

Public Health Bulletin. 18 February 2020

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

[Raise alcohol duty to fund our NHS and save lives, say leading health experts](#)

Feb 2020

Source: Alcohol Health Alliance UK <http://ahauk.org/>

A rise in alcohol duty in the upcoming Budget could help fund thousands of new jobs in health and public services, say top health experts. In a letter to the Chancellor, the Alcohol Health Alliance (AHA), a coalition of more than 50 leading UK health organisations, call for an increase in alcohol duty by 2% above inflation to ease pressure on public finances, tackle the harm caused by alcohol and fund our NHS.

Children and young people

[Children with arthritis 'facing delays to diagnosis'](#)

12 Feb 2020

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

Delays diagnosing and treating children with arthritis are leaving them in pain and at a higher risk of lifelong damage, a national charity has warned. Arthritis is commonly thought to affect only older people, but 15,000 children have the condition in the UK. Versus Arthritis says many children are not getting help soon enough.

[Light activity may improve mental health for teenagers](#)

13 Feb 2020

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

"Teenagers who sit for hours a day are more likely to get depression at 18," reports the Mail Online. It's been known for some time that children's activity levels go down as they get older, and this seems to be happening more in recent years. The numbers of teenagers with depression have also been rising.

See also [Coronavirus: Newborn becomes youngest person diagnosed with virus](#) in the communicable diseases section

Chronic conditions

[Landmark study to transform cancer treatment](#)

05 Feb 2020

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

More than a thousand scientists have built the most detailed picture of cancer ever in a landmark study. They said cancer was like a 100,000-piece jigsaw, and that until today, 99% of the pieces were missing. Their studies, published in the journal Nature, provide an almost complete picture of all cancers.

[Could a new study give hope for earlier diagnosis of cancer?](#)

07 Feb 2020

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

"Signs of cancer can appear long before diagnosis," reports The Guardian.

[NHS cancer patients 'missing out on basics information'](#)

10 Feb 2020 Source: NHS Website <http://www.nhs.uk/news/>

Cancer patients in England are missing out on basic information about their diseases because of staff shortages in the NHS, a charity has warned. Macmillan Cancer Support said at least 120,000 patients a year felt topics including treatments and side effects were not fully explained. The charity blamed "soaring" staffing pressures, which left people "in the dark" about how to prepare.

[Type 2 diabetes cases in Scotland 'up by 40% in 10 years'](#)

11 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

The number of people diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in Scotland has increased by 40% over a decade, according to a new study. Diabetes Scotland figures show cases rose from 190,772 to 267,615 between 2008 and 2018. There are also an estimated 26,347 people living with the condition who have yet to be diagnosed.

[Can a single injection prevent cervical cancer?](#)

11 Feb 2020 Source: NHS Website <http://www.nhs.uk/news/>

"Cervical cancer could be prevented with a single injection," reports The Independent. This is based on a study that looked at the impact of different numbers of doses of human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination in more than 130,000 women in the US.

[Skin cancer "more common" among gay and bisexual men](#)

13 Feb 2020 Source: NHS Website <http://www.nhs.uk/news/>

"Gay and bisexual men 'more likely to suffer skin cancer' – and it may be because they use sunbeds more, scientists say," reports the Mail Online. A survey of 845,264 men and women in the US found that men who said they were gay or bisexual were more likely to have been diagnosed with skin cancer than straight (heterosexual) men. Women who said they were lesbian, gay or bisexual were equally or less likely to have been diagnosed with skin cancer compared to straight women.

[Gene therapy to halt rare form of sight loss](#)

17 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

A new gene therapy has been used to treat patients with a rare inherited eye disorder which causes blindness. It's hoped the NHS treatment will halt sight loss and even improve vision.

Communicable diseases

[Mumps outbreaks across England](#)

14 Feb 2020 Source: Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk/>

Public Health England and NHS England urge people to ensure they have 2 doses of measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine as mumps cases rise to highest levels in a decade. Provisional data from Public Health England (PHE) show that there were 5,042

lab-confirmed cases of mumps in England in 2019, compared to 1,066 cases in 2018. This is the highest number of cases since 2009.

