

15 February 2013

Army Public Health Weekly Update

The Army Public Health Update is a collection of articles taken verbatim from public sources to offer awareness of current health issues and the media coverage given to them. The articles do not necessarily represent US Army Medical Department opinions, views, policy, or guidance, and should not be construed or interpreted as being endorsed by the US Army Medical Department.

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Performance TRIAD: Sleep

The Army Surgeon General has championed the Performance Triad of Activity, Nutrition and Sleep to build resilience, improve readiness and enhance the health of the Army family.

Despite the growing research that shows sleep, like nutrition and physical activity is vital for good health, many people, Soldiers and civilians, adults and children are not getting adequate amounts of sleep. Although individual sleep requirements vary, most adults need seven to eight hours of sleep daily, children and adolescents even more.

From STAND-TO!

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U.S. MILITARY

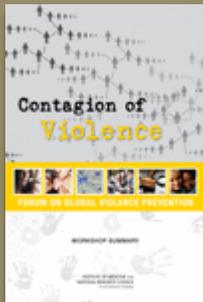
Army studies special operators' nutritional needs

February 2013 - A typical service member in garrison needs to consume about 3,250 calories a day for sustenance. Maj. Aaron Crombie, Ph.D., is in the process of estimating how much more a special operator should eat. Crombie, who works for the Military Nutrition Division at the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine, or USARIEM, at

Contagion of Violence: Workshop Summary

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) Forum on Global Violence Prevention has held four workshops to examine crosscutting, evidence-based approaches to violence prevention from multiple perspectives and at multiple levels of society.

This summary covers the major topics that arose during the 2-day workshop. It is organized by important elements of the infectious disease model so as to present the contagion of violence in a larger context and in a more compelling and comprehensive way.



Natick Soldier Systems Center, Mass., is leading a team that has been studying special operations forces at training venues around the country to discover that. Results will be used to adjust the Basic Daily Food Allowance, or BDFA, for dining facilities that serve their meals. "We know that these guys move a lot," Crombie said. "They train a lot. Some of them are doing two-a-day workouts. They spend a lot of time in the gym, a lot of time at the ranges." [Military.com](#)

Defense Secretary urges DoD to 'operate on every front' to end suicide

8 February - Veteran and service member suicide is a problem no single approach will solve, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta told a Georgetown University audience here today. The secretary, who is expected to retire this month, delivered a speech on leadership and government this morning and then took audience questions. One student introduced himself as a second-year master's student in foreign service and public policy programs, an Army veteran and a member of the Maryland Air National Guard. He asked what "the Department of Defense and our lawmakers" can do to combat suicide among veterans. "It is one of the most tragic issues that we deal with right now in the military," the secretary responded. The rate of suicide among troops and former troops mirrors that of greater society, he noted, but added, "There is no question in my mind that part of this is related to the stress of war over the last 10 years, [and] the fact that we have deployed people time and time again." [MHS](#)

Staphylococcus aureus and other skin and soft tissue infections among basic military trainees, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, 2008-2012

January - Military training environments have been identified as high-risk settings for acquisition of skin and soft tissue infections (SSTIs), including those caused by methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). Among the 148,355 basic military trainees at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, between 1 October 2008 and 30 September 2012, there were 289 SSTIs, including 48 cases of culture-confirmed MRSA and 48 cases of possible MRSA... The period prevalence rates of all SSTIs and MRSA SSTIs increased annually since fiscal year 2010. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

Suicide specter follows troops into civilian life

11 February - The historic pace of troop suicides confounding the military through the war years is following servicemembers into civilian life, according to preliminary analyses of new veteran data. Although only 4.5% of men ages 18-34 are veterans, veterans account for 10.8% of suicides in that age group, according to statistics from the Department of Veterans Affairs. The numbers are based on death data collected by the VA from 21 states.

[USA Today](#)

COCA
Conference Call
Saving Lives with
Words: What Health
Educators Need to
Know About Crisis
and Emergency
Risk Communication

CDC's Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) manual was first published in 2002 to provide an experience and skills-based approach to health communications during emergencies. In 2012, the manual was updated and revised, including a new chapter on social media. This presentation will review the main principles of CERC, highlight the updates to the material, and explore ways in which health educators in a variety of roles can use CERC principles in their work.

