

Public Health Bulletin. 20141222

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Please find below a list of news items from the past fortnight that may be of interest to those involved in public health. This Bulletin provides topical news and reports of relevance to public health teams, community health practitioners and anyone with an interest in health promotion. All content and links are provided for information only and we do not sponsor, endorse or otherwise approve of any mentioned website or the contents of the news items. Please refer to the terms and conditions of the relevant website should you wish to reproduce any of the information.

Details of alternative current awareness services which cover more academic/specialist sources of information can be found in the section *Other Bulletins*. Your local NHS library service can assist you in accessing other current awareness services/tailored alerts, locating peer reviewed journal articles and answer any other queries you may have regarding finding information.

The information about each news item only gives a brief overview so we recommend you view the original source by clicking on the title (or Ctrl+Click in the word document).

Please contact your local NHS library service 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 Thames Valley Public Health Network at: <http://phabtv.net/bulletins/> and the Wessex Public Health Network at: <http://www.wessexphnetwork.org.uk/resources/public-health-updates.aspx>

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Alcohol misuse

[Dry January – It's your round...](#)

10th December 2014

Source: Alcohol Concern: www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/

Alcohol Concern's Ben Fitzgerald talks about the fast-approaching Dry January and how he's prepared for a month of no booze...

[Study finds alcohol industry is hampering harm reduction policies](#)

10th December 2014

Source: UK Health Forum: www.ukhealthforum.org.uk

Research, published in PLoS Medicine, has found that the alcohol industry in Australia and the UK has significant influence on alcohol policy reform.

[Liquid nitrogen cocktail: Oscar's Wine Bar in Lancaster faces Safety Charges](#)

16th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

A woman who drank a cocktail containing liquid nitrogen needed to have her stomach removed.

Chronic conditions

[NICE proposes to recommend drug for psoriatic arthritis](#)

9th December 2014

Source: NICE: www.nice.org.uk

NICE has opened a consultation on its draft guidance which proposes recommending ustekinumab (Stelara) as a treatment option for psoriatic arthritis in certain circumstances.

[Gene therapy could help with inherited blindness](#)

10th December 2014

Source: NHS Choices www.nhs.uk/news

"Procedure to restore sight in dogs gives hope for future blindness cure," The Independent reports.

[NICE updates guidance to help adults and children achieve better control of their diabetes](#)

11th December 2014

Source: NICE: www.nice.org.uk

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is updating its guidance to support adults and children with diabetes and help them have as normal a life as possible.

[Memory gaps in graduates a 'stroke warning sign'](#)

12th December 2014

Source: NHS Choices www.nhs.uk/news

"People with memory problems who have a university education could be at greater risk of a stroke," BBC News reports.

[Wales' bowel surgery death rate 'higher than expected'](#)

15th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

The number of bowel cancer patients dying after surgery in Wales appears to be higher than expected, new figures published on Monday suggests.

[Asthma and allergy devices 'not used properly'](#)

20th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

Patients with asthma and severe allergies are often not taught how to use their medical devices properly, charities have warned.

NHS DNA scheme to fight cancer and genetic diseases

22nd December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

A new genetics project could help "unlock a series of secrets about devastating diseases", the NHS says.

Communicable diseases

How to beat malaria

9th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News www.bbc.co.uk

The World Health Organization says it is confident that deaths from malaria could be stopped entirely.

Ebola outbreak: Virus still 'running ahead of us', says WHO

10th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

The Ebola virus that has killed thousands in West Africa is still "running ahead" of efforts to contain it, the head of the World Health Organization has said.

Superbugs to kill 'more than cancer' by 2050

11th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

Drug resistant infections will kill an extra 10 million people a year worldwide - more than currently die from cancer - by 2050 unless action is taken, a study says.

Ebola vaccine trial 'interrupted' due to joint pains

11th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

The clinical trial of an Ebola vaccine in Switzerland has been interrupted after some patients complained of joint pains in their hands and feet.

Ebola serum supply reaches Liberia

15th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

Liberia has begun treating Ebola patients with serum therapy - a treatment made from the blood of recovered survivors.

Flu jabs needed 'immediately' after hospital outbreaks

16th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

At-risk people and NHS staff are being urged to get flu jabs immediately as cases of flu hit the community and local hospitals.

PHE figures confirm flu season has started

18th December 2014

Source: Public Health England: www.gov.uk

Latest figures from Public Health England show that flu is now circulating in the community with an increase in both children and adult cases.

Ebola crisis: Top Sierra Leone doctor dies from disease

19th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

One of Sierra Leone's top doctors died from Ebola hours after the arrival in the country of an experimental drug that could have been used to save him.

