

# Researchers back call for cancer education in schools

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Credit: University of Stirling

A researcher from the University of Stirling is supporting calls from Teenage Cancer Trust for cancer education programmes to be introduced in secondary schools across the UK.

This comes after research led by the health science expert found such education sessions significantly increase students' knowledge of how to spot the signs of cancer.

The benefits of these sessions have also been highlighted by Jane Sutton, charity patron and mother of the late charity campaigner Stephen Sutton.

Dr Gill Hubbard, Reader in Cancer Care at the University of Stirling, worked with Teenage Cancer Trust to investigate their programme and said: "Tragically, some [young people](#) get cancer and incidences of some cancers such as [skin cancer](#) in teenagers are rising. We need to educate this group so they are aware of the signs of cancer and have the skills to seek and demand help from doctors early on.

"Cancer is still not talked about enough which means young people are often unsure how to raise the subject when they are worried something might be wrong. We found that Teenage Cancer Trust's education programme in schools raises young people's awareness and knowledge of cancer by a third, with teenagers successfully identifying a number of everyday risks including sunburn.

"Importantly, we also found young people are nearly three times more likely to talk about cancer with their parents after the subject has been tackled in a 50 minute education session at school. We want to empower young people so they feel able to talk to parents and their doctors if they notice that something might be wrong and help reduce the taboo around cancer.

"Moving forward, we want to see a national [cancer](#) education programme in all of our schools. Our research backs up the views of Jane Sutton and Teenage Cancer Trust that continued focus in this area will help us spot [childhood cancer](#) sooner."

**More information:** Gill Hubbard et al. School-based brief psycho-educational intervention to raise adolescent cancer awareness and address barriers to medical help-seeking about cancer: a cluster randomised controlled trial, *Psycho-Oncology* (2016). [DOI: 10.1002/pon.4001](#)

Provided by University of Stirling

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