

 Open access • Posted Content • DOI:10.1101/2020.08.17.20161760

SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) infection in pregnant women: characterization of symptoms and syndromes predictive of disease and severity through real-time, remote participatory epidemiology — [Source link](#)

[Erika Molteni](#), [Christina M Astley](#), [Wenjie Ma](#), [Carole H. Sudre](#) ...+14 more authors

Institutions: [King's College London](#), [Boston Children's Hospital](#), [Harvard University](#), [Uppsala University](#)

Published on: 19 Aug 2020 - [medRxiv](#) (Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press)

Topics: [Risk factor](#), [Cohort](#), [Epidemiology](#), [Comorbidity](#) and [Pregnancy](#)

Related papers:

- [Outcome of coronavirus spectrum infections \(SARS, MERS, COVID-19\) during pregnancy: a systematic review and meta-analysis.](#)
- [Maternal and perinatal outcomes with COVID-19: A systematic review of 108 pregnancies.](#)
- [SARS-CoV-2 infection in pregnancy: A systematic review and meta-analysis of clinical features and pregnancy outcomes.](#)
- [Clinical manifestations, risk factors, and maternal and perinatal outcomes of coronavirus disease 2019 in pregnancy: living systematic review and meta-analysis.](#)
- [Update: Characteristics of Symptomatic Women of Reproductive Age with Laboratory-Confirmed SARS-CoV-2 Infection by Pregnancy Status - United States, January 22-October 3, 2020.](#)

Share this paper:    

View more about this paper here: <https://typeset.io/papers/sars-cov-2-covid-19-infection-in-pregnant-women-2bqhd9y6r>

1 **SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) infection in pregnant women: characterization of**
2 **symptoms and syndromes predictive of disease and severity through real-time,**
3 **remote participatory epidemiology.**

4
5 Erika Molteni^{1§} and Christina M. Astley^{2§} and Wenjie Ma^{3§}, Carole H Sudre¹, Laura A. Magee⁴,
6 Benjamin Murray¹, Tove Fall⁵, Maria F. Gomez⁶, Neli Tsereteli⁶, Paul W. Franks⁶, John S.
7 Brownstein², Richard Davies⁷, Jonathan Wolf⁷, Tim D Spector⁸, Sebastien Ourselin¹, Claire J
8 Steves⁸, Andrew T Chan^{3#} and Marc Modat^{1#}.

- 9 1. School of Biomedical Engineering & Imaging Sciences, King's College London, London, United Kingdom.
10 2. Boston Children's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA, USA.
11 3. Clinical and Translational Epidemiology Unit, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA, USA.
12 4. Department of Women and Children's Health, School of Life Course Sciences and the Institute of Women and
13 Children's Health, King's College London, London, United Kingdom.
14 5. Department of Medical Sciences and Science for Life Laboratory, Uppsala University, Sweden.
15 6. Department of Clinical Sciences, Lund University Diabetes Centre, Jan Waldenströms gata 35, SE-21428,
16 Malmö, Sweden.
17 7. Zoe Global Limited, London, United Kingdom.
18 8. Department of Twin Research and Genetic Epidemiology, King's College London, London, United Kingdom.

19

20 § These authors contributed equally

21 # These authors contributed equally

22 Address correspondence to:

23 Erika Molteni, *PhD*

24 School of Biomedical Engineering and Imaging Sciences

25 King's College London

26

27 9th floor, Becket House

28 1 Lambeth Palace Road

29 SE1 7EU London, United Kingdom

30 erika.molteni@kcl.ac.uk

31 ORCID: orcid.org/0000-0001-7773-81-40

32

33 **Tweetable abstract**

34 Pregnancy with SARS-CoV-2 has no higher risk of severe symptoms. Underlying lung disease or
35 cardiac condition can increase risk.

36

37

38

39

40

41 **Abstract**

42 **Objective:** To test whether pregnant and non-pregnant women differ in COVID-19 symptom
43 profile and severity. To extend previous investigations on hospitalized pregnant women to those
44 who did not require hospitalization.

45 **Design:** Observational study prospectively collecting longitudinal (smartphone application
46 interface) and cross-sectional (web-based survey) data.

47 **Setting:** Community-based self-participatory citizen surveillance in the United Kingdom, Sweden
48 and the United States of America.

49 **Population:** Two female community-based cohorts aged 18-44 years. The discovery cohort was
50 drawn from 1,170,315 UK, Sweden and USA women (79 pregnant tested positive) who self-
51 reported status and symptoms longitudinally via smartphone. The replication cohort included
52 1,344,966 USA women (134 pregnant tested positive) who provided cross-sectional self-reports.

53 **Methods:** Pregnant and non-pregnant were compared for frequencies of symptoms and events,
54 including SARS-CoV-2 testing and hospitalization rates. Multivariable regression was used to
55 investigate symptoms severity and comorbidity effects.

56 **Results:** Pregnant and non-pregnant women positive for SARS-CoV-2 infection were not different
57 in syndromic severity. Pregnant were more likely to have received testing than non-pregnant,
58 despite reporting fewer symptoms. Pre-existing lung disease was most closely associated with the
59 syndromic severity in pregnant hospitalized women. Heart and kidney diseases and diabetes
60 increased risk. The most frequent symptoms among all non-hospitalized women were anosmia
61 [63% pregnant, 92% non-pregnant] and headache [72%, 62%]. Cardiopulmonary symptoms,
62 including persistent cough [80%] and chest pain [73%], were more frequent among pregnant
63 women who were hospitalized.

64 **Conclusions:** Symptom characteristics and severity were comparable among pregnant and non-
65 pregnant women, except for gastrointestinal symptoms. Consistent with observations in non-
66 pregnant populations, lung disease and diabetes were associated with increased risk of more severe
67 SARS-CoV-2 infection during pregnancy.

68

69

70

71 **Keywords:** pregnancy; community SARS-CoV-2 symptoms; SARS-CoV-2
72 risk factors; SARS-CoV-2 severity; digital health; citizen science; syndromic surveillance;
73 anosmia.

