

## **Public Health Bulletin. 1<sup>st</sup> December 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: [www.oxsph.org/bulletins.htm](http://www.oxsph.org/bulletins.htm) and the Wessex Public Health Network at: <http://www.wessexphnetwork.org.uk/resources/public-health-updates.aspx>

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## Alcohol misuse

### Wine drinkers urged to drop glass size

25<sup>th</sup> November 2015

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

A new scheme to help wine drinkers cut down on their alcohol consumption is being introduced in East Dunbartonshire. Previously, if you ordered a glass of wine you would most likely be offered it in a 175ml or a 250ml glass. But now, East Dunbartonshire customers will be offered wine in a 125ml glass in a bid to promote sensible drinking.

### Dry January

November 2015

Source: <https://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk>

Alcohol Concern's Dry January is their annual campaign where they challenge people to give up alcohol for the 31 days of January.

### Statistics on alcohol

November 2015

Source: <https://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/>

Statistics on drinking habits and alcohol-related health problems.

## Chronic conditions

### Royal College of General Practitioners launch new 'Consequences of Cancer' toolkit

27<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Source: <http://www.rcgp.org.uk/news/>

The Royal College of General Practitioners, in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support, has today launched an innovative toolkit to support primary care professionals to deliver high quality care to people living with the consequences of cancer and their subsequent treatment.

### Reports of an 'end to daily diabetes jabs' are premature

26<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Source: <http://www.nhs.uk/news/>

"The daily trial of insulin injections could soon be over for hundreds of thousands of people with type-1 diabetes," is the overoptimistic headline in The Times. However, that day is a long way off. Headlines suggesting an end to daily injections can unfairly raise people's hopes, leading to disappointment when no such treatment emerges.

### 'I went blind and feel partly to blame'

26<sup>th</sup> November 2015

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

Leonie Watson lost her sight in her 20s after ignoring doctors' advice about her diabetes for years. Here she charts her journey into blindness, and the frustration of feeling partly to blame.

## Communicable diseases

### Mutant mosquitoes 'resist malaria'

24<sup>th</sup> November 2015

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

US scientists say they have bred a genetically modified (GM) mosquito that can resist malaria infection. If the lab technique works in the field, it could offer a new way of stopping the biting insects from spreading malaria to humans, they say.

## **Diet & nutrition**

### **Sugar and water 'as good as a sports drink', says study**

30<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Source: <http://www.nhs.uk/news/>

Adding a spoonful of table sugar to a glass of water could be just as good as – or better than – a sports drink, several media outlets have reported. The news comes from a study that compared whether a group of long-distance cyclists performed better when they had a glucose or sucrose mix drink.

### **Tax on sugary drinks backed by MPs**

30<sup>th</sup> November 2015

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

A tax on sugary drinks should be introduced as part of a "bold and urgent" set of measures to tackle child obesity in England, MPs say. The Commons' Health Committee said there was now "compelling evidence" a tax would reduce consumption.

### **In search of the perfect sweetener**

23<sup>rd</sup> November 2015

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

Too much refined sugar is blamed for a wave of obesity and ill-health, so the search is on for the perfect sweetener. But it's not an easy task, writes Michael Mosley.

### **Malnutrition causing thousands of hospital admissions**

23<sup>rd</sup> November 2015

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

More than 2,000 cases of patients with malnutrition were recorded by 43 hospital trusts in a single year.

### **One diet 'doesn't fit all' – people 'metabolise food differently'**

20<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Source: <http://www.nhs.uk/news/>

"No one diet fits all," the Daily Mail reports. Israeli researchers monitored 800 adults to measure what is known as postprandial glycemic response – the amount by which blood sugar levels increase after a person eats a meal. This measure provides a good estimate of the amount of energy that a person "receives" from food.

### **Coffee 'can make you live longer' claims**

18<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Source: <http://www.nhs.uk/news/>

"Drinking three to five cups of coffee a day could help people live longer, new research has found," The Independent reports. Research suggests a link between regular coffee consumption and reduced risk of chronic diseases, such as heart disease – whether people drank the normal or decaffeinated variety.

