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Army Public Health Weekly Update

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Afraid of the Flu Shot? Try a Smaller Needle

A new form of the annual flu shot has a significantly shorter needle. The new vaccine should make it easier for people with a fear of needles to get immunized, and in the event of a shortage, may even allow doctors to vaccinate more people.

While the typical flu vaccine uses a 1-in. to 1.5-in. needle, the new Fluzone Intradermal influenza vaccine comes with an ultrafine needle that's 90% smaller, at just 0.06 in. Both vaccines contain the same antigens, which help the immune system to protect against the three commonly circulating influenza strains this season. **TIME**



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U.S. MILITARY

Army designs body armor for women and batteries



25 September - Army equipment officials have recognized after a decade at war that women are built differently than men – especially when it comes to proper-fitting body armor. Speaking at the recent 2012 Maneuver Conference at Fort

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Benning, Ga., equipment officials discussed how engineers are adapting body armor so it provides a more comfortable fit for female soldiers as well as housing advancements in soldier-power technology. Since the Army's initial fielding of Interceptor body armor in the late 1990s, equipment officials have made multiple improvements to this life-saving vest. The latest version of the Improved Outer Tactical Vest includes removable armor protection for both sides of the torso and shoulders and more effective groin and pelvic protection. Despite all of these improvement efforts, female soldiers have always had to be satisfied with body armor that's essentially designed to fit best on the male form. Army equipment officials are now working to change this with an effort designed to field female-specific body armor before the 2014 withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Afghanistan. [Military.com](#)

Army seeks to curb rising tide of suicides

27 September - ... Soldiers are told to ask questions, listen and escort the friend to a chaplain or hospital if necessary. This is the kind of training soldiers around the world are receiving Thursday. The sessions are aimed at beating back some of the misconceptions about military suicide — like the idea that only those in combat are at risk. Worrell says those based stateside still face family pressures. And then there's the stress of not deploying. "Let's put it in terms of the Olympics: If you trained all your life and never got to compete, would that be much fun? Sometimes garrison is the same way. We train but never get to do our job," he says. The Army has been struggling to deal with the suicide problem since numbers began rising in 2004. This year, the average is nearly one soldier suicide a day. The worldwide stand down is meant to keep the force focused on the problem. The question is whether an effort aimed at more than a million active duty, National Guard and Reserve troops can have much of an effect. "I don't think it would be as effective as more individual strategies," says Dartmouth University professor Tracy Stecker, who has worked with the military on the suicide puzzle. Troops today, she says, are already familiar with the dangers of post-traumatic stress and the warning signs of suicide. "They call this kind of training 'death by PowerPoint,' " she says. "What they might not be as informed about are some individual strategies that they can take to maybe cope better with the situation at hand." [NPR](#)

Military leaders: We're still too fat to fight



25 September - Childhood obesity isn't just a health issue, according to a group of retired military leaders. It's also a national security issue. One in four young adults are too overweight to join the U.S. military, a new report from the advocacy group Mission: Readiness says. And the U.S.

Department of Defense spends an estimated \$1 billion each year on medical care related to obesity issues for active duty members, their dependents and veterans. "No other major country's military forces face the challenges of weight gain confronting America's armed forces," according to the report. "At the end of the day, the reason America is safe and sound is not because of its tanks," adds retired Lt. Gen. Norman Seip, spokesman for Mission: Readiness. "It's really the men and women who volunteer and so proudly serve."

[CNN](#)

Pentagon behind on predicting chemical, biological threats

24 September - The Pentagon does not have a clear idea of how adversaries could misuse modern biotechnology and chemical advances, according to the Defense Department's chief chemical and biological defense official. It turns out the Pentagon can move people faster than the speed of sound but not necessarily faster than the speed of biotechnology developments. Gerald Parker, deputy assistant to the secretary of defense for chemical and biological defense, told the E-Ring in an interview in his fifth-floor Pentagon office that he is reexamining the department's sizable network of laboratories, Army commands, and DOD offices tasked with the work of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) protection... Parker manages the back-end of these defenses, the science, the labs, the development, and recently [commissioned the National Research Council](#) to help recommend where to start. The NRC provided him a tall list, including building a basic framework to evaluate their work and better collaboration across DOD agencies. [Foreign Policy](#)

Routine screening for antibodies to HIV-1, civilian applicants for U.S. military service and U.S. Armed Forces, active and reserve components

