

21 September 2012

Army Public Health Weekly Update

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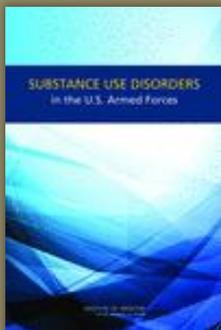
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Substance Use Disorders in the U.S. Armed Forces

Like many sectors of society, the U.S. military has a long history of alcohol and other drug misuse and abuse. In recent years, the face of the issue has been transformed by increasing rates of prescription drug abuse among service members.

An Institute of Medicine analysis concludes that to deal with this public health crisis, the DoD will need to consistently implement evidence-based prevention, screening, diagnosis, and treatment services and take leadership for ensuring that these services expand and improve.



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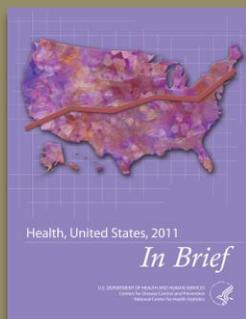
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- Honduras: Hepatitis

Health, United States, 2011

Monitoring the health of the American people is an essential step in making sound health policy and setting research and program priorities. In a Chartbook and detailed tables, Health, United States provides an annual picture of the health of the entire Nation.

This report was compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).



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.

U.S. MILITARY

Sex assault victims need more privacy

20 September - An interim policy promising more privacy to military sexual assault victims applying for security clearances is not enough to make victims comfortable about seeing mental health counseling, says an official with the Service Woman's Action Network. Sexual assault victims won't be truly comfortable seeking counseling until the questionnaire no longer asks about the counseling at all, said Greg Jacob, SWAN's policy director and a Marine Corps veteran with service as an enlisted member and officer. Service members who receive mental health counseling for combat-related stress already are exempt from reporting their treatment, a move made in response to fears that having to report counseling would discourage people from seeking treatment. SWAN, a human rights organization founded in 2007, has been working with Congress, the Defense Department and Office of the Director of National Intelligence to make a similar change to the government's security clearance application for victims of military sexual trauma. "I am confident the question is going to change," Jacob said. "The end-state for this is to not have to say 'yes' when asked about receiving mental health counseling." [Army Times](#)

Substance use disorders in the U.S. Armed Forces

17 September - Like many sectors of society, the U.S. military has a long history of alcohol and other drug misuse and abuse. In recent years, the face of the issue has been transformed by increasing rates of prescription drug abuse among service members. Heavy alcohol use and binge drinking continues to be a concern within the military. To better understand the current substance use problems within the U.S. military, the Department of Defense (DoD) asked the IOM to analyze policies and programs that pertain to prevention, screening, diagnosis, and treatment of substance use disorders for active duty service members in all branches, members of the National Guard and Reserve, and military families. The IOM concludes that to deal with this public health crisis, the DoD will need to consistently implement evidence-based prevention, screening, diagnosis, and treatment services and take leadership for ensuring that these services expand and improve. [Institute of Medicine](#)

Viral meningitis, active and reserve components, U.S. Armed Forces, 2002-2011

August 2012 - Viruses are the most common causes of meningitis, a condition characterized by inflammation of the protective membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord. During the 10-year surveillance period, there were 3,205 confirmed cases, 724 probable cases, and 2,495 suspected cases of viral meningitis among active and reserve component members. In all three categories of cases, the most common diagnoses were meningitis due to enteroviruses; however a majority of these were unspecified enteroviruses. Nearly two-thirds (64.2%) of all cases due to enteroviral infection were hospitalized; on average, cases were hospitalized for 3.2 days. Numbers of cases peaked in late summer/early fall; and higher than average numbers of cases in 2003 reflected several outbreaks that occurred in

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civilian populations that year. Six states (Texas, California, Virginia, North Carolina, Florida, Georgia) reported the most cases in 2003 and overall during the period. Prevention of viral meningitis relies upon the interruption of viral transmission, e.g., thorough hand washing and disinfection of contaminated surfaces. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

