

Public Health Bulletin. 11 August 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

[Study suggests safe alcohol guidance 'unrealistic'](#)

Wednesday 5 August 2015

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

UK government guidelines on how much alcohol it is safe to drink are unrealistic, largely ignored and should be changed to reflect modern drinking habits, a study has suggested.

Black and ethnic minority groups

[Stem Cells: Call for Black and Asian donors](#)

Tuesday 4 August 2015

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

Stem cells can change the lives of people with serious diseases as they have the ability to become virtually any human tissue. However the cells can only be of benefit if a matching donor is found which poses a problem for patients from Black, Asian and minority ethnic heritage.

Chronic conditions

[Melanoma skin cancer guidelines for NHS updated](#)

Wednesday 29 July 2015

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

New guidelines for diagnosing and treating melanoma skin cancers have been issued to the NHS in England. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) hopes they will end a wide variation in the diagnosis and treatment of the disease.

[Prostate cancer: Five types 'found'](#)

Thursday 30 July 2015

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

Scientists have identified five types of prostate cancer, each with a distinct genetic signature. And by comparing 250 samples removed in surgery with the patients' subsequent progress, they have identified some types that are more likely to recur.

[New 'iClusters' identify five subtypes of prostate cancer](#)

Friday 31 July 2015

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

"Scientists have identified five types of prostate cancer, each with a distinct genetic signature," BBC News reports. The hope is that recognising the genetic signature of a specific cancer could lead to targeted treatments, as is the case with some types of breast cancer.

[Pancreatic cancer urine test hope](#)

Monday 3 August 2015

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

A simple urine test that could detect pancreatic cancer much earlier than at present has been developed by scientists. They found a protein "signature" only present in people with the disease.

Cancer survival 'lagging in England'

Wednesday 5 August 2015

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

England's track record for cancer survival remains poorer than other countries with similar health systems, a study suggests. Published in the British Journal of Cancer, the research compares England's survival trends with figures for five other countries over 15 years.

The struggle of being a parent with multiple sclerosis

Thursday 6 August 2015

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

Nicola Smith, who has multiple sclerosis (MS), has told the Victoria Derbyshire programme she is worried her condition will lead her six-year-old son, Finlay, to miss out. She told the programme that because of the tiredness the condition can cause, everyday parenting tasks like taking her son to school can also make her feel "like you've run a marathon".

Communicable diseases

Ebola: 'Isn't that over yet?'

Wednesday 29 July 2015

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

When I told people earlier this month that I was off to West Africa again to cover the Ebola outbreak, the resounding response was, "Isn't that over yet?"

Ebola vaccine is 'potential game-changer'

Friday 31 July 2015

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

A vaccine against the deadly Ebola virus has led to 100% protection and could transform the way Ebola is tackled, preliminary results suggest. There were no proven drugs or vaccines against the virus at the start of the largest outbreak of Ebola in history, which began in Guinea in December 2013.

World Health Organization: Trials could lead to first Ebola vaccine

Friday 31 July 2015

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

Initial results from an Ebola vaccine trial in Guinea are "exciting" and "promising", according to the World Health Organization (WHO). WHO Director General Margaret Chan told a news conference that the vaccine could bring an end to the epidemic in Africa.

Scientists hail '100% effective' Ebola vaccine

Monday 3 August 2015

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

"Ebola vaccine is 'potential game-changer'," says BBC News, while the Daily Mail cites a "100% effective jab" for the disease. These headlines stem from early results of a trial investigating the effects of an Ebola vaccine during the most recent outbreak of the virus in west Africa.

Meningococcal B and ACWY: vaccination programme monitoring

Thursday 30 July 2015

Source: Public Health England*: <https://www.gov.uk>

This slideset contains information for healthcare professionals on the monitoring of the meningococcal B and ACWY vaccination programmes.

Students targeted in MenW vaccination programme

Saturday 1 August 2015

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

Teenagers going to university and college this year are being offered protection against a deadly strain of meningitis, called MenW. GPs across the UK are inviting 17 and 18-year-olds to come for a vaccine. First-time students under 25 are eligible too.

New meningococcal vaccination programme expected to save lives

Monday 3 August 2015

Source: Public Health England*: <https://www.gov.uk>

The MenACWY vaccination programme is beginning with the vaccination of teenagers aged between 17 and 18 years old. Public Health England (PHE) is welcoming the start of the new MenACWY vaccination programme that will offer teenagers protection against meningitis (inflammation of the brain) and septicaemia (blood poisoning) caused by 4 meningococcal strains including MenW

Eligible groups for shingles vaccine announced

Tuesday 4 August 2015

Source: Public Health England*: <https://www.gov.uk>

The PHE announcement follows a letter issued to healthcare professionals about eligibility for the 2015 to 2016 vaccination programme.