August 2012 - During routine testing of civilian applicants for U.S. military service, the overall seroprevalence of antibodies to HIV-1 in 2011 was the second lowest of any year since 1990. Among members of the active components of the U.S. Army, HIV-1 seroprevalences were higher during 2008 to 2011 than in recent prior years. Among members of the active components of the U.S. Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps, the Marine Corps Reserve, and the Army National Guard, HIV-1 seroprevalences have slightly declined or remained relatively stable for at least ten years. In the reserve components of most service branches, it is difficult to discern long-term trends because of instability of seroprevalences in the relatively small numbers of reserve component members tested each year. Monitoring of HIV-1 seroprevalences can help target and focus prevention initiatives. The recent repeal of the Don't Ask Don't Tell policy has created opportunities for prevention messages targeted to men who have sex with men. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

Spinal injury incidence about 5 percent in Iraq/Afghanistan

24 September - The incidence of spinal trauma sustained by military personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan is about 5 percent, according to a study published in the Sept. 19 issue of *The Journal of Bone & Joint Surgery*. Using data from the Joint Theater Trauma Registry, James A. Blair, M.D., from the Brooke Army Medical Center in Fort Sam Houston, and colleagues identified all American military personnel who sustained injuries to the back, spinal column, and/or spinal cord in Iraq or Afghanistan from October 2001 to December 2009. Of the 10,979 combat injuries that were evacuated, the researchers found that 598 casualties (5.45 percent) sustained 2,101 spinal injuries. Fifty-six percent of all spinal injuries were due to

explosions, while motor vehicle collisions accounted for 29 percent, and gunshots for 15 percent. [HealthDay](#)

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GLOBAL

First successful treatment for Progeria, rare childhood disease

26 September - Results of the first clinical drug trial for children with a rare rapid-aging disease, known as Progeria, has shown successfulness with a farnesyltransferase inhibitor (FTI), a drug first used to treat cancer. The clinical trial results showed significant improvements in bone structure, weight gain, and most importantly, the cardiovascular system, according to new research published in *Proceedings of the Natural Academy of Sciences*. [Medical News Today](#)

New SARS-like virus found, man critically ill in UK



24 September - A Qatari man struck down with a previously unknown virus related to the deadly SARS infection and the common cold is critically ill in hospital in Britain, the World Health Organisation said on Monday. The U.N. health body put out a global alert on Sunday saying a new virus had infected the 49-year-old man who had recently travelled to [Saudi Arabia](#) - where another man with an almost identical virus had already died. Britain's Health Protection Agency (HPA) and respiratory disease experts said there was no immediate cause for concern, although authorities were watching out for any signs of the virus spreading. "This new virus ... is different from any that have previously been identified in humans," the HPA said. Any suggestions of a link between the virus and Saudi Arabia will cause particular concern in the build-up to next month's Muslim haj pilgrimage, when millions of people arrive in the kingdom from across the world, then return to their homes. The virus, known as a coronavirus, comes from the same family as SARS which emerged in 2002 and killed 800 people. [Reuters](#)

'Scar free healing' in mice may give clues to human skin repair, says study

26 September - Mice with brittle skin, which tears off in order to escape predators, may offer clues to healing wounds without scarring, according to US researchers. Some African spiny mice lost up to 60% of the skin from their backs, says the study published in the journal *Nature*. Unlike wounds in other mammals, the skin then rapidly healed and regrew hairs rather than forming a scar. Scientists want to figure out how the healing takes place and if it could apply to people. Salamanders, some of which can regrow entire limbs, are

famed for their regenerative abilities. It has made them the focus of many researchers hoping to figure out how to produce the same effect in people. Mammals, however, have very limited ability to regrow lost organs. Normally a scar forms to seal the wound. Although many scientists are trying to speed up the healing process, our studies on spiny mice and salamanders show that slowing things down is the path towards regeneration." "This study shows that mammals as a group may in fact have higher regenerative abilities than they are given credit for," said Dr Ashley Seifert from the University of Florida. [BBC](#)

