

## **Public Health Bulletin. 22 March 2016**

**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://www.oxsph.org/bulletins.html> and the Wessex Public Health Network at: <http://www.wessexphnetwork.org.uk/resources/public-health-updates.aspx>

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## Alcohol misuse

### RCP's EU alcohol lead calls for 'simple' policy changes to reduce mortality

Monday 21 March 2016

Source: Royal College of Physicians: <https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk>

Simple, cheap and effective changes to alcohol policy by both the EU and its member states have the potential to dramatically reduce liver mortality in Europe, according to research published this month by Professor Nick Sheron, RCP representative on EU Alcohol Policies and Head of Clinical Hepatology at the University of Southampton.

## Chronic conditions

### 'Good' cholesterol not always good, study suggests

Friday 11 March 2016

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

Some people with high levels of supposedly "good" cholesterol are at much greater risk of heart disease, a study suggests. A bloodstream tussle takes place between "bad" cholesterol dumping fatty material in the arteries and good cholesterol taking it away.

### Study suggests gene may turn 'good' cholesterol into 'bad'

Monday 14 March 2016

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

"Some people with high levels of supposedly 'good' cholesterol are at much greater risk of heart disease," BBC News reports. Researchers have identified a genetic variant – P376L – that may cause some people to have higher-than-normal levels of "good" cholesterol (high-density lipoprotein, or HDL) and may be linked to heart disease risk.

### Stimulating brain with electricity 'boosts stroke recovery'

Thursday 17 March 2016

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

Stimulating the brain with electrical current can help boost recovery after a stroke, research from the University of Oxford suggests. The team found patients who were given electrical stimulation alongside rehabilitation sessions fared better than people given rehab alone.

### Paracetamol 'useless' in treating osteoarthritis pain

Friday 18 March 2016

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

"Paracetamol is next to useless at alleviating arthritic pain," The Times reports. A comprehensive review of existing data suggests paracetamol should not be used in cases of osteoarthritis as there are far more effective treatments available.

### Type-2 Diabetes: At-risk offered healthy lifestyle help

Tuesday 22 March 2016

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

People in England at risk of type-2 diabetes are to be offered healthy-lifestyle support by the NHS to help them prevent the condition developing. The new national programme will be launched this spring, with the aim of helping 20,000 people this year.

### Could a very low calorie diet 'cure' type 2 diabetes?

Tuesday 22 March 2016

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

"Dieting for just eight weeks can reverse your diabetes," the Daily Mail reports. A small study of 30 people with type 2 diabetes found eight weeks on a very low calorie diet of around 600 to 700 calories a day, followed by a less radical six-month weight control diet, led to significant improvement in blood glucose levels in 12 people.

## **Communicable diseases**

### Rise in scarlet fever cases shows 49-year high, health experts say

Friday 11 March 2016

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

Cases of scarlet fever in England and Wales have risen to the highest level since the 1960s, Public Health England (PHE) says. In 2015 there were 17,586 cases of scarlet fever.

### Measles outbreak feared in London and South East

Friday 11 March 2016

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

Doctors are concerned they are witnessing the start of a measles outbreak in London and the South East. Public Health England has detected 20 cases in the region since February, compared with 91 in all of England in the whole of last year.

### Meningitis B: Mother's plea for routine vaccination

Tuesday 15 March 2016

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

Parents get their chance on Tuesday to tell MPs why they should reject expert advice and listen to public pressure to give the Meningitis B vaccine to all UK children up to the age of 11. Currently, the vaccine is only routinely given to UK infants.

### Parents say meningitis B vaccine 'is cost-effective'

Tuesday 15 March 2016

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

Parents of children affected by meningitis B have told MPs a vaccine for the disease should be extended to all UK children up to the age of 11. They say the cost of treating survivors left with life-long disabilities more than outweighs the £75 vaccine price.

## **Diet & nutrition**

### Can chocolate make you smarter?

Wednesday 9 March 2016

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

"Chocolate makes you smarter, proves 40-year study," claims the Daily Express. The news is based on research which found that people who ate chocolate at least once a week performed better in brain tests.

### [Is fermented food a recipe for good gut health?](#)

Sunday 13 March 2016

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

Fermentation as a way of preserving food dates back thousands of years, but it is now being held up as a potentially important source of friendly, health-giving bacteria. So should we all be eating sauerkraut and kimchi?

### [Junk food ads face online ban in UK](#)

Monday 14 March 2016

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

Advertising junk food could soon be banned from children's content streamed online, according to the UK's advertising watchdog. Ads for foods considered unhealthy are already banned on children's television, but not online.

### [Sugar tax: How it will work?](#)

Wednesday 16 March 2016

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

A new sugar tax on the soft drinks industry will be introduced in the UK, the chancellor has announced as he unveiled his Budget. It is something that has been talked about for some time, but has still come as a surprise.

