

Are frontline nurses prepared for alcohol-related cases?

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Nurses are often on the frontline when patients are brought into hospital with alcohol-related illnesses or injuries but how prepared are they for dealing with cases of this kind?

A researcher at The University of Nottingham is launching a [national survey](#) today (Monday June 6) to establish whether student nurses are receiving the alcohol training and [education](#) which is so vital to their job.

The [survey](#) follows news that alcohol-related admissions to hospital have topped one million for the first time. A recent NHS Information Centre report said that admissions had increased by 12 per cent, reaching 1,057,000 in 2009-10 compared to 945,500 for the previous year. In 2002-03, alcohol-related [hospital admissions](#) stood at just 510,800.

Earlier this year, the charity Alcohol Concern estimated that alcohol-related admissions would reach 1.5 million a year by 2015, representing a burden to the NHS of £3.7 billion per year and The Department of Health is due to respond to this growing issue when it publishes its alcohol strategy later this year.

Research shows that offering advice to patients who are drinking above the recommended levels can be effective in reducing alcohol consumption. Nurses are often among the first health professionals that many patients come into contact with but evidence suggests that student nurses receive very little education and training to prepare them to deal with alcohol-related cases later during their careers.

Dr Aisha Holloway in the University's School of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy is spearheading the new national survey.

She said: "The latest government policies suggest that nurses are well placed to identify patients' level of alcohol consumption and offer advice in relation to cutting down on the amount they are drinking where necessary.

"However, at present there is no compulsory alcohol education and training component within pre-registration curriculum in the UK.

"Alcohol-related harm is a major issue within UK society so it's essential that when student nurses complete their training and embark on their careers in healthcare they are prepared with the right knowledge, skills and clinical confidence to respond to alcohol-related issues among their patients."

The national survey, which starts on Monday June 6, will look at all alcohol-related content delivered in courses currently on offer to student nurses to provide a useful profile of the range and depth of alcohol education and training within the UK.

The survey will involve asking the 70 universities and their respective Schools of Nursing in the UK about the Degree, diploma, post graduate diploma and advanced diploma courses that their student nurses who are not yet qualified are studying. They will be asked to provide information about the amount of alcohol education and training they include in their student nurse courses.

The survey will be carried out online in collaboration with The University of Nottingham Survey Unit and has been funded by The Division of Nursing at The University of Nottingham.

Provided by University of Nottingham

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