

Dear Colleagues,

Please find below a list of news items from the past fortnight that may be of interest to those involved in public health on the afternoon of Tuesday 4th March 2014. This service provides topical news and reports of relevance to public health teams, community health practitioners and anyone with an interest in health promotion in collaboration with other health library services in Thames Valley & Wessex.

Please contact me if you no longer wish to receive this bulletin, or if you know of anyone else who would like to join the mailing list. The bulletins are now also available on the Health Education Wessex website at:
http://www.workforce.southcentral.nhs.uk/libraries_elearning/library_knowledge_resources/public_health_updates.aspx

Alcohol misuse

[Payout for child sought over pregnant mother's drinking](#)

5 March 2014

A child who suffered serious health defects owing to her mother's drinking during pregnancy deserves compensation, a local authority will claim in court.

[Councils want social networks to introduce Nekominate warnings](#)

22 February 2014

Social networking sites Facebook and Twitter should introduce warnings over the drinking game Nekominate, councils in England and Wales have said.

[Young people aim to smash stereotypes at Youth Alcohol Summit](#)

21 February 2014

Children and young people attending the Youth Alcohol Summit will today call on policy makers to see them as part of the solution to the alcohol problems the country is facing, not part of the problem.

Chronic conditions

[Virtual arm eases phantom limb pain](#)

26 February 2014

Doctors have devised a new way to treat amputees with phantom limb pain. Using computer-generated augmented reality, the patient can see and move a virtual arm controlled by their stump.

Communicable diseases

[Significant drop in measles cases in England](#)

28 February 2014

There was a sharp fall in the number of cases of measles in England at the end of 2013, figures from Public Health England show.

Rare 'polio-like' disease reports

24 February 2014

US doctors are warning of an emerging polio-like disease in California where up to 20 people have been infected.

Diet & nutrition

Is cooked meat linked to increased dementia risk?

25 February 2014

Cooking meat "may" increase the risk of developing dementia, reports BBC News.

Drug Misuse

Baby-boomer drug and alcohol warning

27 February 2014

There is a growing problem of drug and alcohol misuse among older people, as "baby-boomers" age, campaigners are warning.

Health protection

MMR first dose uptake in Wales hits new highs

4 March 2014

The number of two-year-olds in Wales who have received the MMR vaccination has reached new highs, according to the latest figures.

Flu jab "may cut" stroke risk by a quarter

21 February 2014

A recent report has revealed that people who have the seasonal flu jab are 24% less likely to suffer a stroke, according to The Daily Telegraph

Health services administration

A Sliding Doors moment for the NHS?

5 March 2014

Sliding Doors is a film that strikes a chord with many people. It alternates between two parallel universes based on the two paths the central character's life could take depending on whether or not she catches a train. Life - as it was for Gwyneth Paltrow in the 1998 movie - is full of these "what if?" moments. The same is true for the NHS.

HIV & AIDS

HIV teens survived against the odds

2 March 2014

In the 1990s, thousands of babies born with HIV in Zimbabwe died in infancy, as today's cheap life-saving drugs were not available in sub-Saharan Africa. But to the great surprise of doctors, there are thousands of teenagers who have lived with HIV for more than a decade.

Infant & child health

[Child health problems 'linked to father's age'](#)

27 February 2014

A wide range of disorders and problems in school-age children have been linked to delayed fatherhood in a major study involving millions of people.

[Is breast milk really best, American study asks](#)

27 February 2014

"Breast milk is 'no better for a baby than bottled milk' and it increases the risk of asthma, expert claims," reports the Mail Online. The news comes from a large US study of children aged 4 to 14 looking at whether breastfeeding is associated with better health and academic outcomes.

Men's health

[20% rise in penile cancer: are STIs to blame?](#)

19 February 2014

"The rise of penis cancer: Cases soar by 20%, amidst fears that symptoms are being misdiagnosed as STDs," reports the Mail Online.

Mental health

[Psychological abuse 'should be a made crime'](#)

5 March 2014

Psychological abuse should be made a crime in England and Wales in order to save more victims of domestic violence, campaigners have said.

[Childhood nightmares link to psychotic experiences](#)

3 March 2014

"Regular nightmares in childhood may be an early warning sign of psychotic disorders," BBC News reports.

[Mental health and community health providers to be inspected from April](#)

24 February 2014

CQC have announced the second group of mental health and community health providers that will be inspected as part of their new approach to inspecting specialist mental health services.

[Could electroconvulsive therapy zap worst nightmares?](#)

23 February 2014

Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT)...can be used to erase memories, Dutch researchers have found - raising hopes of a new treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder.

