

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 15 April 2014.

This service, in collaboration with other health libraries in Thames Valley & Wessex, provides topical news and reports of relevance to public health teams, community health practitioners and anyone with an interest in health promotion.

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 also available on the Wessex Public Health Network website at:

<http://www.wessexphnetwork.org.uk/resources/public-health-updates.aspx>

Alcohol misuse

[Majority of people unaware of unit guideline limits](#)

Wednesday 9 April 2014 Source: Drinkaware: <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk>

New survey results from Drinkaware study has found that over two thirds of 25-65 year olds are not sure how many units they can drink to stay in the low risk guidelines and do not know how many units are in a pint of beer or glass of wine.

[Later life heavy alcohol consumption associated with faster cognitive decline](#)

Wednesday 9 April 2014 Source: ukhealthforum: <http://www.ukhealthforum.org.uk>

A longitudinal study of over 7,000 people with a mean age of 56 at baseline has found that excessive alcohol consumption in men is associated with faster cognitive decline than those who had light-moderate consumption. Cognitive assessment was performed at baseline and alcohol consumption was reported three times in the preceding ten years. Women who drank heavily also showed a quicker decline than those who drank lightly.

[Ban on the sale of alcohol below cost of duty plus VAT](#)

Friday 4 April 2014 Source: Alcohol Concern: <http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk>

Alcohol Concern responds to the introduction of the ban on the sale of alcohol below the cost of duty plus VAT. The ban comes in to effect on April 6 2014.

[Doctors issue drinks price plea](#)

Tuesday 1 April 2014 Source: BBC Health: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health>

A group of doctors has written an open letter to the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) asking it to drop its opposition to minimum price rules for alcohol.

Chronic conditions

[Removing copper from body could slow cancer](#)

Thursday 10 April 2014 Source: NHS Choices: <http://www.nhs.uk>

Researchers have found that a drug that reduces the amount of copper in the body may also be able to lessen the growth of some kinds of tumours.

[Painkiller use linked to irregular heartbeat](#)

Wednesday 9 April 2014 Source: NHS Choices: <http://www.nhs.uk>

"Painkillers used by millions of Britons have been linked to higher risk of an irregular heartbeat that could trigger a stroke," the Mail Online reports.

[Can warm-water exercise help high blood pressure?](#)

Thursday 3 April 2014 Source: NHS Choices: <http://www.nhs.uk>

"Working out in warm water could be a radical new cure for high blood pressure," the Mail Online reports. Results of a small study suggest that "hot aquarobics" may benefit people who had failed to respond to conventional treatment for high blood pressure.

[New genetic clues about skin cancer](#)

Wednesday 2 April 2014 Source: NHS Choices: <http://www.nhs.uk>

Genetic mutations 'warn of risk'," reports BBC News today. The science behind the headline involved sequencing the genetic material of 184 people with a strong family history of malignant melanoma, the most serious type of skin cancer.

[Blood sugar rush: diabetes time bomb in London](#)

April 2014 Source: Greater London Authority: <http://www.london.gov.uk>

This report finds that almost half a million Londoners are living with Type 2 diabetes and that the figure is set to increase exponentially over the coming years. It aims to find out what is driving the increase in Type 2 diabetes across London, and how the delivery of diabetes care is managed and where improvements can be made in providing that care.

[Could statins also protect against dementia?](#)

Monday 14 April 2014 Source: NHS Choices: <http://www.nhs.uk>

"Heart pills taken by millions of people in Britain could dramatically reduce the risk of dementia," the Daily Express reports.

Communicable diseases

[Most scarlet fever cases in 20 years](#)

Tuesday 8 April 2014 Source: BBC Health: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health>

More cases of scarlet fever have been reported since the start of the year than occurred during the whole of 2013.

['Millions wasted' on flu drug](#)

Thursday 10 April 2014 Source: BBC Health: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health>

Hundreds of millions of pounds have been wasted on Tamiflu, a drug for flu that may work no better than paracetamol, a landmark analysis says.

[Effectiveness of Tamiflu and Relenza questioned](#)

Thursday 10 April 2014 Source: NHS Choices: <http://www.nhs.uk>

"Ministers blew £650 MILLION on useless anti-flu drugs," the Daily Mail reports. The paper cites a large study, which investigated the effectiveness of the antiviral drugs Tamiflu (oseltamivir) and Relenza (zanamivir).

[Hepatitis C: New drug treatment 'is a breakthrough'](#)

Saturday 12 April 2014 Source: BBC Health: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health>

A new treatment for hepatitis C "cured" 90% of patients with the infection in 12 weeks, scientists said.