74

75 **Main text**

76 **1. Introduction**

77 The COVID-19 pandemic is caused by the SARS-CoV-2, a newly identified enveloped RNA-β-
78 coronavirus^{1,2}. Early on, pregnant women were regarded as vulnerable group, at greater risk of
79 severe morbidity and mortality, based on previous studies of smaller coronavirus outbreaks, and the
80 theoretical risks associated with immunosuppression of pregnancy³⁻⁵. However, substantial
81 literature has now documented that, among hospitalized pregnant women, antecedent symptoms and
82 risk factors for severe disease are similar to those outside pregnancy⁶, and few hospitalized
83 pregnant women require admission to intensive care or intubation, although preterm birth,
84 Caesarean delivery, and stillbirth may be increased compared with women without COVID-19, and
85 vertical transmission possible (86 studies to 8 Jun 2020)⁷⁻¹⁰. SARS-CoV-2 positive patients
86 develop dry cough, fever, dyspnea, fatigue and bilateral lung infiltrates on imaging in the severe
87 cases¹¹. Hospitalized pregnant women positive for SARS-CoV-2 manifest similar symptoms^{7,12,13}.
88 However, little is known about pregnant women affected by SARS-CoV-2 infection in the
89 community, many of whom recover without hospitalization¹⁴.

90 Smartphone and web-based applications for population-based syndromic surveillance are citizen
91 science tools that can facilitate rapid acquisition of extensive epidemiological data as a pandemic
92 evolves¹⁵. These data can inform public-health policies, enhance the speed of the healthcare
93 response, shape the community services, and alert the general population to urgent health threats¹⁶.
94 Smartphone applications (apps) were used prior to the COVID-19 pandemic to remotely advise on
95 prenatal health, and maternal health behaviours, including gestational weight gain and smoking
96 cessation¹⁷. Many eHealth initiatives were launched at the onset of the pandemic, with most using
97 single, cross-sectional reporting methods to inform SARS-CoV-2 epidemiology¹⁸. We present
98 findings from a unique, longitudinal community-based symptom-tracking system that identified

99 both test positive and suspected (but untested) SARS-CoV-2 infected pregnant women, who were
100 followed prospectively to assess the need for hospitalization. Furthermore, we replicated key
101 findings, using an independent, cross-sectional symptom survey.

102 We present data from a cohort of women of childbearing age, including pregnant women who
103 report test-positive SARS-CoV-2. Despite presenting a wide spectrum of disease manifestations,
104 these pregnant women rarely required hospitalization.

105 In order to include non-tested subjects who developed symptoms during the onset of the pandemic,
106 when testing resources were still limited, we developed a model to predict positivity to SARS-CoV-
107 2 based on symptoms, specific to female population in childbearing age. We sought to characterize
108 the differences in the SARS-CoV-2 symptom profiles and severity between pregnant and non-
109 pregnant women who did and did not receive hospitalization. We identified demographic
110 characteristics and comorbidities that modified symptom severity of SARS-CoV-2 in pregnancy.

111

112 **2. Materials and methods**

113 **2.1 Study Populations**

114 We developed a symptom-based prediction method to identify suspected COVID-19 cases among
115 women 18-44 years of age from a discovery cohort. Results were replicated in an independent,
116 cross-sectional cohort with different survey methodology.

117 **Discovery Cohort.** The COVID Symptom Study smartphone-based application (app), developed by
118 Zoe Global Limited, and having almost four million users from the general population in UK,
119 280,000 from USA and around 175,000 from Sweden. Users self-report daily information about
120 their overall health status, as well as their symptoms (from a pre-defined list, to standardise input)
121 ^{19, 20}. We included all pre-menopausal (if menopausal status was reported) women aged 18 to 44
122 years, who used the app between 24 March and 7 June 2020, and specified their pregnancy status at

123 baseline (pregnant or not pregnant) included symptom profiles, outcomes on testing positive for
124 SARS-CoV-2, and hospitalization (Supplementary Material 1).

125 **Replication Cohort.** The Facebook COVID-19 Symptom survey, launched in the USA and hosted
126 by the Carnegie Mellon Delphi Research Center. Surveys were conducted using sampling strategies
127 and survey weights to ensure respondents were representative of the USA source population ²¹
128 (Supplementary Material 1). Using data from launch (6 April 2020) through 7 June 2020, we
129 identified surveys from 1,344,966 female respondents who indicated their pregnancy status and age
130 18-44 years ²². Users specified if they had experienced specific symptoms over the last 24 hours, in
131 addition to answering demographic and infection-related questions.

132 **2.2 Pregnancy groups, symptoms, syndromes and outcomes**

133 **Pregnancy status:** Women were divided into pregnant and non-pregnant subgroups, based on self-
134 reported pregnancy status, ascertained once near the start of follow-up in the discovery cohort, and
135 at each survey for the replication cohort. Gestational age, at the time pregnancy was ascertained,
136 was available only for the discovery cohort.

137 **COVID-19 Test and Suspected Positive:** Self-reported COVID-19 testing was used to identify
138 women with SARS-CoV-2 infection (termed *test positive*). Test positives were considered
139 *symptomatic positive* if they reported at least one of the tracked symptoms. The type of test (e.g.
140 PCR, serology) was not ascertained, and those reporting a pending test were excluded.
141 Suspected positive cases were imputed, based on a previously published method for the
142 computation of a test-positive prediction score ²⁰. The model was retrained for pregnancy age
143 distribution, based on a bootstrapped train-test scheme in the discovery cohort, and using a strict
144 mapping to equate symptoms ascertained in both the discovery and replication cohorts. We defined
145 the outcome of suspected COVID-19 (termed *suspected positive*) for anyone with a score-based
146 imputation probability above a computed threshold (Supplementary Material 2).

147 **Hospitalization and Syndrome Severity:** Individuals were considered to have been hospitalized
148 when they indicated being either admitted to or discharged from hospital in their daily reporting,
149 within one week before/after reporting at least one of the tracked symptoms. Symptoms, test results
150 and hospitalization can be reported anytime and with no interdependencies in the app, and symptom
151 reporting is not censored after input of test results. Symptom severity was thus defined as the
152 weighted sum of symptoms based on peak presentation when comparing individuals reporting
153 hospital visit with individuals who did not, in the training set of the discovery cohort
154 (Supplementary Material 3). Symptoms were equated in the two cohorts.
155 The weighting was then normalized so that the severity index ranges from 0 (no symptom) to 1 (all
156 symptoms).

157 **2.4 Statistical analysis**

158 A power analysis was conducted to assess the suitability of the samples size. To account for the
159 difference in age distributions between pregnant and non-pregnant groups, age-standardization was
160 performed, by calculating weights for the non-pregnant women, to standardize to the age-
161 distribution of the pregnant population (Supplementary materials 4 and 5).

162 **Symptoms.** To explore differences in the symptom profile between pregnant and non-pregnant
163 women who tested or were suspected positive for SARS-CoV-2 and who also required
164 hospitalization or sought care, we applied univariate unconditional age-weighted logistic regression
165 for each of 18 symptoms ascertained in either the discovery cohort, the replication or in both. We
166 then conducted multivariate analysis on symptoms grouped into clusters by body system, as shown
167 in Table 2, and normalized to range from 0 to 1.