[How does commuting affect wellbeing?](#)

22 February 2014

The daily commute to work is something to be put up with rather than enjoyed, yet how we get there and how long it takes has an impact on how we feel.

[What type of people choose assisted suicide?](#)

20 February 2014

"Women, divorcees and atheists are most likely to choose assisted suicide," the Mail Online reports, "with nearly 20% saying they are 'simply weary of life'".

Obesity

[Sugar tax may be necessary, England's chief medical officer says](#)

5 March 2014

A sugar tax may have to be introduced to curb obesity rates, the chief medical officer for England has said.

[How seaweed could slow the obesity tidal wave](#)

3 March 2014

UK researchers have looked at alginates that occur naturally in "kelp" seaweed (the variety that resembles large blades). They found that these alginates may help reduce the amount of fat the body digests.

[C-section birth 'link to later obesity'](#)

27 February 2014

People born by Caesarean section are more likely to be obese later in life than those born naturally, a large analysis suggests.

[Women have more obesity treatment](#)

26 February 2014

More than twice the number of women than men needed hospital treatment because of their waistline, figures for England show.

[Obese people in Wales 'denied' life saving treatment](#)

25 February 2014

Obese people in Wales are being denied access to life saving treatments, a leading group of surgeons has said.

Older people

[Pensioner denied chance to die at home beside his brother](#)

3 March 2014

A retired South Yorkshire miner was prevented from going home to die beside the brother he had lived with his whole life, because of a string of errors by the five organisations tasked with looking after him, an investigation has found.

[Could food bags help reduce hospital readmissions?](#)

24 February 2014

Elderly hospital patients who have no one to care for them are being given food bags containing basic provisions to help them cope after they have been discharged.

Oral health

[Gum disease may be linked to arthritis](#)

26 February 2014

"Brushing your teeth well could help prevent arthritis," the Mail Online advises after scientists found that the bacteria that causes gum disease – *P. gingivalis* – may also damage joints. But the Mail's advice – though well meaning – is premature. This study involved mice and did not assess whether tooth brushing reduced the risk of arthritis.

Physical activity

[Cycling safety – a special report](#)

24 February 2014

Is cycling a great way to get fit and save money on transport costs, or an increasingly dangerous pastime? Are cyclists aggressive lycra louts who jump red lights, or innocent victims of inconsiderate white van drivers and HGVs?

Safety & accident prevention

[Patients 'are safer with better-educated nurses'](#)

26 February 2014

"Fewer nurses educated to degree level putting patients' lives at risk, study finds," The Independent reports. A Europe-wide study suggests that nurse education and patient to nursing staff ratios may impact on patient outcomes.

Smoking

[Passive smoking 'damages children's arteries'](#)

5 March 2014

Passive smoking causes lasting damage to children's arteries, prematurely ageing their blood vessels by more than three years, say researchers.

Social & economic issues

[UN body criticises US states' cannabis legalization](#)

4 March 2014

A UN illegal drugs body has criticised 2012 moves in two US states to legalise recreational use of marijuana.

[Domestic violence 'wake-up call' issued by watchdog](#)

26 February 2014

Doctors and nurses should receive special training so they can recognise the signs of domestic violence and ask questions, the health watchdog says.

Statistics

[Five-year 'death test' provides few answers](#)

26 February 2014

A “death test” that supposedly predicts the chance of a healthy person dying in the next five years has been developed by scientists, The Daily Telegraph reports.

[Teen pregnancy rate 'lower still'](#)

25 February 2014

The number of teenage pregnancies in England and Wales has continued to drop, latest figures show.

[Over a million babies a year die on first day of life](#)

25 February 2014

"More than a million babies around the world die on the day of their birth yearly," is the sobering news in The Guardian after a report by the charity [Save the Children](#) argued that further action is required to combat child mortality.

Women's health

[Fears pregnant women are ignoring folic acid advice](#)

20 February 2014

“Women are ignoring expert advice to take folic acid supplements before pregnancy to protect their unborn children,” The Guardian reports. The results of a recent UK study have prompted calls for flour to be fortified with folic acid.

Local news: []

Other relevant bulletins – in order to avoid duplication we leave DH and NICE publication to Public Health Awareness Bulletins.

Other South East Public Health news update services:		
Title	Focus areas	Contact details/ Website
NICE Public Health Awareness Bulletins:	A monthly update containing national public health news and information from NICE.	https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/about-evidence-services/bulletins-and-alerts/whats-new-in-public-health/public-health-bulletin-archive
Health Intelligence bulletin	Fortnightly email update containing public health news, publications and information from government and other relevant websites.	Jill Rutland Kent & Medway Public Health Network jill.rutland@nhs.net