

Dental students warn about hidden sugar in energy drinks and snacks

March 5 2015, by Andrew Gould



Dental students and their 'hidden sugar' website

A team of dental students from Plymouth University Peninsula Schools of Medicine and Dentistry have been working with sport students from the University of St Mark and St John, to raise awareness of the hidden dangers to teeth of sugary energy drinks and snacks.

The project is part of the [dental students'](#) Inter Professional Engagement

scheme which is part of their studies, and which sees them interact with a variety of groups within the wider community. The IPE scheme is run by the Peninsula Dental Social Enterprise.

The project comes at a time when charity Action on Sugar has called for the sale of [energy drinks](#) to children to be banned. The charity said energy drinks contained up to 78g of sugar per 500ml - more than three times the 25g limit for women proposed by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition.

The dental students ran a series of activities with the sport students, culminating in an information stand in the main dining hall at the University of St Mark and St John. They have also produced a website with further information for the sport students, and others who want to know more.

Comments from sport students included:

"I didn't realise changing how you drink a [sports drink](#) could reduce the effect on your teeth"; "I'm so shocked at the amount of sugar in those drinks, that's a lot - there should be more warning on the labels"; "It's great having this sort of information available as it's hard to find anywhere else."

Lance Doggart, Head of Sports and Health Science at the University of St Mark and St John, said, "Oral health and hygiene education, specific to [sports](#) participants, has had relatively little coverage in the media or indeed within an academic research context. Although sports participants are aware of the nutritional and hydration requirements in order to perform in sport and exercise, manufacturers tend to 'sell' products on the performance benefits without considering the [oral health](#) aspects related to the product. In this aspect unless participants are made aware of the potential dangers of the content of sports drinks, nutritional bars

and high energy foods then little or no progress can be made to protect them, or counter the negative outcomes, that result from their consumption. Clearly an educational program addressing this aspect, and raising awareness, is of vital importance for current and future generations participating in sport and exercise."

He added, "The project run by the dental students has been a real eye-opener to our sport students, as it has been apparent that they did not fully understand the potential risks of sports drinks on their oral health."

Provided by University of Plymouth

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