### [Budget 2016: How has Osborne's spoonful of sugar tax gone down?](#)

Wednesday 16 March 2016

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

One of the major talking points following this year's Budget is the introduction of a new tax on sugary soft drinks to tackle childhood obesity. The £530m raised by a levy on the sugar content of soft drinks will be spent on primary school sports, according to Chancellor George Osborne.

### [Sugar tax: How bold is it?](#)

Thursday 17 March 2016

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

The announcement by Chancellor George Osborne that a tax on sugary drinks is to be introduced in the UK came as a surprise - ministers had spent months suggesting they were against the idea. But just how bold is it?

### [Sugar tax: What is the UK's most sugary drink?](#)

Tuesday 17 March 2016

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

The government is to tax soft drink manufacturers who put large amounts of sugar in their products. But which fizzy drinks have the highest levels? The UK loves soft drinks. Altogether people got through 14.8 billion litres last year, or 232.9 litres each.

### [Sugar tax - will it unintentionally penalise diabetics?](#)

Friday 18 March 2016

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

Parents of teenagers with type 1 diabetes say George Osborne's plan to raise the cost of sugary drinks will have an unintentional impact on their families. On Wednesday the chancellor unveiled plans to tax soft drinks manufacturers who put large amounts of sugar in their products.

### Salt consumption down - but not enough

Tuesday 22 March 2016

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

Adults in England have cut their average salt consumption by nearly a gram in the last decade, but at 8g per day it is still above the recommended 6g for good health, figures reveal.

## **Disability and Learning Difficulties**

### Disability benefit change to affect half a million

Saturday 12 March 2016

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

More than half a million disabled people could lose out as a result of further changes over the next four years to welfare payments. The formula the government uses to calculate the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) for disabled people will change in January.

### 'Bionic fingertip' offers feeling

Monday 14 March 2016

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

European researchers have developed an artificial fingertip that provides tactile feedback to the user. Amputee Dennis Aabo Sorensen took part in a clinical trial and had nerves surgically connected to the "bionic" fingertip allowing him to experience feeling and distinguish between various surfaces.

### People with autism 'die younger', warns charity

Friday 18 March 2016

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

People with autism are dying earlier than the general population, often through epilepsy or suicide, a charity has warned. Citing recent research carried out in Sweden, the charity Autistica described the problem as an "enormous hidden crisis".

### People with autism are 'dying younger,' warns study

Monday 21 March 2016

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

"People with autism are dying earlier than the general population," BBC News reports. A recent study in Sweden showed the average age of death for a person with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is 54 years, compared with 70 for matched controls.

## **Environmental health**

### Climate change deal: 'Zero carbon' laws promised by government

Tuesday 15 March 2016

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

Climate laws will be tightened to cut carbon emissions effectively to zero, the government has said. Under current law, emissions must be cut by 80% by 2050 - but ministers have said this does not go far enough.

## Health services administration

### NHS trusts ranked on learning from mistakes

Wednesday 9 March 2016

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

Health trusts in England have been ranked by their ability to learn from mistakes, as part of several changes designed to improve patient safety. The "learning from mistakes league" rates 120 trusts outstanding or good, 78 with "significant concerns" and 32 with a "poor reporting culture".

### Not enough doctors for 7-day NHS, says Royal College head

Tuesday 15 March 2016

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

There are not enough doctors to run a seven-day NHS in England, according to a leading doctor. In a speech on Tuesday, Royal College of Physicians president Prof Jane Dacre will warn ministers the issue must be addressed if their policy is to work.

### Eye risk from 'overstretched NHS'

Wednesday 16 March 2016

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

Eye specialists say hundreds of patients suffer irreversible sight loss every year in England because services are overstretched and under-resourced. The president of The Royal College of Ophthalmologists, Prof Carrie MacEwen, writing for the BBC's Scrubbing Up, warns the NHS is struggling to keep up because of a "perfect storm" of increased demand, caused by more eye disease in an ageing population which requires requiring long term care.

### Physios in surgeries 'can save GPs time and money'

Friday 18 March 2016

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

GPs could spend longer with their patients if physiotherapists worked with them at their surgeries, says the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. If patients with back pain, for example, were directed to a physio instead of a GP, an extra five minutes could be spent with other patients.

### Public sector pensions change in Budget criticised

Friday 18 March 2016

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

Health and education will be squeezed by more than £1bn because of changes to the way public sector pensions are funded, figures seen by the BBC show. It comes after George Osborne announced in the Budget that employers would have to contribute more to pensions for NHS staff, teachers and the police.