[New hepatitis C drug treatment 'shows promise'](#)

Monday 14 April 2014 Source: NHS Choices: <http://www.nhs.uk>

"A new treatment for hepatitis C 'cured' 90% of patients with the infection in 12 weeks, scientists said," BBC News reports.....

Diet & nutrition

[Help your heart, eat pulses](#)

Wednesday 9 April 2014 Source: ukhealthforum: <http://www.ukhealthforum.org.uk>

Researchers from Canada and US have found a correlation between the consumption of pulses and reduction in low-density lipoprotein cholesterol. The results from the study showed that those who ate one serving of peas, beans, chickpeas or lentils each day had the greatest effect.

[Call to make 5 a day fruit and veg into '7 a day'](#)

Tuesday 1 April 2014 Source: NHS Choices: <http://www.nhs.uk>

"Eating seven or more portions of fruit and vegetables a day is healthier than the five currently recommended," BBC News report.

[Vegetarians have 'poorer quality of life' study claims](#)

Friday 4 April 2014 Source: NHS Choices: <http://www.nhs.uk>

"Vegetarians are 'less healthy and have a lower quality of life than meat-eaters'," The Independent reports. A study from Austria suggests there is an association between a vegetarian diet and an increased risk of certain chronic diseases.

[Salt cuts have 'saved lives,' says study](#)

Tuesday 15 April 2014 Source: NHS Choices: <http://www.nhs.uk>

"Cutting back on salt does save lives," is the good news on the front page of the Daily Mail. The headline is based on a study of data obtained from the Health Survey for England, the National Diet and Nutrition Survey, and the Office for National Statistics between 2003 and 2011.

Disability

[Pressure sensors to help prevent pain for amputees](#)

Tuesday 15 April 2014 Source: BBC Health: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health>

Researchers have developed a new type of pressure sensor - dubbed a "second skin" - which they say could prevent dangerous sores.

[RNIB: Eye clinics should provide sight loss advisors](#)

Tuesday 15 April 2014 Source: BBC Health: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health>

Every eye clinic in the UK should provide access to a sight loss advisor, the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) has claimed.

Drug Misuse

Sharp increase in steroid users

Wednesday 9 April 2014 Source: BBC Newsbeat: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat>

A leading drugs charity says it has seen a 645% increase in the number of steroid users at needle exchanges.

Environmental health

Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability

Thursday 3 April 2014

Source: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: <http://www.ipcc.ch>

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) evaluates how patterns of risks and potential benefits are shifting due to climate change and how risks can be reduced through mitigation and adaptation. It recognizes that risks of climate change will vary across regions and populations, through space and time, dependent on myriad factors including the extent of mitigation and adaptation.

Air pollution reaches high levels

Wednesday 2 April 2014 Source: BBC Health: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health>

Air pollution in parts of England has reached high levels in the past 24 hours, Defra has said. People with health problems have been warned to take particular care because of the pollution - a mix of local emissions and dust from the Sahara.

Health services administration

Mental health cuts cost NHS millions

Thursday 10 April 2014 Source: BBC Health: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health>

Mental health cuts are costing the NHS millions long-term as reduced preventive measures mean more people are ending up in hospital, a report says.

Accesses to health data made public

Thursday 3 April 2014 Source: BBC Health: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health>

A list of bodies that have been allowed to access NHS patient information has been released. The Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) approved 459 requests for data from 160 organisations between April and December 2013, it shows.

One year on, new commissioning groups are an improvement on their predecessors but do not reflect the views of members, say GPs

Tuesday 1 April 2014 Source: The King's Fund: <http://www.kingsfund.org.uk>

Less than half of GPs feel decisions made by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), the doctor-led bodies created by the NHS reforms to hold local health budgets, reflect their views, suggests a survey by the Nuffield Trust and The King's Fund.

[GP opening hours scheme 'to benefit seven million patients'](#)

Monday 14 April 2014

Source: BBC Health: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health>

New opening hours for some GP surgeries in England will benefit more than seven million patients, far more than originally planned, David Cameron says.

HIV & AIDS

[HIV home test kits given go-ahead](#)

Sunday 6 April 2014

Source: BBC Health: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health>

Kits allowing people to test themselves for HIV at home can be bought over the counter in the UK for the first time - but no kits exist yet in Britain.

Infant & child health

[Lower risk of diabetes and heart disease in stronger children](#)

Wednesday 2 April 2014

Source: Medical news Today: <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com>

Researchers from the University of Michigan Medical School have found that children's strength capacity can have both short and long term benefits for their health.