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GLOBAL

A tickling in the ear



20 September - A 63-year-old man presented with acute pruritus and bubbling tinnitus in his right ear, without hearing loss. Otoscopy revealed a tick anchored to the anterosuperior portion of the right tympanic membrane. The tick was removed by suction after a topical anesthetic agent was applied to the patient's ear. The tinnitus resolved immediately. Aside from mild hyperemia, no visible damage to the tympanic membrane was observed. The tick was identified as the nymph form of *Ixodes ricinus*, a species frequently found on cats throughout Europe. This tick can serve as a vector for *Borrelia burgdorferi*. In addition to being able to transmit disease, ticks and other insects can be found as foreign bodies in the outer ear canal. [New England Journal of Medicine](#)

Cholera vaccine another element of battling disease

20 September - The cholera vaccine is emerging as a prominent tool in the fight against the disease that the World Health Organization says kills at least 100,000 people every year. WHO is creating a cholera vaccine stockpile that countries can tap into during outbreaks. Health experts say the vaccine is not a panacea and must not detract from prevention basics, like safe water and proper sanitation, but given the extent of cholera's global impact it is an important tool. [VOA](#)

Link between BPA and childhood obesity is unclear

18 September - BPA could be making kids fat. Or not. That's the unsatisfying takeaway from the latest study on bisphenol A — the plastic additive that environmental groups have blamed for everything from ADHD to prostate disease. Unfortunately, the science behind those allegations isn't so clear. And the new study on obesity in children and teens is no exception. Researchers from New York University looked at BPA levels in the urine of more than 2,800 people aged 6 through 19. The team wanted to know whether those with relatively high levels of BPA were more likely to be obese. But the results, published today in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, didn't offer a simple answer to that question. Among white kids and teens, higher BPA levels were associated with more than twice the risk of obesity. With black and Hispanic youth, though, BPA levels didn't make a difference. [NPR](#)

Researcher invents weapons of waste destruction

3 September - Aleksandr Georgievich Semenov patented an efficiently disgusting weapon system. Using his method, soldiers inside an armoured tank, under battle conditions, can dispose of their biological waste products in an un wasteful way: encasing those materials, together with explosives, in artillery shells that they then fire at the enemy. Semenov, residing in St Petersburg, can and does brag of having Russian patent #2399858, granted in 2009, officially titled Method of Biowaste Removal From Isolated Dwelling Compartment of Military Facility And Device or Its Implementation. [Guardian](#)

Test of new dengue vaccine shows promise



14 September - A clinical trial of a new vaccine against dengue fever shows progress toward fighting the most common mosquito-borne disease. The drug is less successful than hoped, but seems to be effective at preventing three of the four related viruses that cause dengue. Dengue fever is endemic across the tropics, with more than 2.5 billion people in 128 countries at risk. Symptoms can range from aches and fever to circulatory failure, coma and death. Some 21,000 people die of dengue each year, and the number of cases is increasing, including outbreaks in the southeastern United States. There is no vaccine available to prevent dengue fever. [VOA](#)

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INFLUENZA

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 36, 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 6.5% for week 36. [FluView](#)

China: Avian influenza, H5N1, poultry

18 September - The H5N1 avian flu virus has been detected in the city of Zhanjiang in south China's Guangdong province, experts confirmed on Tuesday [18 Sep 2012]. The virus has infected 14 050 ducks and killed 6300 of them since 11 Sept 2012, when symptoms were 1st reported, a Ministry of Agriculture official said. After the epidemic was confirmed, local authorities cordoned off an infected area in the city and killed all poultry in the area before starting to decontaminate it, the official said. China is particularly prone to bird flu epidemics, as it has the world's largest poultry population and many rural farmers live in close proximity to their poultry. [ProMED-mail](#)

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

During weeks 35-36 (27 August – 9 September 2012), influenza activity of low-intensity was notified by all 18 reporting countries. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

Google.org: Flu Trends

20 September – Estimates of flu activity based on flu-related Internet search queries indicate that the level of flu activity in the U.S. ranges from minimal to low. [Google.org Flu Trends](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For the week ending 15 September 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.

FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates were at or below expected values. [NHRC Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Swaziland: Cattle die in the thousands



20 September - Cold and wet weather, coupled with overgrazing and poor animal husbandry, has been blamed for the deaths of about 10,000 cattle in Swaziland in the past month - and has increased fears of health risks as people scavenge carcasses for food. "This is the highest number of cattle deaths in the country's [modern] history," Zolani Dlamini, the director of the government's livestock and veterinary services, told local media. Since the rinderpest outbreak in the 1890s, which killed about 90 percent of all stock animals in Swaziland, farming practices have barely evolved in the landlocked country. Cattle are highly valued culturally and represent the only means of financial security for the two-thirds of the country's 1.2 million people who reside on communal Swazi Nation Land (SNL). Prior to the mass deaths, Swaziland's national herd was estimated at about 750,000 head of cattle, but

the agricultural ministry estimates the optimum number of cattle for the country's pastures - depending on the weather conditions - is between 400,000 and 600,000. While the mass deaths may be seen as mitigating some of the cattle overpopulation, the losses are difficult for impoverished farmers to manage. [IRIN](#)

U.S.: Antibiotic resistance, campylobacter, swine

19 September - Researchers from North Carolina State University have found identical strains of antibiotic-resistant *Campylobacter coli* (*C. coli*) in both antibiotic-free (ABF) and conventionally raised pigs. This finding may indicate that these antibiotic-resistant pathogens can persist and thrive in the environment, regardless of antimicrobial usage by pork producers. Dr Siddhartha Thakur, assistant professor of population health and pathobiology, had previously found that antibiotic-resistant *C. coli*, a leading cause of foodborne illness in the US, was present in both ABF-certified and conventionally raised pigs. The pathogen was present in both groups in all facilities from breeding to processing. Thakur wanted to determine whether the *C. coli* that he found in each group was genetically the same, in order to see if the presence or absence of antimicrobial usage had an effect on the pathogen's genetic makeup. The rise of antibiotic-resistant pathogens like *C. coli* is a concern for the food animal industry. [ProMED-mail](#)

U.S.: FDA awards contract for tools to analyze food pathogen genomes

19 September - The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) yesterday awarded a contract to Illumina Inc., of San Diego, for technology it hopes will speed pathogen identification on produce, the company said in a news release. The funding is for Illumina to provide the FDA with its MiSeq sequencing systems and reagents for conducting whole-genome analyses of *Salmonella* and Shiga-toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* isolates from produce and produce-related environmental samples. The contract is worth up to \$17 million over 5 years. The FDA already deploys several MiSeq systems, but the new award is to enhance its ability to conduct whole-genome analysis and collect data crucial for tracking the sources of *Salmonella* in produce-related outbreaks. Using MiSeq, FDA and state laboratories will be able to generate whole-genome sequences from historical pathogen collections and from bacteria collected from produce, the release said. [CIDRAP](#)

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WELLNESS

Cancers on the rise in pregnant women: study

19 September - The number of pregnant women diagnosed with cancer has increased over the past couple of decades, a new study from Australia suggests. In 2007, the most recent year studied, researchers found 192 out of every 100,000 pregnant and postpartum women

received a cancer diagnosis - up from 112 per 100,000 women in 1994. Researchers couldn't determine what was behind that increase in risk, but said it could be due in part to the older average age of expectant moms combined with better cancer detection. Another explanation could be "the increased interaction with health services during pregnancy," said Christine Roberts, an obstetrics researcher at the University of Sydney who worked on the study. Roberts said some doctors in her department had seen a few cases of expectant moms with cancer and wanted to know whether this was indicative of any increase in risk.

