



The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland NEWSLETTER

PROTECTING & IMPROVING PUBLIC HEALTH

January 2010

Influenza A (H1N1) Update

On 14 January, the Scottish Government announced that 1,513 people with influenza A (H1N1) have been hospitalised since the start of the outbreak and that there have been 65 deaths linked to the outbreak. Further advice and guidance is available from the Scottish Government website www.scotland.gov.uk.

REHIS – 135th Birthday!

The Institute celebrated its 135th birthday on 20 January 2010. On 20 January 1875, The Sanitary Inspectors' Association of Scotland was established; the Association is the original forebear of today's Institute. The Association then became The Sanitary Association of Scotland in 1878, The Incorporated Sanitary Association of Scotland in 1902 and finally The Royal Sanitary Association of Scotland (RSAS) in 1924. The RSAS joined with The Scottish Institute of Environmental Health to form REHIS in 1983. The Management Committee is currently considering a number of proposals on how best to mark this important milestone.

Consumers ready to consider 1% fat milk

Consumers who regularly use semi-skimmed milk would be happy to switch to drinking 1% fat milk, according to research published by the Food Standards Agency to coincide with the launch of the second phase of its saturated fat campaign. 1% fat milk, which is on sale in most supermarkets, contains about half the fat of semi-skimmed. The UK-wide survey of consumer attitudes to 1% fat milk found that three-quarters of consumers liked the taste just as much as semi-skimmed. The research involved an at-home trial period with households substituting semi-skimmed for 1% fat milk. It found that while 56% were able to taste a difference, 94% or more

found it to be an acceptable alternative across a range of uses, including in hot drinks, on cereal, as a drink on its own, in milkshakes and in cooking. And 85% of those who gave it to their children said they did not notice the switch when given the lower-fat milk. Further advice and guidance is available from the FSA website www.food.gov.uk.

New REHIS Office

The Institute's recently acquired office accommodation in Torphichen Street, Edinburgh (only yards from its existing offices at Manor Place in Edinburgh's Haymarket district) is currently being renovated and our Project Manager, Mr John Ross of Ogilvie Ross, is confident that we will have moved in by the end of next month.

Improvements at Aberdeen hospital

The Healthcare Environment Inspectorate recently published its report of an unannounced follow-up visit to the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. Among the improvements the inspectors found were: an infection control doctor had been appointed; a new infection prevention and control policy had been developed; hand hygiene policy was being more widely implemented with better signage and increased availability of alcohol gel, liquid soap and dispensers; and, improved cleanliness and a more proactive approach to maintenance. The Healthcare Environment Inspectorate operates independently of the Scottish Government and the NHS Boards it inspects. The Inspectorate employs a range of public health professionals including Environmental Health Officers and carries out both planned and unannounced inspections of hospitals. Further advice and guidance is available from the Scottish Government website www.scotland.gov.uk.

REHIS CPD Submissions

The deadline for 2009 submissions is 31 January 2010. Please note: Regulations require the submission of corroborating evidence of participation in all CPD activities.

CO-Awareness launches new campaign

CO-Awareness, a registered UK charity established in 2005 by Lynn Griffiths to provide information on the dangers of CO poisoning and to support victims and their families, recently launched its 'Four Steps Awareness' campaign. The campaign aims to reduce CO-related illness and death by including the issues in the school curriculum, by improving information and equipment for the medical profession, by creating an information and advice resource for solicitors and victims, and by ensuring that all installation and servicing is carried out by competent operatives. *CO-Awareness* is calling for medical practitioners and others across a range of disciplines to raise awareness and provide ongoing help and support to victims. Groups to be targeted include housing associations, landlords, councils, builders, architects, registered engineers, PCTs, hospitals, paramedics, GPs, nurses, health visitors, emergency services, and schools services to educate young people about the dangers of carbon monoxide. Full information is available from Lynn Griffiths, *CO-Awareness* President, c/o Aintree Community Fire Station, Longmoor Lane, Aintree, Liverpool, L9 0EN.

HPS confirms further anthrax cases

On 11 January, Health Protection Scotland (HPS) confirmed that two additional cases of anthrax, one of whom has died, have been confirmed in drug users in Scotland, bringing the total number of confirmed cases in this outbreak to fourteen. The number of deaths is now at seven. One of the latest confirmed cases occurred in the NHS Fife area, marking a further geographical spread of the cases. The confirmed case who died was in the NHS Tayside area. Further advice and guidance is available from the HPS website www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/.

HSE asks Scottish employers to make a New Year safety resolution

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is asking employers across Scotland to ensure their workers are kept safe in 2010 as Britain's safety watchdog urges improvement on last year. According to the HSE, last year almost 222 work-related incidents occurred across Scotland each week, an annual total of 11,533 people being killed or injured. HSE hopes this figure will act a stark reminder to employers and staff to make their workplaces safer this New Year and drive down casualty rates. The 2008/09 statistics show 26 people were killed at work across Scotland while 2,735 sustained major injuries and a further 8,894 suffered injuries requiring more than three days absence. The figures compare with 31 fatalities, 2,822 major injuries and 9,156 cases of injuries requiring more than three days absence 2007/08. Including other absences due to ill-health caused by working activities, this equates to an estimated 3.1 million working days lost at a massive cost to the economy and individual businesses, which is why HSE says it makes perfect sense to make work environments safe. The organisation warns that if employers insist on compromising the health of their employees then it will not hesitate in taking enforcement action. Further advice and guidance is available from the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk.

REHIS Annual Conference 2010

This year's Annual Conference will be held at the Glynhill Hotel, Renfrew on 19 and 20 May. The Conference theme will be 'Environmental Health - 135 Years Protecting the People of Scotland' and Dr Harry Burns, CMO Scotland, has agreed to deliver the keynote address. The programme will be available to all members and potential delegates shortly.

IOSH Annual Conference 2010

IOSH 10 will be held at the SECC, Glasgow on 24 and 25 March. The conference programme has been developed to meet the needs of all health and safety professionals working at any level and in any industry sector. For more information go to www.ioshconference.co.uk. The Institute will be an exhibitor at the conference this year. Visit stand G35 to find out more about REHIS's role in health and safety. We look forward to seeing you there.

Forthcoming events

Healthy Environment Network 'Working together to create healthier sustainable places across Scotland' event, 4 February 2010, Stirling. Further details from Louise Rennick - louise.rennick@health.scot.nhs.uk.

REHIS Law Enforcement Weekend, 19 to 21 February 2010, Tulliallan

Advanced HACCP Course, 16 to 18 March 2010, Edinburgh

Visit the REHIS stand at IOSH 10, 24 and 25 March 2010, Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre, Glasgow

UKPHA Conference 24 and 25 March 2010, Bournemouth

SoCOEHS Conference, 25 and 26 March 2010, St. Andrews

REHIS Annual Conference 19 and 20 May 2010, Renfrew

2nd All Africa Conference on Environmental Health, 24 to 28 May 2010, Lilongwe, Malawi

**If you wish to feature any
Environmental Health or
Public Health initiative, event
or activity in the REHIS
Newsletter, please contact
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