



Welcome to our November newsletter - Eamonn Swanton, Managing Director

Key News Stories

Tuberculosis kills three people a minute as case numbers rise

Tuberculosis is killing more people than thought, yet governments are not doing enough to bring the debilitating infectious disease under control, the World Health Organisation has said.

The latest WHO figures show TB has been taking a much greater toll in India than previously believed and that the number of cases worldwide last year was 10.4m, up from the 9.6m estimated before more detailed investigations were done.

The disease claims the lives of 1.8 million people worldwide each year, not the 1.5 million it was previously thought.

Drug-resistant TB, which is more difficult and very expensive to treat with combinations of the latest antibiotics, has also risen, to more than half a million cases globally.

Dr Margaret Chan, director general of the WHO, warned that much more needed to be done if the world was to have any hope of stopping the disease in its tracks.

"We face an uphill battle to reach the global targets for tuberculosis," she said. "There must be a massive scale-up of efforts, or countries will continue to run behind this deadly epidemic and these ambitious goals will be missed."

The UN has set a target of cutting TB deaths by 90% and cases of the disease by 80% between 2015 and 2030.

Immunotherapy drug a 'gamechanger' for head and neck cancer

An immunotherapy drug hailed as a potential gamechanger in the treatment of cancer could soon offer new hope to patients with currently untreatable forms of the disease.

Nivolumab was found to extend the lives of relapsed patients diagnosed with head and neck cancers who had run out of therapy options. After a year of treatment, 36% of trial patients treated with the drug were still alive compared with 17% of those given standard chemotherapy.

Trial participants treated with nivolumab typically survived for 7.5 months, and some for longer. Middle-range survival for patients on chemotherapy was 5.1 months.

Prof Kevin Harrington, from the Institute of Cancer Research, London, who led the British arm of the international trial, said: "Nivolumab could be a real gamechanger for patients with advanced head and neck cancer. This trial found that it can greatly extend life among a group of patients who have no existing treatment options, without worsening quality of life."

Migraines could be caused by gut bacteria, study suggests

Migraine sufferers have a different mix of gut bacteria that could make them more sensitive to certain foods, scientists have found.

The study offers a potential explanation for why some people are more susceptible and why some foods appear to act as triggers for migraines.

The research showed that migraine sufferers had higher levels of bacteria that are known to be involved in processing nitrates, which are typically found in processed meats, leafy vegetables and some wines.

The latest findings raise the possibility that migraines could be triggered when nitrates in food are broken down more efficiently, causing vessels in the brain and scalp to dilate.

Antonio Gonzalez, a programmer analyst at the University of California San Diego and the study's first author, said: "There is this idea out there that certain foods trigger migraines - chocolate, wine and especially foods containing nitrates. We thought that perhaps there are connections between what people are eating, their microbiomes and their experiences with migraines."

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Key News Stories

Most countries get more calories from alcohol than soft drinks – study

People in the UK and many other countries get more of their calories from alcohol than from sugary drinks like cola and lemonade, according to new data which suggests that tackling Britain's drink problem may be more important for health than cracking down on sugar consumption.

Of 24 countries tracked by the data analysts Euromonitor International, all but one have higher daily calorie consumption from alcoholic drinks than sugary beverages. In the UK, adults are consuming more than 106 calories per head every day from alcoholic drinks, compared with 98 from sugar-sweetened drinks.

Sugar has been targeted by health experts and obesity campaigners. A number of governments are introducing taxes on sugar-sweetened drinks.

But little has been said or done about alcohol, which the new data suggests is more significant even than sugary drinks in obesity in adults. Most people are unaware that alcohol can make you gain weight, because – unlike food – the number of calories are not routinely marked on beer cans and bottles of wines and spirits. Yet a large glass of 13% wine contains 228 calories and a standard glass 160 calories. A pint of 4% beer is also around 160 calories.

"In the UK, alcoholic drinks above 1.2% ABV are currently exempt from having to provide calorie information. This research demonstrates clearly that this exemption should now end," said Prof Sir Ian Gilmore, chair of the alcohol health alliance.

Women now drink as much alcohol as men, global study finds

Women have caught up with men in the amount of alcohol they drink and are doing increasing amounts of damage to their health as a result, according to a global study that looked at the consumption habits of four million people over a period of over a century.

Some studies have even suggested that younger women may be out-drinking men, according to the study's authors.

The researchers from the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre of the University of New South Wales, Australia, say the conclusion is that public health efforts need to focus more on women.

"These results have implications for the framing and targeting of alcohol use prevention and intervention programmes. Alcohol use and alcohol-use disorders have historically been viewed as a male phenomenon. The present study calls this assumption into question and suggests that young women in particular should be the target of concerted efforts to reduce the impact of substance use and related harms," they say.

Their analysis, published in the journal *BMJ Open*, looks at the convergence of drinking habits between men and women over time, from 1891 to 2014. It pools the results of 68 international studies, published since 1980, to look at the changing ratio of male to female drinking over the years.

More than two sugary drinks a day greatly increases diabetes risk, study shows

The Swedish study found that consuming more than two 200ml drinks more than doubled the chances of developing type 2 diabetes. A serious soft drink habit consisting of at least five drinks daily boosted the likelihood of having the disease more than 10 times.

Researchers from the Karolinska Institute studied levels of soft drink consumption in 2,874 Swedish adults and compared them with rates of diabetes.