168 **Severity of syndrome.** To assess symptom severity differences between pregnant and non-pregnant
169 women who tested or were suspected positive for SARS-CoV-2 infection and were hospitalized,
170 univariate unconditional age-weighted regression was applied to the pregnant and non-pregnant
171 groups of the discovery cohort, with the severity index as a response variable. The analysis was

172 repeated for this cohort among those who reported to have been ‘seen at a hospital for their
173 symptoms’, conditional on those who predicted or tested positive for SARS-CoV-2.

174 **Hospitalization.** To explore differences in the symptom profiles between hospitalized and non-
175 hospitalized pregnant women positive for SARS-CoV-2, the frequency and percentage of women
176 reporting each symptom were calculated for the discovery cohort. Symptoms were ranked from the
177 most to the least frequently reported.

178 **Disease modifiers.** To identify demographic characteristics, comorbidities and pre-conditions
179 associated with COVID-19 symptom severity in pregnancy, a multivariate unconditional regression
180 was applied to each dataset, with the severity index as a response variable and age, diabetes, heart,
181 lung (and asthma) and kidney diseases as factors. As the regression investigated within-group
182 factors, age-weighting was not applied. Bonferroni correction for multiple tests was applied.

183 Statistical analyses were performed using STATA version 16 (discovery cohort) and R 3.6.3
184 (replication cohort).

185

186 **3. Results**

187 **Cohort Characteristics and COVID-19 Outcomes.** The discovery cohort (N=400,750
188 participants) was obtained from women (aged 18-44) in the test subset only. It includes longitudinal
189 records from 14,049 pregnant and 386,701 non-pregnant women who had a median duration of
190 follow-up of 18 days (IQR [6-34]) and contributed to an average of 6.6 reports per woman. Among
191 the 45% of pregnant women who self-reported their gestation week at baseline, 14% were in the
192 first trimester, 43% were in the second trimester, and 43% were in the third trimester. The
193 replication cohort consisted of N= 1,344,966 cross-sectional surveys from women aged 18-44. One-
194 time surveys were administered over the 9 week period, at average rate of about 149 thousand

195 surveys per week, using survey methodology. There were 41,796 surveys from women who
196 indicated they were pregnant (3.1% of the source population). Demography was consistent with US
197 age-specific pregnancy rates and stable over the survey period²³.

198 Demographic details are shown in Table 1, together with testing rates. In the discovery cohort, we
199 identified 629 and 25,061 pregnant and non-pregnant women, respectively, who were suspected
200 positive for SARS-CoV-2 infection based on the symptom-score-based imputation method. Of
201 these suspected positive, 21 (3.3%) pregnant and 591 (2.4%) non-pregnant were hospitalized,
202 respectively. In the replication cohort, the proportion of 1,076 (2.9%) suspected positive pregnant
203 was slightly lower compared to 44,772 (4.0%) suspected positive non-pregnant.

204 *Insert Table 1 about here*

205 Validation of the imputation method in a subset of the discovery cohort, and in the replication
206 cohort is depicted in Figure 1, with additional sensitivity analyses in Supplementary Material 2.

207 *Insert Figure 1 about here*

208 **Symptomatic, Syndromic and Severity Predictors:** Frequency of symptoms and body system
209 clusters is reported in Table 2, and graphically in Figure 2. In the discovery cohort, the most
210 frequent symptoms in the hospitalized pregnant women positive for SARS-CoV-2 were persistent
211 cough, headache and anosmia (all 80.0%), chest pain (73.3%), sore throat and fatigue (66.7%). In
212 the replication cohort, among pregnant test positive women who were seen at the hospital for their
213 illness, the most frequent symptoms were fatigue (87.5%), cough (84.6%), nausea or vomiting
214 (78.2%), muscle pain (76.2) and anosmia (75.2%).

215 *Insert Table 2 about here*

216 In the discovery cohort, univariate analysis on each symptom found significant effect of pregnancy
217 for decreased odds of *skipped meals* (OR 0.5, 95% CI 0.2 to 0.9) and of *delirium* (OR 0.2, 95% CI

218 0.1 to 0.6) but not for the other symptoms. Multivariate logistic regression found lower frequency of
219 neurologic symptoms (OR 0.3, 95% CI 0.2 to 0.6) for the positive hospitalized pregnant vs. non
220 pregnant women. Among test positives in the replication cohort, pregnancy status was most
221 strongly associated with increased odds of *nausea or vomiting* (OR 2.3, 95% confidence interval 1.5
222 to 3.5) and the *oropharyngeal* cluster (OR 1.6, 95% CI 1.2 to 2.2), even among test positives
223 reporting being seen at a hospital for their illness (OR 3.4, 95% CI 1.3 to 8.8 and OR 2.1, 95% CI
224 1.1 to 4.1, respectively), indicating how questions are asked can impact symptom profiles in this
225 population (all age-standardized and $p < 5e-05$ Bonferroni corrected).

226 *Insert Figure 2 about here*

227 Univariate weighted regression also showed that pregnancy had no statistically significant effect on
228 the severity of manifestation of SARS-CoV-2 infection, when expressed as ‘severity index’ in both
229 cohorts ($p > 0.001$, uncorrected to test the null hypothesis). In the discovery cohort, overall duration
230 of disease was similar for pregnant and non-pregnant women. However, time to peak of symptom
231 manifestation was statistically longer in pregnant women (mean time = 2.8 days) than in non-
232 pregnant (2.2 days, $p = 5.5e-7$), though clinically the difference may not be significant. In the
233 replication cohort, pregnant women who tested positive and reported being seen at the hospital
234 similarly reported a longer duration of illness.

235 As mentioned above, in the discovery cohort hospitalized positive pregnant women manifested
236 persistent cough, headache and anosmia (all 80%), chest pain (73.3%), sore throat and fatigue
237 (66.7%) as the most frequent symptoms. Non-hospitalised pregnant women positive for SARS-
238 CoV-2 reported headache (71.9%), anosmia (62.5%), persistent cough (57.8%) and skipped meals
239 (48.4%) most commonly (Figure 3). See Supplementary Material 6 for full list of symptoms and
240 their associated prevalence.

241 *Insert Figure 3 about here*

242 **Comorbidities:** Lung disease was the comorbidity that most impacted on the severity of symptoms
243 in pregnant positive women (t=4.1 for discovery cohort; t=14.1 for replication cohort, all p-
244 val<0.0001 Bonferroni corrected).

245 *Insert Table 3 about here*

246 In the replication cohort heart disease (t=7.1) also impacted on the severity of symptoms, followed
247 by kidney disease (t=4.6) and diabetes (t=3.6, all significant after Bonferroni correction at p-
248 val<0.0001).

