

15 June 2012

Army Public Health Weekly Update

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National HIV Testing Day is June 27th

National HIV Testing Day is an annual observance to promote HIV testing. On June 26th, AIDS.gov will host a webinar/conference call on "HIV Testing for an AIDS-Free Generation" for Federal staff, stakeholders, and for grantees who work with domestic HIV/AIDS programs.

[Register here by June 22](#)



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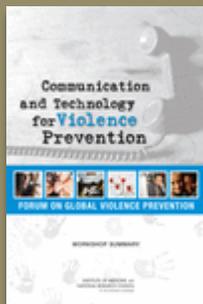
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- Brazil calls for more efforts for comprehensive education to prevent HIV/AIDS

Communication and Technology for Violence Prevention

In the last 25 years, a realization that violence is preventable has occurred. At the same time, new communications technologies and distribution channels have made community-based efforts to prevent violence possible by making information readily available.

How can these new technologies be successfully applied to the field of violence prevention?



U.S. MILITARY

Deaths while on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, 1990-2011

May 2012 - Crude mortality rates are lower among U.S. military members than their civilian counterparts; service members must be healthy when they enter service and deaths from illnesses are relatively infrequent. From 1990 through 2011, there were 29,213 deaths of U.S. military members while on active duty (crude overall mortality rate: 71.5 per 100,000 person-years). The most deaths occurred in years when major combat operations were ongoing; from 2004 to 2007, war-related injuries accounted for approximately 40 percent of all deaths. From 2000 to 2011, two-thirds of all deaths unrelated to war were caused by transportation accidents (n=4,761; 37%), other accidents (n=1,358; 10%) and suicides (n=2,634; 20%). From 2005 to 2011, the proportion of deaths due to suicide increased sharply while the proportion due to transportation accidents generally decreased; as a result in 2010 and 2011, suicides accounted for more deaths of service members than transportation accidents. The current focuses of the Services on safety and mental health are clearly indicated to minimize the premature loss of lives of young men and women in military service. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

Military suicides spike -- nearly 1 per day, Pentagon reports



8 June - Suicides among U.S. military members have spiked this year, with an average of one suicide a day — the highest rate so far during a decade of war in Iraq and Afghanistan. According to new Pentagon figures, 154 military service members committed suicide during the first 155 days of this year. During the same period, ending June 3, 136 U.S. troops died in combat in Afghanistan, according to [icasualties.org](#), a website that tracks combat casualties. The upsurge in suicides comes after the military suicide rate leveled off in 2010 and 2011. Although most Army suicides are of soldiers who have not deployed to war zones, Army studies have found that multiple combat tours are a high risk factor for suicide. Other factors include post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, traumatic brain injuries, marriage and financial stress, and drug and alcohol abuse. [Los Angeles Times](#)

Panetta: 'Huge gaps' in military's review of mental health cases

13 June - Defense Secretary Leon Panetta told a Senate panel on Wednesday that he is unsatisfied with the Pentagon's current approach to combating military suicides and that the Defense Department will review its procedures for handling mental health cases. Under questioning by Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., Panetta said that there are "still huge gaps" in the way a mental health diagnosis is determined. "We're doing everything we can to try to

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build a better system," Panetta said at a Senate Appropriations defense subcommittee hearing. "But there are still huge gaps in terms of the differences in terms of how they approach these cases and how they diagnose the cases and how they deal with them - and frankly, that's a whole area we have to do much better on." Murray's questioning came one week after the Pentagon announced that 154 active duty military suicides have occurred this year, meaning that more soldiers have died from suicide this year than in combat. [The Miami Herald](#)

To rehabilitate young vets, go hunting



12 June - Recreational rehabilitation programs have long been a favorite for helping disabled veterans acclimate after war, and the number of young and disabled vets returning who need those services is on the rise. Two brothers — with nearly 60 years of military service between them — are trying to help with a unique retreat that's free for young vets. The program gets them out of their hospital beds for a few days to hunt in rural Pennsylvania. As Marine and amputee Jake Dobberke positions his wheelchair at the end of a clearing, he and his guides send hen calls across the Pennsylvania countryside. The 26-year-old Dobberke takes part in the [LEEK Hunting & Mountain Preserve's](#) annual turkey hunt. "Coming outdoors is kind of a realization that the outdoor world and the life that I used to live before I was injured continues to exist," says Dobberke, who lost his legs below the knee in Afghanistan last year. Military veterans like Dobberke are the reason retired Army Col. Ed Fisher and his family started the adaptive hunting program in 2007. [NPR](#)

