

BAUS Covid-19 Statement Addressing Vulnerable Groups

During the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, an increasing amount of data is now emerging relating to vulnerable groups which has been highlighted in statements from the government and Public Health England. Vulnerable groups already highlighted include males, those aged over 70 years, those who have an underlying chronic health condition (e.g. hypertension, chronic kidney disease, cardiovascular disease, obesity and diabetes) and those who are pregnant.

Recently published data also indicates that individuals from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, particularly those over 55 years of age, may be at greater risk of severe illness, alongside the other vulnerable groups should they become infected. This data is difficult to interpret, and further analysis of this is being undertaken to define, more accurately, individual risk factors.

BAUS recommends that all urologists should have an individual risk assessment if they fall into any of these at-risk categories, to allow an appropriate working pattern to be adopted.

[**The National Risk Reduction Framework for NHS Staff at Risk of Covid-19 Infection**](#) (developed by a group led by Professor Kamlesh Khunti, Professor of Primary Care Diabetes & Vascular Medicine at the University of Leicester) is now available for use and is likely to form the basis for all regional & local assessment frameworks.

This risk reduction framework involves three assessment domains: **Workforce, Workplace and Individual**, the combination of which will result in a clear understanding of the appropriate working pattern for an individual.

In line with the framework, BAUS supports the recommendation that the assessment is completed by a line manager, supervisor, designated senior manager or health and safety representative, in a one-to-one consultation with their staff, and is conducted in a sensitive manner, taking into consideration the emotional well-being of staff. Employers need to ensure that cultural factors are also taken into consideration so that staff have the confidence to openly discuss and resolve their concerns.

BAUS, as an organisation, is working with its members to provide guidance on how to continue urological services during the current pandemic. As part of this, the Association states that it is imperative that those individuals providing urological care use the appropriate PPE to enable them to perform their clinical roles whilst minimising risks to themselves.

It is also important that we all remain sympathetic to and supportive of our colleagues who, if they fall within these vulnerable groups, will be understandably anxious during the COVID-19 pandemic.