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INFLUENZA

Canadian catches H1N1 variant after close contact with pigs

25 September - An Ontario man has been infected with an H1N1 variant influenza virus after having had close contact with pigs, the province's chief medical officer of health said on Tuesday. H1N1 is a swine flu virus responsible for a pandemic that broke out in 2009, starting in the United States and Mexico and spreading around the world in six weeks. An influenza virus that normally circulates in animals is referred to as a variant virus when it infects humans, and is labeled H1N1v in that case, the officer, Arlene King, said. "I would like to reassure Ontarians that this variant influenza virus rarely spreads from animals to humans. Subsequent human-to-human transmission is also rare," she said in a statement. "I would also like to stress that this is not a food safety issue; the consumption of properly cooked pork continues to be safe. Proper cooking of meats, including pork, kills all bacteria and viruses." The adult male patient is being treated and closely monitored in a hospital in southwestern Ontario. [Reuters](#)

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 37 (week ending 15 September), 6.3% 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 37. [FluView](#)

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

27 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 low to moderate, with the majority of states indicating low activity. [Google.org Flu Trends](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For the week ending 22 September 2012:

[Adenovirus](#) - 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](#)

U.S.: Influenza vaccination coverage among health-care personnel, 2011-12 flu season

28 September - Influenza vaccination of health-care personnel (HCP) is recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) (1). Vaccination of HCP can reduce morbidity and mortality from influenza and its potentially serious consequences among HCP, their family members, and their patients (1-3). To provide timely estimates of influenza vaccination coverage and related data among HCP for the 2011-12 influenza season, CDC conducted an Internet panel survey with 2,348 HCP during April 2-20, 2012. This report summarizes the results of that survey, which found that, overall, 66.9% of HCP reported having had an influenza vaccination for the 2011-12 season. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

U.S.: Salmonella sickens 30 in 19 states, peanut butter recalled

25 September - Thirty people in 19 states have fallen ill from Salmonella poisoning, probably from tainted peanut butter, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said on Tuesday. Health officials and regulators point to Trader Joe's Valencia Creamy Salted Peanut Butter made with Sea Salt as the likely source of the outbreak of the Salmonella Bredeney strain, the CDC said in a statement. The median age of those taken ill is 7, and four people have been hospitalized, the CDC said. The outbreak is scattered across the United States, and Massachusetts has the most cases with three. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: Tests show levels of arsenic in rice

21 September - Preliminary results of a large study by the U.S. government and research by a non-profit organization show measurable amounts of arsenic in samples of rice and rice products for sale in U.S. markets. One form of the chemical, inorganic arsenic, is a known human carcinogen. While the private study cautions that people should limit their consumption of rice products, government scientists say they are making no recommendations until their study is complete, sometime next year. [VOA](#)

WELLNESS

A call for caution on antipsychotic drugs

24 September - ... In 2011 alone,...antipsychotic drugs were prescribed to 3.1 million Americans at a cost of \$18.2 billion, a 13 percent increase over the previous year, according to the market research firm IMS Health. Those drugs are used to treat such serious psychiatric disorders as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and severe major depression. But the rates of these disorders have been stable in the adult population for years... It was also soon discovered that the second-generation antipsychotic drugs had serious side effects of their own, namely a risk of increased blood sugar, elevated lipids and cholesterol, and weight gain... Nonetheless, there has been a vast expansion in the use of these second-generation antipsychotic drugs in patients of all ages, particularly young people. Until recently, these drugs were used to treat a few serious psychiatric disorders. But now, unbelievably, these powerful medications are prescribed for conditions as varied as very mild mood disorders, everyday anxiety, insomnia and even mild emotional discomfort. [New York Times](#)

Eunuchs lived longer than other men: study

24 September - Castrated men -- sometimes called eunuchs -- in the old Korean dynasty lived much longer than other men, according to a new study. The findings suggest that male sex hormones such as testosterone may be one reason men tend to have shorter life spans than women, the researchers said. The study was published Sept. 25 in the journal *Current Biology*. [Medline Plus](#)

For weight loss, less exercise may be more



19 September - Most people who start working out in hopes of shedding pounds wind up disappointed, a lamentable circumstance familiar to both exercisers and scientists. Multiple studies, many of them [covered in this column](#), have found that without major changes to diet, exercise typically results in only modest weight loss at best (although it generally makes people much healthier). Quite a few exercisers lose no weight. Some gain. But there is encouraging news about physical activity and weight loss in a [new study by researchers at the University of Copenhagen](#). It found that exercise does seem to contribute to waist-tightening, provided that the amount of exercise is neither too little nor, more strikingly, too much. [New York Times](#)