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GLOBAL

Fewer mothers, children dying, but progress could be better



13 June - Deaths of mothers giving birth in developing countries have dropped by nearly half since 1990, while deaths of children under 5 have fallen from 12 million to 7.6 million, according to a new report released Wednesday by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). A few countries have made "spectacular progress" toward lowering death rates, but some others have made virtually no progress at all, according to the report, *Building a Future for Women and Children*, which was published under the auspices of the Countdown to 2015 Initiative. That initiative, which is targeted at the 75 countries with the highest rates of maternal and young child deaths, aims to reduce maternal deaths by three-quarters by 2015 (compared with 1990) and deaths of young children by two-thirds. "We are optimistic, but realistic," said Dr. Mickey

Chopra, chief health officer of UNICEF and co-chair of the initiative. "Our main message is that it can be done." In the United States, the number of deaths among children under age 5 is about six or seven per 1,000 live births. [LA Times](#)

New UNICEF campaign targets pneumonia, diarrhea

8 June - UNICEF is launching a major global health campaign to tackle the two leading killers of children under the age of five. The agency's new report says finding more effective ways to prevent and treat pneumonia and diarrhea can significantly reduce childhood mortality worldwide. [VOA](#)

Public health's 5 big data hurdles

11 June - Public health entities are inevitably sitting on massive data sets. Growing archives of stored patient records, population reports, and lab results are thrusting data volume measures into the petabyte scale... Amongst the growing projects issued to the public health sector, what are big data's challenges and what are its benefits?

Here are our top five obstacles:

1. Health industry behind with big data
2. Mobilizing data to reach across systems
3. Big data and meaningful use
4. Big data and cost reduction
5. Big data and the changing healthcare model

...Indeed there are definite challenges tied to big data, ones as hard to ignore as its elephantine, petabyte presence in the health industry. Working through the challenges tied to harnessing big data, however, will allow a focus on patient care, clear cost reductions, and the ability to meet the changing demands of the healthcare industry. [Government Health IT](#)

Right-to-die movement sees gains as world ages

12 June - Right-to-die activists hope more countries will allow assisted suicide or euthanasia in coming years as the world population ages, but opponents are determined to stop them, a dispute that flared ahead of competing conferences in Switzerland. "We have seen over the last 20 years a general migration of positivity towards this being a just cause," Ted Goodwin, the American president of the World Federation of Right-to-Die Societies, told a news conference in Zurich on Tuesday. Goodwin was speaking as representatives of 55 right-to-die societies from around the world gathered for a three-day congress to mark the 30th anniversary of Exit, a Swiss group which provides lethal drugs to help the terminally ill die. [Reuters](#)

Scientists find new genetic path to deadly diarrheal disease

12 June - Scientists have found new genetic information that shows how harmful bacteria cause the acute diarrheal disease shigellosis, which kills more than a million people worldwide each year. The research, which could lead to the development of future treatments, was published today in the journal PLoS ONE. The study was led by Ohio

University scientist Erin Murphy and doctoral student William Broach, with contributions from University of Nevada, Las Vegas and University of Texas at Austin researchers. When the disease-causing bacterium *Shigella* invades a human host, environmental conditions there, such as changes in temperature or pH, stimulate a genetic expression pathway within the bacterium that allows it to survive and cause disease. Central to this genetic pathway are two proteins, VirF and VirB. VirF functions to increase production of VirB which, in turn, promotes the production of factors that increases the bacterium's virulence, or ability to cause illness in its host. "It's like a domino effect," says Murphy, assistant professor of bacteriology in the Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine. Murphy and Broach's new study, however, suggests that production of VirB can be controlled independently of VirF. [Infection Control Today](#)

Study finds 1 in 10 global births are premature



8 June - A first-ever [global study](#) of pre-term births has found nearly 15 million babies were born prematurely around the world in 2010, putting them at increased risk for illness, disability and early death. The authors say premature delivery is a problem not only in poor developing countries but in affluent developed nations as well, including the United States. Researchers with the non-governmental organization Save the Children analyzed data from national health registries and reproductive surveys done in 84 countries, and concluded that more than one in ten babies is born prematurely. Sixty percent of these more perilous early births are occurring in south Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. [VOA](#)