[Medline Plus](#)

Mid-life men struggle with identity, have higher suicide risk

20 September - Middle-aged men from disadvantaged backgrounds are 10 times more likely to commit suicide, often because they have lost a sense of identity and masculine pride, researchers said on Thursday. In a report commissioned by the British helpline charity the Samaritans, health experts explored why men in their 30s, 40s and 50s are at such a substantially higher risk of ending their own lives. The findings suggest suicide is not simply a mental health problem, the researchers said, but also one of men's place in societies and of societies' inability to adapt to men's needs when trying to deal with depression, anxiety and other problems. [Reuters](#)

Second-hand smoke tied to memory problems: study

20 September - Smokers and people who regularly breathe others' cigarette fumes are worse at remembering things on their to-do lists than are people with no tobacco exposure, a small study says. Problems with so-called prospective memory may not only lead to embarrassment if a person forgets to meet with their friends, British researchers write in the journal *Addiction*. It can also have more-serious consequences such as forgetting to take your medication. The study doesn't prove that smoke damages memory, but is nonetheless a cause for concern, the researchers say. [Reuters](#)

Surgery for extreme obesity produces long-term, dramatic weight loss and diabetes remission

18 September - More than 30 million of the Americans classified as obese or extremely obese might benefit from surgery that reconstructs the stomach to accommodate less food. A new study shows that gastric bypass surgery, which leads to weight loss and improvement of related health problems, may yield long-term health benefits. Earlier research had shown improvements but most patients were tracked for shorter intervals. A [report published online September 18](#) in *JAMA, Journal of the American Medical Association* tracked hundreds of extremely obese patients for six years (body mass index (BMI) above 40 or greater than 35 with health complications) and found that even after this lengthy period of time, those who received the surgery had significantly better health outcomes than those who did not. Preexisting type-2 diabetes went into remission more than half of the time (62 percent of cases)... [T]wo years later, the researchers found dramatic results. Those who had the surgery experienced a roughly 35 percent weight reduction—for many as much as 100

pounds or more under their baseline weight—whereas the control groups remained extremely obese. Even after six years and without other interventions, the patients who had the surgery were still about 28 percent lighter on average than before and experienced improved quality of life scores compared to the control groups. [Scientific American](#)
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USAFRICOM

Democratic Republic of Congo: Ebola outbreak, WHO update

18 September - As of 15 September 2012, 46 cases (14 laboratory confirmed, 32 probable) with Ebola haemorrhagic fever (EHF) have been reported in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Of these 19 have been fatal (6 confirmed, 13 probable). The cases reported are from two health zones of Isiro and Viadana in Haut-Uélé district in Province Orientale. Additionally, 26 suspected cases have been reported and are being investigated. The MoH continues to work with partners to control the outbreak. Active epidemiological investigation is being done to identify all possible chains of transmission of the illness, and ensure that appropriate measures are immediately taken to interrupt the transmission, and stop the outbreak. [WHO](#)

Niger: Floods and cholera claim 162 lives

13 September - Floods in Niger have killed 81 people since July, the UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs announced Thursday, adding cholera outbreaks have killed a further 81 people. "The last update of the toll of the floods dating from September 11 indicates that 527,471 people have been affected by the bad weather and 81 people have lost their lives," OCHA said in a statement in Niamey. The previous toll established by the authorities was 68 dead and 485,000 people affected in the Sahel nation in west Africa. Thousands of homes, schools, health centres and mosques have been destroyed, along with large quantities of food supplies, according to the authorities. The UN office also reported outbreaks of cholera, which have claimed 81 lives since the start of the year, mainly in the west of the country. Cholera is spreading fast in at least four places, making 3,854 people sick and notably affecting the Tillaberi regions lying by the Niger river and close to the border with Mali, OCHA said. [AFP](#)