Screen all adults for alcohol misuse: task force

24 September - Health providers should screen all adults and pregnant women for risky drinking habits, a government-backed expert panel said Monday in new draft recommendations. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force guidelines were released along with a summary of past research showing a few brief counseling sessions can help cut excessive drinking in people who aren't full-blown alcoholics. Researchers found that with

such interventions, at least one in every ten risky drinkers can be brought back down to what is considered a safe drinking level. For men, that means no more than four drinks on any one occasion and at most 14 a week. For women, the numbers are three and seven, respectively. [Medline Plus](#)

Weight-loss benefits from cutting out sugary drinks short-lived

25 September - A program to reduce teenagers' intake of sugary drinks showed early benefits, but they didn't last, a new study found. This study, published Friday in the New England Journal of Medicine, randomly assigned 224 overweight or obese teenagers who regularly drank sugary beverages into two groups. One group participated in a year-long intervention program to discourage them from drinking sugary drinks. The other group did not. [ABC News](#)

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USAFRICOM

Cameroon: Death toll rises in flooding, which has displaced thousands

21 September - Cameroon authorities have found six more bodies in flood waters, bringing the number killed to as high as 40 in the wake of tropical downpours and the breaching of a dam in the west African country. The inundation in the Far North Region has affected more than 26,000, officials said Thursday, and in neighboring Nigeria at least 15 deaths are blamed on waters rushing into the country from Cameroon's compromised Lagdo Dam on the Benoue River. Cameroon's Communication Minister Issa Tchiroma Bakary has described the flooding as "a calamity" and called for urgent action to save lives and property. Local officials are calling it the worst flood disaster in over 60 years. [CNN](#)

Guinea, Sierra Leone: Cholera outbreak easing

24 September - The cholera outbreak in Guinea and Sierra Leone that has killed 392 people and infected more than 25,000 others since February is slowing down, say aid groups who also call for sustained measures to wipe out the disease. Between late August and 16 September, new cholera cases per week have dropped from 2,110 to 1,418 in Sierra Leone and from 1,152 to 346 in neighbouring Guinea, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said in a [report](#). "The situation is improving faster in Guinea in terms of new cases and in Sierra Leone in terms of lethality. The number of affected districts remains unchanged: 12 out of 13 in Sierra Leone and 11 out of 33 in Guinea," OCHA said.

[IRIN](#)

Malaria drugs significantly prevent disease in Africa



24 September - A new study shows that widely distributing anti-malaria drugs to healthy children in African countries can significantly reduce the number of new cases of the disease. The medical aid group Doctors Without Borders says it gave intermittent doses of anti-malaria drugs to 175,000 children in Mali and Chad. It says the result was a 67 percent decrease in the number of simple malaria cases in the region of Mali where the study took place, and up to an 86 percent drop in Chad. Doctors Without Borders says there also was a significant decrease in the number of cases of severe malaria. [VOA](#)

Niger: Child mortality slashed

20 September - Niger has nearly halved the death rate of children below five years old since 1998, a significant drop highlighting the benefits of free universal health care for children and pregnant women as well as increased donor funding for health, The Lancet said in a study released on 20 September. The mortality rate reduced from 226 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1998 to 128 deaths in 2009, an annual rate of decline of 5.1 percent, said the study, noting that the slump bettered the fourth Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to cut the child mortality rate by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015. Niger's achievement was also far better than its neighbours in West Africa. [All Africa](#)

Nigeria: Traditional stoves detrimental to health, environment

21 September - After malaria and AIDS, Nigeria's number one cause of death is diseases associated with traditional cooking. Activists say nearly 100,000 people die yearly in Nigeria from what they call a "silent energy crisis." Bola Abiola serves amala, a traditional Nigerian dish made of yam flour while smoke billows from the nearby outdoor kitchen. Like many Nigerian cooks, she does not know about the health risks from the smoky wooden stoves that boil the amala, which activists are now calling "killers" of both people and the environment. But like many who cook with traditional stoves in Nigeria she doesn't feel there is any choice. [VOA](#)

Uganda: Condom use infrequent despite rising HIV rates



21 September - Despite nationwide efforts to increase HIV awareness and common fears of unplanned pregnancy, young, sexually active Ugandans continue to have risky sex without using condoms consistently, spurring new measures to promote the prophylactic. Only 36.2 percent of women and 52.9 percent of men between 20 and 24 used a condom during their last sexual intercourse in the past 12 months, according to the National AIDS Indicator Survey, launched on 18 September. Among those who had more than two partners in the past 12 months, only 23.4 percent of

women and 30 percent of men reported using a condom during their last intercourse. The research also reveals that a majority of young Ugandans lack comprehensive knowledge about HIV; just 39 percent of men and women aged 15 to 24 have all the facts on how HIV is spread and how it can be prevented. [IRIN](#)