Date: February 26, 2013

Time: 1:00 - 2:00 pm (ET)

Register for the Webinar

U.S., Maryland: Fort Meade Burger King reopens after maggot infestation

8 February - The popular Burger King restaurant on Fort Meade, shut down this week when workers discovered an infestation of maggots, has reopened after an all-clear from the installation's public health team. Col. Edward C. Rothstein, commander of the Army base in Anne Arundel County, closed the restaurant Wednesday after the insect larvae were discovered during repairs to a soda machine. The infestation apparently developed around a leak behind a panel that was inaccessible to restaurant workers, according to base officials. Entomologists from Public Health Command said it appeared to have been a one-time event that had developed over seven to 10 days before it was discovered. Rothstein said he closed the restaurant not because it presented an immediate health risk, but to give staff time to conduct a "top-to-bottom cleaning" and a follow-up inspection. [Baltimore Sun](#)

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GLOBAL

Obscure Chagas' disease takes costly toll



10 February - There's been a lot of talk recently about an old malady that seems to be on the rise. It's called Chagas' disease, and it's transmitted by the so-called kissing bug, a bloodsucking insect that bites your face and lips. Health economists have now put a price tag on the global cost of Chagas, and the illness is taking a heavier toll than previously appreciated. Chagas costs the world about \$7 billion annually, says the analysis just published in the *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*. [NPR](#)

New case of SARS-like virus shows person-to-person transmission

13 February - A third patient in Britain has contracted a new SARS-like virus, becoming the second confirmed UK case in a week and showing the deadly infection is being spread from person to person, health officials said on Wednesday. The latest case, who is a member of the family of another patient, brings the worldwide number of confirmed infections with the new virus - known as the novel coronavirus or NCoV - to 11. Of that total, five have died. Most of those infected had recently travelled in the Middle East and three have been diagnosed in Britain. [Reuters](#)

Classified Version of the Weekly Update

An Army Public Health Weekly Update is available with articles classified up to the **SECRET** level from the USAPHC SIPRNet site:

<http://phc.army.smil.mil>

Look under Hot Topics & Current Issues.

To access this version, you will need a **SECRET** clearance and a SIPRNet account.

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Newly developed skin cream cures parasitic illness



6 February - The painless but disfiguring lesions of cutaneous leishmaniasis, caused by the bite of a sand fly, may soon be treatable with an antibiotic cream.

Developed by an international team of researchers, the cream would replace lengthy and painful drug treatments for the disease, commonly known as CL, in subtropical and temperate climates. Right now, treatment for CL involves a 20-day course of drugs which contain toxic heavy metals that must be injected directly into a vein at hospitals and clinics. Public health workers in developing countries report some people infected with cutaneous leishmaniasis have tried to burn their disfiguring lesions with battery acid or red hot machetes rather than seek the medical treatment, which is painful, expensive and lengthy. [VOA](#)

NIH scientists discover promising target to block *Staphylococcus* infection

10 February - National Institutes of Health (NIH) scientists have identified a promising lead for developing a new type of drug to treat infection caused by *Staphylococcus aureus*, a bacterium that frequently resists traditional antibiotics. The researchers discovered a system used by *S. aureus* to transport toxins..., which they call Pmt, is common to all *S. aureus* PSMs and critical for bacterial proliferation and disease development in a mouse model. Their experiments suggest that a drug interfering with Pmt's function could not only prevent production of the PSM toxins, but also directly lead to bacterial death. [NIH](#)

Scientists find new strategy against drug-resistant superbugs



7 February - Scientists may have found an effective new weapon against antibiotic-resistant bacteria. They did not create a new drug to kill these microbes; instead, they found a way to interfere with the metabolism of the extra-hardy bacterium - *E. coli* in this case - so that the germs

became more vulnerable to existing antibiotics. Scientists believe they have discovered the so-called superbugs' Achilles heel, a biochemical weakness in the bacteria that makes it possible - in effect - to "kick them while they are down. [VOA](#)

