

12 February 2016

Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center

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

U.S. Military | Global | Influenza | Veterinary/Food Safety | Wellness | Contact Us

USAFRICOM | USCENTCOM | USEUCOM | USNORTHCOM | USPACOM | USSOUTHCOM

Subscription or Comments

If you wish to be added to the APH Weekly Update mailing list, removed from the mailing list, or if you have comments or questions about the update, please [contact us](#). We welcome your comments. Please feel free to share this update with others who may be interested.



Approved for public release, distribution unlimited.

Contents

U.S. MILITARY

- Army dodged catastrophe in anthrax scandal: expert
- Durations of service until first and recurrent episodes of clinically significant back pain
- House passes bill to help prevent female veteran suicides
- How to operate on a patient who might explode

GLOBAL

- Biggest ever infectious disease survey to speed end of trachoma
- MERS virus targets lungs
- Refugee mental health needs could overwhelm, experts fear
- Report calls leishmaniasis neglected disease of marginalized people
- Superbug review says more vaccines needed to reduce antibiotic use
- Textile workers at higher risk for rheumatoid arthritis
- What the science says about long-term damage from lead
- Whooping cough booster shot may offer only short-term protection
- ZIKA VIRUS
- Brazil finds Zika virus in human urine and saliva, but risk is unclear
- C.D.C. issues Zika advisory for pregnant women and sex partners
- CDC reports link between Zika virus and microcephaly
- Chart: Access to contraception and abortion in Zika-affected countries
- Mayo researchers find new Lyme disease-causing species
- Nearly 100 nerve disorder cases linked to Zika in Colombia, health officials say
- Obama asks congress for \$1.8 billion to combat Zika virus
- Portuguese scientists report probable person-to-person Legionnaires'
- Study in Brazil links Zika virus to eye damage in babies
- WHO lists Zika R&D priorities; groups probe microcephaly, GBS
- Zika may not spread in saliva or urine, health officials say

INFLUENZA

- AFHSB: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary
- APHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report
- CDC: Flu View - Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report
- China: Human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus
- Earlier may be better for flu vax in pregnant women

Follow us!



Facebook



Twitter



YouTube

- ECDC: Flu News Europe
- Influenza-related hospitalizations and poverty levels — United States, 2010–2012
- NHRC: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update
- WHO: Influenza Update

VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

- Army: 1 in 3 dining facilities will close or shrink within three years
- Beyond meat: The end of food as we know it?

WELLNESS

- As men age, their sperm contains more disease-causing mutations
- CDC: A few women continue to smoke while pregnant
- Dementia dropping, but will the trend continue?
- Expanding use of vaccines could save up to \$44 for every dollar spent, study suggests
- Flashes of light may stop jet lag
- Homemade 'dewshine' can be deadly
- 'Metabolically healthy' obesity linked to CKD
- Risk of suicide increases three-fold after concussion
- Why we get running injuries (and how to prevent them)

USAFRICOM

- Angola: 37 killed by yellow fever in Angola
- Democratic Republic of the Congo: Monkeypox outbreak - dozens of cases reported in Bas-Uele District
- Nigeria: Lassa fever outbreak kills more than 100
- Sierra Leone: Last Ebola patient in Sierra Leone released from hospital

USCENTCOM

- Syria: Investigators identify site of possible sarin attack in Syria
- Syria: U.N. says 300,000 people in key Syrian city are at risk of siege

USEUCOM

- France: Guillain-Barré syndrome –Martinique
- Latest ECDC vector maps show new information on the presence of Aedes mosquitoes and ticks in Europe

USNORTHCOM

- Canada: British Columbia initiates formal outbreak response over syphilis; rates in gay men climb
- U.S.: Adult uptake of Tdap, shingles vaccine rises, but overall coverage low
- U.S.: C.D.C. defends advice to women on drinking and pregnancy
- U.S.: U.S. athletes should consider skipping Rio Olympics over health concerns
- U.S.: State of emergency on Hawaii's big island over dengue fever outbreak
- U.S.: Why Americans have shorter lifespans than people in similar nations