249 **4. Discussion**

250 **Main Findings.** We studied two large cohorts of women, tested and suspected SARS-CoV-2
251 positive, with self-reported pregnancy status, symptoms and outcomes through participative
252 surveillance. Pregnant women reported more frequent testing for SARS-CoV-2 than non-pregnant
253 women, but generally did not experience more severe disease. Disease trajectories were similar, and
254 the time from onset to peak of symptoms was only slightly longer in pregnant than non-pregnant
255 women (2.8 vs. 2.2 days).

256 Gastrointestinal symptoms were different in pregnant and non-pregnant women with poor
257 outcomes, with decreased *skipped meals* in the discovery cohort and increased *nausea or vomiting*
258 in the replication cohort. Neurologic symptoms (only surveyed in the discovery cohort) were
259 decreased in pregnant women.

260 The current epidemiologic literature is largely based on pregnant women admitted to the hospital,
261 which provides a narrow view of the spectrum of SARS-CoV-2 infection in all pregnant women.
262 Our data show the preponderance of tested positive and even suspected positive pregnant women
263 were not seen at or admitted to the hospital for their illness; most pregnant women reported they
264 recover in the community, as was observed by Lokken et al.²⁴. Cardiopulmonary symptoms were

265 more frequently reported by pregnant women who were hospitalised. Notably, pre-existing lung
266 disease was confirmed as the largest risk factor to develop more severe COVID-19 symptoms in
267 pregnancy, as it is outside of pregnancy. Heart disease, kidney disease and diabetes were also risk
268 factors.

269 **Interpretation.** Pregnant women are considered a high-risk group in UK and were considered high
270 risk in the USA early in the pandemic. This likely contributed to the higher testing proportion but
271 lower positives results among pregnant women vs. non-pregnant. Hospitalized pregnant women
272 presented lower frequency of neurologic symptoms, especially *delirium*, which were only measured
273 in the discovery cohort. The replication cohort showed higher frequency of *gastrointestinal*
274 symptoms among pregnant women with more severe outcomes, especially *nausea or vomiting* in
275 pregnancy, which may be a feature of pregnancy itself (e.g. hyperemesis gravidum). Diarrhoea in
276 positive pregnant women has been previously reported (rates between 8.8% and 14%)^{25,26}.

277 Syndrome severity did not differ between pregnant and non-pregnant women in both datasets. This
278 posits an equivalent manifestation of SARS-CoV-2 infection in pregnant and non-pregnant, as
279 already reported by Chen and others^{9,12}.

280 Pre-existing lung disease is the comorbidity with strongest impact on the SARS-CoV-2 infection
281 severity in pregnant women in both cohorts. Lokken et al.²⁴ similarly reported asthma as a primary
282 risk factor for severe COVID-19 in pregnancy. Heart disease, kidney diseases and diabetes were
283 also associated with severity in the replication cohort which had high enough prevalence of these
284 conditions (related to survey-sampling to the general population) to detect an effect. These
285 comorbidities are consistent with risk factors in the general, non-pregnant population; Li et al.
286 observed chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, hypertension, coronary heart disease and
287 cerebrovascular diseases had the highest odd ratio for SARS-CoV-2 and admission to the intensive

288 care unit (ICU) ²⁷, while Kumar et al. found diabetes increased SARS-CoV-2 severity and mortality
289 two-fold ²⁸.

290 Cough, chest pain and dyspnea showed much higher incidence in the hospitalized pregnant women,
291 indicating that cardiopulmonary symptoms are the major discriminant for hospitalization. Similarly,
292 Ellington et al ²⁹, found increased ICU admissions and need of mechanical ventilation in pregnant
293 women, although the cohort studied had higher frequency of underlying medical conditions, and
294 might be less representative of the general pregnant population.

295 Pregnant women with pre-existing lung disease or prominent cardiopulmonary symptoms may need
296 special attention during the COVID-19 pandemic; lung disease had strongest impact on syndrome
297 severity while cardiopulmonary symptoms were the main factor predicting hospitalization in
298 pregnancy. Indeed, in pregnancy, cardiopulmonary reserve is limited which increases morbidity and
299 complicates management when there are added physiologic stressors (e.g. asthma exacerbation) ³⁰⁻
300 ^{32 33}. Diabetes was more common in the pregnant women in our cohorts, likely related to gestational
301 diabetes. We confirmed diabetes is associated to increased severity of SARS-CoV-2 symptoms ³⁴.

302 This study leveraged two cohorts followed through remote, participatory epidemiology, enabling
303 rapid assessment of COVID-19 in pregnancy. The longitudinal nature of the discovery dataset
304 enabled the comparison of disease duration, time from onset to peak of symptoms, and
305 hospitalization between pregnant and non-pregnant women, prospectively. Broadly, pregnancy does
306 not substantially contribute to morbidity in our community-based cohorts. Clinicians should be
307 more vigilant with pregnant who have pre-existing health conditions, prominent respiratory
308 symptoms or a higher severity index -- as is the case in the general population. Further studies
309 specifically targeting high-risk pregnancies and outcomes across the three trimesters may be
310 warranted, to better define outcomes in this population. Also, we point out the need to interpret
311 hospitalization rates and severity results in light of the policy changes, which can be dependent on
312 the context or country.

313 **Strengths and limitations.** Participatory surveillance tools are crucial to epidemiological research
314 and citizen science, as they increase population's awareness of urgent public health risks, promote
315 public participation into science and enable inclusion in studies of large samples from the
316 community within short time periods. Real-time public health data has been crucial in decision-
317 making during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, user of smartphone applications and web-based
318 surveys may not be representative of the general population, potentially limiting generalizability.
319 Self-reported events may suffer from misclassification bias, which may be differential (e.g. ability
320 to log hospitalization may be higher in less severely affected participants, test results known at the
321 time of cross-sectional symptom reporting may differ). Median app usage was 18 days, which may
322 be insufficient follow-up to ascertain all outcomes. In the discovery cohort, pregnancy status was
323 only queried at the time of registration; women who became pregnant after registration may be
324 misclassified. In addition, gestational age during the infection could not be assessed, as well
325 as whether women were symptomatic at the time of delivery. The replication cohort was designed
326 to be representative of USA population through survey sampling for the active user base and
327 weights with raking to the USA census. Despite the different platforms and country of origin of
328 users, the cross-sectional surveys showed similar results to the detailed longitudinal discovery
329 cohort of technology-aware smartphone users. However, it was not possible to distinguish
330 difference in methodology from country-specific effects. Additionally, we applied age-
331 standardization to account for demographic structure inherent to pregnancy. Despite the differences
332 in the UK, USA and Sweden testing guidelines and healthcare systems, morbidity with COVID-19
333 in pregnancy were comparable. We were able to develop and validate a prediction score for
334 suspected positive, as well as a severity score for use in women of childbearing age, and these
335 performed similarly in the cross-sectional survey data despite development using longitudinal
336 symptom reports. This may be useful for obstetricians in the context of limited access to SARS-
337 CoV-2 testing during this pandemic.

