

2023-12-20

Real world impact of Christmas BMJ research

Spicer, S

<https://pearl.plymouth.ac.uk/handle/10026.1/21873>

10.1136/bmj.p2879

BMJ

BMJ

All content in PEARL is protected by copyright law. Author manuscripts are made available in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite only the published version using the details provided on the item record or document. In the absence of an open licence (e.g. Creative Commons), permissions for further reuse of content should be sought from the publisher or author.

TAKING THE BISCUIT

Real world impact of Christmas BMJ research

Stuart Spicer, ¹ Graham Johnson, ^{2,3} Andrew Tabner, ^{2,3} Jill Matthews, ⁴ Kerryn Husk¹

¹ University of Plymouth, Plymouth, UK

² Emergency Department, Royal Derby, Hospital, Derby, UK

³ University of Nottingham Medical School, Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham, UK

⁴ Derby and Burton Hospitals Charity, Royal Derby Hospital, Derby

Regular readers of *The BMJ's* Christmas issue may have seen our 2022 article, "Taking the biscuit: defining excessive quantities of free refreshments in a healthcare library," investigating staff attitudes towards free refreshments and what constitutes "excessive consumption."¹

This work identified that most people, when faced with the potential for unlimited free hot drinks and biscuits, would take no more than three free hot drinks and two packets of biscuits over the course of a working day. Free refreshments are usually intended to be a "work perk" to improve morale, and "back-of-a-biscuit-wrapper" calculations suggested that the cost to provide all NHS staff members with unlimited refreshments daily would be 0.084% of the total NHS budget. As such, the article concluded that any such initiative should be without restriction of "excessive consumption," with staff allowed to exercise their own judgment about equitable intake.

The BMJ's Christmas articles are frequently widely disseminated, generate substantial positive publicity, and have excellent Altmetric scores; despite notable exceptions,² however, we are unaware of them generating widespread changes to service delivery or clinical practice.

We were therefore delighted to learn that Derby and Burton Hospitals Charity had decided, independently of the authors of the original manuscript, to support an initiative providing free hot drinks for all staff members of University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust. They credited the Christmas article in *The BMJ* with providing support for the proposal and its modelling.

The recent implementation of this initiative unfortunately renders an impact assessment impossible. Although it is disappointing that other rigorous, snack based research has not yet seen effective translation into clinical practice,³ it is pleasing to see that even lighthearted research can have real world effects. This programme will support staff wellbeing and morale, which in turn enables them to provide our patients with better care. Dare we say that this initiative might even spread Christmas cheer throughout the year?

References

1 Tabner A, Spicer SG, Husk K, et al. Taking the biscuit: defining excessive quantities of free refreshments in a healthcare library. *BMJ* 2022;379:e072846. doi: 10.1136/bmj-2022-072846 pmid:36535695

2 Ashdown HF, D'Souza N, Karim D, Stevens RJ, Huang A, Harnden A. Pain over speed bumps in diagnosis of acute appendicitis: diagnostic accuracy study. *BMJ* 2012;345:e8012. doi: 10.1136/bmj.e8012 pmid: 23247977

3 Bhalla P, Williams G. An inexpensive and edible aid for the diagnosis of puberty in the male: multispecies evaluation of an alternative orchidometer. *BMJ* 2001;323:. doi: 10.1136/bmj.323.7327.1486 pmid: 11751366