Men's health

[Male eating disorders 'overlooked'](#)

Wednesday 9 April 2014

Source: BBC Health <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health>

Young men with an eating disorder are not getting the help and support they need because of a perceptions about a "women's illness", say researchers.

[Single men risk ignoring melanoma symptoms](#)

Wednesday 2 April 2014

Source: NHS Choices: <http://www.nhs.uk>

"Men who live alone at greater skin cancer risk," The Daily Telegraph reports. The headlines are based on a population study from Sweden, which followed almost 30,000 people diagnosed with malignant melanoma – the most serious form of skin cancer.

[Depressed young men at highest risk of becoming sedentary later](#)

Tuesday 1 April 2014

Source: Science Daily: <http://www.sciencedaily.com>

Young men may be more vulnerable to becoming sedentary later on than women are if they are depressed at a young age, a study finds.

[How often is prostate cancer misdiagnosed?](#)

Friday 11 April 2014

Source: BBC Health: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health>

The headline is worrying: "half of prostate cancer misdiagnosed". It came from a Cambridge University study which followed hundreds of men who were given a prostate cancer diagnosis.

[No way to reliably identify low-risk prostate cancer](#)

Friday 11 April 2014

Source: NHS Choices: <http://www.nhs.uk>

“Men with prostate cancer being given 'false hope',” The Daily Telegraph reports.

Mental health

[Bereaved parents heard at last](#)

Wednesday 9 April 2014

Source: BBC Health <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health>

Up until now, no-one has ever asked parents who have experienced stillbirth or the death of a baby shortly after birth what they felt about the care they received.

[Living with the 'opposite of autism'](#)

Monday 7 April 2014

Source: BBC Health <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health>

The joys and dangers of living with Williams Syndrome.

[Heart failure is significantly more likely in those suffering from depression](#)

Monday 7 April 2014

Source: ukhealthforum: <http://www.ukhealthforum.org.uk>

Researchers from Levanger Hosptial in Norway have found that people suffering from depression had a 40 per cent greater chance of suffering heart failure.

[Fears over dementia diagnosis push](#)

Wednesday 2 April 2014

Source: BBC Health <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health>

Questions are being raised about the government's drive in England to increase dementia diagnosis rates.

Obesity

[Being overweight or obese has been underestimated as a risk factor in mortality](#)

Wednesday 9 April 2014

Source: Population Health Metrics: <http://www.pophealthmetrics.com>

A doctoral student at the University of Pennsylvania believes that many obesity studies underestimate the impact of obesity on mortality risk. Andrew Stokes believes the flaw in many studies is the use of participant BMI at the time of the survey. Stokes found when looking at a participants highest point of BMI on record the correlation between excess weight and death was much higher.

Oral health

[Good teeth may help sporting success](#)

Saturday 5 April 2014

Source: BBC Health: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health>

Dentists say elite athletes could stand a better chance of winning gold medals if they look after their teeth.

[Is frequent mouthwash use linked to oral cancer?](#)

Friday 4 April 2014

Source: NHS Choices: <http://www.nhs.uk>

"Experts warn using mouthwash more than twice a day can give you cancer," the Daily Mirror reports. The news comes from a European study that examined the oral health and dental hygiene of people diagnosed with cancers of the mouth, throat, vocal chords or oesophagus (collectively called "upper aerodigestive cancers").

Physical activity

[Active by design: designing places for healthier lives](#)

March 2014

Source: Design Council: <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/>

This guide looks at how the design of buildings and public spaces in cities and towns can lead to positive changes in our lifestyle and ultimately to greater levels of physical activity. It outlines the key facts which detail the problems of inactivity; examples of action which could be taken; and suggestions for different sectors and professions.

[Tackling physical inactivity - a coordinated approach](#)

Tuesday 8 April 2014

Source: All-Party Commission on Physical Activity: <http://activitycommission.com/>

The final report of the All-Party Commission on Physical Activity makes policy recommendations to tackle the need for action to end the physical inactivity epidemic in the UK.

[Running 'preserves thinking skills'](#)

Thursday 3 April 2014

Source: BBC Health: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health>

Aerobic exercise in your 20s may protect the brain in middle age, according to US research.

Smoking

[Sons of prepubescent smokers are fatter](#)

Tuesday 8 April 2014

Source: Medical news Today: <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com>

A study conducted by researchers at the University of Bristol have found boys who started smoking before the age of 11 were more likely to produce fatter sons. The study found that these children would be 5-10kg heavier than average in their teens. The results were not as pronounced in daughters and were not seen in children of smokers who started after 11.