Skin 'may restore' diseased MS brain

8 February - It may be possible to use a patient's own skin to repair the damage caused by multiple sclerosis (MS), which is currently incurable, say researchers. Nerves struggle to communicate in MS as their insulating covering is attacked by the immune system - causing fatigue and damaging movement... A team of scientists at the University of Rochester Medical Center, in the US, used advances in stem-cell research to attempt to repair the myelin. They took a sample of human skin cells and converted it into stem cells, which are

capable of becoming any other type of cell in the body. The next step was to transform the stem cells into immature versions of cells in the brain that produce myelin. When these cells had been injected into mice born without any myelin it had had a significant effect, said researchers. [BBC News](#)

Tracking system could fight fake drugs

13 February - Fighting the problem of fake drugs will require putting medications through a chain of custody like U.S. courts require for evidence in a trial, the Institute of Medicine reported Wednesday. The call for a national drug tracking system comes a week after the Food and Drug Administration warned doctors, for the third time in about a year, that it discovered a counterfeit batch of the cancer drug Avastin that lacked the real tumor-killing ingredient... The Institute of Medicine report made clear that this is a global problem that requires an international response, with developing countries especially at risk from phony medications. Drug-resistant tuberculosis, for example, is fueled in part by watered-down medications sold in many poor countries. [ABC News](#)

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INFLUENZA

Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center: DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary

- In Week 5 (through 2 February 2013), Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) and Pneumonia & Influenza (P&I) incidence rates increased substantially in unvaccinated active duty members in PACOM. The proportion of outpatient visits due to ILI decreased in the US but continued to increase in EUCOM and PACOM. The proportion of outpatient visits due to P&I decreased for most regions but remained elevated in EUCOM compared to previous seasons.
- Across the overseas DoD laboratory surveillance network, influenza activity has decreased in Central and East Africa but remained at moderate levels with variable co-circulation of influenza A/H1, A/H3, and B across all sites.
- The influenza vaccination coverage for the DoD (Active Duty component only) is 96%.
[AFHSC DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary](#)

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 5 (January 27 - February 2, 2013), influenza activity remained elevated in the United States, but decreased in most areas.

- Viral Surveillance: Of 10,132 specimens tested and reported by collaborating laboratories, 2,362 (23.3%) were positive for influenza.
- Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality: The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia

and influenza (P&I) was above the epidemic threshold.

- Influenza-Associated Pediatric Deaths: Fourteen pediatric deaths were reported.
- Geographic Spread of Influenza: Thirty-eight states reported widespread influenza activity. [FluView](#)

DoD Global Laboratory-Based Influenza Surveillance Program

- During Week 5, 190 specimens were tested from 39 locations. There were 72 influenza A viruses (57 A (H3N2), 14 A(H1N1)pdm09, and one A/Not Subtyped) and 15 influenza B viruses detected.
- To date, 2,354 specimens have been tested from 75 locations of which 798 were positive for influenza A (727 A(H3N2), 64 A(H1N1)pdm09, two co-infections of A(H3N2) & B, one co-infection of A(H3N2) & A(H1N1)pdm09, one co-infection of A(H3N2) and Parainfluenza and three A/not subtyped); and 139 were positive for influenza B (14 B/Yamagata, two B/Victoria, and 123 B/lineage undetermined). There have been 146 other respiratory viruses isolated (54 Parainfluenza, 40 Adenovirus, 43 RSV, and nine Enterovirus).
- Sequence analysis of specimens processed indicate a good match to the vaccine strains this season. [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview

- In week 5/2013 (28 January – 3 February 2013), 19 countries reported concomitantly high/medium-intensity transmission and wide geographic spread. Twenty-two countries reported increasing trends in influenza activity.
- The proportion of influenza-positive sentinel specimens continued to increase, reaching 55%.
- Since week 40/2012, the proportions of influenza A and B viruses have remained similar (51% vs. 49%), but among type A viruses, the percentage of A(H1)pdm09 has continued to increase (64%), compared to 52% in week 2/2012.
- Of 71 hospitalised laboratory-confirmed influenza cases reported by six countries, 33 (46%) tested positive for influenza A viruses and 38 (54%) for type B viruses.