Hand washing web programme 'helps reduce infections'

Friday 7 August 2015

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

A web-based programme encouraging people to wash their hands more frequently could reduce the risk of catching and passing on infections, a study suggests. Researchers writing in The Lancet tested it on around 16,000 households in the UK during the winter flu season.

Medical innovations get £18m funding

Saturday 8 August 2015

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

Development of a universal flu vaccine and a home testing kit for lung infections are among 12 projects to have received backing from an £18m fund for medical innovation.

Diet & nutrition

[Sugar: Can we trust industry?](#)

Thursday 30 July 2015

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

Imagine a kilo of sugar - the large bag that you might buy in a supermarket. It's a lot, isn't it? But that's exactly how much sugar the average adult consumes in a fortnight. Teenagers have even more. This is the reason why the sweet stuff is the new frontier in the campaign to get people to live healthier lives.

[Health by stealth: Inside the food lab](#)

Monday 3 August 2015

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

Food manufacturers are increasingly looking to make their products healthier, without consumers noticing a change in taste. The Victoria Derbyshire programme visits one laboratory trying to provide an answer.

[Everyone 'should take vitamin D pills'](#)

Monday 3 August 2015

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

Everyone should consider taking vitamin D supplements to counter the lack of sunshine in the UK, government experts are proposing. The draft Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition guidelines suggest, from the age of one, 10 microgram pills be taken to ensure people get enough.

[Could eating spicy food help you live longer?](#)

Wednesday 5 August 2015

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

"Curry really could be the spice of life," says The Daily Telegraph, reporting on a study looking at the link between regularly eating foods that contain capsaicin – found in chilli peppers – and the risk of dying early.

[New brain diet 'slows mental decline'](#)

Thursday 6 August 2015

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

"Eating food rich in vitamins and minerals keeps the brain younger," reports the Daily Express. The headline was prompted by a US study of a new diet called MIND, which appeared to slow down ageing of the brain.

[Can eating white bread and pasta make you depressed?](#)

Friday 7 August 2015

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

"White bread and pasta 'may increase the risk of depression'," reports the Mail Online today. It doesn't take much to realise that feeling down from time to time is probably not caused by the last cheese sarnie or bowl of spag bol you ate. But in this case, the news outlet is reporting on a well-conducted study of post-menopausal women's diets and their depressive symptoms over time.

Drug Misuse

[How dangerous is laughing gas?](#)

Friday 31 July 2015

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

The UK government is moving to ban the sale of nitrous oxide to clubbers and partygoers because of its dangers, but some users are protesting that the move is unfair. Exactly how dangerous is the gas?

Health services administration

[GP workloads 'put patients at risk'](#)

Wednesday 29 July 2015

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

Patient safety is at risk because of increasing GP workloads in the UK, doctors' leaders are warning. The Royal College of GPs said the pressure of more consultations, complex cases and increased bureaucracy was causing fatigue and burnout.

[GP fatigue a 'risk' to patient safety, warns RCGP](#)

Wednesday 29 July 2015

Source: Royal College of General Practitioners: <http://www.rcgp.org.uk>

Fatigue among overworked GPs is becoming so prevalent that it could jeopardise patient safety on a widespread scale unless urgent action is taken to address this, the Royal College of General Practitioners warns today.

[Give us your views to help us develop our 2016 to 2021 strategy](#)

Monday 3 August 2015

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

In 2013 we launched Raising Standards, Putting People First – a three year strategy introducing our new approach to regulation including the appointment of three chief inspectors. We are now developing a new strategy to be launched in spring 2016. This will be a five year strategy that will set out our vision for health and social care quality regulation in the future.

[NHS vulnerable to health card fraud, government admits](#)

Monday 10 August 2015

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

The NHS is potentially vulnerable to fraud due to loopholes in the issuing of European Health Insurance cards, the Department of Health has admitted. An investigation by the Daily Mail found people who had never worked in Britain were able to obtain a free EHIC card in the UK, the paper says.

HIV & AIDS

[HIV flushed out by cancer drug](#)

Friday 31 July 2015

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

HIV can be flushed out of its hiding places in the body using a cancer drug, researchers show. The cornerstone of treatment, anti-retroviral therapy, kills the virus in the bloodstream but leaves "HIV reservoirs" untouched.

