

A useful map of COVID-19 evidence

The map is useful and educational but there needs to be more quality assessment of individual studies and clinicians need to know the map exists.

Clinicians, public health personnel and other decision makers are target groups for the [Live map of COVID-19 evidence](#). How useful is the map to these groups and how could it be improved?



*Preben
Aavitsland*

Great initiative

– I can easily find and quickly review studies on themes of interest. And I like that you rapidly made this information available to everyone. Preben Aavitsland is an infectious disease epidemiologist and medical doctor who has been a highly visible spokesman for the Norwegian Institute of Public Health during the pandemic.

– I have two suggestions to improve the map, says Preben: The main research questions should be expanded, by splitting infection prevention and control (IPC) into traditional IPC against health care associated infections and interventions to prevent spread of the disease in the community. And I miss a category on more basic virology and immunology research, and for modelling.

– As the number of articles keep increasing, you must develop methods to easily separate the wheat from the chaff.



Henrik Vogt

It will only get better with time

– The COVID-19 pandemic, our perception of it, our knowledge, our ability to predict and to act - or our ability to be misled - is all about information, says Henrik Vogt, a general practitioner (GP) who also trained in history, philosophy and journalism. Henrik is currently working as a GP and as a postdoc at the Centre for medical ethics, University of Oslo.

– Libraries are historically anchors of civilization, and, in this fast-moving situation, this project of categorizing the COVID-19 literature in real-time really represents the finest of what our society can do when faced with such a challenge.

– The map gives a great opportunity to sort through the literature, but the literature is still vast and, necessarily, “noisy” so there is lots of extra stuff. It would perhaps be useful to have the content more curated, to have a

range of selected publications that are recommended and/or highlighted because they are high impact and key references. Finally, I would like the dating of the articles to be much more detailed. This is a fast-moving target.



Marit Tuv

Should be better known

– Actually, I did not know the existence of this project until recently, says Marit Tuv, a public health physician in Vang in Valdres and specialist in general medicine.

– Now that I know about the map, I will turn to this source of information when confronted with unanswered questions regarding COVID-19. Clear categorization makes this evidence useful for general practitioners and public health physicians.

– This epidemic has raised a lot of questions, many of which may be answered through this project. The map is neatly organized and intuitive even to non-researchers like me. Results are presented immediately, which enhances use in clinical settings where answers are needed quickly.



*Anders Skyrud
Danielsen*

Quality and impact should be highlighted

– I like to stay up to date on developments in infectious disease epidemiology and the scientific community’s response to the most serious pandemic in the modern era, says Anders Skyrud Danielsen. He has a master’s degree in International Community Health with a specialization in infectious disease epidemiology and is now working as a consultant at the Cancer Registry of Norway.

– It is impossible for any individual to keep track of the sheer magnitude of the COVID-19 research. The map helps me find studies of high quality with original data on topics that are of particular interest to me, says Anders.

– The map is very good at describing the scope of the research, but it could be even better at describing quality and impact. The map could, for instance, highlight some highly cited and central studies in the rapidly evolving and vast COVID-19 literature.

How to use the map

The [Live map of COVID-19 evidence](#) includes 4363 articles as of June 24, 2020. The articles are categorized according to topic, population of interest and publication type. Topics are shown in columns (vertical) and population groups in rows (horizontal). Publication type is indicated by colored bubbles and can be selected through using a filter.

The three overarching categories are broken down into finer subcategories. You can combine these to find articles for your chosen subject area.

Topic

Here you find the most detailed categorization of the articles with a total of 92 different topic codes divided into seven topic groups. All topic groups except “Prevalence and incidence” are further subdivided and presented in separate detailed topic maps:

- Prevalence and incidence
- [Etiology](#)
- [Diagnosis](#)
- [Infection prevention and control](#)
- [Interventions to treat the infected patient](#)
- [Prognosis](#)
- [Experiences and perception, social, political, economic aspects](#)

Population

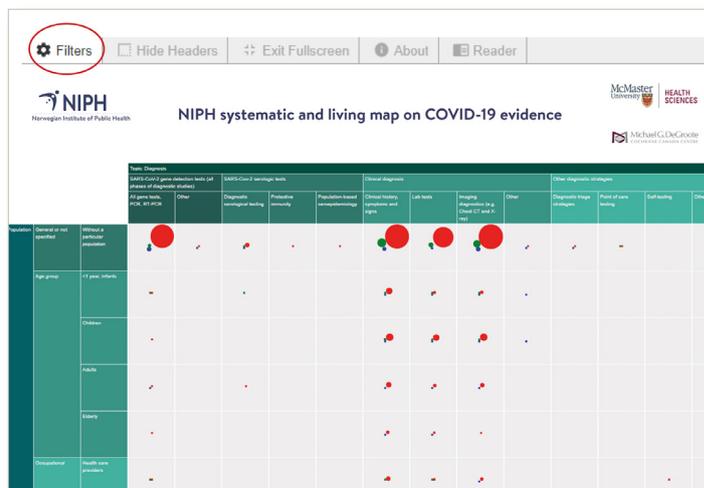
Most studies are not limited to one specific population group. The map has 42 population groups to choose from within six broad population categories:

- COVID-19 status
- Health status
- Age
- Occupation
- Gender
- Social and economic setting

Publication type

Publication type describes the different kinds of studies. The publication type is indicated on the map by three colored bubbles. The bubble sizes show the relative number of articles of each type:

- Green - systematic reviews and HTAs (health technology assessments)
- Red - primary and modelling studies, randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and non-randomized studies with control groups
- Blue - others



You can select publication type by using the “Filters” function in the upper left corner of the screen

Publication type can be further subdivided by using the filter function. Click “Filters” in the upper left corner of the map. Under “Publication type, detailed” is a list of 19 publication types. For example, you can select only systematic reviews or qualitative studies – or both.

List of references

When you click your selected cell, you get a list of all respective references alphabetical ordered by the title of the article. Below the abstract (if available) are authors, source (journal), URL and DOI of each article.

On the left-hand side of the reference list there are further options to filter by population group.

Using the right browser

Unfortunately, the maps will not work in Internet Explorer, there is a compatibility issue. You will have to use Microsoft Edge, Firefox or Google Chrome. To be sure you see the most updated version of the map, refresh the webpage or alternatively clear your browser’s cache and cookies regularly.

RECENT RAPID REVIEWS

1. [Should individuals in the community without respiratory symptoms wear facemasks to reduce the spread of COVID-19?](#)
2. [Social and economic vulnerable groups during the COVID-19 pandemic – a rapid review](#)

Project leader: Gunn Vist
Editor: Magne Nylenna
Photo: NIPH, Tor Stenersen, private and Guri Barka Martins
Date: 24 June 2020
E-mail: Covid-19.evidencemap@fhi.no