Wuhan novel coronavirus:

Finding the evidence: Coronavirus

07 Feb 2020 Source: Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk/>

The PHE Knowledge and Library Services Team (KLS) has produced this page to help those working on the current coronavirus outbreak embed evidence-informed decision-making in their daily practice.

Secretary of State makes new regulations on coronavirus

10 Feb 2020 Source: Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk/>

[New regulations](#) made by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to delay or prevent further transmission of the virus.

Coronavirus: Newborn becomes youngest person diagnosed with virus

06 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

A Chinese newborn has been diagnosed with the new coronavirus just 30 hours after birth, the youngest case recorded so far, state media said. The baby was born on 2 February in Wuhan, the epicentre of the virus.

Coronavirus: NHS orders 'assessment pods' in England hospitals

06 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Every hospital in England is being asked to create "priority assessment pods" for patients with suspected coronavirus, the NHS has said. Patients who are concerned they may have the virus are still advised to isolate themselves and call 111. But the contingency measure is intended to prevent any patients who do arrive at hospital from mixing with vulnerable patients.

PHE reaches crucial step in fully sequencing novel coronavirus

04 Feb 2020 Source: Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk/>

Scientists at Public Health England (PHE) have fully sequenced the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) viral genome.

Coronavirus: Third UK patient 'caught coronavirus in Singapore'

06 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

The third person in the UK to be diagnosed with coronavirus caught it in Singapore, it is understood. He is thought to have tested positive for the virus in Brighton before being taken to hospital in London. The government is now telling travellers arriving in the UK from a total of nine Asian countries and territories to check for symptoms.

Coronavirus: Five things you need to know

06 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Myths around the risks of coronavirus in the UK are doing the rounds. We put the facts straight.

Explainer: Coronavirus - What You Need to Know

06 Feb 2020 Source: Chatham House <https://www.chathamhouse.org>

World-renowned global health expert Professor David Heymann CBE explains the key facts and work being done on the coronavirus outbreak.

PHE novel coronavirus diagnostic test rolled out across UK

07 Feb 2020 Source: Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk/>

The novel coronavirus diagnostic test developed by Public Health England (PHE) is being rolled out to laboratories across the UK starting on Monday 10 February 2020. The increase in diagnostic capacity from one laboratory in London to 12 labs over the coming weeks, will accelerate the country's testing capabilities.

Coronavirus: Four more people diagnosed in UK

10 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

The number of people infected by the coronavirus in the UK has doubled to eight - after four more patients in England tested positive for the virus. It comes as the government announced new powers to keep people in quarantine to stop the spread of the virus. In order to do this the Department of Health has described the coronavirus as a "serious and imminent threat" to public health. The overall risk level to the UK remains "moderate".

Coronavirus claims 97 lives in one day - but number of infections stabilises

10 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

The number of people killed by the new coronavirus rose by 97 on Sunday, the highest number of casualties in a day. The total number of deaths in China is now 908 - but the number of newly-infected people per day has stabilised. Across China, 40,171 people are infected while 187,518 are under medical observation.

Coronavirus disease named Covid-19

11 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

The World Health Organization says the official name for the disease caused by the new coronavirus is Covid-19.

Coronavirus: 12 patients treated by two coronavirus GPs being traced

12 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Twelve patients treated by two British GPs who have been diagnosed with coronavirus are being traced by health officials, the BBC understands. Between them, the two doctors worked in four different places in East and West Sussex - a nursing home, an A&E department and two GP practices. The pair are now in isolation, and efforts to trace those that came into contact with them are ongoing.

Government to monitor impact of coronavirus on UK medicine supply

11 Feb 2020 Source: Dept. of Health and Social Care <https://www.gov.uk/>

The Department of Health and Social Care is evaluating the potential impact of coronavirus on the supply of medicines and medical goods. The Chinese government continues to impose further restrictions on movement within China in response to the coronavirus outbreak, including on flight and rail travel. To relieve potential pressures on global supply chains, suppliers have been asked to carry out a risk assessment on the impact of coronavirus on their business.

Britain's race to contain the coronavirus

13 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

There were 12 days between Steve Walsh leaving a business conference in Singapore and finding out he had been infected with the new coronavirus. When he was tested, he did not even have any symptoms. But it was still enough to set in train a series of events that have left health officials battling to stop the disease - now named Covid-19 - from spreading across the UK.