Diet & nutrition

Hopes for chemicals that turn 'bad' fat 'good'

9th December 2014

Source: NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/news

"Scientists discovered how to trigger a molecule which can turn 'bad' white fat cells into 'good' energy-burning brown fat cells," The Daily Telegraph reports, saying that it could "replace the treadmill".

Ready meals may count towards five a day

9th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

The government is considering adding its "five-a-day" logo to ready meals and tinned foods that contain fruit and vegetables.

Food additive that could reduce appetite

11th December 2014

Source: NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/news

"Appetite suppressing additive could be added to food to create 'slimming bread'," ITV News reports.

'Sugar worse than salt' row erupts

11th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

Scientists have clashed over claims that sugar may be worse for blood pressure and heart health than salt.

Food allergy laws enforced in restaurants and takeaways

12th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

Restaurants and takeaways across Europe will be required by law to tell customers if their food contains ingredients known to trigger allergies.

GI diet 'debunked' claims are misleading

19th December 2014

Source: NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/news

Today, the Mail Online says, "The GI diet debunked: Glycaemic index is irrelevant for most healthy people", explaining how "it doesn't matter if you eat white or wholewheat bread".

Disability

Nikki Fox 'walks' on her own for first time in years

19th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

The NHS is trialling robotic suits called exoskeletons. The device is strapped to the legs and torso to help patients with some disabilities to walk.

Access to Work: Disability scheme 'needs more funding

19th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

MPs say substantial numbers of disabled people are missing out on government support to help them into work.

Environmental health

'Electromagnetic smog' unlikely to harm humans

18th December 2014

Source: NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/news

The Daily Telegraph reports that “mobile phones are unlikely to harm human health”, adding to the ongoing, and often conflicting, coverage of the potential health impact of environmental exposure to what some commentators have called “electromagnetic smog”.

Health services administration

A third of NHS contracts awarded to private firms – report

10th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

A third of NHS contracts in England have been awarded to private sector providers since the service was reorganised in 2013, figures suggest.

Public health commissioning in the NHS 2015 to 2016

11th December 2014

Source: Public Health England: www.gov.uk

This agreement sets out outcomes to be achieved and funding provided for NHS England to commission public health services.

Auditors question public health spend

17th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

A £2.7bn fund to improve public health in England is not always being spent where most needed, a watchdog says.

Denmark patients visiting the doctor via the internet

18th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

The internet is set to make dramatic changes to the relationship between doctor and patient.

Infant & child health

Millie Thompson's nursery death prompts first aid review

16th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

A review of paediatric first aid training for nursery staff across England is to take place following the death of a baby in Greater Manchester.

Autism link to air pollution raised

18th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

A link between autism and air pollution exposure during pregnancy has been suggested by scientists.

Men's health

Fathers-to-be experience hormone changes

17th December 2014

Source: NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/news

“Men suffer pregnancy symptoms too: Fluctuating hormones make fathers-to-be ... more caring,” the Mail Online reports.

Mental health

Historical abuse counselling wait 'up to three years'

9th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

Victims of historical sexual abuse are having to wait up to three years for counselling, a charity has claimed.

Connections between perceived safety and walkability of neighbourhoods and depression

9th December 2014

Source: UK Health Forum: www.ukhealthforum.org.uk/

Researchers investigated longitudinal associations between perceived walkability and safety of a neighbourhood and depressive symptoms among older Latino adults.

Back-to-work schemes are 'making mental illness worse' says charity

11th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

The government's back-to-work schemes are ineffective and damaging for people with mental health problems, according to campaigners.

Broadmoor to test camera that monitors vital signs

11th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

Broadmoor is to test a camera that remotely monitors patients' vital signs such as heart and breathing rate.

Lowest earners three times more likely to suffer from poor sleep

11th December 2014

Source: Homeless Link: www.homeless.org.uk

A new survey has revealed that your chance of getting a good night's sleep is directly related to the size of your income. In the poll of 2,000 UK adults, more than three times as many people on the lowest incomes have trouble sleeping as those with the highest salaries.

Self-harm hospital admissions among children 'at five-year high'

12th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

The number of children being admitted to hospital in England for self-harm is at a five-year high, figures show.

Feeling 'young at heart' may increase lifespan

16th December 2014

Source: NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/news

"Feeling young at heart wards off death, scientists find," The Daily Telegraph reports.

Five lifestyle changes to reduce dementia risk

16th December 2014

Source: UK Health Forum: www.ukhealthforum.org.uk/

Research, funded by Age UK, suggests that there are five lifestyle changes people can take to reduce their risk of developing dementia.