## Disability

### [Study suggests disability test link to suicide risk](#)

17<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Source: <http://www.nhs.uk/news/>

"Fitness to work tests linked to 590 extra suicides in England," warns the Daily Mirror. The paper reports a "horrific death toll" from the policy of reassessing disability benefit claimants. But there is reason to be cautious about whether the suicides were directly linked to Work Capability Assessments (WCAs).

## Drug Misuse

### [High-strength 'skunk' cannabis linked to brain changes](#)

27<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Source: <http://www.nhs.uk/news/>

"Scientists warn smoking 'skunk' cannabis wrecks brains," The Sun reports, somewhat simplistically. A small study found some users of the high-strength skunk strain of cannabis had changes in nerve fibres in a specific part of the brain.

## Health protection

### [Improved vaccine uptake for children, pregnant women and older people](#)

26<sup>th</sup> November 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/>

Flu vaccination uptake rates for older people, pregnant women, and children are at encouraging levels compared to the same point last year, according to the first monthly GP patient data for the 2015 to 2016 flu season.

### [Antibiotic resistance: World on cusp of 'post-antibiotic era'](#)

19<sup>th</sup> November 2015

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

The world is on the cusp of a "post-antibiotic era", scientists have warned after finding bacteria resistant to drugs used when all other treatments have failed.

## Health services administration

### [Government commits to public health science centre of excellence](#)

25<sup>th</sup> November 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/>

Public Health England's (PHE's) Science Hub moved a huge step closer today (25 November 2015) when the Government decided to move their science facilities from Colindale to Harlow in Essex. This follows on from the Chancellor's announcement in September that PHE's laboratories at Porton will move to Harlow and completes the plan to bring all the public health laboratories onto a single integrated campus. The Hub will create a centre of excellence for research, health improvement and protection and bring together world-renowned scientists working to protect and improve the health of the nation.

## **HIV & AIDS**

### [Are we winning the fight against HIV?](#)

18<sup>th</sup> November 2015      Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Hollywood star Charlie Sheen has confirmed he is living with HIV in a US television interview. The development of new drugs means the diagnosis is no longer a death sentence, but are we winning the global fight against HIV?

### [HIV home-test kit launched in England](#)

18<sup>th</sup> November 2015      Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

A free HIV home-testing kit has been launched across England as the latest figures show 18,100 people in the UK are unaware they have the infection. The test, which can be ordered online, uses a small droplet of blood that is sent to a laboratory. Public Health England (PHE) is urging more people to check their HIV status.

## **Infant & child health**

### [Experts call for caution over Ritalin](#)

25<sup>th</sup> November 2015      Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Stimulant drugs like Ritalin should be used judiciously in hyperactive children because they can have unpleasant side effects, say experts.

## **Mental health**

### [Many parents 'never talk about mental health' to children](#)

30<sup>th</sup> November 2015      Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

More than half of parents in England have never spoken to their children about stress, anxiety or depression, a survey has suggested. A poll of more than 1,100 parents found that 55% had not spoken about the subject to their offspring. Of those, 20% said they did not know how to address the issue. The survey results have been released as part of a campaign, funded by the Department of Health, to break down the stigma associated with mental health.

### [What it is like having a family member who has dementia](#)

24<sup>th</sup> November 2015      Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

More than one in 10 children have a family member who has dementia, according to figures from Alzheimer's Research UK. So how does dementia affect young people? Dan spoke to BBC Breakfast about his Nan.

### [Has the 'happiness region' of the brain been discovered?](#)

23<sup>rd</sup> November 2015      Source: <http://www.nhs.uk/news/>

"Neurologists 'work out the key to finding happiness'," claims The Independent. Japanese researchers claim to have found a link between reported happiness and an area of the brain called the precuneus.

### [Mental health early deaths 'worrying in one in four areas'](#)

18<sup>th</sup> November 2015      Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Nearly one in four areas of England has unacceptably high rates of early deaths among people with mental health problems, a report suggests.

## **Obesity**

### [One in five children obese leaving primary school](#)

26<sup>th</sup> November 2015      Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

One in 10 children was obese at the start primary school in England last year but one in five was obese by the end, according to the Health and Social Care Information Centre.