TSA full-body scanners at airports pose little risk, study finds

10 June - Full-body scanners used for security screening at the nation's airports do not expose passengers to dangerous levels of radiation, according to a new independent analysis of the devices. The study by the Marquette University College of Engineering concluded that radiation from so-called backscatter scanners passes beyond a passenger's skin to reach 29 organs — including the heart and brain. But the radiation levels are considerably lower than those of other X-ray procedures such as mammograms, the study said... The study, believed to be the first independent review of the scanners, is not likely to put to rest years of heated debate over the health risk of the machines operated by the Transportation Security Administration. The TSA has submitted the scanners for testing by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory and the U.S. Army Public Health Command. The tests concluded that the scanners posed no significant risk to passengers, but TSA critics have called for more independent studies. [Los Angeles Times](#)

UN warns of irreversible damage to planet

7 June - A United Nations report says the world faces irreversible change to life support functions if humanity does not change its ways. The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) issued the report ahead the U.N. Conference on Sustainable Development, set for

Brazil at the end of June. The Global Environmental Outlook, or GEO5, says the world is on an unsustainable path, despite more than 500 international agreements. And scientific evidence says Earth's systems are being pushed toward their limits. "We have some specific examples: carbon emissions are continuing to grow, not decline," said Amy Fraenkel, who directs the U.N.'s Environmental Program in North America. "We already exceeded the safe levels of where scientists say we need to be reaching in the atmosphere for greenhouse gases. Biodiversity has declined, our oceans are not in good shape, our fisheries are not in good shape." [VOA](#)

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INFLUENZA

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 22 (week ending 2 June 2012), 6.0% of all deaths reported through the 122-Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to P&I. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 7.2% for week 22. [FluView](#)

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

During weeks 21-22 (21 May – 3 June 2012), sixteen countries reported low intensity of influenza activity and decreasing or stable trends. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For the week ending 9 June 2012:

Adenovirus

- Vaccination against types 4 and 7 adenovirus was instituted at all basic training centers by mid-November 2011 (week 45).
- FRI rates and the proportion of FRI cases positive for adenovirus have decreased markedly since vaccine was reintroduced.
- Type 14 adenovirus is present at MCRD Parris Island.
- A MSMR paper on the initial impact of adenovirus vaccine resumption was recently published.

FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates were moderately elevated at CGTC Cape May. [NHRC Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)

Update: Influenza activity — United States, 2011–12 season and composition of the 2012–13 influenza vaccine

8 June - During the 2011–12 influenza season in the United States, influenza activity* occurred at low levels during October through December and increased in January and February before peaking in mid-March. Influenza A (H3N2) viruses predominated overall, but influenza A (H1N1)pdm09 (pH1N1) and influenza B viruses also circulated widely. This influenza season was mild compared with recent years, with a lower percentage of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI),† lower rates of hospitalizations, and fewer deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza. This report summarizes influenza activity in the United States during the 2011–12 influenza season (October 2, 2011–May 19, 2012) and reports the recommendations for the components of the 2012–13 Northern Hemisphere influenza vaccine. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

PANDEMIC AND AVIAN INFLUENZA

A SMART(er) way to track influenza

11 June - ...Swine flu will not be the last viral mutation to cause a worldwide stir. One way to contain the next outbreak is by administering tests at the infection's source, pinpointing and tracking the pathogen's spread in real time. But such efforts have been stymied by devices that are costly, unwieldy and unreliable. Now, biomedical engineers at Brown University and Memorial Hospital in Rhode Island have developed a biochip that can detect the presence of influenza by zeroing in on the specific RNA sequence and then using tiny magnets in a tube to separate the flu-ridden sequence from the rest of the RNA strand. The result: A reliable, fast prototype of a flu-detection test that potentially can be carried in a first-aid kit and used as easily as an iPhone. [EurekAlert](#)

Egypt: Avian influenza situation, WHO update

7 June - The Ministry of Health and Population of Egypt has notified WHO of a new case of human infection with avian influenza A(H5N1) virus. The case is a four year-old female from Kfr -Elsheikh governorate. She developed symptoms on 25 April 2012, was admitted to a hospital on 26 April 2012 and received oseltamivir treatment upon admission. She was discharged from the hospital on 7 May 2012. Investigations into the source of infection indicated that the case had exposure to backyard poultry. The case was confirmed by the Central Public Health Laboratories and the Naval Medical Research Unit 3 (NAMRU-3), a WHO reference laboratory. To date, a total of 168 cases have been confirmed in Egypt, of which 60 have been fatal. [WHO](#)

