

Investigating the potential effects of the heatwave in Coventry

Why was this piece of work done?

During the 'hot dry spell', as defined by the Met Office, from 3rd July to 23rd July 2013, a multi-agency group including University Hospital Coventry, Coventry & Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group, Coventry City Council Public Health and the People's directorate, was convened to manage systems-wide responses to additional demand for health and social care, as a result of the hot weather. This group oversaw implementation of the local Heatwave Plan, including preventative work to target health messages at vulnerable groups using the local media and voluntary sector information cascades and also proactive contact with vulnerable groups known to social care.

The group reported anecdotal increases in hospital admissions, ambulance call-outs and social care referrals/requests for step-up care in Coventry during this time period. It was unclear whether the observed rise in activity locally was due to heat-related conditions or due to causes unrelated to heat.

Analysis was carried out to:

1. Identify whether an increase in activity had occurred and, if so, whether this could be attributed to hot weather.
2. If particular increases in activity as a result of hot weather were identified, to modify local Heatwave Plans to target additional effort on high risk groups to reduce demand in future periods of hot weather.

Did the heat cause extra pressure on secondary care and social care?

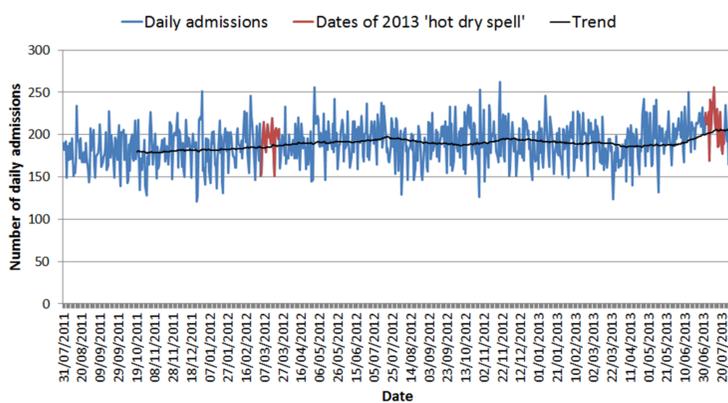
Was there a change locally?

The following primary data sources were analysed locally:

- Emergency admissions to inpatient care, 31/07/11 to 31/07/13
- Accident & Emergency (A&E) attendances, 31/07/11 to 31/07/13
- Adult social care referrals, January to August 2013

No rise compared to previous years found in overall A&E attendances or adult social care referrals. However there was a slight rise in emergency admissions leading up to the period of the hot dry spell.

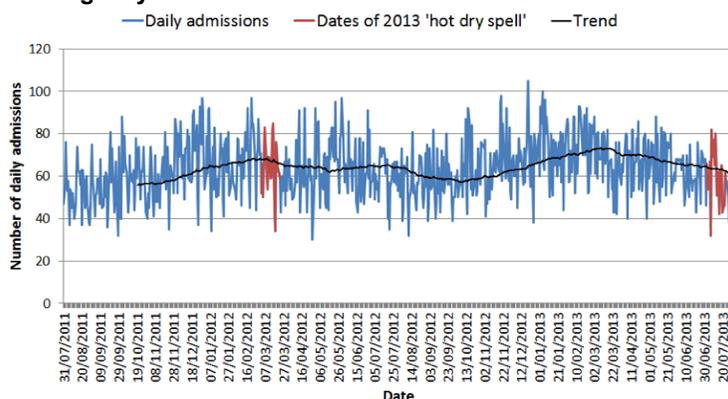
Emergency admissions for all conditions



Was this likely to be heat related?

All conditions listed in Public Health England's heatwave guidelines were analysed, none of these conditions showed a rise during the 2013 'hot dry spell'.

Emergency admissions for heat related conditions



The rise is occurring in other conditions....

What was the national picture?

Increase in A&E attendances for heatstroke and sunstroke - but only accounts for 0.2% of A&E attendances during the time period

Rise in calls to NHS direct

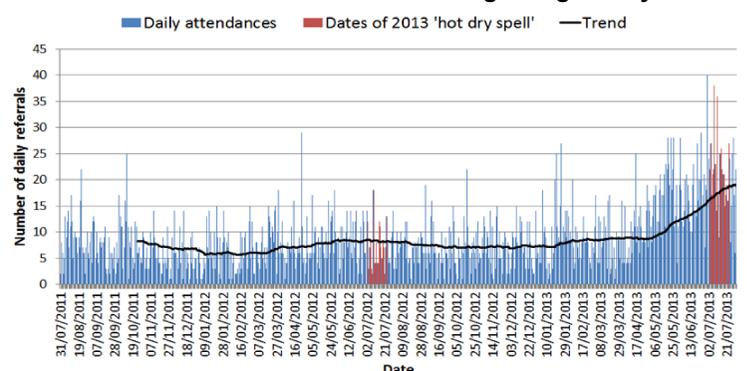
Rise in GP in hours attendances and out of hours contacts

This does not provide evidence of an increase in activity outside of primary care...

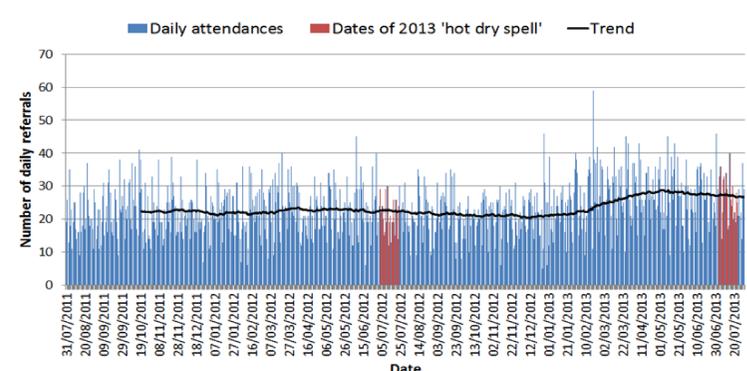
What could people have been noticing?

Although there was no overall rise in A&E attendances, there were two referral routes that did show a rise in the time leading up to the 'hot dry spell', which may have caused those in secondary care and social care to notice an increase in activity at this time.

A rise in fracture clinic referrals from beginning of May 2013



A rise in A&E review clinic referrals from mid-February to the beginning of May 2013



An increase in referral elsewhere may have led to the perception of effects due to heat...

It's unlikely...

...but it leads to more questions

