Friday 21st April 2017
Health and social care news from the national and trade press.

Today's health news - stories in full below

Health and Social Care News

- Restrictions on migrants forces NHS doctors to 'act as border guards' according to charity Doctors of the World
- Police cannot continue to fill gaps left by mental health cuts, says Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary
- Breast Cancer Care report highlights nurse shortages
- NHS hospital to sell private patients access to proton cancer therapy
- Number of patients on mixed-sex wards rises again
- Young patient's death reveals 'no coordination' between mental health services in Birmingham
- West Country STP faces £90m deficit
- Current plans to enable GPs to curb OTC prescribing are unworkable, says GPC's clinical lead
- NHS England's mental health lead admits plans to expand CAMHS workforce in doubt
- Maximum midwife-to-supervisor ratios increased under new NHS model
- Roll-out of information sharing system to help nurses spot child abuse falls behind implementation target

Latest Medical Research

- Trial of new bleeding control surgery at University of Aberdeen receives £1.1m

Public Health News

- Shops agree to limit sugary drinks sales in hospitals
- Stroke and dementia risk linked to artificial sweeteners, new study suggests
- Italian court rules mobile phone use caused brain tumour
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- WHO surgical safety checklist cuts post-surgical deaths by 22%, US study find
Health and Social Care News

Restrictions on migrants forces NHS doctors to 'act as border guards' according to charity Doctors of the World
A medical charity has launched a campaign against government guidance that “makes border guards of doctors” by allowing the Home Office to access details of undocumented migrants who seek NHS treatment. Doctors of the World along with the human rights charity, Liberty, and the National Aids Trust, have launched a petition aimed at reversing the data-sharing policy between the NHS and the Home Office implemented this year. They want the Government to “stop using NHS patients' personal information to carry out immigration enforcement.
Guardian  BMJ

Police cannot continue to fill gaps left by mental health cuts, says Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary
Police cannot continue to pick up the slack for cuts in other public services, especially the lack of mental healthcare provision, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Sir Thomas Winsor, has said. He was speaking in relation to the report published yesterday: State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2016. The report highlights high levels of online fraud, increased police awareness of crimes against the elderly, and child sexual exploitation as among the increasing daily pressures facing officers. Sir Thomas also said the failures of other public services, especially in respect of children's and adolescent mental health, too often leave the police to fill the gaps, long after the chances of effective intervention have been lost.
Guardian

Breast Cancer Care report highlights shortage of specialist nurses
Women with incurable breast cancer are not receiving adequate care because almost half of hospitals don’t have specialist nurses, according to a new report by the charity Breast Cancer Care. The first ever study of the provision of specialist nursing for incurable breast cancer found the vast majority of NHS trusts and health boards say they are short of expert staff to provide care and support. Breast Cancer Care said their findings were “worrying” and showed failings in care of the most vulnerable.
Telegraph

NHS hospital to sell private patients access to proton cancer therapy
The NHS is to sell private patients access to its proton-beam therapy machine in order to raise money. University College Hospital (UCLH) in London has struck a deal with a US company that will allow paying patients to benefit from £125 million cancer treatment equipment alongside NHS users. Hospital leaders have said that the arrangement will raise money for the hospital without affecting care, but Jonathan Ashworth, the Shadow Health Secretary, has criticised the decision as it could potentially see wealthy patients paying for treatment which they have been denied on the NHS.
Times

Number of patients on mixed-sex wards rises again
Almost 8,000 people were treated on mixed-sex hospital wards in the 12 months to March, according to figures from NHS England. Over the past two years there has been a rise in the number of breaches of NHS rules that say men and women should be treated on separate wards. Overall, 7,771 patients were admitted to mixed-sex wards between April 2016 and the start of last month. This compares with 5,309 in 2015-16 and 2,655 in 2014-15, the analysis showed.
Times

http://mailchi.mp/healthinparliament/aphg-daily-media-bulletin-1161645?e=2e5ca76e43
Young patient's death reveals 'no coordination' between mental health services in Birmingham

A coroner has raised concerns about the lack of coordination in mental health services for young people in Birmingham, after a patient in NHS care was found hanged. Leah Abby Ratheram died on 7th October 2016, aged 20. She had Asperger’s syndrome and had previously been in the care of Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Trust's rapid assessment, interface and discharge team, before being referred to Forward Thinking Birmingham. Forward Thinking Birmingham, launched in 2015, is a mental health service for the under-25s, provided by Birmingham Women’s and Children’s Foundation Trust, The Priory Group, Worcestershire Health and Care Trust, Beacon UK and the Children’s Society. In a report aimed at preventing future deaths published last month, Birmingham’s Senior Coroner Louise Hunt, said there was concern that young patients had “no coordination of care at a time of crisis”.

West Country STP faces £90m deficit

A sustainability and transformation partnership in the West Country with severe financial problems is seeking to make £82m in savings. Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire clinical commissioning groups have said that their current plans would mean a £90m combined deficit for the current financial year, so they have announced new joint working to find the necessary savings.