Study highlights avian flu risk factors in ducks

12 June - Small-farm ducks in Indonesia that scavenged around the neighborhood and that were from flocks in which birds had died and were consumed by the farmers were at higher risk of contracting highly pathogenic H5 avian flu, according to a study today in

Epidemiology and Infection. Indonesian and Australian researchers visited 96 small farms twice, 14 months apart, in 2007 and 2008 and measured bird- and flock-level incidence of highly pathogenic H5. Each farm housed from 10 to 700 birds. The investigators analyzed more than 30 possible risk factors. In addition to the scavenging and carcass-consumption risk factors, the team found that confining a flock overnight on the farm and recording sudden deaths of birds between visits were associated with a lower risk of the flock's developing H5 antibodies as determined by hemagglutination-inhibition assay. The authors said their findings can help in avian flu prevention efforts. [CIDRAP](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Global food-trade network vulnerable to fast spread of contaminants

11 June - As the world's population climbs past seven billion, the sustainable production and distribution of food is balanced against the need to ensure its chemical and microbiological safety; this is not easy: a rigorous analysis of the international food-trade network shows the network's vulnerability to the fast spread of contaminants as well as the correlation between known food poisoning outbreaks and the centrality of countries on the network. University of Notre Dame network physicists Mária Ercsey-Ravasz and Zoltán Toroczkai of the Interdisciplinary Center for Network Science and Applications, in collaboration with food science experts, have recently published a rigorous analysis of the international food-trade network which shows the network's vulnerability to the fast spread of contaminants as well as the correlation between known food poisoning outbreaks and the centrality of countries on the network. Together with food science experts József Baranyi, from the Institute of Food Research in the United Kingdom, and Zoltán Lakner, of Corvinus University in Budapest, Ercsey-Ravasz and Toroczkai recently published their results in the journal PLoS ONE. [Homeland Security News Wire](#)

U.S.: Multistate Outbreak of Shiga Toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* O145 Infections

10 June - A total of 14 persons infected with the outbreak strain of STEC O145 infection have been identified in 6 states. The number of ill persons identified in each state is as follows: Alabama (2), California (1), Florida (1), Georgia (5), Louisiana (4), and Tennessee (1). Three ill persons have been hospitalized; one death has been reported in Louisiana. Based on interviews conducted to date, a source for these infections has not been identified. If a specific source is identified, public health officials will advise the public and take steps to prevent additional illnesses. Dates for patients' onset of illness range from April 15 to May 12, 2012. It has been approximately 4 weeks since the last illness onset among reported cases. Although this indicates that this outbreak could be over, CDC continues to work with state public health officials to identify additional cases and the source of these STEC O145 infections. [CDC](#)

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WELLNESS

10-year-old Florida twins' hip-hop handwashing routine wins second annual APIC Film Festival

13 June - Ten-year-old twin brothers Jerry and Josie Herman, rapping about proper hand hygiene, won first place in the second annual Film Festival during the 39th Annual Educational Conference & International Meeting of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC). [View video on YouTube.](#) [Infection Control Today](#)

Diesel exhaust fumes cause lung cancer, WHO says



12 June - Diesel engine fumes can cause lung cancer and belong in the same potentially deadly category as asbestos, arsenic and mustard gas, World Health Organisation (WHO) experts said on Tuesday. In an announcement that caused concern in the auto industry, the [France](#)-based International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), part of the WHO, reclassified diesel exhausts from its group 2A of probable carcinogens to its group 1 of substances that have definite links to cancer. The experts, who said their decision was unanimous and based on "compelling" scientific evidence, urged people worldwide to reduce their exposure to diesel fumes as much as possible. [Reuters](#)

Low-dose vitamin D no help to older women: panel

12 June - Postmenopausal women shouldn't take low doses of vitamin D and calcium to prevent broken bones since they have little positive effect and come with a slightly increased risk of side effects, according to a U.S. government-backed panel. In draft recommendations that appeared on its website, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), which makes recommendations on a range of prevention issues, said studies of the supplements suggest they do little to prevent fractures at doses lower than 400 IU of vitamin D and 1,000 milligrams (mg) of calcium daily. But it is clear that they come with a slightly increased risk of side effects, such as kidney stones. [Reuters](#)