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USCENTCOM

Afghanistan: Several Afghan school girls poisoned in capital Kabul

26 September - Afghan education officials on Wednesday said at least 16 school girls were poisoned in capital Kabul city today. A spokesman for the ministry of education of Afghanistan Amanullah Iman said the school girls who were poisoned were taken to hospital for treatment purposes. Mr. Iman further added two school girls are still in the hospital while the remaining school girls have been discharged after receiving medical treatment. The incident took place early Wednesday morning around 7:00 am in Um-ul-Benin high school at the 6th district of capital Kabul and the school girls were immediately taken to hospital. In the meantime officials in Um-ul-Benin high school said the reason behind the poisoning of the school girls is unclear and the health officials are investigating the issue. [Khaama Press](#)

Jordan/Syria: As numbers swell, Syrian refugees face new woes



25 September - Syria's refugees keep growing dramatically in number, and no country in the region has taken in more of them than Jordan — a poor, desert nation that is now hosting some 200,000 Syrians. The conditions for the refugees are perhaps harsher in Jordan than in any other country, with many people sheltered in tents on a hot, dusty plain just inside Jordan's northern border with Syria... About 30,000 people are now living in the Zaatari camp, with their numbers growing every day. And the Jordanian government says it can't keep up... [Jordan] is already under stress, he says. It already hosts millions of Iraqi refugees. Its economy is tanking, and it has its own protest movement to worry about. Jordanians, he says, cannot add too many Syrian refugees to this mix. [NPR](#)

Pakistan: A dismal place to be a kid, report finds

24 September - ... Now a new report backs up what was obvious: Pakistan is an increasingly dismal place to be a kid. The report from one of Pakistan's leading child advocacy groups, the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child, presents an overwhelmingly bleak picture. But solutions are not easy to come by. Under the country's constitution, the federal

government cannot impose blanket child-protection regulations on the provinces, officials say. More than a third of the nation's population age 5 to 9 — about 7 million children — is not enrolled in school, the report found. Floods that cause mass displacements and damaged schools compound the problem, adding 1.8 million children to that total. Pakistan is also the only country in the world where polio rates are increasing. In 2005, there were 28 reported cases of polio in the nation of 180million. The number increased to 197 reported cases reported in 2011. There are 35 cases so far this year, according to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, but that might rise. Taliban leaders have issued fatwas against the administration of polio drops in parts of the tribal areas. [Washington Post](#)

Pakistan: Fear and suspicion in Pakistan hamper global polio fight

27 September - When Bill Gates hears about children like Fahad Usman, a two-year-old Pakistani boy crippled by polio before he learned to walk, the billionaire philanthropist sounds frustrated and fired up. Fear and suspicion have prevented thousands of children like Fahad from being protected against the infectious and incurable disease. Now more than ever, it's time that stopped, Gates says. Rumors that polio immunization campaigns are "Western plots to sterilize Muslims" or that the vaccine is "George Bush's urine" underline the need to take politics out of the fight to eradicate polio, he says. If Gates, the most influential of global health advocates, gets his wish - and in an interview he's pretty sure he will - the world won't stop at the 99 percent reduction in cases so far, but will rid itself of polio completely by 2018. [Reuters](#)

Saudi Arabia adopts measures to limit virus infection during Haj

26 September - Saudi Arabia has taken precautions to prevent disease spreading among Muslim pilgrims next month after a Qatari man was infected with a virus related to the deadly SARS, a health ministry official said on Wednesday. The World Health Organisation put out a global alert on Sunday saying a new, previously unknown, virus had infected a 49-year-old Qatari man who had recently travelled to Saudi Arabia, where another man with an almost identical virus had already died. Britain's Health Protection Agency and respiratory disease experts said there was no immediate cause for concern, although authorities were watching for any signs of the virus spreading... "The Health Ministry has taken preventative measures to deal with the influx of over 2 million Haj pilgrims," Ziad Memish, the deputy minister for public health, told Reuters. "The measures include monitoring the entrances through land, sea and air to evaluate the people entering and obtain samples if any symptoms are apparent," he added. [Reuters](#)

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England: Faith leaders in 'HIV healing' claims

