

NEWS

In brief

Report details violence against health staff: Details of more than 1800 violent incidents affecting healthcare delivery in 23 countries in 2012 and 2013 were published this week in a report from the International Committee of the Red Cross.¹ In some of the incidents, medical personnel were forced to breach medical ethics, such as by being required to withhold treatment from adversaries.

FDA approves treatment by family members for heroin overdoses: The US Food and Drug Administration has approved an antidote for suspected heroin overdoses that doctors could prescribe to family members or caregivers to keep on hand, in a pocket or medicine cabinet. Called Evzio, the device automatically injects the right dose of naloxone. Caregivers would be able to use the drug while waiting for medical help.

Scarlet fever cases in England reach 5000: New cases of scarlet fever rose to 883 in the week from 24 to 30 March, the highest weekly total for more than 30 years, Public Health England has announced. Cases have been rising for around six months, to a current total of 5012 since September 2013. Most cases are mild and can be treated with antibiotics, but complications can occur. The East Midlands and London have had the largest numbers of cases.

Drug firms can apply for special treatment for new products in UK: Applications are now open for the Early Access to

Medicines Scheme, which aims to accelerate access to new drugs for patients with life threatening or debilitating conditions.² Drug companies and research organisations that believe that their products may qualify can apply to the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency for inclusion.

Payment for vaccination can work in drug users: Drug users who were paid £30 (€36; \$50) in supermarket vouchers as a reward for having three hepatitis B injections were much more likely to complete the course, a study led by John Strang of the National Addiction Centre in London has found.³ Almost half (45%) of participants who were given three payments of £10 vouchers but only 9% of those who not given the vouchers completed the course within 28 days.

- 1 International Committee of the Red Cross. Health care in danger: violent incidents affecting health care. Apr 2014. www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/reports/4050-002_violent-incident-report_en_final.pdf.
- 2 Hawkes N. Seriously ill patients in UK will have access to unlicensed drugs. *BMJ* 2014;348:g2161.
- 3 Weaver T, Metrebian N, Hellier J, Pilling S, Charles V, Little N, et al. Use of contingency management incentives to improve completion of hepatitis B vaccination in people undergoing treatment for heroin dependence: a cluster randomised trial. *Lancet* 9 Apr 2014. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(14)60196-3.

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