'Mindful' meditation tied to healthy brain changes, study

12 June - Just a few hours of meditation training may change your brain for the better, a small, new study suggests. Researchers using imaging technology have found that people develop measurable changes in the white matter of the brain after learning "mindfulness meditation." Also called "integrative body-mind training," it involves periods of intense focus and concentration. "The notable physical changes suggest that short-term meditation can improve self-control, mood, stress response and immunity response," said Michael Posner, a co-author of the study and a professor emeritus at the University of Oregon, in Eugene. The study was published online June 11 in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. [Medline Plus](#)

Smoking and drinking has 'little effect' on sperm counts

12 June - ...A study by researchers at the Universities of Sheffield and Manchester compared the lifestyles of 939 men with poor sperm quality with 1,310 men with normal sperm quality. The study showed there was little difference in the number of mobile sperm between patients who never smoked and those who had a 20-a-day habit. There was "little evidence" that recreational drug use, a high BMI or excessive alcohol consumption affected sperm quality. Dr Andrew Povey, from the University of Manchester, said there were these lifestyle choices were hugely important for wider health but "probably have little influence" on male fertility. [BBC News](#)

Taking omega-3 supplements may provide no mental or cognitive benefit



13 June - Omega-3s might not provide the mental and cognitive benefits that were previously thought, according to a new study. Looking at research from three large studies of over 3,500 people, scientists discovered that individuals who took omega-3 for up to 3.5 years didn't see an increase in memory, mental skills or verbal skills. The research was published in [The Cochrane Library](#) on June 13. "From these studies, there doesn't appear to be any benefit for cognitive health for older people of taking omega-3 supplements," Dr. Alan Dangour, a nutritionist at LSHTM and co-author of the report, said in the [press release](#). [CBS News](#)

Type 1 diabetes rate rises among U.S. youth

9 June - In the first major national analysis of diabetes trends among American youth, researchers Saturday reported an alarming 23% rise in type 1 diabetes prevalence over an eight-year period ending in 2009. The surprising increase, reported at a meeting of the American Diabetes Association, comes amid similar growth of type 2 diabetes in children. But unlike type 2, which is linked to the high prevalence of obesity in youth, researchers have no explanation for why the autoimmune form of the disease is growing at such a clip. [Wall Street Journal](#)

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USAFRICOM

New malaria task forces will address top Africa killer



13 June - Two new task forces being stood up by U.S. Africa Command have set their sights on one of the biggest killers on the continent: the mosquito. Malaria -- that same affliction that decimated Roman legions, Revolutionary War and Civil War soldiers and was a scourge in the South Pacific during World War II -- continues to plague Africa, particularly the sub-Saharan region. Ninety percent of the world's malaria-related deaths are reported in Africa, and the disease kills some 600,000

African children each year. The toll is so devastating that it overshadows Africa's other medical challenges, including HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, Army Col. (Dr.) John Andrus, Africom's deputy surgeon and medical logistics division chief, told American Forces Press Service. And beyond the pure humanitarian toll, there's an operational one, too. Last year, during Africom's World Malaria Day observance, a soldier from an African partner nation told Andrus malaria is one of the biggest concerns among his troops deploying for peacekeeping operations across the continent. "This was a real eye opener to us," he said.

[American Forces Press Service](#)

Nigeria: Jigawa launches new vaccine against child killer diseases

14 June - The Jigawa State government has launched a new vaccine against five child killer diseases in the state. State commissioner for health Dr Hassana Hussaini Adamu said the newly introduced pentavalent vaccine into the EPI schedule was conceived after the Pentavalent Vaccine was introduced into the country as a means of increasing the immunization coverage, adding that Jigawa is one of the few states selected to start the vaccine after it was introduced at the national level. The commissioner also said the vaccine is not a new one, rather it is an improved version of the DPT3, adding that the DPT3 is one of the performance indicators for any routine immunization in the country. [All Africa](#)