Influenza activity continued to rise across Europe in week 5/2013. In a few countries, the epidemics seemed to have passed their peaks, although some countries experienced a resurgence of ILI rates. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

Google.org: Flu Trends

13 February – Estimates of flu activity based on certain Internet search queries indicate that the level of flu activity in the northern hemisphere ranges from minimal in Bulgaria to intense in France, Sweden, and Japan. In the southern hemisphere flu activity ranges from minimal to low. [Google.org Flu Trends](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For Week 6 ending 9 February 2013:

- Influenza: Three cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza (A/H3) among US military basic trainees.
- Adenovirus: Type 14 adenovirus cases continue at MCRD Parris Island, though FRI rates remain low.
- FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates at or below expected values. [NHRC Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)

USAPHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report

For the week ending 2 February 2013 (Week 5)

- Civilian influenza-like illness activity continues decreasing, although it remains above baseline. Activity continues shifting westward. CDC reports civilian hospitalizations continue to increase, while deaths are beginning to decrease compared to previous weeks.
- ILI Activity: Data unavailable.
- Influenza cases: 1 dependent hospitalized influenza case was reported to USAPHC in week 5. 60 hospitalized cases have been reported during this influenza season, 53 in dependents and 7 in Active Duty.
- Acute Respiratory Disease at BCT sites: While ARD rates remain low at all Army BCT sites, surveillance testing in weeks 2 & 3 detected influenza at Ft. Jackson (11/13 were A/H3) and Ft. Leonard Wood (3 A/H3).
- Viral specimens: During week 5, 561 of 1970 (28%) laboratory specimens tested were positive for respiratory pathogens. Influenza A accounted for 49% of positive specimens. Most of the influenza positive specimens were from SRMC (30%); 27% were from WRMC, and 18% from ERMC. [USAPHC U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report](#)

PANDEMIC AND AVIAN INFLUENZA

Cambodia, China report H5N1 fatalities

13 February - H5N1 avian influenza killed two more people, a young girl whose illness was first announced by Cambodian authorities today and a Chinese woman whose infection was first reported 3 days ago. Cambodia's health ministry, in a joint statement with the World Health Organization (WHO) said the 3-year-old girl who died was from Kampot province and is the country's seventh H5N1 case so far this year... An investigation into the source of her infection identified recent poultry deaths in the girl's village and reported that she had

contact with sick poultry before she started having symptoms... China's two new cases fit a pattern of infections without exposure to poultry, raising questions about possible surveillance gaps in poultry or problems with China's vaccination program... If the WHO confirms the two cases, China's H5N1 total would rise to 45 infections and 29 deaths. Also, the additional case and two new H5N1 deaths would push the global H5N1 count to 619 illnesses, including 367 deaths. [CIDRAP](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Europe: Horsemeat scandal deepens as minister says bute may be in food chain

14 February - Eight horses slaughtered for food in the UK have tested positive for the veterinary painkiller phenylbutazone, known as bute, new tests from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) revealed. The minister for food and agriculture, David Heath, told the Commons that 206 carcasses had been tested. Six of the carcasses that tested positive may have entered the food chain in France in the last few weeks, according to the FSA, and efforts were being made to recall them. Heath said the Findus food products found to contain horse had tested negative for bute... In July 2012 the veterinary residues committee (VRC), which advises the government, warned that it had repeatedly expressed concern about bute entering the food chain. [Guardian](#)

U.S., California: Investigation underway for bovine tuberculosis case in CA

12 February - Agriculture officials in California are currently investigating cases of bovine tuberculosis in a dairy cow herd first reported last Wednesday. The bacteria that causes bovine tuberculosis (TB) can spread to humans via raw milk, but the cow belonged to a dairy in Tulare County which pasteurizes all of its milk, thus eliminating the risk of tuberculosis transmission. [Food Safety News](#)

U.S.: Industry says government is obligated to provide meat inspection, even with sequester

11 February - After the White House and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack suggested that the automatic budget cuts, known as the sequester, could force the government to furlough all federal meat inspectors, the food industry is arguing that such a move would violate the government's legal obligation to keep inspectors at work. Furloughing more than 6,000 meat safety inspectors housed at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service would effectively shut down American meat and poultry production because plants must have FSIS inspectors present to operate. [Food Safety News](#)

U.S.: Lean Cuisine recalled nationwide for fragments of glass

12 February - Nestlé Prepared Foods Company recently announced it is recalling two production codes of LEAN CUISINE® Culinary Collection Mushroom Mezzaluna Ravioli, UPC 13800-58358... The reason for the recall is that the meal may contain fragments of glass. Nestlé is taking this action after three consumers reported they had found small fragments of glass in the ravioli portion of the entrée. No injuries were reported by any of the consumers. [Food Safety News](#)

