry of Health	None found	-	-	-	2176
Iceland	Government of Iceland	Novel Coronavirus COVID-19	May 18, 2020	14 days	14 days after symptom onset + 7 days after end of symptoms	5292
India	Ministry of Health & Family Welfare	Guidelines for home quarantine	March 11, 2020	14 days	17 days after symptom onset + no fever for 10 days	150
		Revised guidelines for Home Isolation of very mild/pre-symptomatic COVID-19 cases	May 10, 2020			
Italy	Government of Italy	FAQ – COVID-19, questions and answers	June 2, 2020	14 days	Not stated	3862

New Zealand	Ministry of Health NZ	COVID-19: Self-isolation for close contacts	May 22, 2020	14 days	Once advised by public health	239
Northern Ireland	Public Health Agency	COVID-19: Information for the public: What should I do if I think I have COVID-19?	n.d.	14 days	7 days after end of symptoms	5076
Norway	Norwegian Institute of Public Health	Social distance, quarantine and isolation	April 5, 2020	10 days	1 day after end of symptoms	1557
Scotland	Health Protection Scotland	COVID-19 – guidance for Health Protection Teams (HPTs)	May 30, 2020	14 days	7 days from symptom onset	Not available
Singapore	Ministry of Health	COVID-19 Resources	Feb 3, 2020 and April 21, 2020	14 days	5 days from symptom onset	6125
South Korea	KCDC	The updates on COVID-19 in Korea as of 29 March	March 29, 2020	14 days	Not stated	226
Sweden	The Public Health Agency of Sweden	FAQ about COVID-19/How long is the incubation period of the coronavirus?	May 22, 2020	None specified	2 days after end of symptoms	3820
Switzerland	Federal Office of Public Health	New coronavirus: Isolation and quarantine	May 11, 2020	10 days	10 days after symptom onset + 2 days after end of symptoms	3557
UK	Public Health England	Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection	May 28, 2020	14 days	2 days with no fever	4094
		Guidance for stepdown of infection control precautions and discharging COVID-19 patients.	May 20, 2020			
USA	CDC	Health Departments: Interim Guidance on Developing a COVID-19 Case Investigation & Contact Tracing Plan	June 1, 2020	14 days	10 days after symptom onset	5534
		Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Ending Home Isolation	May 29, 2020			

Table 2: Syntheses

Reference	Date Released	Country	Description of included studies	Summary of Findings	Quality Rating: Synthesis	Quality Rating: Included Studies
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Public Health Scotland. (May 15, 2020). <i>Rapid Review of the literature: Assessing the infection prevention and control measures for the prevention and management of COVID-19 in healthcare settings.</i> National Services Scotland.	May 15, 2020	Scotland	This rapid review searched academic databases on March 5, 2020 for topics related to infection prevention and control measures for the prevention and management of COVID-19 in health and care settings.	Self-isolation for 14 days is recommended for contacts of symptomatic cases.	Low	Not done
European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. (March 10, 2020). <i>Novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) – Discharge criteria for confirmed COVID-19 cases.</i>	March 10, 2020	International	This review of selected countries' practices reports a comparison of current-to-date guidelines on de-isolation of COVID-19 cases.	Self-isolation for 14 days with regular health monitoring can be considered after discharge if the patient's home is equipped for self-isolation.	Low	Not done

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Public Health England. (May 20, 2020). [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection.](#) Government of the United Kingdom.

Public Health Scotland. (May 15, 2020). [Rapid Review of the literature: Assessing the infection prevention and control measures for the prevention and management of COVID-19 in healthcare settings.](#) National Services Scotland.

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