

ESMI Digest

A regular update of health and social care evidence summaries and syntheses produced in the South West.



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Health and Care Research

ESMI Evidence Synthesis
& Modelling
for Health Improvement

What have we been working on?

The ESMI team specialises in gathering, evaluating and synthesising research evidence to support evidence-based health and social care policy and practice. We work with a wide range of partners, including NHS organisations, government departments and public sector bodies, to address pressing questions and emerging challenges. By combining methodological expertise with a strong understanding of policy and practice needs, we deliver accessible evidence products that help shape decisions and improve services.

Implementation of safety management systems

This project was conducted for the NHS England Patient Safety Team.

[Briefing paper](#)

Academic publication:

The implementation of Safety Management Systems in healthcare: a systematic review and international comparison. Health & Social Care Delivery Research 2025;13[07].

<https://doi.org/10.3310/QPLF8546>

Extra care housing for older people

This project was conducted for the NIHR Health and Social Care Delivery Research Programme.

[Briefing paper](#)

[Academic paper](#)

Academic publication:

How is extra care housing for older people defined in the UK? Observations from a scoping review. Health & Social Care in The Community 2025, Article ID 3364466, 15 pages.

<https://doi.org/10.1155/hsc/3364466>

Targeted and population screening for osteoporosis in women

This project was conducted for the National Screening Committee.

[Briefing paper](#)

[Plain language summary](#)

Academic publication:

Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of targeted and population screening for osteoporosis in women: scoping review [published online ahead of print March 25 2026]. Health Technol Assess 2026.

<https://doi.org/10.3310/GJTT0804>

Contact tracing to reduce transmission of infectious diseases

This project was conducted for the UK Health Security Agency.

[Briefing paper](#)

[Plain language summary](#)

Academic publication:

The Effectiveness of Contact Tracing to Reduce Transmission of Infectious Diseases During Epidemic or Pandemic Response: Rapid Systematic Review
JMIR Public Health Surveill 2026;12:e84805

[doi: 10.2196/84805](https://doi.org/10.2196/84805)

PANS [Pediatric Acute-onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome] and PANDAS [Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal infections]

This project was conducted in response to an NIHR James Lind Alliance Priority Setting Partnership in collaboration with clinicians at Evelina Children's Hospital and South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and the charity PANS PANDAS UK.

The project is being conducted in two stages. In the first stage we produced an evidence and gap map, which is an interactive visual representation of the distribution of evidence across topics according to predefined characteristics. The map also highlights where there are gaps in the research. In the second stage we will be conducting systematic reviews on treatment of PANS/PANDAS and the experiences of living with PANS/PANDAS – please get in touch if you would like more information.

[Briefing paper](#)

[Plain language summary](#)

[Full report](#)

[Evidence and gap map](#)– with link to a video explaining how to navigate the map on the opening page.

Health and environmental impacts of dental amalgam

This project was conducted for the Department of Health and Social Care.

Briefing papers:

[Health impacts](#)

[Environmental impacts](#)

[Overall findings](#)

Slide decks:

[Health impacts](#)

[Environmental impacts](#)

Recorded presentations:

[Health impacts](#)

[Environmental impacts](#)

Patient information leaflets:

[Health impacts](#)

[Environmental impacts](#)

Academic publications:

- Environmental impact of dental amalgam and alternative restorative materials: a systematic review. BDJ Open 12, 11 [2026].
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41405-026-00399-z>
- The health impacts of dental amalgam and alternative restorative materials: a systematic review. J Dent. 2026 Apr; 167:106530.
[https://doi: 10.1016/j.jdent.2026.106530.](https://doi: 10.1016/j.jdent.2026.106530)

Peer and community breast feeding support

This project was completed for the NIHR Public Health Research Programme.

Briefing paper

Blog posts: [1](#) and [2](#)

Academic publication:

Peer Support and Community Interventions Targeting Breastfeeding in the UK: Systematic Review of Qualitative Evidence to Identify Inequities in Participants' Experiences. Maternal & Child Nutrition, 21: e70041.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/mcn.70041>

Inequalities in accessing diagnosis and care for people living with a rare disease

This project was completed for the Department of Health and Social Care to inform the Rare Diseases Action Plan.

The project had two stages. In the first stage we conducted a scoping review of the evidence on health inequities experienced within the rare disease community. In the second stage we used the identified evidence to develop a framework which maps the experiences of the rare disease community onto the patient care pathway across diagnosis and access to health and social care services.

[Briefing paper](#)

[Framework](#)

Academic publication:

Evidence of inequities experienced by the rare disease community with respect to receipt of a diagnosis and access to services: a scoping review of UK and international evidence. Orphanet J Rare Dis 20, 303 [2025].
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13023-025-03818-w>

Click on the links above to discover our full range of outputs for each project, including academic publications, four-page briefing papers and plain-language summaries. If you'd like to discuss any of these projects, please contact Jo Thompson Coon j.thompson-coon@exeter.ac.uk or Rob Anderson r.anderson@exeter.ac.uk — we would be delighted to hear from you.

We are currently working on the following projects:

- NHS staff's experiences of workforce reconfiguration during the Covid-19 pandemic
- Young people's attitudes to condom use
- Advanced care planning for people with learning disabilities
- Education and information provision for people with early-stage chronic kidney disease
- Digital interventions to support young people with their mental health, sexual health and substance misuse
- Public health strategies for first episode psychosis
- Live-in care for older people
- Impacts of treatment with diethylstilbestrol
- Treatment of addictions in people who have served
- Homelessness and health
- Economic and societal costs of living with a rare disease

If you are interested in being involved with any of our ongoing projects and/or would like to be kept informed of progress, please contact Jo Thompson Coon j.thompson-coon@exeter.ac.uk or Rob Anderson r.anderson@exeter.ac.uk

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