

Public Health Bulletin. 28th March 2017

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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).

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[Alcohol misuse](#)

[Chronic conditions](#)

[Communicable diseases](#)

[Diet & nutrition](#)

[Disability](#)

[Environmental health](#)

[Health protection](#)

[Health Services administration](#)

[Infant and child health](#)

[Men's health](#)

[Mental health](#)

[Obesity](#)

[Older people](#)

[Physical activity](#)

[Smoking](#)

[Social and economic issues](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Women's health](#)

[Local news](#)

Alcohol misuse

'Wide awake drunk' on energy drinks and alcohol mix

21 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

Mixing energy drinks with alcohol could be a risky combination, leading to a greater risk of accidents and injuries, research from Canada suggests. The caffeine contained in energy drinks can make people feel wide awake and encourage them to drink more than normal. Medics say this could also cause problems sleeping and a raised heart rate, although more research is needed.

Chronic conditions

Lack of skin specialists causes delays for acne patients, says dermatologist

16 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/>

A lack of trained skin specialists is having a huge impact on acne patients, says a leading dermatologist. Dr Tamara Griffiths says of 800 positions, more than 200 are unfilled and it's been getting worse over the past decade. She says it's causing long waits for people trying to get treatment.

Communicable diseases

British scientists in world-first TB breakthrough

24 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

British scientists have made a world-first breakthrough in the diagnosis of tuberculosis. Researchers in Oxford and Birmingham say they can isolate different strains of the disease using a process called genome sequencing.

Doctor admits misleading over Ebola

20 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

A doctor has admitted she misled other medics about the health of a colleague returning to the UK from West Africa with Ebola in 2014. Dr Hannah Ryan told a disciplinary hearing she had been in a state of "disbelief, fear and panic" after finding out nurse Pauline Cafferkey had had a high temperature, a warning sign.

Diet & nutrition

Night-time loo trips 'linked to salt in diet'

26 March 2017 Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

People who wake at night with an urge to go to the loo may need to cut back on salt in their diets, doctors from Japan are suggesting.

'I put toast and cake back on the hospital menu'

24 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

Patients at Kingston Hospital, in south-west London, used to say the food was a major disappointment. When patients were asked for feedback, the poor quality of hospital meals was mentioned more often than anything else. So Duncan Burton decided to do something about it - starting with the breakfasts.

How long does it really take for food to go bad?

21 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/>

With 1.3 billion tons of food wasted every year, is it time we got to grips with the advice on food packaging?

Hot chocolate serving 'has more salt than packet of crisps'

20 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

A mug of hot chocolate can have more salt than a packet of ready salted crisps, a campaign group says.

Do you fancy nettle bubble and squeak?

14 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

The charity Plantlife told us that the countryside is becoming overrun by weeds like nettles and hogweed because of nitrogen compounds emitted by diesel engines. And that's bad. Or is it? What should we do with this abundance of nettles? Chef Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall suggests a bit of nettle bubble and squeak to the Today programme

Disability

How a life model uses nudity to explain his disability

21 March 2017 Source: BBC news <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

Kevin French poses as a nude life model to explain more about his disability. The 53-year-old has severe cerebral palsy and a speech problem and communicates through an iPad by using his nose or a head-pointer. He was the first severely disabled person to do a dance theatre BA degree at Plymouth University and is studying for a masters in performance training.

Andiamo: How a boy died and his parents had a medical brainwave

20 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

Diamo Parvez was born with cerebral palsy and died from complications when he was nine years old. During his life his parents were constantly struggling to get him the braces and splints he needed to support his body - and have channelled the pain of their loss into the search for a new, fast way of making them.

Environmental health

[B vitamins may have 'protective effect' against air pollution](#)

14 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

B vitamins may offer some protection against the impacts of air pollution, a small scale human trial suggests. Researchers in the US found that high doses of these supplements may "completely offset" the damage caused by very fine particulate matter.

Health protection

[Africa health: Rotavirus vaccine could save 500,000 children a year](#)

23 March 2017 Source: BBC news

Hopes are growing for a new, inexpensive, heat-proof vaccine to protect against a disease which kills 1,300 children a day following a successful trial in Niger.

Health services administration

[Online care home bed booking system aims to cut hospital bed blocking](#)

21 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

An online system is aiming to reduce hospital bed blocking by allowing real time bookings of care home beds. Bed Finder is being used by Hertfordshire County Council and is thought to be the first system of its kind to streamline referral processes and make searching for and booking beds more efficient.