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WELLNESS

Everyday activities may have same health benefits as going to gym



10 February - Short stretches of physical activity -- such as taking the stairs or raking leaves -- throughout the day can be just as beneficial as a trip to the gym, according to a new study. Researchers looked at more than 6,000 American adults and found that this "active lifestyle approach" appeared to be as effective as structured exercise in providing health benefits such as preventing high blood pressure, high cholesterol and the group of risk factors known as metabolic syndrome that increases the risk for coronary artery disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes. [Medline Plus](#)

Price for a new hip? Many hospitals are stumped

11 February - Jaime Rosenthal, a senior at Washington University in St. Louis, called more than 100 hospitals in every state last summer, seeking prices for a hip replacement for a 62-year-old grandmother who was uninsured but had the means to pay herself. The quotes she received might surprise even hardened health care economists: only about half of the hospitals, including top-ranked orthopedic centers and community hospitals, could provide any sort of price estimate, despite repeated calls. Those that could gave quotes that varied by a factor of more than 10, from \$11,100 to \$125,798. [New York Times](#)

Petition urges FDA to limit sugar levels



14 February - Consumer groups, scientists, and health-advocacy organizations recently urged the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to consider determining safe limits of high-fructose corn syrup and other forms of sugar in soft drinks, as high levels could affect the risk of developing diabetes,

obesity, and heart disease. In particular, the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) helped spearhead the effort to urge the FDA to consider safe level of sugars in beverages. CSPI stated that a 20-ounce bottle of soda has approximately 16 teaspoons of sugar from high-fructose corn syrup, which is double the daily limit advised by the American Heart Association (AHA). [Red Orbit](#)

Straining to hear and fend off dementia

11 February - ... Over the past few years, [Dr. Frank Lin, an otolaryngologist and epidemiologist at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine] has delivered unwelcome news to those of us with hearing loss. His work looks "at the interface of hearing loss, gerontology and public health," as he writes on his Web site. The most significant issue is the relation between hearing loss and dementia... In an interview, Dr. Lin discussed some possible explanations for the association. The first is social isolation, which may come with hearing loss, a known risk factor for dementia. Another possibility is cognitive load, and a third is some pathological process that causes both hearing loss and dementia. [New York Times](#)

Vitamin D supplement labels grossly inaccurate about what's inside

12 February - ...Researchers from Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research (KPCHR) in Portland, Oregon today released findings vitamin D sold in stores contain anywhere from 9 – 140 percent of the doses listed on the supplement's label. Though none of the pills studied were likely to be dangerous, many contained far too little of the vitamin to effectively treat people with a deficiency, the researchers said... Even more embarrassingly, pills from compounders were nearly as variable as the OTC brands, varying from 23 – 146 percent of the expected dose. [Red Orbit](#)

Working out when to exercise in the cold and flu season

11 February - Sniffles, runny noses and flu-like symptoms can deter, delay and even derail many exercisers just when enthusiasm for that New Year's resolution is beginning to flag. Health and fitness experts advise to starve a fever of exercise. But feeding a cold moderately, with a brisk walk, may not be a bad idea. "The classic line from every sports medicine doctor is, 'If you can do it, do it. If you can't, don't,'" said Dr. Lewis G. Maharam, author of "Running Doc's Guide to Healthy Running." Usually if symptoms are confined to above the neck, exercising is OK, he explained. But if you're running a fever of 101 degrees Fahrenheit (38.3 degrees Celsius) or higher, skip it. [Reuters](#)

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Africa: Mothers' health is improving across continent

11 February - In recent years, the shrill cries of a newborn baby have been bringing more shouts of joy than of anguish in maternity wards across Africa. That is because maternal deaths are decreasing on the continent, says Gifty Addico, a South Africa-based adviser for the UN Population Fund (UNFPA). New figures in a UN report, Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2010, show that maternal mortality has declined by 41 per cent in the past 10 years in sub-Saharan Africa. "More mothers and their babies are staying alive after birth, and this is a very good sign," comments Ms. Addico, as the inflection of her voice rises in excitement. "But we need to do more to make sure that every mother lives to see her child," she told Africa Renewal. [All Africa](#)