[Tobacco marketing targeted at adolescents](#)

Monday 7 April 2014

Source: Journal of Adolescent Health: <http://www.jahonline.org>

Researchers assessed direct-to-consumer tobacco marketing and its association with smoking behaviour among adolescents and young adults.

[Review recommends plain cigarette packs](#)

Friday 4 April 2014

Source: NHS Choices: <http://www.nhs.uk>

"The government has announced its support for the introduction of standardised cigarette packets, following a review," BBC News reports. The review concludes that plain packaging would have a positive impact on public health.

The Tobacco Control Scale 2013 in Europe

Friday 4 April 2014

Source: Association of European Cancer Leagues: <http://www.europeancancerleagues.org/>

In this report, the authors describe the results of a survey of tobacco control activity in 34 European countries in 2013 using the Tobacco Control Scale (TCS), first described in their 2006 paper, [The Tobacco Control Scale: a new scale to measure country activity](#). Here the authors report the results of the 2013 survey, show changes in rankings from the last (2010) survey, and discuss the results. It found that the United Kingdom has the most comprehensive tobacco control measures in Europe.

Social & economic issues

'Selfie' body image warning issued

Thursday 10 April 2014

Source: BBC Health: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health>

Spending lots of time on Facebook looking at pictures of friends could make women insecure about their body image, research suggests.

Warm Well Families project

Wednesday 9 April 2014

Source: ukhealthforum: <http://www.ukhealthforum.org.uk>

The Warm Well Families project, conducted by researchers at Sheffield Hallam University, has found that there is a complex network of factors that make families in South Yorkshire vulnerable to fuel poverty.

Gay blood donation 'devolved matter'

Monday 7 April 2014

Source: BBC Health: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health>

A decision on whether gay men in NI should be able to donate blood should be a devolved matter, the Department of Health in England has said.

Gadget light causing sleep problems

Friday 4 April 2014

Source: BBC Newsbeat: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat>

More than nine out of 10 young people expose themselves to the blue light from smartphones and tablets, before bed, causing problems with sleep.

More aggressive tactics needed to address fuel poverty

Wednesday 2 April 2014

Source: The Guardian: <http://www.theguardian.com>

Mervyn Kohler, external affairs advisor for Age UK, discusses in the Guardian the "difficult position" the Department of Energy and Climate Change currently faces in trying to tackle fuel poverty whilst also consulting on lowering energy bills by reducing the 'green taxes' that fund fuel poverty reduction work.

Fuel Poverty and Health Toolkit

April 2014

Source: ukhealthforum: <http://www.ukhealthforum.org.uk>

This guide published by Healthy Places is intended to be a tool for directors of public health and their teams, health and wellbeing boards, and colleagues across local authorities who want to start, extend or improve their work on fuel poverty.

[Dutch study finds small tax increase on sugary drinks could reduce consumption](#)

Wednesday 2 April 2014 Source: ukhealthforum: <http://www.ukhealthforum.org.uk>

A team from the VU University of Amsterdam created a 3D computer simulation of a supermarket to study the effects of increased tax on sugary drinks.

Statistics

[Census 2011 analysis, disability free life expectancy at birth, at age 50 and at age 65: CCGs 2010-12](#)

Friday 28 March 2014 Source: Office for National Statistics: <http://www.ons.gov.uk>

Life expectancy (LE) is an important outcome measure of mortality among an area's residents; however, alone it does not tell us anything about the health related quality of life of these years. Disability-free life expectancy (DFLE) figures, which are based on subjective self-assessed disability evaluations, add value to life expectancy estimates by calculating the average lifetime spent without a disability which limits a persons day-to-day activities.

[Adult Health in Great Britain, 2012](#)

Tuesday 1 April 2014 Source: Office for National Statistics: <http://www.ons.gov.uk>

This is the final Opinions and Lifestyle Survey report using the 2012 data, following the [Smoking Habits Amongst Adults, 2012](#) and [Drinking Habits Amongst Adults, 2012](#) reports. This report focuses on the prevalence of long-standing illness or disability in Great Britain, and how it varies by different groups of society.

Women's health

[Lab-grown vaginas successfully implanted](#)

Friday 11 April 2014 Source: NHS Choices: <http://www.nhs.uk>

"Doctors implant lab-grown vagina" is the headline on the BBC News website, reporting on the latest breakthrough in the increasingly exciting field of tissue engineering.

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