

The indirect health economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on English Hospitals : A scoping review of the literature

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INTRODUCTION:

- The COVID-19 pandemic is a continuing global pandemic that originated in Wuhan, China, at the end of 2019.¹
- Lockdowns aimed at mitigating the direct effects of the virus changed behaviours that affected access to healthcare.
- This research aimed to identify and synthesise the emerging literature on the the indirect health economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on English Hospitals.

METHODS:

- Searches were conducted in Embase, MEDLINE, Web of Science, and Google Scholar.
- Search concepts included “COVID-19” AND “hospital outcomes of health economic consequence” AND “England” AND “indirect”.
- A two-step sifting process of assessing titles and abstracts was followed by review of full texts.
- Data on outcomes of health economic consequence (e.g. activity, length of stay, mortality) and change in direction was abstracted and charted.

- Narrative synthesis using the approach from Popay² was used to collate, summarise and report findings consistent with PRISMA-ScR Checklist.³

The emerging literature identified by the scoping review suggests that decreased hospital admissions for non-COVID-19 conditions was commonly reported during the pandemic. Impact on length of stay and inpatient mortality was mixed.

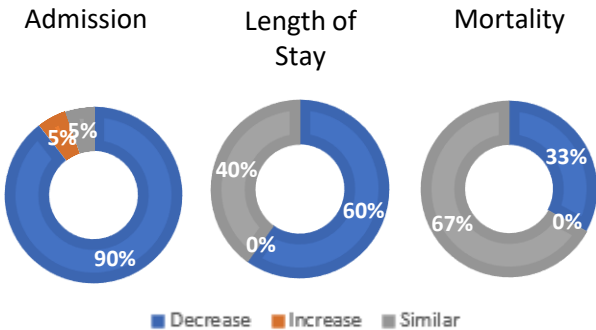
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- 3 Tricco AC, Lillie E, Zarin W, O'Brien KK, Colquhoun H, Levac D, et al. (2018) 'PRISMA Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR): Checklist and Explanation.' Annals of Internal Medicine, 169, pp. 467–473.

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RESULTS:

- A total of 502 records were identified. 5 articles were excluded due to duplication. 497 tiles and abstracts were screened. 440 articles were excluded. 57 articles were screened based on their full text. 37 further articles were excluded and 20 articles were included. Included studies reported on Admission (n=19) Length of stay (n=10) and Mortality (n=12).



DISCUSSION:

- Changes in length of stay and mortality are not always identified and likely context specific.
- Drivers of decreased admissions for non-COVID-19 conditions is unclear. Stricter admission policies, reduced capacity and hospital avoidance by patients were likely to contribute.
- Reduced hospital admissions may result in unmet health needs that lead to increased healthcare utilisation in the future.

FUTURE RESEARCH:

- Further research to quantify the magnitude of change, why these changes were observed, the impact in other care settings and the longitudinal impact on morbidity and mortality are required to fully explore the indirect consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.