



COVID-19 clusters and outbreaks in occupational settings in the EU/EEA and the UK

5.1.2e

Webinar for NFPs for Preparedness, Response and Threat Detection

Thursday 17 September 2020

Media attention



NEWS

Coronavirus: German slaughterhouse outbreak crosses 1,000

Officials in northwestern Germany have insisted the wider community But they complain that they've lost trust in the country's largest meat delays in cont

Five Covid-19 clusters found among Irish fruit and vegetable growers

Migrant workers and local students are helping the sector through labour shortage

© Tue, Aug 4, 2020, 02:33

Coronavirus: Hundreds of Polish infections linked to mine

🕒 7 June

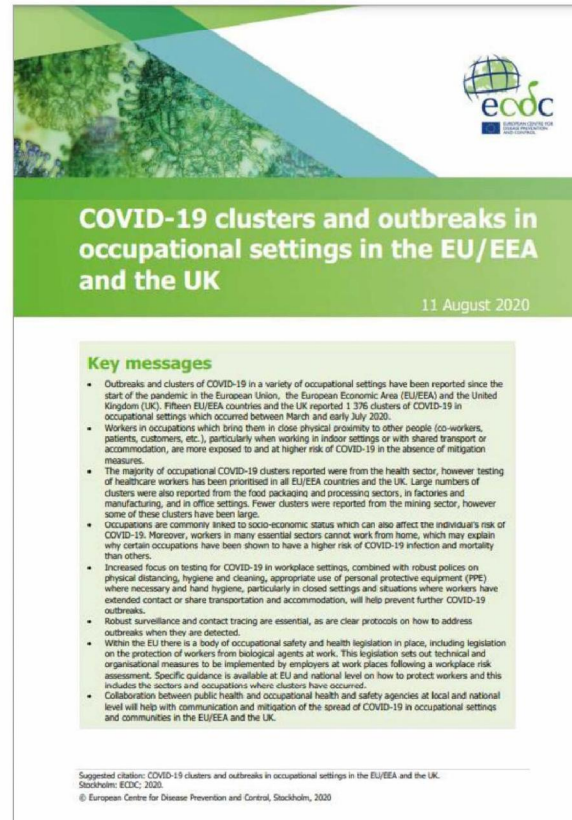
Technology

Amazon workers test positive for covid-19 at 10 U.S. warehouses

Sources: [Deutsche Welle](#), [The Washington Post](#), [BBC News](#) and [The Irish Times](#)

Background

- ECDC received a Commission request to look into this issue
- Published its technical report early August



Methods



Country-based data collection

- Data collection on clusters in occupational settings from EU/EEA countries and the UK
 - Data collection included occupational setting, date of identification of cluster, number of cases, number of deaths, risk factors identified etc.
 - Option for providing aggregated data when multiple outbreaks in one setting were identified

Epidemic Intelligence activities

- ECDC's epidemic intelligence collects and collates daily information from a variety of media and national sources
- Retrieved information on relevant occupational clusters/outbreaks of COVID-19 identified between 1 May and 23 July
- Ad-hoc searches were performed

Literature search

- A rapid literature search on clusters/outbreaks in occupational settings was conducted – focus on factors contributing to these clusters

Results



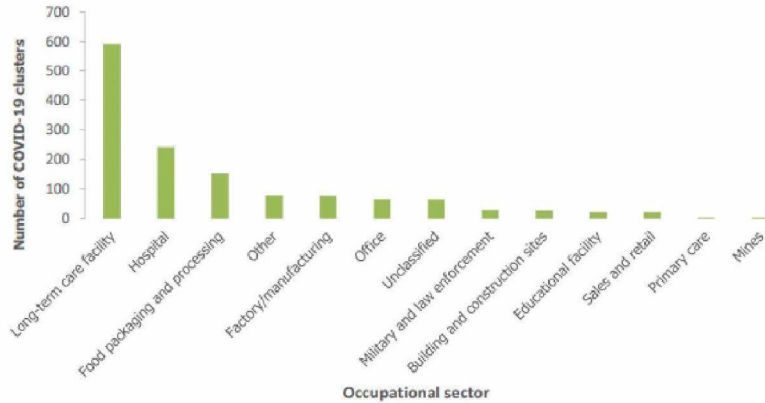
- 17 countries responded
 - 13 countries reported data on specific clusters in occupational settings
 - 3 countries provided aggregated data only
 - 1 country provided number cases in different occupational groups