## **Older people**

### [Winter deaths 'highest since 1999'](#)

25<sup>th</sup> November 2015      Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

There were an estimated 43,900 excess deaths in England and Wales last winter, the highest number since 1999, figures show. The report suggests most of the deaths involved people over 75.

## **Oral health**

### [Dental phobia patients 'benefit from talking therapy' – research](#)

27<sup>th</sup> November 2015      Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

People with a dental phobia are more likely to undergo treatment without sedation if they have had Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), research suggests. The research, published in the British Dental Journal, looked at 130 people who all feared dental treatment. All had talking therapy, and more than three-quarters went on to have treatment without sedation.

## **Physical activity**

### [Bitwalking dollars: Digital currency pays people to walk](#)

21 November 2015      Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

A digital crypto-currency has launched that is generated by human movement. Bitwalking dollars will be earned by walking, unlike other digital currencies such as Bitcoins that are "mined" by computers. A phone application counts and verifies users' steps, with walkers earning approximately 1 BW\$ for about 10,000 steps (about five miles).

## **Safety & accident prevention**

### **Call to improve toddlers' home safety**

21st November 2015      Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Emergency doctors and safety campaigners are calling for a national home-visiting scheme to help prevent injuries to toddlers. The Royal College of Emergency Medicine and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) say it would make a "huge difference". They argue it would reduce pressure on A&E and save money for the NHS.

## **Sexual health**

### **FPA responds to Government's spending review on public health**

26<sup>th</sup> November 2015      Source: <http://www.fpa.org.uk/>

FPA has responded to the Government's Spending Review, in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that there will be an average annual cut of 3.9% to local authorities' public health budgets, including sexual and reproductive health, over the next five years.

### **Unprotected Nation 2015**

November 2015      Source: <http://www.fpa.org.uk/>

Unprotected Nation 2015 is a report commissioned by FPA which considers the knock-on effects of a 10% cut in spending on contraception and sexual health services.

## **Social & economic issues**

### **Inequalities in health and life expectancies persist**

20<sup>th</sup> November 2015      Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/>

A new ONS report produced in conjunction with PHE has been published revealing the scale of inequalities in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy across England, but also within local authority areas. The data show that wide inequalities exist not only between the most and least deprived areas of the country; but between the most and least deprived areas within local councils across the country.

## **Statistics**

### **Teenage pregnancy rates continue to decrease in England and Wales**

24<sup>th</sup> November 2015      Source: <http://www.fpa.org.uk/>

[Data released by the Office for National Statistics](#) shows the rolling annual rate of conceptions to under 18s in England and Wales was 23.5 per 1,000 of the population (of 15-17-year-olds) by the end of September 2014. At the end of 2013 the rate was 24.5 per 1,000.

## Women's health

### Better care 'could reduce stillbirths'

19<sup>th</sup> November 2015

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

Hospitals are missing key opportunities to save the lives of hundreds of babies in the UK, an investigation into stillbirths has found. The report looked at 85 stillbirths in detail and found care could have been better in at least two-thirds of cases. In some cases, mothers were not offered the right tests, despite concerns their babies had stopped moving.

## Local news: []

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<b>Other Bulletins</b>
<p><b>Big Four Bulletin</b>            This is a weekly Bulletin that details original articles in the BMJ, JAMA, New England Journal of Medicine and The Lancet.  <a href="http://cash.libraryservices.nhs.uk/cash-service/rss-newsfeed-menu/medicine/big-four-bulletin/">http://cash.libraryservices.nhs.uk/cash-service/rss-newsfeed-menu/medicine/big-four-bulletin/</a></p>
<p><b>Daily Health Bulletin</b>            The Daily Health Bulletin is produced by the Knowledge Service of the West and South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw Commissioning Support Unit.  <a href="http://cash.libraryservices.nhs.uk/cash-service/daily-health-bulletin/">http://cash.libraryservices.nhs.uk/cash-service/daily-health-bulletin/</a></p>
<p><b>Healthcare Public Health</b>            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.  <a href="http://www.healthcarepublichealth.net/newsletters.php">http://www.healthcarepublichealth.net/newsletters.php</a></p>
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