Somalia: Steep increase in measles cases

8 June - Measles is a major killer in Somalia and it's easily preventable. Vaccination - with high coverage and proper vaccine management - is critical to saving lives in Somalia. MSF asks all authorities to support emergency vaccination programmes throughout Somalia. Khadijo came to the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) supported hospital two days ago with six of her children. All seven of them have measles. She says she knows the signs for measles but she didn't come in earlier because she lives too far away and transport is expensive. She first tried traditional medicine - applying burns to various areas of the body - and only came to the hospital when her youngest child, a one-year old boy named Jakob, died. Left untreated, measles can be deadly, especially for young children. With in-patient medical care most patients survive, but the best gains are made in prevention through vaccination. All over Somalia, measles has been flaring up, especially over the past six months. MSF has treated 4,288 patients for measles since January, the vast majority of them children, in its health centers across Somalia¹. Even in areas where medical authorities say vaccination campaigns are effective, MSF is still treating dozens of patients every day. [All Africa](#)

South Africa: Rabies, official statement

13 June - Rabies has been confirmed in a 29 year old farmer from Underberg, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. The patient was admitted to a Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal hospital on 2 May 2012 with migratory pain in his arm and shoulder, unilateral ptosis, fever, confusion, and progressively hypersalivation and hydrophobia. The patient was already unwell on 29 Apr 2012. Rabies was considered as a differential diagnosis when the patient reported contact with a stray dog that died and with which he had contact 2 months prior

to his illness. The patient provided shelter for the animal, which was initially well but reportedly developed signs and symptoms consistent with rabies within a couple of days. The animal was buried on the farm. The patient did not report any bites or serious injuries from the animal and therefore did not receive any rabies post exposure prophylaxis at the time. [ProMED-mail](#)

Uganda: Aerial spraying for nodding disease control



13 June - Following President Museveni's launch that took place in Pader district on May 26, 2012 concerning the control of black flies in Kitgum, Pader and Lamwo districts, new plans have already been set. The task to clear the flies which transmit river blindness is spearheaded by a

technical team comprising of members from the health and agriculture ministries plus district officials of the affected areas. The head of the National Onchocerciasis Control Program, Tom Lakwo explains that the great alliance of nodding disease and river blindness has led his team to focus on fighting the flies that transmit the latter. "Although the cause of nodding disease has not yet been established, the mapping so far done shows that the most affected areas with river blindness are again those highly affected with the nodding disease," he explained. In a meeting of technocrats that sat at Kitgum Royal Hotel last week, it was decided that aerial spraying be used to yield better results. The meeting set the months of June and July to be used in mapping, and aerial spraying to take place in August and October this year, the latter period noted to be a peak season for the black flies. [All Africa](#)

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USCENTCOM

Iran: Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever

12 June - Iranian media report that 7 people in the country have died after contracting Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF). Most victims of the viral disease have been identified in the eastern provinces, but reports indicate that the virus has been detected in 27 of Iran's 31 provinces. The Mehr News Agency reports on Sunday [10 Jun 2012] that the head of the Pasteur Institute labs in Tehran announced that since the beginning of the Iranian year in March [2012], 29 people have contracted Crimean Congo haemorrhagic fever and 7 of them have died from it. He confirmed that the virus has been identified in 27 provinces. The Mehr report adds that top Health Ministry officials have so far confirmed that 2 deaths can be attributed to this disease. [ProMED-mail](#)

UAE: All blood banks will be linked

12 June - Blood banks across the emirates will soon be linked through a modern web-based system to facilitate the swift provision of blood for the patients in need. It will also streamline the blood donation process and exchange the information of donors between

the hospitals, Hamad Al Mulla, Director of the Regional Blood Bank at Tawam Hospital, said here on Tuesday at the launching of the system at his facility. The application, widely used in blood banks in Europe and the US, simplifies donors registrations, blood donating and other processes such as separation of blood platelets, virus and bacterium detection, blood distribution, and other administrative procedures, said a spokesperson of the hospital. The application also transfers information to the main servers instantly from external blood donation campaigns through a 3G network. It also applies a secure code to ensure privacy, said Al Mulla. A similar system is already running at Abu Dhabi Blood Bank at Shaikh Khalifa Medical City. [Zawya](#)