[Hiding HIV virus 'flushed out' by skin cancer drug](#)

Monday 3 August 2015

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

"HIV flushed out by cancer drug", BBC News reports. This headline was prompted by laboratory research showing the promising results of a cancer drug being used to treat HIV.

Infant & child health

[£143m for children's mental health services in England](#)

Friday 31 July 2015

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

The government is to invest £143m improving children's mental health services in England this year. The funding is part of a £1.25bn package of increased spending on children and adolescents' mental health services announced in March's budget.

Men's health

[Can the so-called 'male menopause' be treated with HRT?](#)

Thursday 30 July 2015

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

"New research suggests that testosterone deficiency in older men is much more prevalent than current screening methods suggest, and that more men would benefit from hormone treatment," The Daily Telegraph reports.

[Does red meat affect male fertility?](#)

Tuesday 11 August 2015

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

"Want to be a dad? Cut out sausages and eat chicken," the Daily Mail reports, prompted by the findings of a recent study into diet and fertility outcomes for couples undergoing fertility treatment.

Mental health

[Brain game 'improves lives of schizophrenia patients'](#)

Monday 3 August 2015

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

A computer-based brain-training game could improve the daily lives of people with schizophrenia, say University of Cambridge researchers. Tests on a small number of patients who played the game over four weeks found improvements in memory and learning. This could help people to get back to work or studying after a diagnosis.

[Home Office to issue mental health disclosure advice](#)

Sunday 9 August 2015

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

New guidelines will list factors that must be considered before people's mental health crises are disclosed to employers in background checks. Police will have to examine

issues such as how long ago a detention under the Mental Health Act occurred, when assessing whether it is disclosed.

Older people

[Some over-the-counter drugs may be linked to falls in older men](#)

Wednesday 29 July 2015

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

"Popular over-the-counter drugs for hay fever and insomnia may increase the risk of a serious fall among older men," the Daily Mail reports after a study suggested anticholinergic drugs, which can cause side effects such as blurred vision and drowsiness, could increase fall risk.

[Maud, 90, talks about the effects of loneliness](#)

Thursday 30 July 2015

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

Being lonely could be as bad for your health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day, according to the charity The Campaign to End Loneliness. A poll carried out by the group suggests one in five people over the age of 60 who feel isolated say they have got no-one to turn to.

[Warning that adult social care 'under stress and strain'](#)

Sunday 9 August 2015

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

New figures show more than 150 new cases of abuse against the frail and elderly are being reported to England's social care watchdog every day. Chief Inspector of Adult Social Care Andrea Sutcliffe told the Observer cuts in funding and a lack of political leadership were putting the system under stress.

[Elderly care home review responses 'disappointing'](#)

Tuesday 11 August 2015

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

Care inspectors and ministers have been criticised for failing to explain in detail how they will improve life for elderly people in care homes. Older People's Commissioner Sarah Rochira said she was "disappointed" with their responses to a 2014 review.

Palliative care

[Dying care: 'Improved' guidelines proposed](#)

Wednesday 29 July 2015

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

England's health watchdog has put forward new draft guidance to improve the care of adults in their last few days of life. It comes after concerns that misuse of the previous system - the Liverpool Care Pathway - led to some patients being deprived of water and food.

[A good death: Can guidelines really help?](#)

Wednesday 29 July 2015

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

Dealing with death is never easy. But for the relatives, friends, doctors and nurses caring for the half a million people who die in England each year it is an inevitability of life that has to be faced.

[RCGP response to NICE draft guidance on End of Life Care](#)

Wednesday 29 July 2015

Source: Royal College of General Practitioners: <http://www.rcgp.org.uk>

Dr Catherine Millington-Sanders, Clinical Lead for End of Life at the Royal College of GPs, said: "It is crucial that patients approaching the end of their lives receive high quality and compassionate care that is tailored to their own needs and wishes. This guidance highlights how important it is for people to be involved in having discussions about their care."

[NICE produces new draft guidelines on caring for the dying](#)

Wednesday 29 July 2015

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

"England's health watchdog has put forward new draft guidance to improve the care of adults in their last few days of life," BBC News reports. The guidelines, produced by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), have been proposed as an alternative to the controversial Liverpool Care Pathway, which was phased out in 2014.

Physical activity

[A 15-minute daily walk 'will help you live longer' says study](#)

Tuesday 4 August 2015

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

Going for a 15-minute walk every day will "make you live longer", reports the Mail Online. It is one of several news outlets to report that small amounts of daily exercise may be enough to increase your chances of living longer. A study found people aged 60 and over who did just 15 minutes of exercise a day reduced their risk of dying early by 22%, compared with those of a similar age who did no exercise at all.