338 **Conclusions.** Our findings from two large real-time syndromic surveillance technologies provide
339 evidence that most pregnant women in the community who are positive for SARS-CoV-2 are at
340 similar risk of developing either increased morbidity or complex symptomatology compared with
341 non-pregnant women. However, pre-existing lung or cardiac disease may exacerbate
342 cardiopulmonary stress of pregnancy. Pregnant women with comorbidities appear to be at increased
343 risk for severe disease, consistent with evidence from COVID-19 infection in the general
344 population. Pregnant women with pre-existing conditions, similar to the general adult population,
345 require careful monitoring for the evolution of their symptoms during SARS-CoV-2 infection.

346

347

348 **Acknowledgements**

349 Authors express gratitude to all the participants who entered data into the smartphone app and
350 website, including study volunteers enrolled in the Coronavirus Pandemic Epidemiology (COPE)
351 consortium and Carnegie Mellon Delphi Research Center. We thank the staff of Zoe Global, the
352 Department of Twin Research at King's College London, the Clinical and Translational
353 Epidemiology Unit at Massachusetts General Hospital, the Department of Clinical Sciences in
354 Malmö at Lund University and the Department of Medical Sciences at Uppsala University for
355 tireless work in contributing to the running of the study and data collection.

356

357 **Declaration of interest**

358 EM, CMA, WM, JB, MFG, MM have no conflict of interest. ATC previously served as an
359 investigator on a clinical trial of diet and lifestyle using a separate mobile application that was
360 supported by Zoe Global Ltd.

361

362 **Funding**

363 This work was supported by Zoe Global. The Department of Twin Research receives grants from
364 the Wellcome Trust (212904/Z/18/Z) and Medical Research Council/British Heart Foundation
365 Ancestry and Biological Informative Markers for Stratification of Hypertension (AIMHY;
366 MR/M016560/1), and support from the European Union, the Chronic Disease Research Foundation,
367 Zoe Global, the NIHR Clinical Research Facility and the Biomedical Research Centre (based at
368 Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust in partnership with King's College London). The
369 School of Biomedical Engineering & Imaging Science and Centre for Medical Engineering at
370 King's College London receive grants from the Wellcome/EPSRC Centre for Medical Engineering
371 [WT 203148/Z/16/Z]. E.M. is funded by the 'Skills Development Scheme' of the Medical Research
372 Council UK. C.M.A. is funded by NIDDK K23 DK120899 and the Boston Children's Hospital
373 Office of Faculty Development Career Development Award. CHS is supported by an Alzheimer's
374 Society Junior fellowship (AS-JF-17-011). W.M., J.S.B. and A.T.C. are supported by the
375 Massachusetts Consortium on Pathogen Readiness (MassCPR) and Mark and Lisa Schwartz. Most
376 of the mentioned funding schemes are externally peer reviewed for scientific quality, and rely on
377 the involvement of patient and public panels in either the design or evaluation phases, or both.

378

379

380

381 **References**

- 382 1. Gorbalenya AE, Baker SC, Baric RS, de Groot RJ, Drosten C, Gulyaeva AA, et al. The
383 species Severe acute respiratory syndrome-related coronavirus: classifying 2019-nCoV and
384 naming it SARS-CoV-2. *Nature Microbiology*. 2020.
- 385 2. Sironi M, Hasnain SE, Rosenthal B, Phan T, Luciani F, Shaw MA, et al. SARS-CoV-2 and
386 COVID-19: A genetic, epidemiological, and evolutionary perspective. *Infection, Genetics
387 and Evolution*. 2020.
- 388 3. Wong SF, Chow KM, Leung TN, Ng WF, Ng TK, Shek CC, et al. Pregnancy and perinatal
389 outcomes of women with severe acute respiratory syndrome. *Am J Obstet Gynecol*. 2004;
- 390 4. Park MH, Kim HR, Choi DH, Sung JH, Kim JH. Emergency cesarean section in an epidemic
391 of the middle east respiratory syndrome: A case report. *Korean J Anesthesiol*. 2016;
- 392 5. Chui ML, Shell FW, Tse NL, Kam MC, Wai CY, Tin YW, et al. A case-controlled study
393 comparing clinical course and outcomes of pregnant and non-pregnant women with severe
394 acute respiratory syndrome. *BJOG An Int J Obstet Gynaecol*. 2004;
- 395 6. Panahi L, Amiri M, Pouy S. Risks of Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) in Pregnancy;
396 a Narrative Review. *Arch Acad Emerg Med*. 2020;
- 397 7. Khalil A, Kalafata E, Benlioglu C, O'Brien P, Morris E, Draycott T, et al. SARS-CoV-2
398 infection in pregnancy: A systematic review and meta- analysis of clinical features and
399 pregnancy outcomes. *EClinicalMedicine*. 2020;100446.
- 400 8. Khalil A, von Dadelszen P, Draycott T, Ugwumadu A, Magee LA. Increase in the incidence
401 of stillbirth during the COVID-19 pandemic. *JAMA - J Am Med Assoc*. 2020;July 10.
- 402 9. Chen Y, Li Z, Zhang YY, Zhao WH, Yu ZY. Maternal health care management during the
403 outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019. *Journal of Medical Virology*. 2020.
- 404 10. CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) People Who Need Extra Precautions Others At
405 Risk. If You Are Pregnant, Breastfeeding, or Caring for Young Children. 2020.
- 406 11. Hu Y, Sun J, Dai Z, Deng H, Li X, Huang Q, et al. Prevalence and severity of corona virus