Coronavirus: Hunt for contacts of latest UK case

13 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Officials are attempting to trace the contacts of the latest person to be diagnosed with coronavirus in the UK. The woman, being treated at Guy's and St Thomas' in London, flew into Heathrow from China a few days ago.

Are coronavirus tests flawed?

13 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

There are deep concerns laboratory tests are incorrectly telling people they are free of the coronavirus. Stories in several countries suggest people are having up to six negative results before finally being diagnosed.

Coronavirus: More may need to self-isolate to stop spread - NHS boss

13 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Many more people may be forced to self-isolate as part of efforts to stop the coronavirus spreading in Britain, the head of NHS England has warned. Sir Simon Stevens said more than 80 people discharged from quarantine on Thursday set an "important example".

Coronavirus: Schools advised not to close over suspected cases

17 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Schools are being told they do not need to close or send people home if there is a suspected case of coronavirus. Guidance to be published by Public Health England says no restrictions are needed while tests are carried out. If tests are positive, health protection teams will speak to the head teacher and action will be taken

Diet & nutrition

[Red meat and processed food 'not back on the menu' according to new review](#)

04 Feb 2020

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

The Mail Online reports that "red meat IS bad for you" saying that eating pork or beef twice a week raises the risk of heart disease by 7%. The Sun meanwhile advises that eating chicken twice a week raises your risk.

[Food bank parcels high in sugar and low in vital nutrients](#)

13 Feb 2020

Source: University of Reading <http://www.reading.ac.uk/>

Food bank parcels do not provide a balanced, healthy diet for those requiring emergency food and would benefit from being supplemented with fresh produce, according to new research.

See also [Food Standards Agency sets deadline for the CBD industry and provides safety advice to consumers](#) in the Health protection section

Health protection

[Ban term 'painkiller' to end obsession with drugs](#)

06 Feb 2020

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

The term "painkiller" should not be used, to help bust the myth they cure pain, a government adviser suggests. Prof Jamie Coleman said the phrase raised unrealistic expectations - with "pain-reliever" a better option. Research suggests just one in 10 patients seeking help for long-term pain, benefit from strong painkillers.

[My Right to Healthcare](#)

11 Feb 2020

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

Groundswell and the LHHP have produced 'My Right to Healthcare' cards which explain to GP surgeries the rights of homeless people to register for primary care.

[Food Standards Agency sets deadline for the CBD industry and provides safety advice to consumers](#)

13 Feb 2020

Source: Food Standards Agency <https://www.food.gov.uk/>

The FSA has set a deadline for CBD businesses to provide more information about CBD products and their contents. It also advises vulnerable groups not to take CBD, and healthy adults to take no more than 70mg a day.

[Cannabis oil products 'could be off the shelves in a year'](#)

13 Feb 2020

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

Oils, snacks and drinks containing the cannabis extract cannabidiol (CBD) will be "taken off the shelves" next year if they do not gain regulatory approval. The Food Standards

Agency (FSA) said products had to be registered by March 2021 or they would be pulled.

[What the quality of work means for our health](#)

04 Feb 2020 Source: The Health Foundation <https://www.health.org.uk/>

Social, economic, commercial and environmental conditions are the strongest determinants of people's health. This includes people's access to homes that are safe, stable and warm; the availability of an adequate financial safety net; access to healthy, affordable food; and the quality of their work. This long read presents new analysis exploring changes in one of these wider determinants of health: the labour market

[Transgender patients self-medicating over NHS waits](#)

18 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Transgender patients are choosing to self-medicate with hormones bought online from unregulated sources due to waiting times to see NHS specialists, the BBC has learned. In many areas, some patients wait over two years to be seen, new figures show. England's target time is 18 weeks.

[Taking multiple medicines? Support the Yellow Card scheme by reporting suspected side effects](#)

17 Feb 2020 Source: Dept. of Health and Social Care <https://www.gov.uk/>

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) launches a week long social media campaign to raise awareness about the importance of reporting suspected side effects using the Yellow Card Scheme.

Health services administration

[£1.5 billion to deliver Government commitment for 50 million more general practice appointments](#)

06 Feb 2020 Source: Dept. of Health and Social Care <https://www.gov.uk/>

The Government and NHS England have committed at least an additional £1.5 billion in total for general practice over the next four years for additional staff, a key step towards delivering 50 million more appointments in general practice by 2024.

