

Your HealthWise Wales Spring Newsletter 2020



We hope you're all keeping well and staying safe.



Just over a week ago, researchers at Cardiff Metropolitan and Cardiff University launched a survey to find out about the experiences of people living in the UK during the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic. They've received an incredible 5721 completed surveys from HWW participants so far. Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts and experiences. The researchers would love to hear from more people so they can have a greater insight into how the Coronavirus pandemic is affecting you all. If you are over 18 years old, please complete the survey by following the link below.

<https://covid19attitudes.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/uk-public-experiences-of-the-coronavirus-covid19-pandemic-2>

The survey will be open until 12 April.

TAKE PART

THANK YOU!
FOR COMPLETING OUR
COVID-19
SURVEY
5721 RESPONSES
SO FAR

At HealthWise Wales (HWW) we value input from our participants and stakeholders. Two years ago, we asked HWW participants to volunteer to participate in our 'user testing panel' - to be a sounding board for ideas and to pre-test new features of our website and research platform. We instantly had 156 responses from HealthWise Wales participants who were keen to help us. The first task offered to the user panel was to review two research modules which used a new data collection method enabling us to evaluate the effectiveness of public information videos. Feedback from the panel was very positive and we launched the modules in October 2018. We are pleased to be able

to share the results from these *two modules below*. Since then, the User Panel have responded to requests for help with naming our twitter hash tag (#WeAreHealthWiseWales), to invitations to volunteer as HWW ambassadors and to pre-test links to our research partner websites (Great Minds dementia platform who offer tests to over 40 year old participants). Thank you for your input and thanks also to those participants who contact us on an ad hoc basis to report glitches with our website. This is very helpful, enabling us to keep things running smoothly.

Increasing public knowledge on side effect reporting

YellowCard

You can report:

- Suspected side effects from medicines
- Adverse incidents with medical devices
- Defective medicines
- Counterfeit medicines
- Side effects or safety concerns for e-cigarettes

Through our Yellow Card Scheme

Prescription medicines are tested for effectiveness and safety before reaching patients, but some side-effects may not be observed during the testing process. Often adverse drug reactions (ADRs) are not identified until medications have been used by the wider population. Finding out about these ADRs is an important step in revising prescribing practice and patient information sheets. In the UK, The Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Authority (MHRA) protects health and patient safety by ensuring that medicines meet appropriate

standards of safety, quality and efficacy. The MHRA operates a Yellow Card Scheme through which both members of the public and healthcare practitioners can report suspected side effects. Although the Yellow Card Scheme operates globally, public knowledge of the scheme has been reported to be poor.

HealthWise Wales worked with the Yellow Card Centre for Wales to evaluate the awareness of Yellow Card reporting by HWW participants and to get feedback on a video about Yellow Card which was produced by the MHRA. This research module was available to HWW participants for six months and 1,606 HWW participants took part by completing a questionnaire about their knowledge of Yellow Card before and after watching the video.



What we found

Less than a fifth of people who took part in the survey were aware of the Yellow Card Scheme before watching the video. Of those who did know about Yellow Card, 35% had a healthcare background. After watching the video 84% of participants reported understanding what the Yellow Card Scheme was about and 82% said they would be confident to use it. Most participants thought that the video was informative. Some participants suggested that different methods of reporting adverse reactions to medication should be available so that both younger and older people can report ADRs easily.

To learn more about how the Yellow Card Scheme collects information on suspected problems or incidents visit the Yellow Card Centre Wales website (<https://www.awttc.org/yccwales>).

A summary of findings from this project is available on the HealthWise Wales website (https://www.healthwisewales.gov.wales/files/Yellow-Card-abstract_260220.pdf).

Raising public awareness about the approval of medicines

Did you know that the public can influence the approval of new medicines for use in Wales? In this study HWW worked with the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG) and the All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre (AWTTC) to assess public awareness of how new medicines get

approved for use in the NHS and to evaluate an information video about how to get involved.

Participants completed a questionnaire about the medicines approval process and the role of the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG). Then, they watched the patient video and were asked to complete a second questionnaire.

The study showed that participants thought that it is important to have an independent body to advise Welsh Government on which medicines should be available in Wales, however, very few knew how new medications are approved in Wales. After watching the video, 72% said they knew what the role of AWMSG was and over 50% said they would consider getting involved in the assessment of new medications.