- 407 disease 2019 (COVID-19): A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Clinical*
408 *Virology*. 2020.
- 409 12. Knight M, Bunch K, Vousden N, Morris E, Simpson N, Gale C, et al. Characteristics and
410 outcomes of pregnant women admitted to hospital with confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection in
411 UK: national population based cohort study. *BMJ*. 2020;
- 412 13. Chen H, Guo J, Wang C, Luo F, Yu X, Zhang W, et al. Clinical characteristics and
413 intrauterine vertical transmission potential of COVID-19 infection in nine pregnant women: a
414 retrospective review of medical records. *Lancet*. 2020;
- 415 14. Ceulemans M, Verbakel JY, Van Calsteren K, Eerdeken A, Allegaert K, Foulon V. SARS-
416 CoV-2 Infections and Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Pregnancy and Breastfeeding:
417 Results from an Observational Study in Primary Care in Belgium. *Int J Env Res Public Heal*.
418 2020;17(18):E6766.
- 419 15. McCullough PA, Eidt J, Rangaswami J, Lerma E, Tumlin J, Wheelan K, et al. Urgent need
420 for individual mobile phone and institutional reporting of at home, hospitalized, and
421 intensive care unit cases of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) infection. *Reviews in cardiovascular*
422 *medicine*. 2020.
- 423 16. Brownstein JS, Freifeld CC, Madoff LC. Digital disease detection - Harnessing the web for
424 public health surveillance. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 2009.
- 425 17. Hussain T, Smith P, Yee LM. Mobile Phone-Based Behavioral Interventions in Pregnancy to
426 Promote Maternal and Fetal Health in High-Income Countries: Systematic Review. *JMIR*
427 *mHealth and uHealth*. 2020.
- 428 18. mHealth solutions list [Internet]. p. <http://mhealth-hub.org/mhealth-solutions-against-c>.
429 Available from: <http://mhealth-hub.org/mhealth-solutions-against-covid-19>
- 430 19. Drew DA, Nguyen LH, Steves CJ, Menni C, Freydin M, Varsavsky T, et al. Rapid
431 implementation of mobile technology for real-time epidemiology of COVID-19. *Science* (80-
432). 2020;

- 433 20. Menni C, Valdes AM, Freidin MB, Sudre CH, Nguyen LH, Drew DA, et al. Real-time
434 tracking of self-reported symptoms to predict potential COVID-19. *Nat Med.* 2020;
- 435 21. Facebook Questionnaire [Internet]. p. https://cmu.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV_cT2ri.
436 Available from:
437 [https://cmu.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV_cT2ri3tFp2dhJGZ?Q_SurveyVersionID=curre](https://cmu.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV_cT2ri3tFp2dhJGZ?Q_SurveyVersionID=current&Q_CHL=preview)
438 [nt&Q_CHL=preview](https://cmu.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV_cT2ri3tFp2dhJGZ?Q_SurveyVersionID=current&Q_CHL=preview)
- 439 22. Kreuter F, Barkay N, Bilinski A, Bradford A, Chiu S, Eliat R, et al. Partnering with
440 Facebook on a university-based rapid turn-around global survey. *Surv Res Methods.*
441 2020;14(2).
- 442 23. CDC D. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db136.pdf> [Internet]. CDC data. 2020.
443 Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db136.pdf>
- 444 24. Lokken EM, Walker CL, Delaney S, Kachikis A, Kretzer NM, Erickson A, et al. Clinical
445 Characteristics of 46 Pregnant Women with a SARS-CoV-2 Infection in Washington State.
446 *Am J Obstet Gynecol.* 2020;
- 447 25. Yu N, Li W, Kang Q, Xiong Z, Wang S, Lin X, et al. Clinical features and obstetric and
448 neonatal outcomes of pregnant patients with COVID-19 in Wuhan, China: a retrospective,
449 single-centre, descriptive study. *Lancet Infect Dis.* 2020;
- 450 26. Yang Z, Wang M, Zhu Z, Liu Y. Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and Pregnancy: A
451 Systematic Review. *J Matern Fetal Neonatal Med.* 2020;Apr 30:1–4.
- 452 27. Li J, Xue H, Yuan Yuan, Wei Z, Li X, Zhang Y, et al. Meta-analysis Investigating the
453 Relationship Between Clinical Features, Outcomes, and Severity of Severe Acute
454 Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) Pneumonia. *Am J Infect Control.*
455 2020;Jun 12(S0196-6553(20)30369-2).
- 456 28. Kumar A, Arora A, Sharma P, Anikhindi SA, Bansal N, Singla V, et al. Is diabetes mellitus
457 associated with mortality and severity of COVID-19? A meta-analysis. *Diabetes Metab*
458 *Syndr Clin Res Rev.* 2020;

- 459 29. Ellington S, Strid P, Tong VT, Woodworth K, Galang RR, Zambrano LD, et al.
460 Characteristics of Women of Reproductive Age with Laboratory-Confirmed SARS-CoV-2
461 Infection by Pregnancy Status — United States, January 22–June 7, 2020. *MMWR Morb*
462 *Mortal Wkly Rep.* 2020;
- 463 30. Li N, Han L, Peng M, Lv Y, Ouyang Y, Liu K, et al. Maternal and neonatal outcomes of
464 pregnant women with COVID-19 pneumonia: a case-control study. *Clin Infect Dis.* 2020;
- 465 31. Qiao J. What are the risks of COVID-19 infection in pregnant women? *The Lancet.* 2020.
- 466 32. Gardner MO, Doyle NM. Asthma in pregnancy. *Obstetrics and Gynecology Clinics of North*
467 *America.* 2004.
- 468 33. Angeli F, Spanevello A, De Ponti R, Visca D, Marazzato J, Palmiotto G, et al.
469 Electrocardiographic features of patients with COVID-19 pneumonia. *Eur J Intern Med.*
470 2020;
- 471 34. Kayem G, Lecarpentier E, Deruelle P, Bretelle F, Schmitz T, Alessandrini V, et al. A
472 snapshot of the Covid-19 pandemic among pregnant women in France. *J Gynecol Obstet*
473 *Hum Reprod.* 2020;
- 474
- 475

476 Table 1. Characteristics of the two cohorts, presented as percentages and means (standard
 477 deviations) in the cohorts. Except for group age, percentages and means are age standardized to the
 478 pregnant population age distribution in each cohort. Adjustment for survey weights was applied to
 479 the replication cohort. Self-report of being seen at a hospital was used as a proxy for hospitalization
 480 in the replication cohort.