See also [Dad 'cannot speak' to autistic son at mental health unit](#) in the Mental health section

HIV & AIDS

[HIV in older people: 'I thought it was a young person's illness'](#)

10 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

When 59-year-old Ashley was in hospital with appendicitis, neither Ashley nor the doctors considered HIV. "They said there's nothing wrong with you, you've had a virus - not knowing that I'd still got the biggest virus you could possibly get," Ashley recalls.

PrEP: Fully fund councils to avoid stalled roll out of anti-HIV drug

11 Feb 2020 Source: Local Government Assoc. <http://www.local.gov.uk/>

The LGA is warning that councils' already overstretched public health budgets - which have been reduced by £700 million in real terms between 2015 and 2020 - will struggle to meet this commitment unless government provides a guarantee to meet any extra and unforeseen costs of providing the drug.

Rapid tests to help tackle Glasgow's HIV outbreak

18 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

New HIV tests that provide results in minutes have been introduced in Glasgow to help tackle the worst outbreak of the infection in decades. Drug users sharing needles are in the group most affected by the surge of HIV cases in Scotland's biggest city. Previously, test results could take up to two weeks to come back from the laboratory and it could be difficult to trace people to tell them the outcome. The finger-prick blood tests will be available at needle exchanges.

Mental health

Dad 'cannot speak' to autistic son at mental health unit

12 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

A father whose autistic son is at a mental health unit in England has said he has not been able to see or speak to him for three years. Wayne Erasmus said his son Huw, 31, moved without notice from a unit in Carmarthen to Birmingham and then on to St Andrew's Healthcare in Northampton. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has raised concerns and criticised repeated failings in St Andrew's leadership.

Occupational therapy at home may benefit people with dementia and their carers

12 Feb 2020 Source: National Institute for Health Research
<https://discover.dc.nihr.ac.uk/>

Multiple occupational therapy sessions, provided in a person with dementia's own home, improve their ability to carry out daily activities, compared with usual care. Improvements are also seen in behavioural and psychological symptoms and their quality of life. In addition, carers report feeling less distress, and a better quality of life.

Increasing omega-3 intake does not prevent depression or anxiety

12 Feb 2020 Source: National Institute for Health Research
<https://discover.dc.nihr.ac.uk/>

Increasing intake of polyunsaturated fats, for example with omega-3 fatty acid supplements, has little or no effect in preventing the onset of depression or anxiety symptoms in people without these conditions, but who might be at risk. These findings support dietary advice that omega-3 supplements are not needed in healthy people.

See also [Light activity may improve mental health for teenagers](#) in the Children and young people section

Older people

See also [HIV in older people: 'I thought it was a young person's illness'](#) in the HIV & Aids section

Oral health

[Teeth-whitening: Reports of illegal procedures up 26%](#)

10 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Reports of illegal teeth-whitening that could leave patients at risk of health problems including burns or lost teeth have increased, the BBC has found. General Dental Council (GDC) figures showed a 26% rise in reports last year.

[Dentists threatened by coronavirus face-mask shortage](#)

14 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Some UK dentists may have to "down drills" if the shortage of face masks caused by the coronavirus outbreak continues, according to the British Dental Association.

Physical activity

[Pedometers can help people get more active as part of an exercise programme](#)

12 Feb 2020 Source: National Institute for Health Research
<https://discover.dc.nihr.ac.uk/>

Pedometers and accelerometers helped people with diabetes or cardiovascular diseases to increase their physical activity by a moderate amount, though pedometers were more successful. Programmes that involved face-to-face consultations with a facilitator were more effective than those where devices were used in isolation to track progress.

Prison health

[Criminals end up with 'smaller brains'](#)

18 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

People who steal, bully and lie throughout their lives may have smaller brains, researchers say. MRI scans suggested 45-year-olds who had shown antisocial behaviour from childhood had reduced surface area and a thinner cortex in parts of the brain previously linked to such behaviour. But it is unclear if this was inherited or due to factors such as substance abuse, low IQ or poor mental health.

Safety

[Jeremy Hunt calls for public inquiry into NHS after baby deaths](#)

07 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

The former health secretary has called for an inquiry into the safety of NHS maternity services following reports of avoidable baby deaths in hospitals. Jeremy Hunt told the Independent the inquiry should investigate if the safety of mothers and babies has been "compromised in any part of the NHS".

