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Characteristics and outcomes of health and social care workers testing positive for SARS-CoV-2 in the Tayside region of Scotland

Moneeza K. Siddiqui¹ , Benjamin Parcell², Sarah Allstaff³, Colin Palmer¹, James D. Chalmers⁴ and Samira Bell¹

Affiliations: ¹Division of Population Health and Genomics, School of Medicine, University of Dundee, Dundee, UK. ²Dept of Medical Microbiology, Ninewells Hospital and Medical School, Dundee, UK. ³Tayside Sexual and Reproductive Health Service, Ninewells Hospital and Medical School, Dundee, UK. ⁴Division of Molecular and Clinical Medicine, School of Medicine, University of Dundee, Dundee, UK.

Correspondence: James D. Chalmers, Division of Molecular and Clinical Medicine, School of Medicine, University of Dundee, Dundee, DD1 9SY, UK. E-mail: j.chalmers@dundee.ac.uk



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Tayside, Scotland was one of the first health boards to institute testing for all symptomatic workers. As expected, there was a high prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 among health and social care workers; however, in most cases disease was mild. <https://bit.ly/38JaUmB>

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To the Editor:

The spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and reported outcomes among health and social care workers (HSCWs) is concerning [1–3]. Early in the outbreak it was recommended in the UK that HSCWs experiencing symptoms of a cough or fever remain absent from work for 7 days. In order to address this problem, National Health Service (NHS) Tayside, a health board in Scotland covering a population of 400,000, was the first in Scotland to set up a drive-through testing programme for HSCWs, other key workers and their symptomatic household contacts (including children), with results available within 24 h, allowing staff to return to work following a negative test [4]. As testing for SARS-CoV-2 was limited to hospitalised patients across much of Europe there is limited data on the self-reported clinical characteristics and outcomes of patients in the community with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Here, we report characteristics and outcomes of HSCWs presenting to the drive-through testing centre who tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 on a combined nasal and pharyngeal swab. Anonymised record linkage was conducted between routinely collected healthcare

datasets in order to ascertain clinical characteristics and outcomes of those who tested positive. All hospitalisations until 25 April and deaths until 20 May, 2020 were recorded. Approval was obtained from the local data protection officer (Caldicott Guardian).