Enjoying the great outdoors – nature's own stress buster

16th December 2014

Source: Economic and Social Research Council:

<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/>

Nature has beneficial effects that help us cope with stress at work, according to new research funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). The research,

conducted by Dr Valerie Gladwell at the University of Essex, highlights the power of the 'great outdoors' to improve both physiological and psychological wellbeing.

[Mentally-ill teenagers no longer to be held in cells](#)

18th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

Teenagers experiencing mental health problems will no longer be detained in police cells as a "place of safety".

[Report calls for more support for vulnerable doctors](#)

19th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

Up to 28 doctors took their own lives between 2005 and 2013 while being investigated by the General Medical Council, a review of cases has found.

Obesity

[NHS Devon smokers and obese surgery bar dropped](#)

11th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

Plans to place conditions on routine surgery for smokers and the morbidly obese in Devon have been dropped.

[Fat 'breathed out' of body via lungs, say scientists](#)

17th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

Fat can be breathed out as well as burned off as you lose weight, biochemists who have studied metabolism at a microscopic level say.

[Obesity 'could be a disability' - EU courts rule](#)

18th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

Obesity can constitute a disability in certain circumstances, the EU's highest court has ruled.

Physical activity

[Yoga may help protect against heart disease](#)

16th December 2014

Source: NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/news

"Yoga could be as effective as cycling or brisk walks in reducing the risk of a heart attack or stroke," The Guardian reports.

Sexual health

[FPA welcomes human rights challenge to abortion law in Northern Ireland](#)

10th December 2014

Source: The Family Planning Association: www.fpa.org.uk/

FPA welcomes the decision by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) to challenge abortion law in the country.

Rules for babies 'from three people'

17th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

The rules for creating babies from three people - which state only two would be classed as parents - have been announced by the UK government.

Smoking

E-cigarettes could help some smokers quit

17th December 2014

Source: NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/news

"E-cigarettes can help smokers quit or cut down heavily," The Guardian reports. An international review of the evidence, carried out by the well-respected Cochrane Collaboration, found evidence that they can help some smokers quit.

Car smoke ban 'to start in October'

17th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

Smoking in cars with children will be banned in England, under new laws put forward by the government.

Women's health

Around 1 in 10 maternal deaths due to flu

9th December 2014

Source: NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/news

"Nearly one in ten pregnant deaths caused by flu," The Daily Telegraph reports. A review into maternal deaths, which thankfully remain rare, found that conditions such as the flu and sepsis account for many of the deaths.

Poor water and hygiene 'kills mothers and newborns'

14th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

Many mothers and newborns are dying because of a lack of sanitation, safe water and hygiene while giving birth, leading health experts have warned.

Extra mental health support for new mums and mums-to-be

17th December 2014

Source: BBC Health News: www.bbc.co.uk

Women with or at risk of mental health problems should receive extra support at all stages of pregnancy and beyond, updated NHS guidelines say.

Big Lottery funding awarded to scale up Young Mums' Project in 2015

17th December 2014

Source: Mental Health Foundation: www.mentalhealth.org.uk

The Young Mums' Project – which was piloted in 2012 and in partnership with Linden Children's Centre in Hackney – focuses on supporting young parents with mental health issues through peer-to-peer support, physical activity, wellbeing, play, and overcoming emotional barriers such as stigma, isolation and stereotypes.

Workplace health

Could a '10 to 6' working day help you sleep better?

12th December 2014

Source: NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/news

A major new study of American workers has recommended "later start times to improve on health," the Mail Online reports.

Shift workers more likely to report poor health

18th December 2014

Source: NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/news

"Higher rates of obesity and ill-health have been found in shift workers than the general population," BBC News reports.

Local news: []

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Other Bulletins

Big Four Bulletin

This is a weekly Bulletin that details original articles in the BMJ, JAMA, New England Journal of Medicine and The Lancet.

<http://cash.libraryservices.nhs.uk/cash-service/rss-newsfeed-menu/medicine/big-four-bulletin/>

Daily Health Bulletin

The Daily Health Bulletin is produced by the Knowledge Service of the West and South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw Commissioning Support Unit.

<http://cash.libraryservices.nhs.uk/cash-service/daily-health-bulletin/>

NICE Public Health Awareness Bulletin

This is a monthly update highlighting 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>

PHE Bulletin (Public Health England)

The PHE Bulletin is issued monthly and contains public health news and information.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/phe-bulletin>

Public Health and Social Care Bulletin

This is published weekly and created by Kent & Medway Public Health Observatory. It provides an update on what is new in public health and social care, both nationally and locally.

<http://www.kmpho.nhs.uk/events-and-updates/bulletins/bulletins-archive/>