Nigeria: Floods displace 12,000 people in Kano, Jigawa



17 September - About 12,000 people have been displaced by flood disaster that ravaged many communities in Kano and Jigawa states. This was disclosed by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) north-west zone coordinator, Alhaji Musa Ilallah, who spoke to journalists shortly after delivering relief materials to some flood victims at Ringim LGA, Jigawa State. He said that in

Ringim LGA alone over 2,000 flood victims were camped at Government Arabic Secondary School, Ringim. Alhaji Illalah explained that out of the said number (2,000) in the camp, 45 were pregnant women and 30 were disabled. [allAfrica](#)

Sierra Leone: Cholera, WHO update

18 September - As of 16 September 2012, a cumulative total of 18,508 cases including 271 deaths (with a case fatality ratio of 1.5%) has been reported in the ongoing cholera outbreak in Sierra Leone since the beginning of the year. The highest numbers of cases are reported from the Western area of the country where the capital city of Freetown is located. The Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MOHS) is closely working with partners at national and international levels to step up response to the cholera outbreak. The ongoing activities at the field level include case management; communication and social mobilization; water, sanitation and hygiene promotion; surveillance and data management. [WHO](#)

Uganda's poorest communities tackling diseases



14 September - ...The Ugandan government is preparing to roll out a new master plan designed to tackle the most common of these NTDs - including elephantiasis, sleeping sickness, bilharzia and plague. According to Kurylo, Uganda is only the second country in Africa to draft such a plan. Gabriel Matwale of the Ministry of Health says the focus will be on both prevention and treatment of these diseases. "We are scaling up by covering endemic communities with mass drug administration, that is, giving them drugs," said Matwale. "We have a component of improved hygiene and sanitation." But with most NTDs occurring in hard-to-reach rural communities, Matwale says, it is important to build networks of volunteers who can access even the most isolated villages. "We need to strengthen what we call village health teams, the lowest level where health care can be got," Matwale added. "So if we strengthen the village health team level, we would be able to reach the most marginalized communities." [VOA](#)

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USCENTCOM

Afghanistan: Grandmother, mom and kids addicted to opium

20 September – ...They may look like any normal Afghan family, but they're hiding a shameful secret: They're all addicted to opium, the main ingredient of heroin. It is a drug so prevalent that one million Afghans are addicted to it -- that's 8% of the population, according to the United Nations... "I feel shame," she tells me as her mother weeps in the background. "I always say to myself, why did I do this? Why didn't I think about my children,

my future? People want nothing to do with us." That was until Laila Haidari found them. The local Afghan woman set up Mother Camp in the abandoned school about a year ago. It's a place for drug addicts to live, escape their destructive environment and hopefully get clean. She and her small team of volunteers offer counseling to help the addicts become "mentally strong." There is no government assistance to fund the program. Instead the profits from a restaurant she owns keep Mother Camp running... In another suburb, close to the slums of Kabul, is a methadone clinic operated by Medecins du Monde (Doctors of the World). It's the only clinic in Afghanistan that is allowed to dispense methadone --- a substitute for heroin. Some 71 addicts registered on the program arrive each day to receive the methadone -- a liquid poured into a small paper cup and drunk once a day. Program director Ernst Wisse says this is the best and most effective way to get drug addicts off heroin. It also eliminates the use of needles and dramatically reduces the risk of HIV spreading. [CNN](#)

China donates 100 ambulances to Afghanistan

20 September - The government of China donated 100 ambulances to Afghanistan's Public Health Ministry on Thursday, Public Health Ministry said in a statement released here, Xinhua reported. "The People Republic of China donated 100 new ambulances worth 4 million U.S. dollars to the Ministry for Public Health and a technical team of China would also train Afghans on how to maintain and repair the ambulances," the statement added. Afghan minister for public health Dr. Saraya Dalil, while thanking China for the contribution, said the ambulances will be distributed to all the health centers in the provinces. [Journal of Turkish Weekly](#)

