

Rapid COVID-19 tests effective if part of wider strategies, analysis states

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A British Medical Journal (BMJ) paper analyzing rapid testing for COVID-19, co-authored by a University of Liverpool academic, was released today.

The paper reviews how rapid testing technologies such as PCR and lateral flow tests can be most appropriately used to support different COVID-19 testing strategies.

Professor Iain Buchan and co-authors from University College London, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the European Observatory of Health Systems and Policies examined the benefits and risks of such technologies.

The review has found that strategies for use of COVID-19 tests vary widely between countries. The authors concluded that while [rapid tests](#) provide opportunities for early detection and isolation, they must be integrated in to wider strategies to effectively control transmission.

The assessment of the benefits and risks of different testing strategies suggests how novel tests can be used in public health policies to improve COVID-19 resilience and recovery.

Professor Iain Buchan said: "Rapid tests are an important tool for reaching more people more often and giving them a chance to isolate before they pass on the virus, for example by going to work that day.

"This type of testing works best as part of a comprehensive program co-created with local leaders and communities, where messages are crystal clear on when to [test](#), how to test and what to do with the result—particularly maintaining 'hands-face-space' precautions after a negative result.

"Rapid tests should complement effective contact tracing and appropriate support for those isolating. Testing should also work in concert with vaccination, in a joined-up public health approach to COVID-19 resilience and recovery."

More information: Alex Crozier et al. Put to the test: use of rapid testing technologies for covid-19, *BMJ* (2021). [DOI: 10.1136/bmj.n208](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n208)

Provided by University of Liverpool

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