24 September - Dangerous cases of faith leaders who tell people with HIV to stop taking their life-saving drugs have been identified by African-led community groups in a number of locations across England. Seven groups said there were instances of people being told by faith leaders they had been "healed" through prayer - and then pressured to stop taking antiretroviral medication, according to the charity African Health Policy Network (AHPN). Cases were reported to have taken place in Finsbury Park, Tottenham, and Woolwich, in London, as well as in Manchester, Leeds and at a number of churches across the North West. Last year, BBC London identified three people with HIV who died after they stopped taking antiretroviral drugs on the advice of their Evangelical Christian pastors. AHPN, which tackles health inequalities for Africans living in the UK, called on the government to do more to prevent faith leaders encouraging people with HIV to stop taking their drugs. [BBC News](#)

Israel: Leishmaniasis, cutaneous, visceral

25 September - The Environmental Protection Ministry expressed concern over the growing number of cutaneous leishmaniasis cases reported in over the past year, and has been able to obtain NIS 10 million (roughly USD 2.6 million) in government funds to curb a potential outbreak. The funds are to be allocated across 3 years. The Health Ministry has reports of 293 patients in 2011 -- double the number of cases reported in 2010. According to the Environmental Protection Ministry's data, over 1650 people in 50 communities in Israel have contracted the Oriental sore over the past decade, especially around the Sea of Galilee, the Judea Mountains, the western Negev, the Arava, and the Beit Shean Valley. Cutaneous leishmaniasis, commonly known as "Oriental sore," or "Aleppo boil," is a skin infection caused by a single-celled parasite. It is usually transmitted by sandflies. The ministry appealed to the cabinet for funds meant to help at-risk communities, in the form of setting up sandfly traps and building fences to keep the rock hyrax -- which is a known carrier -- out. "This is a difficult disease that has inflicted many and left them scarred, literally," Environmental Protection Minister Gilad Erdan said. "After years of ignoring this hazard, the government is taking on dealing with this national infliction." [ProMED-mail](#)

United Kingdom: Cancer deaths expected to drop 17% by 2030

25 September - Cancer death rates are predicted to drop by 17% (16.8) in the UK by 2030, according to Cancer Research UK's new report. This new research coincides with a study from February of this year, which revealed that [in 2012, the rates of deaths from cancer \(per 100,000 people, by age\) have decreased](#). 2010 saw 157,275 cancer deaths in the UK alone - 170 of every 100,000 cancer patients died. However, experts believe that by 2030, this number will drop from 170 to 142. According to the report, this is partly because there are

now better rates of survival, due to earlier diagnosis and treatment improvements. The authors note that there has been a decrease in cancers related to smoking, which in turn, has resulted in less deaths. [Medical News Today](#)

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USNORTHCOM

Canada bans key substance in 'bath salts' drug

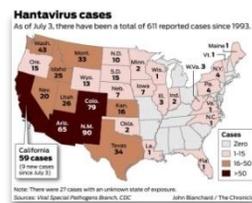
26 September - Canada on Wednesday banned the main substance used to make "bath salts," a new and emerging drug linked to a grisly attack in the United States in which a man almost killed another by chewing his face. The drug -- which as its name suggests resembles regular bath salts in texture -- can spark an often aggressive, psychotic experience for users, including intense hallucinations. Key to the production of the drug is a synthetic stimulant known as MDPV, which the new regulations make illegal to possess, traffic, export or import in Canada, except for authorized research and scientific activities. MDPV is now included in the same category of illicit drugs as heroin and cocaine. [AFP](#)

U.S.: Another 400 West Nile cases reported in past week - CDC

26 September - More than 400 new U.S. cases of West Nile virus emerged in the last week, in an outbreak that remains the second worst on record but has begun to show signs of slowing. So far this year, 3,545 cases have been reported to federal health officials as of September 25, up from 3,142 reported the week before, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said in its weekly update of outbreak data. That marked a rise of nearly 13 percent, down considerably from a 30 percent weekly jump witnessed earlier this month.