Egypt: Vaccine shortage hits children



14 September - Tens of thousands of children are at risk because of a vaccine shortage in Egypt, paediatricians warn. "The longer the government fails to immunize these children, the more vulnerable to disease they are," Eman Masoud, head of the Paediatrics Section at Abul Riesh University Hospital in Cairo, told IRIN. She said a delay of more than one or two months in obtaining vital vaccines like MMR, which protects against measles, mumps and rubella, can put children's lives in peril. Over the last two weeks, parents have lined up at many of the government's 5,000 health offices which vaccinate children for free, only to be told: "The vaccines are not available." (Shots are, however, available for the equivalent of US\$50 at private clinics.) [IRIN](#)

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Belgium: Usefulness of the European Epidemic Intelligence Information System in the management of an outbreak of listeriosis, 2011

20 September - A cluster of time-linked cases and the identification of a clonal strain suggest the occurrence of an outbreak of listeriosis in Belgium in 2011, presumably due to the consumption of hard cheese made with pasteurised milk and produced by a Belgium manufacturer. The outbreak clone was identified as *Listeria monocytogenes* serovar 1/2a, sensitive to arsenic and cadmium and of multilocus sequence typing MLST-type 37. Food investigation of this outbreak was facilitated by the European Epidemic Intelligence Information System and data exchanged between French and Belgium listeriosis surveillance systems. [Eurosurveillance](#)

ECDC report profiles tickborne encephalitis patterns

19 September - The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) yesterday published its first major report on the prevalence of tickborne encephalitis (TBE) in Europe from 2000 to 2010, a move intended to build support for harmonizing TBE surveillance and increase prevention efforts. TBE is endemic across large parts of Europe and Asia, and the virus causes thousands of cases of neuroinvasive disease in Europe each year. The report includes data from 20 of 30 countries in the region and highlights key risk areas, seasonal peaks, and groups at risk, the ECDC said in a press release. The main risk areas are the Nordic and Baltic countries, eastern and central Europe, and southern Europe, including northern Italy and the Balkans. Men ages 40 to 60, particularly those who work outdoors, may be at increased risk for the disease, which peaks seasonally from June to October. In 16 countries reporting TBE case data, the annual numbers were relatively stable over the decade, ranging from about 1,900 to 2,630, with notable increases in 2003, 2006, 2009, and 2010. The new report follows a Sep 5 European Commission decision to add TBE to the list of notifiable diseases. ECDC Director Marc Sprenger, MD, PhD, said in the press release that TBE prevalence should be lower, considering that vaccines against the disease are safe and protective. [CIDRAP](#)

Greece: Malaria

14 September - As of August 5, 2012, 8 cases of malaria have been reported from the Attica and Laconia regions of Greece. Cases have occurred in the cities of Marathon, Markopoulo, and Evrotas. No cases have been reported in Athens. The Hellenic (Greek) CDC and the European CDC are improving surveillance for malaria cases. In affected areas, mosquito control has been intensified, healthcare providers have been educated, and the public has been informed. [CDC](#)

United Kingdom: Legionellosis

19 September - Public Health Wales and Carmarthenshire County Council's Environmental Health department are investigating an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease in Carmarthen. There are currently 3 cases, and all have links to Carmarthen. All were admitted to hospital as a result of their illness but have since been discharged. Legionnaires' disease is contracted by breathing in droplets from contaminated water sources. It cannot be caught from another person. Investigations into the possible source are ongoing. Information has been circulated to general practitioners (GPs) and hospitals in the area to advise them to be alert to the symptoms of Legionnaires' disease. Anyone who lives or works in the Carmarthen area and has symptoms suggestive of Legionnaires' disease is advised to contact their GP. Symptoms include breathlessness, chest pain and a dry cough, as well as fever, muscle aches, and sometimes vomiting and diarrhoea. Legionnaires' disease can lead to pneumonia and can be fatal and so it is important for anyone with symptoms to seek medical advice. [ProMED-mail](#)

West Nile virus kills 5 in Balkans, dozens in hospital



20 September - At least five people in the Balkans have died from West Nile virus and several dozen others have been hospitalized in the past four weeks, according to health authorities in Serbia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Croatia. West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne disease usually found in temperate and tropical regions. While many cases are mild and have no symptoms, severe disease symptoms can include headaches, high fever, neck stiffness, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness and paralysis. Kosovo confirmed its first fatality on Wednesday, saying the victim was a woman from central Kosovo who died on Sept 14. Macedonia's health officials said on Thursday one woman had died and two other people were infected with the virus.

