

Charity warns over child drinking



A charity has warned that a rising number of children are drinking at dangerous levels.

Alcohol Concern says that the number of under-18s needing hospital treatment after drinking too much is increasing and costs the NHS as much as £19m a year.

The organisation's report Right Time, Right Place said alcohol contributes to 5% of young people's deaths, 1.4% higher than in the adult population.

This country also has highest rates of teenage alcohol-related injuries in Europe with the numbers admitted to hospital in England where alcohol was a factor up from 10,976 in 2002/3 to 14,501 in 2007/8, though admissions did fall back to 12,832 in 2008/9.

Alcohol Concern chief executive Don Shenker said some of the youngsters are as young as 10.

"We are extremely concerned about the damage to children's health," he said.

The document wants to see earlier identification of young people engaged in 'risky' drinking with better training of medical staff to spot the problems.

Costs of early intervention are seen as less than the costs of treating the health problems of long-term alcohol misuse by children and young people.

Professor Sir Ian Gilmore, chair of Alcohol Health Alliance UK, said: "We know that heavy drinking from an early age can diminish the life chances of the young person involved. It is important that parents realise they are role models - their behaviour in relation to alcohol has more impact than what they tell their children."

The Department of Health said the report showed the devastating impact alcohol has on the lives young people.

16488

Work stress rising



Cases of work-related stress are soaring in the UK as a consequence of the global economic downturn.

The findings, in a report for the British Academy, says the impact has hit those who have lost their jobs as much as those still in the workplace.

University of Manchester sociologist Professor Tarani Chandola, who compiled the document, said in each of the last two years, work stress levels rose by more than 4%, compared to annual rises between 0.1% and 1% from 1992 to 2009.

He added: "It's likely to continue to increase because of the determinants of work stress: changes in working conditions and the government spending."

Severe stress can trigger depression, anxiety, lead to workplace injuries, suicide and increased risk of heart disease.

Professor Chandola feared that the

workers in the public sector would be worst affected and with a greater number of women in the public sector workforce, he expected women workers to be hit particularly badly.

The Health and Safety Executive has set up a number of management standards on tackling work stress which suggest bosses regularly survey employees over potential problems of work-related anxiety or depression in the work force, along with action plans to reduce stress at work.

Neil Carberry of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), said: "Employers take the well being of staff very seriously.

"As the recent CBI/Pfizer absence and workplace health survey showed, many companies have strategies in place to address issues, such as workplace stress, and recognise the benefits of doing this for both the business and employees alike."

16552

We all carry genes linked to diseases

A study has shown that every human being carries around 75 to 100 genes that are linked to disease such as cancer and diabetes.

The study also found that each individual had up to 300 genes that did not function in any way. The global project included scientists from the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute in Cambridge. Data from the pilot stage of the 1,000 Genomes Project should aid scientists in their understanding of how diseases are caused and the potential for new treatments.

40 UK children have died after MMR jab

Health authorities across the UK have revealed that 40 children have died after a routine vaccination such as MMR and 2,100 more have suffered a serious reaction. Data revealed by the Medicine and Healthcare Products Regulatory Authority (MHRA) showed that two of the vaccinated children have been left with permanent brain damage, and 1500 others have suffered neurological reactions, including 11 cases of brain inflammation and 13 cases of epilepsy and coma. The MHRA revealed the data under a freedom of information request.

Blood test for ectopic pregnancy

Scientists are developing a blood test for ectopic pregnancies which could help save the fertility of thousands of women. The test would enable the life-threatening condition to be diagnosed within a day, instead of the several weeks it takes for tests to come back now and allow doctors to intervene earlier to save reproductive organs which are often damaged by the condition. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists said the test, which should be available within the next two to five years, would be "potentially useful for making an earlier diagnosis".

Scorpion sting could aid heart bypasses

A study from the University of Leeds has suggested that an ingredient in a scorpion's sting could be used to stop heart bypasses failing.

The findings, published in the journal Cardiovascular Research, say that margatoxin, from the venom of the Central American bark scorpion, proved effective in preventing a complication arising from the growth of new blood cells. With some 25,000 coronary artery bypass grafts carried out in the UK each year, the Leeds team say the findings were "promising".

16486

Diabetes and obesity rates rising

The charity Diabetes UK has warned that the number of people with diabetes in the UK has risen by about 5% over the past 12 months and warns that failure to act could have serious implications for public health.

Latest figures show that the number of cases of people diagnosed with diabetes – which is linked to being obese, overweight and an unhealthy diet - has risen by 150,000 to 2.8 million. Some 10% of NHS spending goes on diabetes and its complications.

16489

Paternal health not considered in breast cancer

A study published in Lancet Oncology has suggested that women at risk of breast cancer miss out on tests and early diagnosis because their father's family's health history is disregarded.

Researchers say that women were more likely to report a history of the disease on their mother's side and the UK charity Breakthrough Breast Cancer also acknowledged that a father's history was "often overlooked". It is believed that between 5% and 10% of breast and ovarian cancers are the result of a genetic inheritance.

16490

Red flag for bowel cancer is rectal bleeding

Researchers from the south of England suggest rectal bleeding is the strongest marker of early-stage bowel cancer. They believe its presence brings patients significantly improved survival and comes after examining data from the Wessex Bowel Cancer Audit. Of those with rectal or sigmoid cancer, 63% presented with rectal bleeding and these patients were significantly more likely to have Dukes' stage A disease rather than Dukes' stage D, compared with patients presenting with a change in bowel habit or abdominal pain.

16530

33% of women smoke while pregnant

A new survey has shown that nearly 15% of women who gave birth in England in 2008/09 were smokers. The figure was as high as 33% in Blackpool, compared with just 4% in Richmond, Surrey, according to data from the Association of Public Health Observatories. The charity's survey, commissioned by the Department of Health, found tobacco still caused more significant illness and deaths across the north west than in most other parts of the country, though the region also has some of the highest quit rates in the country.

16536

eDischarge system wins award

The pharmacy and IT teams at Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust have been recognised for its electronic patient discharge system. The Southampton eDischarge system, which enables pharmacists and doctors to enter drug information directly into an electronic document before a patient is discharged, won the Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists and UK Clinical Pharmacy Association's information technology award for 2010. Under the system doctors can enter clinical information and sign off the medication with a pharmacist.

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