Current plans to enable GPs to curb OTC prescribing are unworkable, says GPC’s clinical lead

NHS England’s plan to draw up national guidelines preventing GPs from prescribing certain over-the-counter or low-value medicines are 'unworkable' and 'totally unacceptable', the GPC's clinical lead has said.

NHS England’s mental health lead admits plans to expand CAMHS workforce in doubt

Government plans to expand mental health services for children and young people over the next four years have already been thrown into doubt, after NHS England’s lead on mental health admitted recruitment of the necessary workforce may need to be rethought.

Maximum midwife-to-supervisor ratios increased under new NHS model

The recommended maximum number of midwives that a supervisor should support has been increased to 20 under a new model being introduced by NHS England, which also suggests the use of “sessional” staff to provide supervision without extra payment.

Roll-out of information sharing system to help nurses spot child abuse falls behind implementation target

A national information sharing system launched two years ago to help nurses and other clinicians identify children at risk of abuse, has yet to come into operation in all local authorities and NHS trusts. Only around a quarter of local authorities and NHS trusts in England are using the Child Protection-Information Sharing (CPIS) system, which was expected to be available to all clinicians working in Accident and Emergency and out-of-hours services by 2018.

Latest Medical Research

Trial of new bleeding control surgery at University of Aberdeen receives
An emergency treatment using a balloon device to control catastrophic bleeding in accident victims is being trialled as part of a new £1.1m study. The University of Aberdeen trial - over four years - compares the survival of those who receive the treatment against those who do not. Reboa (resuscitative endovascular balloon occlusion of the aorta) works by inserting a balloon device into the body's main artery. The trial will examine if the technique can prevent deaths and disability from road collisions and falls from height. The study is being supported by a £1.1m grant from the National Institute of Health Research. The trial will take place across 10 major trauma centres in England.

**Public Health News**

**Shops agree to limit sugary drinks sales in hospitals**

WH Smith, Marks & Spencer, Subway and Greggs have all agreed to cut the proportion of sugary drinks they sell in their hospital shops in England. NHS England has asked all retailers with hospital outlets to limit the drinks to no more than 10% of the total beverages they sell by next April. Companies that do not comply will face a total ban on selling sugary drinks in hospital shops. Retailers have been asked to cut sales of drinks such as fruit juices with added sugar and coffees with sugar syrup and NHS England will ask them to provide sales figures so they can check on their progress.

**Stroke and dementia risk linked to artificial sweeteners, new study suggests**

Consuming a can of a low- or no-sugar soft drink daily is associated with a much higher risk of having a stroke or developing dementia, according to research published in the Journal of the American Heart Association. Their findings have prompted renewed questions about whether drinks flavoured with artificial sweeteners can increase the risk of serious illness, as heavily sugared drinks have already been shown to do. Drinking at least one artificially sweetened beverage daily was associated with almost three times the risk of developing stroke or dementia, compared to those who drank artificially sweetened beverages less than once a week. However, the researchers admitted that they could not prove a causal link between intake of diet drinks and development of either medical condition because their study was merely observational and based on details people provided in questionnaires logging their food and drink consumption habits.

**Italian court rules mobile phone use caused brain tumour**

An Italian court has ruled that excessive, work-related use of a mobile phone caused an executive to develop a benign brain tumour. In what could become a landmark ruling, the court in the northern town of Ivrea awarded the plaintiff a state-funded pension. The judgement, which was handed down on 11 April, but which was only made public yesterday, is subject to a possible appeal.

**Allergies send thousands more to hospital**

The number of people admitted to hospital for allergic reactions has risen by almost 30 per cent in the past five years. The NHS recorded 32,167 hospital admissions last year for patients being treated for skin conditions brought on by chemical substances and food, or other symptoms triggered by seasonal weather changes or hay fever. The new figures from NHS Digital, show that about one in seven of those patients suffered from a severe, and potentially fatal, anaphylactic reaction, where the body goes into shock. The number of times that children aged under nine were treated for anaphylactic shock rose by 50 per cent to 672. Scientists are not certain what might have triggered a rise in allergies but there are theories that a change in the types of foods we consume, genetics, environmental pollution and an increase in hygiene, may all play a part.
Infant mortality rate rises for first time in a decade

Infant death rates have risen for the first time in a decade, prompting calls to ensure that pregnant women eat healthily and stop smoking. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) said that 2,578 children under the age of one died during 2015 in England and Wales. This was equivalent to 3.7 deaths for every 1,000 live births. In 2014 the figure was at a record low of 3.6. Large falls in infant mortality have been recorded since 1985, when there were 6,141 infant deaths, or 9.4 per 1,000. Vasita Patel, from the ONS, said the 2015 figure was the first increase in the rate since 2006.

Times

WHO surgical safety checklist cuts post-surgical deaths by 22%, US study finds

Hospitals that completed a quality improvement programme, designed to implement the World Health Organisation’s surgical safety checklist, saw a 22% lower 30 day post-surgery mortality rate than hospitals that did not complete the programme, a US study has found. The WHO checklist requires surgical teams to take such steps as confirming the patient’s identity, the scheduled procedure, and the surgical site at the outset; reviewing the procedure’s risks before incision; completing instrument and sponge counts; and discussing post-operative care before the patient leaves the operating room.

BMJ

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