

Public Health Bulletin. Date 10th February 2015

Produced by NHS libraries in Thames Valley and Wessex

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://phabbtv.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

Armed forces alcohol abuse strategy criticized

Tuesday, 3rd February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

The government's strategy for combating alcohol abuse in the armed forces is ineffective, a top psychiatrist says. Prof Neil Greenberg, lead on military health at the Royal College of Psychiatrists, said educating personnel about dangers did not stop them from excessive drinking.

Chronic conditions

Type 1 diabetes 'more dangerous' in women

Monday 9th February 2015

Source: NHS Choices www.nhs.uk

"Type 1 diabetes is more dangerous for women than men, study finds," The Daily Telegraph reports. A large review found gender inequality in overall deaths among people with type 1 diabetes, and also deaths due to heart disease.

Is asthma being overdiagnosed?

Monday, 2nd February 2015

Source: NHS Choices www.nhs.uk

A potentially alarming figure that emerged in the UK news last week was that "1 million" UK adults may have been wrongly diagnosed with asthma – So, where did the figure of 1 million come from? All the UK press rallied round a statement in the draft guideline that said: "studies of adults diagnosed with asthma suggest that up to 30% do not have clear evidence of asthma". What followed was clearly a "back of the envelope" calculation extrapolating this to the number of people receiving treatment for asthma in the UK, which is around 4.1 million. This gave the magic figure of 1.23 million potentially misdiagnosed people.

Communicable diseases

Flu jab is not a 'waste of time'

Friday 6th February 2015

Source: NHS Choices www.nhs.uk

"Flu jab given to millions is 'useless'," and "Flu jab is a waste of time," are the irresponsible headlines in The Daily Telegraph and the Daily Mail. While recent research shows that the current seasonal flu vaccine only has 3% protection against the main circulating strain – A(H3N2) – in adults, it can still protect against other strains.

Flu and freezing weather may be driving up winter death rates

Wednesday, 4th February 2015

Source: NHS Choices www.nhs.uk

"The current death rate in England and Wales is running about one-third higher than its normal rate for this time of year," BBC News reports. A combination of [flu](#) and very cold weather may be responsible. The BBC's story comes from the latest official statistics on deaths in England and Wales. They show that in the last three weeks of January, death rates were significantly higher than predicted for the time of year.

Flu vaccine 'barely effective' against main viral strain

Thursday 5th February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

This year's seasonal flu vaccine is barely able to protect people from the main strain of flu being spread in the UK, health officials say. Doctors are being urged to use antiviral drugs quickly to protect vulnerable patients.

[Ebola: Call for more sharing of scientific data](#)

Monday, 2nd February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

Ebola is an international emergency so why isn't more data on the virus being made public? asks Helen Briggs. The devastation left by the Ebola virus in west Africa raises many questions for science, policy and international development. One issue that has yet to receive widespread media attention is the handling of genetic data on the virus. By studying its code, scientists can trace how Ebola leapt across borders, and how, like all viruses, it is constantly evolving and changing.

Diet & nutrition

[Exhibition examines the science behind food cravings](#)

Wednesday, 11th February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

A new exhibition at London's Science Museum is exploring what influences our appetite and cravings.

[Food fight: Row over saturated fat advice](#)

Tuesday, 10th February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

A row has erupted over claims that official guidance to cut down on saturated fat had been based on shaky evidence.

Disability

[The winemaker who had to relearn how to taste and smell](#)

Wednesday, 11th February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

Andrew Hedley trained as a chemist on Tyneside, while harbouring dreams of becoming a winemaker in New Zealand. But when he finally found himself at the right end of a wine bottle, throat cancer meant he could no longer taste or smell his own creations.

Emergency planning

[Call to boost antibiotics funding to tackle 'looming crisis'](#)

Thursday, 5th February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

Far more money needs to be pumped into global drug research to tackle the looming crisis of antimicrobial resistance, a report says.

Health promotion

[PHE and NHS England guide highlights importance of communities to health and wellbeing](#)

Wednesday 11th February 2015

Source: GovUK <https://www.gov.uk>

A new guide from Public Health England (PHE) and NHS England has identified how local government and the NHS have important roles in building confident communities to improve health and reduce inequalities.

Health protection

[Travel safely this Chinese New Year](#)

Wednesday 11th February 2015

Source: GovUK <https://www.gov.uk>

PHE and NaTHNaC remind UK travellers going to Asia to avoid contact with live poultry or wild birds and practise good hand hygiene.

HIV & AIDS

[PHE action plan tackles health inequalities for men who have sex with men](#)

Wednesday 4th February 2015

Source: GovUK <https://www.gov.uk>

The plan focuses on 3 interrelated areas in which MSM are disproportionately burdened with ill-health: sexual health and HIV (Human immunodeficiency virus), mental health and in the use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco.