	Discovery Cohort			Replication Cohort		
	All (N=400, 750)	Non- pregnant (N=386,70 1)	Pregnant (N=14,04 9)	All (N=1,34 4,966)	Non- pregnant (N=1,303,1 70)	Pregnant (N=41,796)
Age (years) (not age- standardized)	32.1 (7.2)	32.1 (7.3)	32.4 (4.9)	29.0 (0.02)	29.0 (0.01)	29.0 (0.05)
Tested	7.0%	6.1%	8.0%	2.5%	2.4%	2.7%
Positive	0.6%	0.7%	0.6%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Negative	5.5%	4.9%	6.2%	2.2%	2.1%	2.2%
Suspected	5.6%	6.7%	4.5%	3.5%	4.0%	3.0%
Comorbidities						
Diabetes	1.8%	1.2%	2.3%	3.9%	3.5%	4.3%
Lung	12.9%	12.8%	11.3%	19.3%	19.8%	18.8%
Heart	0.6%	0.5%	0.6%	0.8%	0.9%	0.7%
Kidney	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.6%	0.7%	0.5%
Cancer	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.9%	1.1%	0.8%
Symptom Severity	0.07 (0.11)	0.07 (0.11)	0.04 (0.09)	0.08 (0.0005)	0.08 (0.0003)	0.07 (0.001)
Test positive and hospitalized*	0.09%	0.07%	0.1%	0.06 %	0.03%	0.09%
Suspected positive and Hospitalized*	0.16%	0.16%	0.15%	0.17 %	0.12%	0.23%

481 * Hospitalization not queried in replication cohort. Proportion of who tested positive or were
482 suspected positive and who reported seeking care at a hospital for symptoms in the prior 24 hours
483 provided as a proxy.

Table 2. Frequencies and percentage values of presentation of each symptom among hospitalized in the discovery cohort, and among all women who self-reported being seen at a hospital for their illness in the replication cohort (as hospitalization data were not available). Data are reported by pregnancy status and further subdivided by SARS-CoV-2 test positive or suspected COVID-19 status. Data are reported as N (%) in the discovery cohort, and N surveys (survey-weight adjusted %) in the replication cohort. *Fatigue* was mapped to *tiredness/exhaustion* and *unusual muscle pain* to *pain in muscle and joints* in the replication cohort. Symptoms not ascertained or mapped in either cohort are marked as not available (NA).

Cluster (body system)	Symptom	Discovery Cohort				Replication Cohort			
		Hospitalised non pregnant positive (N=229)	Hospitalised non pregnant suspected positive (N=591)	Hospitalised pregnant positive (N=15)	Hospitalised pregnant suspected positive (N=21)	Seen at hospital, non-pregnant positive (N=300)	Seen at hospital, non-pregnant suspected positive (N=1395)	Seen at hospital, pregnant positive (N=29)	Seen at hospital, pregnant suspected positive (N= 75)
Inflammation	Fever	151 (65.9)	359 (60.7)	8 (53.3)	12 (57.1)	135 (48.1)	514 (39.0)	12 (50.6)	19 (29.9)
	Unusual muscle pain	121 (52.8)	338 (57.2)	9 (60.0)	9 (42.9)	199 (69.0)	1,048 (77.0)	19 (76.2)	52 (71.8)
	Fatigue	125 (54.6)	345 (58.4)	10 (66.7)	8 (38.1)	207 (65.9)	1,142 (79.8)	24 (87.5)	61 (84.0)
Neurologic	Headache	185 (80.8)	516 (87.3)	12 (80.0)	17 (81.0)	NA	NA	NA	NA

	Delirium	88 (38.4)	253 (42.8)	4 (26.7)	1 (4.8)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cardiopulmonary	Dyspnea	113 (49.3)	316 (53.5)	9 (60.0)	11 (52.4)	166 (54.8)	913(65.1)	20 (73.6)	47 (66.9)
	Persistent cough	178 (77.7)	438 (74.1)	12 (80.0)	19 (90.5)	202 (68.2)	1,161 (82.3)	24 (84.6)	61 (81.0)
	Chest pain	170 (74.2)	463 (78.3)	11 (73.3)	14 (66.7)	156 (53.2)	787 (56.8)	17 (62.3)	34 (51.9)
	Difficulty breathing	NA	NA	NA	NA	144 (47.7)	710 (51.6)	16 (56.0)	36 (55.1)
Oropharyngeal	Hoarse voice	117 (51.1)	309 (52.3)	6 (40.0)	11 (52.4)	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Sore throat	148 (64.6)	371 (62.8)	10 (66.7)	14 (66.7)	118 (38.3)	552(39.1)	15 (59.0)	29 (46.7)
	Nasal congestion	NA	NA	NA	NA	146 (48.4)	719 (51.5)	19 (61.5)	45 (56.2)
	Runny nose	NA	NA	NA	NA	116 (35.9)	636 (48.5)	14 (57.0)	33 (51.4)
Anosmia/ageusia	Anosmia	177 (77.3)	481 (81.4)	12 (80.0)	19 (90.5)	182 (63.1)	786 (56.7)	20 (75.2)	47 (70.4)
Gastrointestinal	Skipped meals	153 (66.8)	400 (67.7)	7 (46.7)	11 (52.4)	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Abdominal pain	115 (50.2)	274 (46.4)	9 (60.0)	10 (47.6)	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Diarrhoea	126 (55.0)	275 (46.5)	7 (46.7)	11 (52.4)	137 (49.2)	611 (44.4)	17 (59.8)	39 (56.1)
	Nausea or	NA	NA	NA	NA	138 (49.4)	633 (49.8)	21 (78.2)	51 (79.4)

	vomiting								
--	----------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Table 3. Frequencies and percentages of comorbidities and pre-existing conditions in the discovery and replication cohorts. Columns refer to pregnant women tested and suspected positive for SARS-CoV-2 infection. Data are reported as N (%). Data from the replication cohort are reported as N surveys (survey-weight adjusted %). Conditions not ascertained or mapped in either cohort are marked as not available (NA).

Comorbidity or pre-existing condition	Discovery Cohort		Replication Cohort	
	Pregnant test positive (N=79)	Pregnant suspected positive (N=629)	Pregnant test positive (N=134)	Pregnant suspected positive (N=1076)
Diabetes	3 (3.8)	15 (2.4)	11 (8.9)	76 (7.4)
Lung disease	8 (10.1)	80 (12.7)	37 (31)	376 (34.2)
Heart disease	1 (1.3)	5 (0.8)	5 (6.3)	41 (4.8)
Kidney disease	0 (0.0)	2 (0.3)	8 (7.8)	30 (43.3)
Hypertension	NA	NA	17 (13.9)	170 (15.4)
Autoimmune	0 (0.0)	8 (1.3)	14 (11.5)	106 (9.3)
Cancer	0 (0.0)	1 (0.2)	5 (4.7)	29 (3.2)
Smoking / Past smoker	6 (7.6) 13 (16.5)	36 (5.7) 121 (19.2)	NA	NA

Figure 1. Receiver Operating Characteristics curve showing validation of the imputation of SARS-CoV-2 test status using the mapped symptom score probability in the replication cohort. Area under the curve is 74%.