[Reuters](#)

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USNORTHCOM

U.S.: Anthrax vaccine offer for first responders may begin in 2013

14 September – The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) may launch a pilot plan to offer anthrax vaccination to first responders early in 2013, a DHS official said at a congressional hearing yesterday. In response to questions, Alexander Garza, MD, MPH, DHS's chief medical officer and assistant secretary for health affairs, was reluctant to discuss timing but said the trial program may be ready to debut "early next year." In April the Obama administration unveiled the proposal to offer unused federal supplies of the vaccine to emergency personnel because they would probably be first on the scene in an anthrax attack. State and local health officials could choose to accept the vaccine doses or not,

officials said at the time. The vaccine is currently given to military personnel who serve in high-risk areas, such as the Middle East. [CIDRAP](#)

U.S.: F as in fat - How obesity threatens America's future 2012

18 September - *F as in Fat: How Obesity Threatens America's Future 2012* is the 9th edition of the annual report by RWJF and Trust for America's Health. For the first time, the report forecasts adult obesity rates in each state by 2030 and the likely resulting rise in obesity-related diseases and health care costs. Researchers used data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System to model two scenarios: if obesity rates continue to rise on their current trajectory and if states reduce residents' average body mass index by five percent by 2030. The report also includes the most recent adult and childhood obesity rates for each state. In 2011, adult obesity rates exceeded 30 percent in 12 states. The new projection shows that, if rates continue to increase at the current pace, adult obesity rates could exceed 60 percent in 13 states, and all states could have rates above 44 percent by 2030. [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#)

U.S.: More kids opting out of school-required vaccinations, study



19 September - The number of parents who opted out of school-required vaccines for their children because of non-medical reasons, such as religious or philosophical beliefs, increased between 2005 and 2011, according to U.S. researchers. During this period, the rates of non-medical exemptions were higher in the states with easy opt-out policies, such as California and Maryland, and in those states that allowed philosophical, instead of only religious, exemptions. "The more relaxed these requirements are, as we and others have shown, the easier it is to get an exemption, the higher the rates of exemptions," said Saad Omer, an infectious disease epidemiologist at Emory University in Atlanta, and lead study author. "It is common sense to me that it should not be easier to file for an exemption than it is to get your kid vaccinated," Omer said. Every state requires vaccines for school attendance that protect against diseases including measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), polio, chickenpox, and diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTaP), according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Religious exemptions are permitted in every state except Mississippi and West Virginia, and 20 states also accept philosophical exemptions, the CDC notes. [Medline Plus](#)

U.S., New York City: Evaluation of a neighborhood rat-management program - December 2007-August 2009

21 September - ...Several areas of New York City have experienced persistent rat infestation despite a longstanding rat control program that employed property-level inspection and control measures triggered by individual citizen complaints, a common approach in urban areas (3). Recognizing the need to address conditions conducive to rat infestation at the community level, in 2007 the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

launched a proactive "rat indexing" (active surveillance) program, using rapid inspections of properties in several Bronx neighborhoods with persistent rat infestation (5). The program included repeated, neighborhood-wide inspections; education and enforcement actions to promote rat control measures by property owners; and community outreach. Signs of rat infestation were noted and recorded electronically by inspectors, and records were analyzed to evaluate program effectiveness. After three rounds of indexing over a 21-month period, the percentage of properties with active rat signs (ARS) had declined 54%, and the percentage with severe rat infestation had declined 58%. The indexing approach to rat control subsequently was expanded to other parts of the city. Indexing can be an effective control strategy in urban neighborhoods with persistent rat infestation. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