Infant & child health

[Campaigners want tougher regulation of alcohol adverts](#)

Thursday, 5th February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

There should be stricter regulations on alcohol advertising because of its impact on children, campaigners say. A survey of 800 primary school pupils showed many were more familiar with brands of beer than with leading brands of biscuits, crisps and ice-cream.

[Warnings over 'skinny selfies' craze on social media](#)

Tuesday, 3rd February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

Some of the country's top child psychiatrists say they are very concerned about an online craze for so-called "skinny selfies" among teenagers. They are warning that the sharing of pictures, mainly by girls on social media websites, is fuelling anorexia among young people.

[Teen screen time linked to less sleep](#)

Tuesday, 3rd February 2015

Source: NHS Choices www.nhs.uk

The study involved almost 10,000 older teens in Norway and included any device that had a screen, such as tablets, laptops, smartphones, games consoles, PCs and TVs. It found that those who used electronic devices in the hour before going to bed took longer

to fall asleep. They were also more likely to feel they needed at least another two hours sleep more than they actually got. The same was true of those who spent at least two hours of their leisure in various forms of screen time. The more time a teenager spent on electronic devices, the less sleep they tended to get.

Mental health

End scandal of mentally ill being held in police cells, MPs say

Friday, 6th February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

The number of people with mental health illnesses being detained in police cells is a "scandal", MPs have said. A Home Affairs Committee report called for a change in the law so that police cells were no longer deemed a "place of safety" under the Mental Health Act.

One in five records of mental health patients lack evidence that their rights have been explained to them after being detained, finds CQC

Thursday, 5th February 2015

Source: CQC <http://www.cqc.org.uk/>

The regulator of health and adult social care is concerned that people across England are being detained under the Mental Health Act without their legal rights being discussed or explained to them, without being fully assessed for their willingness and ability to consent to their treatment, and without always having easy access to appropriate independent advice.

Talking about mental health is just the first step

Thursday, 5th February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

People are being encouraged to spend five minutes talking about mental health as part of the second annual Time to Talk day. But talking isn't the end goal, argues Mark Brown.

'Facebook envy' associated with symptoms of depression

Thursday, 5th February 2015

Source: NHS Choices www.nhs.uk

"Facebook can cause depression in people who compare themselves with others," The Independent reports. A new study has examined the relationships between Facebook use, feelings of envy, and feelings of depression.

Obesity

Tribunal rules obese employees in Northern Ireland can get disability rights

Wednesday 11th February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

Obese workers in Northern Ireland can be deemed eligible for disability protections, an employment tribunal has ruled.

'Focus on Fitness not fatness'

Tuesday 10th February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

In this week's Scrubbing Up, Dr Gavin Sandercock argues there has been a well-meaning but misguided focus on obesity, while the harm caused by inactivity has been overlooked.

Older people

[A&E struggles with growing elderly population](#)

Monday, 2nd February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

Recent reports have shown many hospital accident and emergency (A&E) departments are in crisis after facing unprecedented demand.

Physical activity

[Why activity trackers deliver mismatched fitness data](#)

Tuesday 10th February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

Fitness trackers can monitor our activity 24/7 but how accurate are the devices.

[Too much jogging 'as bad as no exercise at all'](#)

Tuesday, 3rd February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

Too much jogging may be as bad for you as not putting on your running shoes at all, a report in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology says.

Safety & accident prevention

[Warning over drug-driving law and prescribed medication](#)

Tuesday, 10th February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

People who have been prescribed powerful anxiety or pain relief drugs are being warned about a new drug-driving law. As well as outlawing driving while under the influence of illegal drugs, new legislation will include some prescription medicines.

Sexual health

[Finger length 'not a pointer' for future sexual behaviour](#)

Friday 6th February 2015

Source: NHS Choices www.nhs.uk

"How to work out if your partner is cheating on you? Check their fingers," the Daily Mirror advises. The news comes from research founded on the theory that humans are believed to display two types of mating pattern – one more promiscuous, and the other more monogamous.

Smoking

[E-cigarettes 'may harm the lungs and immune system'](#)

Thursday, 5th February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

E-cigarettes contain some toxic chemicals and are not a safe alternative to smoking tobacco, US research suggests.

Social & economic issues

Is a richer world a healthier one?

Tuesday, 3rd February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

The BBC's new A Richer World season is exploring global wealth, poverty and inequality. The world is richer now than ever before. But has it made us healthier?

Women's health

'No alcohol in early pregnancy' call

Tuesday, 10th February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

Women trying for a baby and those in the first three months of pregnancy should not drink any alcohol, updated UK guidelines say.

Pregnant travellers offered new flight advice

Friday, 6th February 2015

Source: BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

The safest time to fly during pregnancy is before 37 weeks or, if carrying twins, before 32 weeks, new advice says.

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/>