[Chicago Tribune](#)

U.S.: Hantavirus outbreak puzzles experts



23 September - The deadly outbreak of hantavirus in Yosemite National Park has sent disease experts and rodent researchers scrambling for answers as people across the country second-guess their plans to visit California's most famous landscape. The

[California Department of Public Health](#) and the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) are trying to figure out why the mouse-borne virus struck suddenly, spread quickly and infected so many people this summer, but not in any other years. One prominent theory is that the mysterious cluster of hantavirus cases was caused by a skyrocketing mouse population in Yosemite Valley. "I suspect that the underlying factors likely are simple - more deer mice," said [Douglas Kelt](#), a professor of wildlife ecology at UC Davis. "Why more deer mice? Presumably more food and a less rigorous winter." It's a pattern that has occurred in the past with similar results, most

notably in 1993 when the disease was first identified after a deadly outbreak on the Navajo reservation in New Mexico. Also suspect are the tent cabins, built in 2009, where the people who were infected had stayed. [SF Gate](#)

U.S.: Military leaders point to schools in U.S. fat fight

25 September - Former U.S. military leaders have identified a latent threat to the potential for a leaner, more agile fighting force: the school vending machine. In a report to be released on Tuesday, a group of 300 retired military officers said school-age children are eating 400 billion excess calories a year - the equivalent of 2 billion candy bars - from junk food sold in such machines as well as in snack bars and cafeterias that should be off-limits. Those extra calories from candy, chips and sugary drinks amount to about 130 calories a day, which over a student's school years can lead to extra pounds. "The calories add up," the U.S. generals and admirals said in their report, which calls for tougher standards on the snacks schools can sell. "While limiting the sale of junk food is not a solution by itself for the childhood obesity epidemic, it is part of the solution," wrote the retired officers, who are part of a nonprofit group called Mission: Readiness, focused on youth issues. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: Suicide now kills more Americans than car crashes - study

20 September - More Americans now commit suicide than die in car crashes, making suicide the leading cause of injury deaths, according to a new study. In addition, over the last 10 years, while the number of deaths from car crashes has declined, deaths from poisoning and falls increased significantly, the researchers report. "Suicides are terribly undercounted; I think the problem is much worse than official data would lead us to believe," said study author Ian Rockett, a professor of epidemiology at West Virginia University. There may be 20 percent or more unrecognized suicides, he said. Many of the poisoning deaths may actually be intended, he added. A lot of these deaths are due from overdoses of prescription drugs, Rockett noted. "We have a situation that has gotten out of hand," he said. "I would like to see the same attention paid to other injuries as has been paid to traffic injuries." The report was published online Sept. 20 in the *American Journal of Public Health*. [MedlinePlus](#)

U.S.: Variation in antibiotic prescribing hints at overuse

24 September - Seniors in the U.S. are prescribed at least one antibiotic each every year, on average - but the rate of prescribing varies quite a bit across the country, a new study finds. In some parts of the country, seniors averaged less than one antibiotic prescription per year, while in others, they received between one and two per year, according to a report in *Archives of Internal Medicine*. Records from Medicare, the government-run insurance program for the elderly, showed older adults in the South were prescribed more antibiotics than seniors living elsewhere in the country and that prescribing everywhere went up in the winter months. That variation suggests overuse of antibiotics in some cases - an important public health issue because both normal and inappropriate use of the drugs can lead to bacterial resistance, which makes future infections extra difficult to treat. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: Washington state's first 'zombie bees' reported; parasite causes bees to fly erratically, die

24 September - The infection is as grim as it sounds: "Zombie bees" have a parasite that causes them to fly at night and lurch around erratically until they die. And experts say the condition has crept into Washington state. "I joke with my kids that the zombie apocalypse is starting at my house," said Mark Hohn, a novice beekeeper who spotted the infected insects at his suburban Seattle home... San Francisco State University biologist John Hafernik first discovered zombie bees in California in 2008. Hafernik now uses a website to recruit citizen scientists like Hohn to track the infection across the country. Observers also have found zombie bees in Oregon and South Dakota. The infection is another threat to bees that are needed to pollinate crops. Hives have been failing in recent years due to a mysterious ailment called colony collapse disorder, in which all the adult honey bees in a colony suddenly die. [Washington Post](#)

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China: Foxconn plant closed after 2,000 riot

24 September - About 2,000 Chinese employees of an iPhone assembly company fought a pitched battle into the early hours of Monday, forcing the huge electronics plant where they work to be shut down... Foxconn, which assembles Apple's iPhones as well as making components for other global electronics firms, has faced accusations of poor conditions and mistreatment of workers at its operations in China, where it employs about 1 million people. The company says it has been spending heavily in recent months to improve working conditions and to raise wages. [Reuters](#)