USPACOM

- Indonesia: Unicef report finds female genital cutting to be common in Indonesia
- Japan: How is Fukushima's cleanup going five years after its meltdown? Not so well.
- South Korea: The country with the world's worst drink problem
- Taiwan earthquake: Tin cans found in the construction of toppled highrise
- Thailand: Thai health policy seen as model for emerging economies

**Fact Sheet:
Air Sampling for
Silica with
Aluminum Cyclone
for Comparison to
Occupational
Exposure Limits**

A new APHC fact sheet outlines how to conduct air sampling for crystalline silica for comparison with the occupational exposure limits (OELs) in the OSHA standard and the ACGIH TLV guidelines.

USSOUTHCOM

- Brazil: Guillain-Barré syndrome
- Haiti: Number of Haitians needing food aid spikes amid drought
- PAHO adds almost 5,000 cases to 2015, 2016 chikungunya totals
- Peru: Rabies kill a dozen due to bat bites

U.S. MILITARY

Army dodged catastrophe in anthrax scandal: expert

4 February - The Army dodged a catastrophe in the anthrax scandal and risked a recurrence without a major overhaul of how the military handles deadly agents and conducts research, the former commander of the Army's top biothreat research organization said Wednesday. The investigation of the mistaken shipment from the Army's Dugway Proving Ground of live anthrax to contractors, sub-contractors and private labs in 50 states and nine foreign countries concluded last month that the public faced little risk despite the slipshod methods that were used. ... Kenneth L. Wainstein, a member of the Study Panel, testified at the hearing that terror groups including the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria were making preparations for a biological attack on the U.S. ... "We believe it's not a matter of if, but rather when and how soon, a biological attack will be launched on our nation, our people or our allies," Wainstein said.

[Military.com](#)

Durations of service until first and recurrent episodes of clinically significant back pain

January 2016 - This report summarizes frequencies and timing of first and recurrent episodes of back pain treated in the U.S. Military Health System among more than 2 million military members who began active service between July 2000 and June 2012. In the population overall, at least 5% were affected by clinically significant back pain within 6 months and 10% within 13 months of beginning active service; and 34% had at least one episode of back pain while in active service during the surveillance period. After initial episodes of back pain, more than half (54%) of those affected had at least one recurrent episode; and after first recurrences, 65% had second recurrences while still in active service. In general, back pain episode-free periods preceding initial and between successive episodes markedly decreased during the period. Frequencies and timing of back pain episodes varied in relation to service branch, gender, and occupation.

[Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

House passes bill to help prevent female veteran suicides

9 February - The House passed legislation on Tuesday to identify programs offered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs that are most effective in preventing suicides among female veterans. Lawmakers said the measure, approved by voice vote, would offer insights into

Zika Virus

Army Medicine is tracking this outbreak to assess the risks to the Soldiers and their Families. All Army medical facilities have been notified of the concerns surrounding Zika infections and are prepared to assist patients who may have been infected.

The Armed Forces Pest Management Board emphasizes the importance of proper wear of permethrin-treated uniforms and use of approved insect repellent, and removal of any standing water that may serve as mosquito breeding sites.

The Department of Defense labs are developing techniques to test mosquitoes for Zika.

The United States Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) is advising pregnant DOD personnel and dependents within their area of operations (AOR), or scheduled for official travel to the AOR, to consult their health care provider on the risk of Zika virus. SOUTHCOM is also offering voluntary relocation to all pregnant DOD employees and beneficiaries.