Mozambique: Cholera confirmed in northern Mozambique

8 February - In the last 10 days, 22 cases of the waterborne disease cholera have been confirmed by laboratory testing in three areas in and around the northern Mozambique town of Pemba, in Cabo Delgado Province. Leonard Heyerdahl, project manager of [Africhol](#) - an initiative of Paris-based NGO Agence de Médecine Préventive that is working in cooperation with the government's National Institute of Health (NIH) - told IRIN that from 30 January, "samples started turning positive [for cholera]." Prior to that, there were 366 cases of severe diarrhoea caused by the salmonella bacteria. [IRIN](#)

Nigerian doctor fighting killer blood disease

11 February - Every year, more than 200,000 African children are born with sickle-cell anemia -- around 150,000 of those in Nigeria. At the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), rows of young women line up inside the antenatal clinic. Many of them suffer from sickle-cell anemia, the world's most common hereditary blood disorder. They are here to see Dr Bosedé Afolabi, a specialist practitioner who has dedicated much of her working life to studying the disease and how it affects pregnant women and their babies. "We have the highest number of people suffering from sickle-cell disease in the world," explains Afolabi, an associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology who consults twice a week at LUTH. Her mission is to use her knowledge to cut maternal mortality in Nigeria. Around one in four people in the West African country carries the sickle cell gene -- around 40 million people -- and virtually everyone has lost a relative or a close friend to the disease. [CNN](#)

Nigeria: Wazobia FM journalists held over polio deaths

12 February - Two Nigerian journalists have been arrested over the killing of nine female polio vaccinators in northern Kano state on Friday, police have said. Kano police chief Ibrahim Idris told the BBC the journalists would be charged with culpable homicide. They had incited the public to oppose vaccinations through their Wazobia FM radio station, he alleged. Some Muslim leaders in northern Nigeria believe polio vaccinations cause infertility among women. They see it as a Western conspiracy to reduce the Muslim population. Such

opposition is a major reason why Nigeria is one of just three countries where polio is still endemic. There were 121 cases of polio in Nigeria last year, compared to 58 in Pakistan and 37 in Afghanistan, according to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. [BBC News](#)

Polio in Niger

12 February 2013 - Following the notification on 3 January 2013 of a wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) case in Niger, outbreak response is continuing in the country. A WPV1 case had been detected from Tahoua region, with onset of paralysis on 15 November 2012 (the first case in the country since December 2011). Genetic sequencing confirmed that the virus was a new importation into Niger, most closely related to virus circulating in Kaduna state, Nigeria... This event confirms the risk of ongoing international spread of a pathogen (WPV) slated for eradication. [WHO](#)

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USCENTCOM

Egypt: Poliovirus detected from environmental samples

11 February - In Egypt, wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) was isolated from sewage samples collected on 2 and 6 December 2012 in two areas of greater Cairo. Virus has been detected in sewage only; no case of paralytic polio has been reported. Genetic sequencing shows that the virus strains are closely related to virus from northern Sindh, Pakistan. Pakistan is one of three countries worldwide affected by ongoing indigenous transmission of WPV (together with Nigeria and Afghanistan). The isolates were detected through routine environmental surveillance in Egypt that involves regular testing of sewage water from multiple sites. Following detection of these isolates, the Government of Egypt is implementing a comprehensive response in line with international outbreak response guidelines issued by the World Health Assembly (WHA) in Resolution WHA59.1. [WHO](#)

Syria: Syrian refugee diseases, infections on the rise

13 February - ...Lebanese officials have reported several cases of tuberculosis and Hepatitis A in Syrian refugee areas. The aid organization Medecins Sans Frontieres has treated cases of lice, scabies and the skin disease leishmaniasis, said its Head of Mission Fabio Forgione. "We have seen an increase in certain diseases related to overcrowding and poor living conditions," he said... The increase in health problems comes as the United Nations struggles to help over 265,000 refugees and reach many more people who have yet to seek aid. Despite the U.N. registering nearly 50,000 refugees a month, according to U.N. reports, the number of unregistered refugees continues to increase while their living conditions decline. [The Daily Star](#)

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Israel: Hepatitis A outbreak reported TA, Bat Yam

8 February - The Health Ministry has reported a significant outbreak of hepatitis A, with 69 cases – almost 20 percent of them diagnosed in young drug-addicted and homeless men in south Tel Aviv and Bat Yam – compared to only seven reported cases in the previous year.