UAE: Health council in plans to launch medical board

10 June - Dubai The health council yesterday discussed the latest updates on the results of the scientific higher committee to establish the UAE medical board and the cabinet's draft decision regarding the health advertisements system in the UAE. Abdul Rahman Al Owais, Minister of Culture, Youth and Community Development, Acting Minister of Health, chaired the second health council meeting at the Ministry of Health in Dubai. The council also reviewed the report on the unification of the medical licensing system in the UAE. Acting Health Minister Al Owais lauded the efforts of both Abu Dhabi and Dubai Health Authorities and their cooperation to unify the medical licensing systems in the UAE which will be finalised by the end of the year. The members of the council likewise highlighted the need for a UAE medical council known as the 'UAE Medical Board' which will be responsible for putting up suitable standards to evaluate and approve medical majors and all related examinations. All this, will be done in coordination with competent health authorities in the UAE. [Zawya](#)

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USEUCOM

Europe: ECDC public health response to the threat of resistant gonorrhoea

14 June - The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) has launched its public health response plan to control and manage the threat of resistant gonorrhoea across Europe [1]. This is the first regional response plan after the World Health Organization (WHO) warned about drug-resistant gonorrhoea becoming a major public health challenge [2]...Results from the European gonococcal antimicrobial surveillance programme (Euro-GASP) show that the percentage of isolates with decreased susceptibility to the recommended drug for treatment of gonorrhoea (cefixime) rose from 4% in 2009 to 9% in 2010. Decreased susceptibility was detected in 17 countries in 2010, seven more than in the previous year. At the same time, the susceptibility to the injectable drug ceftriaxone is decreasing as well [3]. The loss of both cefixime and ceftriaxone as treatment options for gonorrhoea would have a significant impact on public health: gonorrhoea is the second most commonly reported bacterial sexually transmitted infection (STI) in Europe [4] and its effective control relies entirely on antimicrobial treatment. [Eurosurveillance](#)

France: Adverse events following vaccination in the French armed forces, 2002-2010

14 June - French military personnel are subject to a compulsory vaccination schedule. The aim of this study was to describe vaccine adverse events (VAE) reported from 2002 to 2010 in armed forces. VAE are routinely surveyed by the military Centre for epidemiology and public health. For each case, military practitioners fill a notification form, providing patient characteristics, clinical information and vaccines administered. For this study, VAE following influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 vaccination were excluded. Among the 473 cases retained, 442 (93%) corresponded to non-severe VAE, including local, regional and systemic events, while 31 corresponded to severe VAE, with two leading to significant disability. The global VAE reporting rate (RR) was 14.0 per 100,000 injections. While stationary from 2002 to 2008, the RR increased from 2009. The most important observations were a marked increase of VAE attributed to Bacille Calmette–Guérin (BCG) vaccine from 2005 to 2008, a high RR observed with the inactivated diphtheria-tetanus (toxoids)-poliovirus vaccine combined with acellular pertussis vaccine (dTdap-IPV) from 2008 and an increase in RR for seasonal influenza vaccine VAE in 2009. Our RR for severe VAE (1.1 VAE per 100,000) appears comparable with rates observed among United States civilians and military personnel. The increase observed from 2009 could be partly explained by the influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 pandemic which increased practitioner awareness towards VAE. In conclusion, the tolerance of the vaccines used in French armed forces appears acceptable. [Eurosurveillance](#)

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USNORTHCOM

U.S.: Helmet use among motorcyclists who died in crashes and economic cost savings associated with state motorcycle helmet laws, 2008-2010

15 June - ... To examine the association between states' motorcycle helmet laws and helmet use or nonuse among fatally injured motorcyclists, CDC analyzed 2008–2010 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), a census of fatal traffic crashes in the United States (1). Additionally, economic cost data from NHTSA were obtained to compare the costs saved as a result of helmet use, by type of state motorcycle helmet law. The findings indicated that, on average, 12% of fatally injured motorcyclists were not wearing helmets in states with universal helmet laws, compared with 64% in partial helmet law states (laws that only required specific groups, usually young riders, to wear helmets) and 79% in states without a helmet law. Additionally, in 2010, economic costs saved from helmet use by society in states with a universal helmet law were, on average, \$725 per registered motorcycle, nearly four times greater than in states without such a law (\$198). [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

U.S.: Huge rise in CT, MRI, ultrasound scan use, study



12 June - The number of advanced diagnostic scans, such as CTs and MRIs, has zoomed upward since 1996, greatly boosting the amount of estimated radiation that patients receive, according to a new analysis of the medical records of millions of Americans in HMO health plans. It's not clear what extra risk the radiation poses, nor is it known how much difference the scans have made in terms of diagnosing and treating illness. Still, the existing research raises questions about overuse of the scans, said study lead author Dr. Rebecca Smith-Bindman, a professor at the University of California, San Francisco. [Medline Plus](#)

