

In brief

Admissions for alcohol related cancers rise in England:

Hospital admissions for alcohol related cancers rose in England by 28% in eight years, from 29 400 in 2002-3 to 37 600 in 2010-11, says a report by the Alcohol Health Alliance UK.¹ Each year 12 500 alcohol related cancers are diagnosed in the United Kingdom, such as those of the mouth, larynx, oesophagus, and around 3200 people die from them. The report gives more evidence of the need for strong government action, including a minimum price on a unit of alcohol, said Ian Gilmore, the alliance's chairman.

Drugs in Europe undergoing monitoring will get black triangle symbol:

From September an inverted black triangle will feature on leaflets accompanying drugs available in the European Union that are undergoing additional monitoring. The symbol will make it easier for patients and health professionals to identify the products concerned. The European Medicines Agency advises professionals and patients to report any side effects they encounter.

Computer based interventions provide limited support in diabetes:

Self management interventions delivered by computer and mobile phone currently provide limited benefits for people with diabetes, a systematic review in the Cochrane Library has found.² Although computer and mobile phone based self management programmes had small positive effects on blood sugar concentrations, these effects seemed to be short lived, showed the analysis from 16 trials involving a total of 3578 people with type 2 diabetes.

Researchers can access human brain tissue more easily:

Researchers can now access samples from more than 7000 donated human brains to help study major brain diseases through a new online database launched by the Medical Research Council. The UK Brain Banks Network database provides access to donated brain samples held across 10 brain banks in the UK. Previously researchers had to apply to each brain bank in turn to find out whether it held the samples they needed and to find the "control" samples (donated brains free from disease) for comparison.

More UK children started smoking in 2011:

About 207 000 UK children aged between 11 and 15 started smoking in 2011, up from 157 000 in 2010, show figures from Cancer Research UK. The charity urges the government to introduce mandatory plain, standardised packaging of tobacco products, because research has shown that children find the plain packs less appealing and are less likely to be misled by sophisticated marketing techniques designed to make smoking attractive to youngsters.

- 1 Alcohol Health Alliance. Alcohol and cancer. Mar 2013. www.rcplondon.ac.uk/sites/default/files/aha_booklet.pdf.
- 2 Pal K, Eastwood SV, Michie S, Farmer AJ, Barnard ML, Peacock R, et al. Computer-based diabetes self-management interventions for adults with type 2 diabetes mellitus. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2013;3:CD008776.

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