[Jerusalem Post](#)

Russia: Hundreds injured by meteor explosion

15 February - A meteor streaked over the city of Chelyabinsk in Russia's Ural Mountains on Friday morning, producing a blast that injured hundreds, caused minor damage to buildings and temporarily disrupted Internet communication, officials said. Yelena Smirnykh, deputy information chief of the Emergency Situations Ministry said 474 people sought medical assistance after the explosion. "Five of them were hospitalized, most of the injuries being cuts by shattered window glass," she said... The meteor entered the atmosphere over the north of Kazakhstan and flew over part of Russia before exploding over Chelyabinsk, said Vladimir Stepanov, chief of the Emergency Situations Ministry's crisis center. "We have deployed 28 stations in the area to monitor radiation levels, which up to now remain normal," Stepanov said. He added that officials did not have sufficient time to issue a warning before the meteor entered the atmosphere. [Los Angeles Times](#)

United Kingdom: Child hospital stays 'keep rising'

11February - The number of children being admitted to hospital each year in England has increased over the past decade, according to researchers. A report in Archives of Disease in Childhood showed 739,000 children under 15 were admitted in 2010, up from 594,000 in 1999. The greatest increase was in children under five years of age. Experts said the strain of growing demand could lead to standards dropping. There has been a surge in births in the UK, but even accounting for the growing numbers of children there was still a 28% increase in the admissions rate between 1999 and 2010. Admissions in children under 12 months increased by 52% and the rate increased by 25% in those aged between one and four.

[BBC News](#)

United Kingdom: Measles outbreaks hit 18-year high as effects of MMR scandal are felt



8 February - Outbreaks of measles across England and Wales have reached the highest levels for 18 years, leaving young adults and teenagers whose parents did not get them immunised during the 1998 MMR scare most at risk, with many taken to hospital. Public health campaigns are now being run across affected areas to persuade older people, teenagers, university students and young adults to get themselves vaccinated. All of these groups are not only vulnerable themselves but pose a risk to babies and toddlers. [Guardian](#)

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U.S.: Acute kidney injury associated with synthetic cannabinoid use — multiple states, 2012

15 February - In March 2012, the Wyoming Department of Health was notified by Natrona County public health officials regarding three patients hospitalized for unexplained acute kidney injury (AKI), all of whom reported recent use of synthetic cannabinoids (SCs), sometimes referred to as "synthetic marijuana." SCs are designer drugs of abuse typically dissolved in a solvent, applied to dried plant material, and smoked as an alternative to marijuana. AKI has not been reported previously in users of SCs and might be associated with 1) a previously unrecognized toxicity, 2) a contaminant or a known nephrotoxin present in a single batch of drug, or 3) a new SC compound entering the market. After the Wyoming Department of Health launched an investigation and issued an alert, a total of 16 cases of AKI after SC use were reported in six states... The results of the investigation determined that no single SC brand or compound explained all 16 cases. Toxicologic analysis... identified a fluorinated SC previously unreported in synthetic marijuana products. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

U.S. fertility rates fall to all-time low

11 February - Here we go again. The rate at which American women are having babies fell by 1 percent in 2011, continuing a decline that's been under way for years. There were 63.2 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44 in 2011 (the lowest on record), compared with 64.1 in 2010 and 66.2 in 2009. A deeper look at the numbers reveals some other noteworthy trends. Births to teenagers hit another low — 31.3 per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19, down from 34.2 in 2010. Fertility rates rose a little for older women — climbing 1 percent to 10.3 births per 1,000 women aged 40 to 44 from 10.2 in 2010. The rate of births was unchanged for women aged 45 to 49. The infant mortality rate was 6.05 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2011, about the same as the rate of 6.15 in 2010. There has been some improvement in the U.S. The rate stood at 6.91 in 2000 and 9.22 in 1990. But the U.S. could do a whole lot better. A table that's [part of the analysis](#) published in the latest issue of *Pediatrics* puts the U.S. just behind Hungary and Slovak Republic in a list of 30 nations ranked by infant mortality. [NPR](#)