U.S.: Pace of West Nile virus activity slows

19 September – The number of new West Nile virus (WNV) infections dropped somewhat last week in comparison with the week before, but cases continued to pile up, especially in hard-hit states like Texas. The number of cases rose 19%, compared to 35% the previous week, when officials from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said they saw signs that disease activity might have peaked. In an update today, the CDC said it has received a total of 3,142 case reports so far, an increase of 506 from the week before. The number of neuroinvasive disease cases climbed to 1,630, which is 225 more than the previous week. Sixteen more WNV deaths were reported, pushing the nation's total so far to 134. The number of cases reported so far is the highest the CDC has recorded through the third week of September since 2003. However, last week CDC officials said the number of neuroinvasive disease cases—considered the best indicator of the size of the epidemic—was on track to be the highest since 1999, when WNV was first detected in the United States. [CIDRAP](#)

U.S.: Schools not ready for next pandemic

19 September - Many U.S. schools are not prepared for bioterrorism attacks, outbreaks of emerging, infectious diseases, or pandemics, despite the recent 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic which resulted in more than 18,000 deaths worldwide, Saint Louis University researchers say. The study, led by Terri Rebmann, Ph.D., associate professor at SLU's [Institute for Biosecurity](#), surveyed about 2,000 nurses working in elementary, middle, and high schools across twenty-six states. A Saint Louis University release reports that the findings reveal that only 48 percent of schools address pandemic preparedness and only 40 percent of schools have updated their plans since the 2009 H1N1 pandemic that spread illnesses in more than 214 countries. "There is a lot of research that shows influenza spreads quickly in schools because it's a communicable disease and kids interact closely," Rebmann said. "Schools need to have a written pandemic plan in order to be prepared to put interventions into place quickly when an event occurs." ...[T]he study also found that 44 percent of schools do not participate in community surveillance that tracks the presence of a disease based upon symptoms reported by area residents. [Homeland Security News Wire](#)

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China to sell cigarettes for quake relief?

17 September - Authorities in south China's Yunnan province, where a recent earthquake claimed at least 81 lives, now plan to sell 400,000 cartons of cigarettes in order to raise tax revenue to spend on quake relief, a Chinese daily said. According to the state-run Global Times daily, China has become the world's largest tobacco producer and consumer, with more than 300 million smokers. It is estimated that deaths in China from smoking will exceed three million annually by 2050. The tobacco industry in the country remains the foremost source of revenue for certain local governments. "However, the idea of using increased tobacco production to raise relief funds is not only contrary to the national tobacco control commitment, but also comes at the expense of public health," the daily said. [SME Times](#)

Taiwan: Dengue fever epidemic increases by nearly a hundred cases a week

19 September – [A]ccording to the Central News Agency, dengue fever cases surge in southern Taiwan, "Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control announced yesterday, last week, 96 new cases of indigenous dengue fever epidemic in Annan District, Tainan." CDC epidemic director of the Center for Zhuangren Xiang pointed out last week, added 96 cases of local (including two cases [of] DHF) and eight cases of imported confirmed cases of dengue. [Paper Wenweipo via Google Translate](#)

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Honduras: Hepatitis

19 September - The lack of treated water for human consumption as well as inadequate family hygiene triggered a hepatitis outbreak in the Concepcion del Horno community. Health authorities identified 12 people with symptoms of the disease that were later confirmed. Rodolfo Miranda, municipal Coordinator of Environmental Health, said that an education session was carried out with the water boards and trusts. "We have instructed them to wash their hands before eating, after going to the bathroom, to wash fruit and vegetables, and have good home hygiene. We also taught them to purify water from the 4 systems that serve the community." [ProMED-mail](#)

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