## One size doesn't fit all - GPs and physicians innovate to improve patient care

Wednesday 16 March 2016

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

A new report from the Royal College of Physicians and Royal College of General Practitioners shows how GPs and physicians are innovating to improve patient care. The report *Patient care: A unified approach*, highlights nine case studies where GPs and physicians have worked closely together to produce new and integrated services. The case studies span a wide range of services in England and Wales, covering different specialties, different population groups and different ways of addressing complex issues.

## **HIV & AIDS**

### Row over HIV prevention drug Prep

Tuesday 22 March 2016

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

Charities say NHS England's "eleventh hour decision to pull the plug" on game-changing HIV prevention drugs is leaving people at risk. The medication - known as Prep - has been shown in UK studies to reduce the chances of people getting HIV.

## **Infant & child health**

### Stem cells used to repair children's eyes after cataracts

Thursday 10 March 2016

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

"Children with cataracts regain sight after radical stem cell treatment," The Guardian reports. The new operation, carried out on 12 children under two years old in China, was to treat childhood cataracts – a condition where a baby is born with clouded lenses in their eyes, blocking vision.

### How a cat enabled an autistic six-year-old to communicate

Sunday 13 March 2016

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

Six-year-old Iris Grace spent the first half of her life trapped in her own world, barely communicating. Her mother Arabella Carter-Johnson explains how her cat, Thula, transformed the family.

### Scottish teenage girls more sick and stressed says WHO report

Tuesday 15 March 2016

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

Fifteen-year-old girls in Scotland face more pressure from schoolwork and report poorer health than others around the globe, according to research. The major study by the World Health Organisation (WHO) compared the health of children in 42 European and North American countries.

### Common antibiotic for children 'ineffective in half of cases'

Wednesday 16 March 2016

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

"Antibiotics used to treat common infections in children could soon be rendered useless," the Daily Mail reports. A major review of existing data found worryingly high levels of resistance to widely used antibiotics such as ampicillin, which is used to treat urinary tract infections (UTIs) in children. Researchers specifically looked at UTIs caused by E. coli, a very common bacteria.

## **Men's health**

### U-turn over prostate cancer drug

Monday 21 March 2016

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

Patients with prostate cancer in England will now have early access to a drug that can delay the need for chemotherapy.

## **Mental health and dementia**

### Gum disease link to Alzheimer's, research suggests

Thursday 10 March 2016

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

Gum disease has been linked to a greater rate of cognitive decline in people with Alzheimer's disease, early stage research has suggested. The small study, published in PLOS ONE, looked at 59 people who were all deemed to have mild to moderate dementia.

### Gum disease linked to worsening dementia symptoms

Friday 11 March 2016

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

"How brushing your teeth properly can ward off the symptoms of dementia," is the misleading headline in the Daily Mail. In the study it reports on, all the participants already had dementia related to Alzheimer's disease. What the researchers wanted to do was investigate whether gum disease worsened the symptoms.

### Is it nice outside? Mental Health Foundation collaborates on new study into dementia and the natural environment

Friday 11 March 2016

Source: Mental Health Foundation: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk>

Working in collaboration with Natural England, Dementia Adventure, and Innovations in Dementia, the Mental Health Foundation has today welcomed the publication of a new study into dementia and the natural environment – Is it nice outside? Consulting people living with dementia and carers about engaging with the natural environment.

### Memories 'taken' by Alzheimer's could possibly be retrieved

Thursday 17 March 2016

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

"Memories wiped by Alzheimer's could be revived, research suggests," The Daily Telegraph reports. Research involving mice suggests memories are not destroyed by Alzheimer's disease – rather, there are difficulties recalling them.

## [Sean Duggan speaks out on children's mental health services on Victoria Derbyshire show](#)

Friday 11 March 2016

Source: Centre for Mental Health: <http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk>

Amid concerns being voiced that money for children's mental health services is failing to reach the front lines, Sean Duggan (Chief Executive of Centre for Mental Health) was interviewed on the BBC Victoria Derbyshire show on Tuesday (8th March).

## **Obesity**

### [Sugar tax: 'Children used to call me fat'](#)

Thursday 17 March 2016

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

Chancellor George Osborne says money raised by a new tax on sugary drinks - an estimated £520m a year - will be spent on increasing the funding for sport in primary schools. Figures suggest that one in three British 10-year-olds are overweight or obese, with statistics showing the majority of them will remain so as they grow up.

## **Oral health**

### [Dentist charges to rise 5% in England](#)

Friday 11 March 2016

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

Charges for NHS dental treatment in England will rise by 5% this year and next, the government has announced. By 2017-18, a routine examination will cost more than £20, with more expensive procedures including crowns exceeding £240.