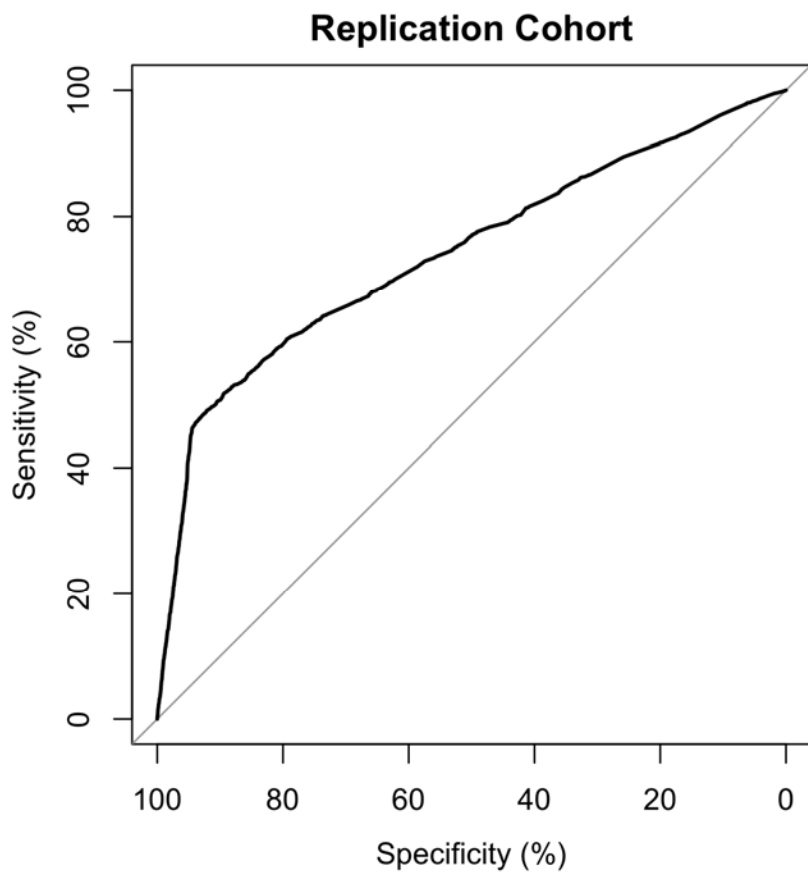


Figure 2. Comparison of symptoms presentation in the discovery (DC) and replication (RC) cohorts. Results refer to non-pregnant (orange) and pregnant (blue) women tested positive and suspected positive for SARS-CoV-2 and who required hospitalization (in DC, darker shade) or were seen at the hospital (RC, lighter shade). Results are reported as age-standardized percentage of women reporting each symptom in each sub-cohort.

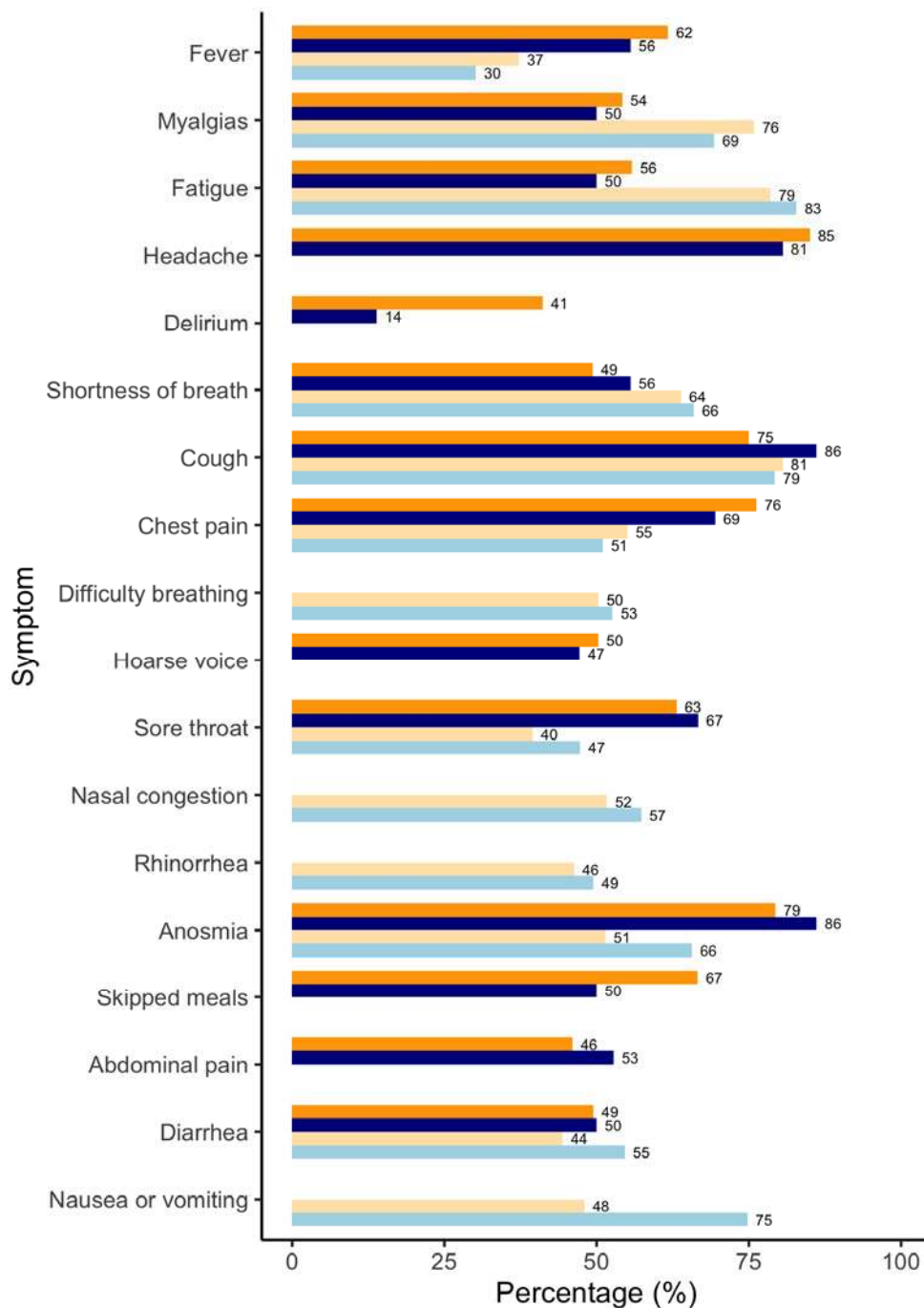


Figure 3. Symptom profile of hospitalized and non-hospitalized pregnant and non-pregnant women positive and suspected positive to SARS-CoV-2 in the discovery cohort. Results are reported in percentage of women reporting each symptom in each group.