Screening

[Abdominal aortic aneurysm screening: programme updates](#)

Thursday 30 July 2015

Source: Public Health England*: <https://www.gov.uk>

News from the NHS abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) screening programme.

[Newborn blood spot screening: programme updates](#)

Thursday 30 July 2015

Source: Public Health England*: <https://www.gov.uk>

News from the newborn blood spot (NBS) screening programme.

[Which medical tests are worth doing?](#)

Tuesday 11 August 2015

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

There are lots of medical screening tests available and screening is big business, but which of these tests are really useful and what are the drawbacks? Michael Mosley decided to find out by looking at the evidence and trying a whole battery of them.

Smoking

Smoking cessation in secondary care: mental health settings

Monday 3 August 2015 (Updated)

Source: Public Health England*: <https://www.gov.uk>

Guidance and self-assessment framework for NHS mental health trusts to develop local action to reduce smoking prevalence and the use of tobacco.

Health and Wellbeing of 15-year-olds in England - Smoking Prevalence – Findings from the What About YOUth? Survey 2014

Tuesday 4 August 2015

Source: Health and Social Care Information Centre*: <https://www.gov.uk>

The Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) was commissioned by the Department of Health to run the What About YOUth? 2014 (WAY) survey in direct response to the Children and Young People's Health Outcomes Forum. This Forum identified gaps in the Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF) and other key health behaviour measures relating to young people. HSCIC contracted Ipsos MORI to carry out the survey.

Social & economic issues

New epigenetics research to understand how early life experiences affect health

Thursday 30 July 2015

Source: Economic and Social Research Council: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/>

Eight new projects are set to study the impact of early life experiences on lifelong health, with over £3 million of funding awarded to researchers across the UK. The projects bring together both biological and social scientists in an innovative collaboration funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC).

Reading for pleasure 'boosts social relations'

Monday 3 August 2015

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

Getting stuck into a good book can boost people's ability to relate to each other and increase their empathy, a report suggests. A review of research for the Reading Agency says reading for pleasure does much more than boost educational outcomes among adults and children.

Women's health

Bury: 'I will if you will' project encourages women to stay active

Thursday 30 July 2015

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

One of the big promises of the London Olympics was that people of all ages would be encouraged to become more active. Three years on, fewer of us now take part in sport than we did before the Games arrived.

'It's a matter of dignity'

Friday 31 July 2015

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

The struggle many homeless women face in accessing sanitary products inspired the Homeless Period campaign. Its petition for tampons and sanitary towels to be made available for free has attracted more than 100,000 signatures. And it has led two young women from Hertfordshire to get directly involved.

New moves to tackle Female Genital Mutilation – Vanessa Lodge

Monday 3 August 2015

Source: NHS England: <http://www.england.nhs.uk>

This is the time of year when young girls may be taken abroad for female genital mutilation (FGM). Vanessa Lodge, Chair of the national FGM steering group for NHS England, shares advice for preventing the abuse and supporting victims.

Contraceptive pill 'cuts womb cancer risk'

Friday 7 August 2015

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

"The pill cuts womb cancer cases by 200,000," the Sky News website reports, in an uncommon example of a credible headline figure. However, it should be noted that it refers to the amount of cases prevented over 10 years.

Pregnancy iodine pills 'good for babies and economy'

Monday 10 August 2015

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

Recommending iodine supplements to all pregnant women could save the NHS money, say researchers. A study in The Lancet concluded that if all pregnant women took a daily dose, it could boost children's IQ scores, causing health improvements.

Iodine supplements could help mums, babies and the economy

Monday 10 August 2015

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

"Providing pregnant women with iodine supplements could boost children's intelligence and save thousands of pounds in future health costs," The Daily Telegraph reports. Iodine is a chemical element found in seawater, rocks and some types of soil. Good food sources include sea fish and shellfish. Iodine is important for healthy brain development and there is some evidence that UK women might not be getting enough iodine.

Workplace health

The gadgets that track workplace fitness

Monday 10 August 2015

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

BBC News explains how some employers are trying to keep their staff in the peak of health and fitness - and are even issuing wearable health devices.

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/>

Healthcare Public Health

Monthly bulletin containing news and information about key public health issues including health service commissioning, updates from Public Health England, local authorities, Faculty of Public Health and others agencies, resources and good practice.

<http://www.healthcarepublichealth.net/newsletters.php>

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/>



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