[Should the NHS have its own tax?](#)

16 March 2017 Source: BBC news <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

The NHS in England is under financial pressure. There is an intensifying debate about whether more money is needed and if so how much. Among the options being suggested is a dedicated tax for the health service - transparent, easily understandable and less prone to political interference, or so the theory goes. So how realistic might it be?

Infant & child health

[Baby teeth removals 'up 24% in a decade'](#)

21 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

Hospitals in England are seeing thousands of very young children each year needing baby teeth removed. The Faculty of Dental Surgery at the Royal College of Surgeons, which compiled the data, blames tooth decay linked to sugary diets. Figures show there were 9,206 extractions carried out on children aged four and younger between April 2015 and March 2016.

[Grandparents 'may be first to spot autism in a child'](#)

17 March 2017 Source: NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/news/>

"Grandmas are usually the first to spot autism in children," the Mail Online reports. The headline was prompted by a US online survey of parents and family members of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Researchers wanted to explore the factors linked to early or late diagnosis. They found several factors were linked, one of which was time spent with grandparents, particularly grandmothers.

Schools must do more on mental health, say School Reporters

16 March 2017 Source: BBC news <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

According to research for BBC School Report, half of teenagers with mental wellbeing issues try to cope alone. And a third said they were not confident enough to speak to a teacher.

The parents who created a drug to save their daughters

15 March 2017 Source: BBC news <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

When Chris and Hugh Hempel were told their twin daughters had a fatal disease that couldn't be treated, they decided there was only one thing they could do - create a new medicine themselves.

Children's screen time linked to diabetes risk factors

14 March 2017 Source: NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/news/>

"Children who are allowed more than three hours of screentime a day are at greater risk of developing diabetes," The Guardian reports. In a new study, UK researchers found a link between three hours or more of screen time and risk factors for type 2 diabetes, such as higher body fat.

Exercise levels decline 'long before adolescence'

14 March 2017 Source: BBC news <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

Adolescence is thought to be the time when children go off exercise - but a study in The British Journal of Sports Medicine suggests it happens much earlier, around the age of seven.

Trampoline park emergency calls revealed

14 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

Ambulances were called to trampoline parks in the UK more than 300 times in a year, figures obtained by BBC 5 live's Daily programme show.

Girls 'too poor' to buy sanitary protection missing school

14 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

Girls in the UK are missing school because they cannot afford sanitary protection, a charity has said. Freedom4Girls was contacted by a school in Leeds after it became concerned about teenage girls' attendance. The group provides sanitary products to women in Kenya - but is now doing the same in West Yorkshire.

Men's health

[Overweight young men 'more likely to get severe liver disease'](#)

21 March 2017 Source: NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/news/>

"Men who are overweight in their late teens have a higher risk of developing liver cancer in later life, new research suggests," reports ITV News. Swedish researchers also found a link to other serious types of liver disease.

[Sperm swimming technique 'all down to simple maths'](#)

20 March 2017 Source: BBC news <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

How an individual sperm swims, against all the odds, through fluid to reach the fallopian tubes has been revealed - and it's all about rhythm.

[Could your barber save your life?](#)

16 March 2017 Source: BBC news <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

Torquay barber Tom Chapman wants to let everyone know it's OK to talk to him - about anything. Since losing a good friend to suicide, he has made it his mission to help men in a similar frame of mind by encouraging them to come to his shop and open up about their emotional and mental health.

Mental health

[How one woman beat her mental illness by helping others](#)

20 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

Jessica May was moving quickly up the career ladder until she was tripped up by mental illness. Following the birth of her first child, Jessica developed a problem with her thyroid gland that greatly exacerbated her pre-existing anxiety disorder. However, the bad experience did ultimately have a positive impact - it made Jessica determined to help other people with mental or physical disabilities, and gave her the idea for setting up a business to do this.

[Happiness report: Norway is the happiest place on Earth](#)

20th March 2017 Source: BBC news <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

Norway is the happiest place on Earth, according to a United Nations agency report - toppling neighbour Denmark from the number one position. The World Happiness Report measures "subjective well-being" - how happy the people are, and why. Denmark, Iceland, Switzerland and Finland round out the top five, while the Central African Republic came last.