U.S., Oregon: Plague, septicemic

12 June - Crook County health officials said Mon, 11 Jun 2012, they are investigating a probable case of human plague involving a man in his 50s who is being treated at a local hospital. Contacts with the individual have been notified and are receiving preventive antibiotics, officials said. The man reported contact with a sick stray cat in his neighborhood, they added. [ProMED-mail](#)

U.S.: Pertussis surge continues in several states

12 June - Pertussis activity continues in certain US hotspots, such as the Pacific Northwest and Maine, and outbreaks are now being reported in Florida, Iowa, Oregon, Kansas, and New York, according to media reports...A compilation of 12 recent media reports on pertussis activity in different parts of the country by ProMED Mail, the online reporting system of the International Society for Infectious Diseases, highlighted more pertussis cases in Washington's Island County schools. In addition, increased cases in Grant County that have prompted offers of free tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap) vaccine by the health department and private clinics for underinsured people and those who have contact with infants and young children. [CIDRAP](#)

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USPACOM

China: Heavy smog sparks online fears in Chinese city

12 June - Chinese authorities Tuesday denied rumors of a poisonous industrial leak in the city of Wuhan, in central Hubei province, after a thick yellow fog engulfed the city and its surrounding area starting early Monday morning. The province's environmental protection department said on its web site that the smog was the result of straw burning, but advised people to stay indoors as much as possible and wear a protective mask outside. "We exclude any industrial pollution causes behind this abnormal weather," the note said.

Speculation online had linked the unusually heavy smog with an industrial leakage, and users posted pictures of Wuhan engulfed in smog, next to photos of the same location on a clear day. Local police posted an announcement online Tuesday saying that they had detained two Internet users who had spread rumors about the unusual haze. According to the police, the users had claimed that the poor atmospheric situation was caused by a chlorine leak at a chemical factory, or by an explosion at a steel plant. Noting that such false information had "caused panic among the netizens," Wuhan police advised people to be wary of Internet rumors. [Voice of America](#)

India: Rabies mortality estimates

14 June - The National Health Profile of India, published by the Central Bureau of Health Intelligence within the Directorate General of Health Services, under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, actually began reporting markedly lower rabies death numbers in 2005 -- but apparently nobody noticed until Indian health minister Gulam Nabi Azad on 29 Apr 2012 brought the latest data to the Lok Sabha [House of the People, the lower house of the Parliament of India].

The National Health Profile of India human rabies death numbers:

2005: 274

2006: 361

2007: 221

2008: 244

2009: 260

2010: 162

2011: 223 [ProMED-mail](#)

Indonesia: Housewives help fight TB

13 June - Housewives in Cicendo District near Bandung in West Java, Indonesia's third largest city, are spearheading the fight against tuberculosis (TB) by helping to identify people suspected of having contracted the disease and then referring them to a clinic for treatment. Activists trained by Aisyiah, the women's wing of Muhammadiyah, a Muslim organization, work with religious as well as neighbourhood leaders to educate people about TB, and recruit family members to monitor patients' adherence to their medication. People with TB often experience social stigma and many Indonesians see TB as a disease of the poor. "One of our problems is that people here are ashamed to admit that they have TB," said Nunung Resmawati, one of the "community cadres" in Cicendo District. "So we talk to them and try to convince them TB is not a curse, and not something to be ashamed of. It's a serious disease but one that can be cured." [IRIN](#)

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Brazil calls for more efforts for comprehensive education to prevent HIV/AIDS

12 June - Brazil on Monday called for more comprehensive education on how to prevent HIV/AIDS, saying that discrimination, limited access to health services and lack of specific HIV-prevention policies contribute to making key affected populations disproportionately vulnerable to the infection. The statement came as Regina Maria Cordeiro Dunlop, the deputy Brazilian permanent representative to the United Nations, made the statement as he was speaking at a plenary session of the UN General Assembly on HIV/AIDS.

"Comprehensive education on sexuality must be made available together with the expansion of access to essential preventive commodities, particularly male and female condoms," she said. "Substantive reductions have recently been registered in sexual transmissions of HIV, especially in high prevalence countries," she said. "However, there is a lot we must accomplish in order to reach the 50 percent reduction target by 2015." [EIN](#)

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