U.S.: First cases of vaccine-resistant whooping cough found in United States

8 February - In a letter to the editor published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, doctors have identified twelve cases of pertussis that do not respond to the pertussis vaccine. The samples were collected from children hospitalized in Philadelphia in 2011 and 2012. These are the first cases of vaccine-resistant pertussis identified in the United States... This new resistance to the pertussis vaccine may be why whooping cough cases have been increasing. Experts also believe that increased awareness about whooping cough has led to reporting of more cases. [HealthMap](#)

U.S.: Big strides in reducing domestic violence

13 February - A bruised cheek. A broken bone. Verbal battering. A window shattered in an effort to intimidate. The rate of such violence or abuse between husband and wife – or any two intimate partners – has been on the wane in America, falling by a stunning 64 percent between 1994 and 2010. That finding, from a recent report by the US Department of Justice on intimate partner violence (IPV), parallels the overall drop in violent crime during that period. Many in the field cite a broad shift in attitudes that began in the 1980s and '90s, crediting public awareness campaigns, national legislation protecting victims, and subsequent training of police and prosecutors to recognize intimate partner violence as a crime, rather than as a private matter. [Christian Science Monitor](#)

U.S.: Powerful Northeast storm kills 4, tests officials' emergency readiness

9 February - The massive blizzard that whipped New England this weekend with hurricane-force winds and crushing snow tested the readiness of authorities to deal with the increasing frequency of severe and record-breaking weather. State officials in Massachusetts took the rare step of ordering cars off the streets in advance of the storm, while in Long Island, hundreds of commuters were surprised and stranded by the blizzard, which dumped two to three feet of snow on the region. The storm claimed at least four lives and added to the march of extreme weather events in the past year that includes Hurricane Sandy, a deep drought, the hottest U.S. year on record and widespread wildfires in the West. [Washington Post](#)

U.S.: Slower growth of health costs eases deficit

11 February – A sharp and surprisingly persistent slowdown in the growth of health care costs is helping to narrow the federal deficit... In figures released last week, the Congressional Budget Office said it had erased hundreds of billions of dollars in projected spending on Medicare and Medicaid. The budget office now projects that spending on those two programs in 2020 will be about \$200 billion, or 15 percent, less than it projected three years ago... Health experts say they do not yet fully understand what is driving the lower spending trajectory. But there is a growing consensus that changes in how doctors and hospitals deliver health care — as opposed to merely a weak economy — are playing a role. [New York Times](#)

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Australia: Feral pig outbreak after floods

12 February - Feral pig numbers are on the rise after flooding presented them with prime breeding conditions. Regional areas affected by flooding, particularly Hervey Bay and

Maryborough, are plagued with a boost in pig numbers. Fraser Coast councillor James Hansen says pigs are being seen where they've never been seen before. "This kind of event with flooding really lends itself to an explosion in pigs," he said. [ABC Rural](#)

South Korea: Seoul says no nuclear radiation detected from North's nuke test

13 February - No change has yet been detected in the level of radiation in South Korea following North Korea's detonation a nuclear device this week, Seoul's nuclear safety commission said Wednesday. "As of 14:00 today, the level of radiation remained at the usual level of 50 to 300 nanosieverts per hour," the Nuclear Safety and Security Commission said in a press release. The report came one day after the communist North said it had conducted what was its third nuclear test. Seoul has also said an "artificial earthquake" believed to have been created by the North's detonation of a nuclear device had been detected. The nuclear safety commission has since intensified its radiation monitoring, fearing a radiation leak from the North's test site could affect the country as well. [Yonhap News Agency](#)

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Panama: MoH reports another case of hantavirus in Soná



8 February - The Department of Epidemiology of the Ministry of Health, confirmed a new case of hantavirus in a 35-year-old, who lives in the community of Carrizal, Sona district, province of Veraguas. Ricardo Chong, an epidemiologist at the Ministry of Health, said that so far have reported three cases of hantavirus, all from Soná district in less than a month. [Crítica](#)

Paraguay: Dengue epidemic leaves more than 20 dead and hundreds of infected

14 February - At least 23 dead and nearly 10,000 infected is the preliminary balance of a dengue epidemic in Paraguay, which began in January, said the Ministry of Health. According to the general director of that institution Surveillance, Celia Martinez, to date there were some 31,000 suspected cases in health centers, of which one third were confirmed as positive. He added that in addition to the 23 deaths, 10 other cases were studied to determine whether they were killed by the disease. [CRE Satellite](#)

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