Lead scientist Dr Josefin Edwall Lofvenborg said: "In this study we were surprised by the increased risk in developing autoimmune diabetes by drinking soft drinks. We next plan on investigating what could counter this risk, such as eating fatty fish.

"We are looking into this now using data from eight different countries across Europe."

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Risk of heart attack tripled by exercising while angry, study finds.

Being very upset or angry more than doubles the risk of a heart attack within an hour, while heavy physical exertion does the same, a worldwide study suggested. But combining the two – such as using extreme exercise as a way of calming down – increases the risk even further.

Experts said the study – the biggest of its kind – provides evidence of a “crucial link” between mind and body.

The study's lead author, Dr Andrew Smyth, from the population health research institute at McMaster University in Canada, said extreme emotional and physical triggers are thought to have similar effects on the body.

He added: “Both can raise blood pressure and heart rate, changing the flow of blood through blood vessels and reducing blood supply to the heart. This is particularly important in blood vessels already narrowed by plaque, which could block the flow of blood leading to a heart attack.

“Regular physical activity has many health benefits, including the prevention of heart disease, so we want that to continue. However, we would recommend that a person who is angry or upset who wants to exercise to blow off steam not go beyond their normal routine to extremes of activity.”

Bored, lethargic and always craving carbs? Try adjusting your light levels.

New research has found millions of us are victims of poor lighting – which can wreak havoc with our health, mood and job performance.

Exposure to bright light helps us to regulate our sleep, boosts our mood and even raises our productivity levels.

However most of us are severely 'light deprived' because levels of brightness in our homes and workplaces aren't high enough to help regulate our body clock.

In fact, less than five per cent of daylight filters into the average building, one British study suggested.

As a result, millions of us struggle to stay alert – and battle through the day feeling sluggish, disgruntled and unmotivated.

Experts are increasingly recommending the use of bright light

therapy – i.e. a desktop light box such as those used for Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

Light therapy involves sitting or working near a light therapy device that emits bright light. This mimics natural outdoor light, compensating for lack of it in e.g. a dimly-lit office. Bright light devices work by delivering daylight or light of specific wavelengths to the back of the eye (retina) to help keep the circadian and other rhythms relating to the body clock stable.

Service News

We have been working on improving internal Governance processes over the last few weeks, especially Information Asset Management and management system feature/update/bug tracking and test documentation. Information Asset tracking includes Information Security Risk assessment based on the Carnegie Mellon OCTAVE Allegro process. We continually review the methods we use to assess Information Assets and the risks to them; in light of ever increasing cyber threats.

We have also improved our Management Referral triage process formalising a triage action and form to improve the quality checking of the triage process.

We have implemented a number of security updates to ensure our servers are not vulnerable to the Linux 'Dirty Cow' vulnerability as well as updates to the backend database(s).

We are testing a number of internal cloud drive solutions with online document editing to determine if any of them suit our current business model. External solutions are not a viable option for security reasons.

We are also completing a re-write of the Document Management System (DMS) module to implement a stronger Document Management tracking process. Future document additions, updating and deleting will be controlled through a standardised case within the management system rather than directly via the DMS..

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Health Promotion and Education

Heales Medical can help advise and manage proactive health promotion days that will encourage employees to adopt healthier lifestyles.



Our health promotion days specialise in the prevention of ill health and the promotion of health & well-being within your organisation.

Our services are delivered by high calibre, well qualified staff with a broad experience base and all results are assessed against National Clinical Guidelines.

During each assessment, the health professional will ask lifestyle questions about the employee's general health and give health advice.

After each assessment we will be able to provide results, advice and an information pack.

If you have any queries or are interested in having an event, please contact a Heales Occupational Health Advisor or Contract Manager for further information

- ✓ Advice of physical activity
- ✓ Advice on healthy eating
- ✓ Advice on weight management
- ✓ Advice on stress management
- ✓ Advice on smoking, alcohol & drugs
- ✓ Understanding blood pressure
- ✓ Understanding blood cholesterol

Upcoming Health Promotion Dates

November

Lung Cancer Awareness Month (1/11-30/11)

<http://www.roycastle.org/how-we-help/our-campaigns/lung-cancer-awareness-campaigns/thank-you-for-supporting-lung-cancer-awareness-month>

Mouth Cancer Action Month (1/11-30/11)

<http://www.mouthcancer.org/>

Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month (1/11-30/11)

<https://pancreaticcanceraction.org/support-us/awareness-month/>

Dyslexia Awareness Week (5/11-11/11)

<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/get-involved-and-fundraising/dyslexia-awareness-week.html>

World Diabetes Day (14/11)

<http://www.idf.org/worlddiabetesday/>

Alcohol Awareness Week (16/11-22/11)

<http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/what-we-do/campaigns/alcohol-awareness-week/>

World COPD Day (20/11)

<http://www.goldcopd.org/wcd-home.html>

December

Decembeard (01/12-31/12)

www.beatingbowelcancer.org/decembeard

Anger Awareness Week (01/12-07/12)

<http://www.angermanage.co.uk/anger-management-conferences.html>

World Aids Day (01/12)

www.worldaidsday.org

International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3/12)

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1637>

January

Love Your Liver (01/01-31/01)

www.loveyourliver.org.uk

World Braille Day (04/01)

www.worldblindunion.org

National Obesity Awareness Week (11/1 - 17/1)

<http://www.jan-u-ary.co.uk/>

Cervical Cancer Prevention Week (25/01-31/01)

<http://www.jostrust.org.uk/get-involved/campaign/cervical-cancer-prevention-week>