[Can yoga and breathing really help 'cure' depression?](#)

16 March 2017 Source: NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/news/>

"Taking yoga classes can help ease depressive symptoms, a new study says," reports the Mail Online. A small study from the US found yoga was associated with a clinically significant improvement in depression symptoms.

Marks and Spencer offers cafe space for 'frazzled' people

15 March 2017 Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

Too much to do and not enough time to do it in? It's not just you, according to retail chain Marks and Spencer. It is offering 11 of its cafes to host fortnightly mental health chat sessions for those feeling overwhelmed by the stresses of modern life.

Obesity

Childhood obesity: Cut unhealthy food multi-buy offers – MPs

27 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

The government must do more to reduce the number of cut-price and multi-buy offers on unhealthy food to help curb childhood obesity, a group of MPs say.

Obesity crisis: Is this the food that is making us all fat?

15 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

A teaspoon of oil, measured out with precision, is how Professor Tim Benton remembers his mother preparing items for frying. When he was growing up in the 1960s, vegetable oil was still a precious commodity and used sparingly. Fast-forward to today and oil is now so abundant and cheaply available that most of us use it liberally in our cooking - chucking it in anything from salad dressings to deep fat frying.

Older people

Toddler group joins forces with Cambridge care home

15 March 2017 Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

A toddler group has joined forces with a care home in Cambridge, after research highlighted the benefits of children spending time with dementia patients.

Will the Budget help ailing grandparents?

8 March 2017 Source: BBC news <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

The chancellor has announced a £2bn rescue package for the social care sector in England. Philip Hammond says the extra money - to be phased in over three years - will help support a system that is "clearly under pressure". It comes after months of warnings that services provided by councils for the elderly are under threat because of a lack of funding.

Physical activity

Extreme exercise an 'escape from life', Cardiff Uni says

14 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

Extreme adventure challenges can help office workers deal with the "anxieties of modern life" new research suggests.

Smoking

[Manchester shoppers' lung scans 'saved lives'](#)

15 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

Thousands of lives across the UK could be saved after a scheme in which smokers received CT scans in shopping centres, a cancer charity says. There was a fourfold increase in the diagnosis of potentially curable cancers in the Manchester pilot, Macmillan Cancer Support said. Early diagnosis of lung cancer in "stages one or two" is seen as crucial for a patient's survival.

Social & economic issues

['Lack of money' prompts care firms to end council contracts](#)

20 March 2017 Source: BBC news <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

Care firms have cancelled contracts with 95 UK councils, saying they cannot deliver services for the amount they are being paid, a BBC Panorama investigation has found.

[Prescriptions to rise by 20p in England](#)

16 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

The cost of an NHS prescription in England will increase by 20p to £8.60 from the start of April, the government has announced. Health minister Philip Dunne said prescription charges were expected to rise "broadly in line with inflation". In other parts of the UK, prescriptions are free.

Statistics

[Bed delay transfer figures reveal areas worst affected](#)

23 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

More than 2,500 hospital beds a day are taken up by patients whose release has been delayed due to problems in the social care system. Analysis of official so-called "bed-blocking" statistics reveals the areas where the NHS is worst affected.

[Teenage pregnancies down to record low](#)

22 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

Fewer teenagers are getting pregnant than ever before in England and Wales, according to new figures.

Women's health

[The pill provides 'lifelong protection against some cancers'](#)

22 March 2017 Source: NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/news/>

"The pill can protect women from cancer for 30 years," is the front page headline in the Daily Mirror. The paper reports on a landmark study that followed more than 46,000 women in the UK for up to 44 years.

Modern mothers 'watched and judged', say researchers

20 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

When Tanya, then pregnant, and her mother Diane, had lunch together in a cafe near their home in south Wales, they did not expect the waiter to tell them what they could eat. But according to Tanya, he acted "like the kind of food police". "He said 'The only things you can have are, um, cheese and pickle'." Tanya's experience is typical of a generation of mothers who "feel watched and judged", suggests a Cardiff University study.

Women 'should be told' sex of foetus in pregnancy scan

19 March 2017 Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

Women should be told the sex of the foetus when they are scanned during pregnancy, a senior, retired obstetrician has said.

New breast cancer drugs could help more than previously thought

15 March 2017 Source: NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/news/>

"Up to one in five women with breast cancer could benefit from a type of treatment currently only given to patients with a rare form of the disease," The Independent reports. Research suggests around 20% of women with breast cancer may benefit from a new class of drug known as PARP inhibitors.

Local news: []

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