- A cluster was defined as a minimum of two cases

Results

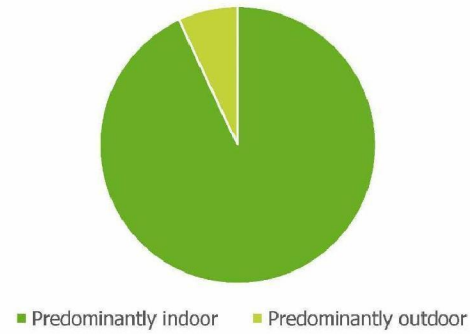


Number of reported clusters of COVID-19 in different occupational settings March- July 2020 (based on individual and aggregate data reported by 13 EU/EEA countries and the UK) (n=1 266)



Note: Clusters in 'other' occupational settings (n=79 clusters) and unclassified settings (n=63) are not included.

>95% of clusters/outbreaks reported in indoor settings



Results

- A total of 1376 clusters reported, including ~18 200 cases



Table 1. Summary overview of reported clusters of COVID-19 in different occupational settings, EU/EEA, March-July 2020

Setting	Number of clusters reported	Total number of cases reported	Number of reported deaths	Number of reporting countries	Number of cases within a cluster (min-max) ¹	
Health and social care	Hospitals	241	3 298	82	10	2-571
	Long-term care facilities	591	5 670	46	8	2-342
	Primary care facilities	4	14	0	3	2-5
Food packaging and processing	153	3 856	4	14	2-117	
Factory/manufacturing	77	1 032	0	4	2-96	
Building and construction sites	27	402	0	9	2-69	
Office	65	410	4	10	2-23	
Educational facilities	22	143	1	5	2-35	
Sales and retail	22	188	6	0	2-30	
Military and law enforcement	29	269	0	8	2-50	
Mines	4	1 538	1	1	4-704	
Other occupational settings ²	79	696	4	11	3-35	
Unclassified	63	682	18	4	2-52	
Total	1 376	18 170	166	16	2-704	

¹Excludes aggregated data reported by three countries.

²Includes various settings such as packaging/mail distribution, transportation, bars and restaurants, churches and monasteries, fitness clubs and spas.

Factors contributing to clusters in occupational settings



- Lack of physical distance
 - Shared staff facilities, canteens, dressing rooms
 - Shared and/or overcrowded accommodation,
 - Shared transport,
 - Sharing of office space...
- Lack of facilities to wash hands (*building sites*)
- Language challenges among migrant workers (*building sites*)
- Staff socialising together in the community (*office settings*)
- Close/direct contact with cases (*health and social care setting*)
- Insufficient or incorrect use of PPE (*health and social care setting*)

Discussion/Conclusion



- Clusters reported in various occupational settings
 - Majority in health and social care settings – routine testing in this group
- Vast majority of clusters in predominately indoor settings
- Number of outbreaks linked to migrant or seasonal workers
 - Overcrowded living conditions pose an additional risk
- Health and safety of staff important not only for their own protection but also to prevent further spread
- Largest contributing factor: lack of physical distance
- Increased focus on testing in workplaces, combined with robust and strictly enforced policies for physical distancing, hygiene and cleaning, appropriate use of PPE and handhygiene will help to prevent outbreaks

Limitations



- No thorough overview of all countries and occupational settings affected
- No information on age/sex, underlying conditions etc. collected
- No consistent definition of how occupational outbreaks are classified, investigated or reported by Member States in the EU/EEA and UK
- Results of investigations on outbreaks in occupational settings generally not made public
 - Information on risk factors is limited and mostly anecdotal