

### Anger: bad for health

'In your anger do not sin: do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,' warns Ephesians 4:26. The Bible is replete with warnings not to indulge anger. Now, new research cited by the British Heart Foundation reinforces age-old biblical wisdom about the need to find ways to avoid anger. The dangers to health are clear. BHF says in the two hours after feeling angry, the risk of a heart attack increases nearly five-fold and the risk of stroke more than three-fold. (*BHF website*, 5 February 2014 [bit.ly/1kAmqnd](http://bit.ly/1kAmqnd))

### 'Cut down on sugar' says WHO

Activists supporting William Wilberforce boycotted sugar, because of its links to the North Atlantic slave trade. Now the WHO wants people to halve sugar intake because of its link to obesity and tooth decay. New WHO draft guidelines propose sugars should be less than 10% of total daily energy intake and say an even more drastic reduction to below 5% (six teaspoons) would be beneficial. Many are unaware of 'hidden' sugar in processed foods: ketchup (one tablespoon contains around one teaspoon), a can of sugar-sweetened soda (ten teaspoons). (*WHO*, 5 March 2014 [bit.ly/1hMsoy5](http://bit.ly/1hMsoy5))

### Smoking still a global issue

Smoking has become less popular in some countries but overall numbers of smokers continues to rise. In 2012, 967 million people smoked every day compared with 721 million in 1980 according to data from 187 countries. Patterns are changing. Countries such as Canada, Iceland, Norway and Mexico have mounted successful campaigns to persuade citizens to quit. People most likely to take up smoking live in resource-poor countries. Top of the league is East Timor with 61% of its population smoking every day. Next in line are Indonesia, Kiribati, Armenia and Papua New Guinea. (*JAMA*, 8 January 2014 [bit.ly/1q5AOFI](http://bit.ly/1q5AOFI))

### Three-parent children

Another flawed consultation process. The Department of Health has published draft regulations to implement mitochondrial donation to prevent the transmission of serious mitochondrial disease from mother to child. Deadline for responses is 21 May. The process flagrantly sweeps aside ethical considerations, side-stepping whether this is desirable, focusing merely on how it should be implemented. *CMF File 51* (2013) anticipated this issue and concluded: '...it would seem wiser, given the scientific uncertainty, ethical problems and availability of alternative approaches, if we did not take a further step down that road.' (*BBC Health*, 27 February 2014 [bbc.in/1kJF3Wh](http://bbc.in/1kJF3Wh))

### Male suicide higher than female

Males: the stronger sex? Not according to 2012 suicide statistics released in February (Office of National Statistics). Male suicide deaths were 4,590 compared to 1,391 female, a ratio of more than 3 to 1. Suicides among males aged 45-59 are 40% higher than a decade ago. Stalling careers is a commonly cited cause. The Samaritans claim men from the most socially deprived areas are ten times more likely to commit suicide than those from most affluent areas. Decline of traditionally male industries is cited as another key factor. (*Mail Online*, 19 February 2014 [dailym.ai/1cR7qK9](http://dailym.ai/1cR7qK9))

### Blaming LCP is 'like blaming the Highway Code'

Debate about the Liverpool Care Pathway continues despite recommendations that it is no longer used. There are worries among health professionals about creating an alternative system likely to meet the same fate in a few years. Dr Claud Regnard, a consultant in palliative medicine in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, suggests the media, government and the Neuberger panel were wrong to finger the LCP. Human error was the core problem: issues about communication, training and decision-making. Blaming the LCP was like 'blaming the Highway Code because of a few bad drivers'. (*BBC Health*, 14 January 2014 [bbc.in/1nFJeRG](http://bbc.in/1nFJeRG))

### After antibiotics, what?

In May the World Health Assembly is set to discuss a scenario where antibiotics no longer work. Professor Jeremy Farrar, the new head of Wellcome, the medical research charity, said in his first media interview in the job that the growing threat of antibiotic resistant organisms is set to become a 'truly global issue'. He said the golden age of antibiotics could soon come to an end unless action is taken. He echoed the views of England's Chief Medical Officer Dame Sally Davies who said last year that growing resistance to antibiotics is a 'ticking time bomb', presenting a threat to the nation that should rank alongside terrorism. (*BBC Health*, 8 January 2014 [bbc.in/19dOrwU](http://bbc.in/19dOrwU))

### Teenagers reject booze

We tend to think of binge drinking as a teenage vice. In reality, however, the number of young people in the UK consuming alcohol has declined sharply. It's middle aged people who are more likely to drink too much. NHS statistics gathered in 2011 show just 12% of 11 to 15-year olds said they had drunk alcohol in the previous week, that's down from 26% a decade earlier. The proportion who said they had ever drunk alcohol fell from 61% to 45% over the same period. (Health and Social Care Information Centre, 2012 [bit.ly/1onvVUm](http://bit.ly/1onvVUm))

### Quality of care threatened

Cutting senior nursing posts is causing a 'dangerous drain of experience and skills' in the NHS, the Royal College of Nursing claims in the new report. It says nearly 4,000 senior nursing posts have been cut since the Coalition came to power. Matrons, ward sisters and clinical nurse specialist posts are most affected. Official statistics reveal there are now 4,500 more nurses on wards than in May 2010, but this masks an 'under-the-radar haemorrhaging' of senior staff. RCN states that matrons and ward sisters are 'a vital part' of patient care. (RCN, *Frontline First*, 11 February 2014 [bit.ly/1cuk6Mb](http://bit.ly/1cuk6Mb))

### Gruesome...

How else can we describe the reality behind revelations that the thousands of bodies of aborted and miscarried babies have been routinely incinerated, even used in 'waste to energy' plants to generate heating for hospitals? Ten NHS trusts admitted the practice in a Channel 4 *Dispatches* programme, aired on 24 March. At least 15,500 foetal remains were incinerated by 27 NHS trusts in the last 24 months. Parents who lose children in early pregnancy are often treated without compassion and not consulted about what they wanted to happen to the remains. (Report, *Telegraph*, 24 March 2014 [bit.ly/1dhsSxq](http://bit.ly/1dhsSxq))