[East Kent baby deaths: Four more families come forward](#)

10 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

A BBC News investigation has uncovered more preventable baby deaths at an NHS trust which has already been criticised for its maternity services. Four families said their babies would have survived had East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust provided better care. The NHS's Healthcare Safety Branch is investigating 25 maternity cases at the hospitals in Margate and Ashford.

[East Kent baby deaths: Independent review into NHS trust](#)

13 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

An independent review will be held into maternity services at the East Kent NHS Trust after up to 15 babies died there in recent years. Nadine Dorries, minister for patient safety, pledged immediate action and said NHS England would investigate the two hospitals in Margate and Ashford.

Sexual health

[BASHH & THT release State of The Nation report on STIs in England](#)

05 Feb 2020 Source: Terrence Higgins Trust <https://www.tht.org.uk>

The British Association for Sexual Health and HIV in partnership with the Terrance Higgins Trust have launched a new State of The Nation Report on Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) in England. The report urges the Government to reverse the deep funding cuts that have placed tremendous pressures on services and those working within them at a crucial time of need.

[Contraception shortage 'causing utter chaos'](#)

07 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

A shortage of contraception is causing chaos and risks unplanned pregnancies and abortions, doctors are warning. Leading sexual health experts have written to ministers warning that the supply shortage is beginning to lead to serious problems across the UK. A number of daily pills and a long-acting injectable contraceptive are thought to be affected.

Smoking

[Text messaging support helps smokers quit, but apps not yet shown to work](#)

12 Feb 2020 Source: National Institute for Health Research

<https://discover.dc.nihr.ac.uk/>

Text messaging support helps people quit smoking, more than minimal support such as self-help materials. Also, when text messaging is combined with another smoking cessation intervention, it is more effective than just that intervention alone. However, the evidence to support smartphone apps is absent or of poor quality.

Statistics

[Latest patient outcomes data on hip and knee replacements published today](#)

13 Feb 2020 Source: NHS Digital <https://digital.nhs.uk/>

Patients undergoing elective inpatient surgery for hip and knee replacements (funded by the English NHS) are asked to complete questionnaires before and after their operations to assess improvement in health, as perceived by the patients themselves. Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) Finalised Hip & Knee Replacements, April 2018 – March 2019¹ provides an indication of the outcomes or quality of care delivered to NHS patients and has been collected by all providers of NHS-funded care since April 2009.

Women's health

[West Midlands smear test results delayed by 10 weeks](#)

06 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Women are facing a 10-week delay to receive results of their smear tests. Thousands of women in the West Midlands are thought to be affected by the backlog that built up after Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust took over the service. It said it hoped to meet the national target to return results within two weeks by the end of February.

[Complete vaginal-mesh removals 'leaving material behind'](#)

06 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Dozens of women who thought they were having a "complete mesh removal" have discovered material has been left behind, the BBC's Victoria Derbyshire programme has been told.

[Rugby concussion: Swansea University study into protecting women](#)

10 Feb 2020 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Rugby is one of the fastest growing sports for women and one of the few sports where men and women play in exactly the same way. But recent research suggests female

players are at a greater risk of suffering concussion than men - and the effects are more severe. Swansea University is carrying out a pioneering study to understand why.

Period products reach half a million people

14 Feb 2020

Source: Scottish Government <http://www.gov.scot/>

Scotland leading the way on access and removing stigma. Free period products are now available to more than half a million people across Scotland. The Scottish Government has invested £15 million in its world-leading action to widen provision and tackle the stigma surrounding periods. Later this year, an app will be launched to provide information on where to get free products and resources introduced to support employers who want to do more to provide them.

Workplace health

The health, safety and wellbeing of shift workers in healthcare environments

Feb 2020

Source: NHS Employers <https://www.nhsemployers.org>

This guidance explores: how shift work can impact on health, safety and wellbeing; what measures can be taken by employers and employees; and the importance of partnership working on shift working patterns.

Local news: []

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Other Bulletins
<p>Super Six Bulletin 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 http://cash.libraryservices.nhs.uk/subject-a-z/m/medicine/major-research/</p>
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