## **Physical activity**

### [Commuters who shun car travel keep slimmer, study concludes](#)

Thursday 17 March 2016

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

People who cycle, walk or catch the train or bus to work keep more weight off than commuters who travel by car, a large UK study has found. The results come from 150,000 UK adults aged 40 or older who agreed to be measured and weighed and fill in a survey about their typical journey to and from work.

### [Mile a day campaign launched in UK primary schools](#)

Thursday 17 March 2016

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

A campaign is being launched to persuade primary schools across the UK to incorporate a daily one-mile run into their timetables, to improve children's health.

## Smoking

### 'Cold turkey' best way to quit smoking, study shows

Tuesday 15 March 2016

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

People who want to quit smoking are more likely to succeed if they go "cold turkey" by stopping abruptly, a study in *Annals of Internal Medicine* shows. Volunteers who used this approach were 25% more likely to remain abstinent half a year from the date that they give up than smokers who tried to gradually wean themselves off instead.

### Quitting smoking overnight 'better than cutting down gradually'

Tuesday 15 March 2016

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

"Want to quit smoking? Forget trying to cut down, if you really want to kick the habit 'going cold turkey is the best option'," is the headline from the Mail Online. The news website reports on a trial by UK-based researchers that aimed to assess whether it's better to stop smoking gradually or abruptly.

### Smoking in cars with children: Police 'cannot' enforce ban

Tuesday 15 March 2016

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

Police in England and Wales are "unable" to enforce a new law banning smoking in cars carrying children because there are no tickets which they can issue, the BBC understands. No fines or court summonses were issued in the first three months of the law, a BBC Radio 5 live freedom of information (FOI) request suggests.

### 43% 'resume smoking after giving birth'

Wednesday 16 March 2016

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

Nearly half of women who quit smoking during pregnancy take it up again soon after they give birth, according to research in the journal *Addiction*. The analysis of several studies suggests 13% of women who enrol on smoking cessation programmes quit during pregnancy.

## Social & economic issues

### Thatcher's children: the lives of Generation X

Friday 11 March 2016

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

What is life like for the British generation born in the late 1960s and early 1970s? The generation who grew up in Thatcher's Britain – Generation X – came of age at a time of social flux and transformation. Today, as the generation enters middle age, it is making its mark on British society. Indeed, some are even running the country – David Cameron, George Osborne, Nicola Sturgeon, Leanne Wood and Natalie Bennett are all Gen Xers, born in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

### Doctors urge chancellor to increase social care funding

Saturday 12 March 2016

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

Fourteen doctors' leaders have written to George Osborne asking for further funding for social care in next week's Budget. In a letter to the chancellor, they said cuts in social care funding were putting real pressure on the NHS.

## **Statistics**

### Teen pregnancy rate continues to fall, ONS figures show

Wednesday 9 March 2016

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

The number of teenage girls getting pregnant in England and Wales is continuing to fall, figures show. There were about 23 conceptions per 1,000 15 to 17-year-old girls in 2014, compared to a high of 55 in 1971, the Office of National Statistics said.

### Teenage pregnancies in England and Wales at record low

Wednesday 9 March 2016

Source: Family Planning Association: <http://www.fpa.org.uk/>

Teenage pregnancy statistics for 2014 published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that the under 18 conception rate is the lowest since records began in 1969. The England and Wales under-18 conception rate for 2014 is 22.9 per 1,000 females aged 15-17. This is a 6.5% reduction from 2013.

## **Women's health**

### Tumours shrunk 'dramatically' in 11 days

Thursday 10 March 2016

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

A pair of drugs can dramatically shrink and eliminate some breast cancers in just 11 days, UK doctors have shown. They said the "surprise" findings, reported at the European Breast Cancer Conference, could mean some women no longer need chemotherapy.

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<b>Other Bulletins</b>
<p><b>Super Six Bulletin</b>            This is a weekly Bulletin that details original articles in the BMJ, JAMA, New England Journal of Medicine and The Lancet, Annals of Internal Medicine and Annals of Emergency Medicine  <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>
<p><b>NICE Public Health Evidence Awareness Bulletin</b>            This is a monthly update highlighting national public health news and information from NICE.  <a href="http://www.nice.org.uk/News/NICE-newsletters-and-alerts">http://www.nice.org.uk/News/NICE-newsletters-and-alerts</a></p>
<p><b>PHE Bulletin (Public Health England)</b>            The PHE Bulletin is issued monthly and contains public health news and information.  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/phe-bulletin">https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/phe-bulletin</a></p>
<p><b>Public Health and Social Care Bulletin</b>            This is published weekly and created by Kent &amp; Medway Public Health Observatory. It provides an update on what is new in public health and social care, both nationally and locally.  <a href="http://www.kpho.org.uk/library-services/keeping-up-to-date/e-bulletin-archive">http://www.kpho.org.uk/library-services/keeping-up-to-date/e-bulletin-archive</a></p>



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