India: Numerous encephalitis cases devastate north India

21 September - Health officials in northern India report that a serious outbreak of Japanese encephalitis has infected hundreds of children. The viral brain disease, which can cause permanent disabilities and sometimes death, is a common seasonal disease in Asia. Experts say it is likely the virus also is spreading in other countries in the region, but is going undetected due to inadequate surveillance and diagnostics. In India every year, during the rainy monsoon season, hundreds of children die or become disabled, physically or mentally, after contracting Japanese encephalitis. Doctor K. P. Kushwaha is a senior pediatrician at a government hospital in Gorakhpur, in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. "We have the highest number of patients admitted in one day, which is 550 patients," said Kushwaha. "We have never got such figures in the past. In the current cases of encephalitis, the children not only have swelling in their brains, but their skin, kidney, liver and heart also show swelling."

[VOA](#)

Japan: Spike in heart failures follows 2011 quake

27 September - Following the massive earthquake and tsunami of March, 2011, which devastated parts of eastern Japan, the number of heart failure cases spiked in Miyagi Prefecture and remained elevated for six weeks, according to a new study. The number of people diagnosed with cardiac arrest and other heart problems also jumped immediately following the earthquake, but tapered back to earlier levels within three weeks. Dr. Hiroaki Shimokawa, one of the authors of the study and a professor at Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine, told Reuters Health that factors such as drug discontinuation, cold temperatures in the short term, excessive salt intake from preserved food, and mental and physical stresses over a long period likely contributed to the sustained increase in heart failure cases. [Yahoo! News](#)

Japan: Super typhoon Jelawat to threaten Okinawa then Japan

26 September - Another monster typhoon has spun up in the western Pacific. Following super typhoon Sanba that ripped across Okinawa and then into South Korea, super typhoon Jelawat is also eyeing Okinawa before a possible encounter with Japan. Jelawat is the equivalent of a category-4 hurricane, with peak sustained winds of 150 mph. Briefly Tuesday, it reached category-5 strength with maximum sustained winds of 160 mph becoming the second strongest storm on Earth in 2012, trailing only Sanba whose peak winds reached 178 mph. [Washington Post](#)

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Cuba: Cholera, diarrhea, and dysentery update

26 September - 4 weeks after the Cuban government announced that an outbreak of cholera in the eastern part of the island was over, there are unconfirmed reports of new cases popping up in 2 small towns. 27 cases were reported in the municipality of San Luis, in the eastern province of Santiago de Cuba, and 19 more in the Bahia Honda municipality [Artemisa province] 35 miles [56 km] west of Havana. A dissident living in San Luis, said that area public health workers and residents have told him of the more than 2 dozen confirmed cases and 102 suspected cases of cholera in the municipality over the past 2 weeks. He said that on Tue 25 Sep 2012, he saw police checking IDs on municipal roads to keep out non-residents and barring all access to the Eliseo Reyes clinic in the village of Chile. Tanker trucks were delivering water to areas where the aqueduct has been shut down. The Cuban government has not publicly acknowledged any new cholera cases since 28 Aug 2012, when it declared that an epidemic focused in the eastern city of Manzanillo had ended with a final tally of 3 deaths and 417 confirmed cases. Government officials provided little information during that 2-month long outbreak of cholera, Cuba's first in many decades. They confirmed

it only after independent journalists and dissidents began reporting on the epidemic.

[ProMED-mail](#)

El Salvador gets a cervical cancer screening test that women can administer at home



24 September - A new way to screen poor women for cervical cancer was introduced this month in El Salvador, using a test that was originally developed in China. Cervical cancer was once the leading cancer killer of women in the United States, but deaths have been dramatically reduced in the last 50 years as a result of pap smears. But those must be stained and read under a microscope by a trained cytologist, which makes them expensive and unwieldy in poor countries, where cervical cancer still kills more than 250,000 women a year. Some countries, like Thailand, screen women by shining a light on the cervix and painting it with vinegar, which reveals precancerous lesions that can then be burned off with liquid nitrogen or carbon dioxide. (Above, community health workers in Thailand.). The new test, called [careHPV](#) and made by Qiagen, a Dutch company, is a swab test for the DNA of the papillomaviruses that cause cancer. In a study published in *The Lancet Oncology*, [it was more than twice as sensitive as the vinegar test](#). The test worked even when women inserted the swabs themselves, which can be done at home and so is easier and faster than having them go to a clinic for visual inspections. [New York Times](#)

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