AWTTC

All Wales Therapeutics & Toxicology Centre
Canolfan Therapiwteg a Thocsicoleg Cymru Gyfan

You can watch the patient video from the All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre (AWTTC) website which gives information about access to medicines in Wales (<https://www.awttc.org/pams>).



Grwp Strategaeth Meddyginiaethau Cymru Gyfan
All Wales Medicines Strategy Group

You can visit the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG) website to learn more about how to get involved with the Patient and Public Interest Group (<http://www.awmsg.org/awmsgonline/patient.html>).

A summary of findings from this project is available on the HealthWise Wales website (https://www.healthwisewales.gov.wales/files/AWMSG-Abstract_260220.pdf).

COLLABORATIONS WITH RESEARCHERS AND HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

HealthWise Wales has also collaborated with researchers from universities, including Cardiff University and Cardiff Metropolitan University, as well as professionals from different health boards across Wales. HWW was used as a platform to recruit participants for studies that would otherwise be unable to reach people living in diverse areas across Wales. The results of our collaboration with Consultant Dermatologist Rachel Abbot from the Department of Dermatology in University Hospital Wales are presented below.

Sun protection behaviour in Wales

Failing to protect the skin against sun damage through applying sun cream and exposing the skin to damaging rays e.g. using sun beds can both be harmful to the skin. Despite several campaigns to raise awareness of sun-safe behaviours to protect against skin cancer, a lot of people do not know how to protect themselves from harmful sun exposure. This study aimed to understand the public's knowledge of sun exposure safety and inform future skin cancer prevention strategies.

Participants completed a questionnaire on sun care knowledge, sunburn and attitudes to sun bed use. The questionnaire was developed through the collaboration of the HWW team and professionals from the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.

What we found:

Of the 6,386 participants who responded to this study, most reported using sunscreen, wearing a hat or staying in the shade as means of sun protection. However, only one in four reported daily use of sunscreen and over half of the participants reported a sunburn in the previous year. Additionally, participants who used a sunbed for tanning suggested that it made them feel healthier or attractive, with younger people being more likely to say so, despite the danger sunbed use may pose.

Although people are aware of the benefits of sun protection, expanding the use of sunscreen and reducing the use of sunbeds needs to be prioritized in future policies by the Department of Health.

MAKING USE OF YOUR DATA

The HealthWise Wales team doesn't only facilitate research for other researchers and professionals, but also conducts its own research studies exploring key issues that can have a negative effect on the health of the population. One such ongoing project is focusing on carers, with over a quarter of respondents identifying as such.

Mental health and unhealthy behaviours among carers

Caring for a loved one such as a family member, friend or neighbour can be a demanding role, with lots of responsibilities such as dressing, washing and help with daily tasks, increasing and disrupting one's own daily routines. Carers may experience distress and poorer mental health due to their caring duties, but often remain hidden from services that could support them. Looking after another adult can also take up a lot of their time and result in neglecting their own wellbeing. Through this research study, we wanted to find out

Carers were

21%

more likely to report having been diagnosed with a mental health condition

Carers who gave up work were

67%

more likely to self-report a CMD

What we found:

More carers experience common mental health conditions (CMDs) than non-carers. The quantity of caring is important. Carers who have given up work to care for someone and those who provide care for more than 20 hours per week, report poorer mental health compared to other carers. These findings suggest that caring can negatively affect a carer's life, especially their mental health, highlighting the need to better support their mental health needs.

Carers generally reported more unhealthy lifestyle behaviours than non-carers. Carers with more of these unhealthy behaviours also had worse mental health. The time and energy a carer devotes to daily caring activities could help explain this neglect of personal health.

Breaking the circle of unhealthy behaviours and poor health by helping carers get the support they need could make a difference in the lives of both carers and their loved ones.

Results from this work have been published in the Lancet (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140673619328892?via%3Dihub>) and the International Journal of Population Data Science (<https://ijpds.org/article/view/1215>)

how carers' day-to-day health behaviours differ from non-carers and how their duties might affect their physical and mental health.

HealthWise Wales collects self-report information on the number of hours of caring a participant provides for family members, friends or neighbours, as well as on mental well-being and diagnosis. Information on self-reported lifestyle behaviours such as smoking, unhealthy eating and physical inactivity are also collected.

Carers were

27%

more likely to be physically inactive

Carers were

49%

more likely to smoke cigarettes

Carers were

48%

more likely to eat unhealthily