STAND-TO!
THE OFFICIAL FOCUS OF THE U.S. ARMY

how to best address any unique factors that drive female veterans to commit suicide. Recent findings from the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) show that female veterans are significantly more likely to commit suicide than their male counterparts. ... Young female veterans between the ages of 18 to 29 are nearly 12 times more likely to commit suicide than women who didn't serve in the military, the VA found. The bill passed on Tuesday expands upon a 2015 law that requires a third party to evaluate suicide prevention programs offered by the VA and the Defense Department. [The Hill](#)

How to operate on a patient who might explode

11 February - ... Even for surgical teams in the military, it's rare to encounter patients who might also be weapons, says Dr. Michael Wirt, a colonel and commander of the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research in San Antonio. Since World War II, there have been only about 40 reported such cases in U.S. military data, all successfully extracted, he says. But the risks to medical teams are high enough that the Army has a how-to guide on removing "unexploded ordnance" inside the human body. "We'll have maybe a single general surgeon or a single orthopedic surgeon at the site," says Wirt. "The result of not recognizing it places the entire surgical team and the hospital in danger." Revised Army guidelines for removing unexploded ordnance from patients are set to come out in February. [NPR](#)

[top of page...](#)

GLOBAL

Biggest ever infectious disease survey to speed end of trachoma

9 February - Surveyors were taken hostage in Yemen, accused of being representatives of Dracula in Papua New Guinea, worked in sandstorms and temperatures of 50 degrees Celsius in Ethiopia. It was all part of the day's work for some of the thousands of people who have completed what the organizers say is the largest ever survey of an infectious disease, examining 2.6 million people in 29 countries for the eye infection trachoma. ... The scale and quality of the survey mean trachoma, an extremely painful disease which causes blindness, could be eliminated by 2020, according to the GTMP organizers - the World Health Organization, the Carter Center, and the international NGO Sightsavers. [Reuters](#)

MERS virus targets lungs

7 February - The lungs are the main target of the coronavirus that causes Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), according to the results of the first autopsy performed on a victim of the disease. The main histopathologic finding was diffuse alveolar damage, according to Sherif Zaki, MD, PhD, chief of the CDC's infectious diseases pathology branch, and colleagues. But although the man was suffering from renal failure at the time of his

2015-2016 Influenza Activity and Clinical Recommendations

Influenza activity is increasing across the United States and CDC has received several reports of severe influenza illness. Since October 2015, CDC has detected co-circulation of multiple seasonal influenza virus types and sub-types, with recent reports of severe respiratory illness among young- to middle-aged adults with H1N1pdm09 virus infection. During this COCA Call, clinicians will learn about 2015-2016 influenza activity, hear an overview of CDC's current recommendations for vaccination and antiviral medications, and gain insight into data supporting the recommendations.

Date: Tuesday, February 16, 2016

Time: 2:00 - 3:00 pm (Eastern Time)

Audio Dial In:

800-857-9697
(U.S. Callers)

212-287-1833
(International Callers)

Passcode: 4396514



death, there was no evidence of MERS outside the lungs, including the kidney, Zaki and colleagues. [MedPage Today](#)

Refugee mental health needs could overwhelm, experts fear

10 February - For the thousands of Syrian refugees expected to arrive in the U.S. in coming months, the first order of business will be securing the basics — health care, jobs, education and a safe home. But what organizations helping resettle them might not be prepared for, and what refugees themselves might be in denial about, is the need to treat the mental scars of war, experts said. ... Experts estimate 10 to 20 percent of incoming Syrians will have war-related psychological problems warranting treatment. ... "It's only about two years later or so when there's a mental health crisis," [Richard Mollica, a psychiatry professor at Harvard Medical School] said. "It's at that point that reality hits and they really need a lot of mental health care." [ABC News](#)

Report calls leishmaniasis neglected disease of marginalized people

9 February - Leishmaniasis, a growing parasitic disease that causes an estimated 1.6 million new cases and 40,000 deaths each year across nearly 100 countries, is largely ignored by the international community, states a 22-page report titled *Leishmaniasis Gap Analysis Report and Action Plan*. ... Key findings included:

- Leishmaniasis is highly correlated with poverty, malnutrition, crowded living conditions, and poor sanitation.
- The real health burden it causes is largely unknown because those most affected are from marginalized communities (eg, rural areas, slums) and unable to seek or afford care.
- The disease has been largely ignored "because of its association with poverty and the limited capacity of governments and aid agencies to deal with its complex epidemiology" and because pharmaceutical companies have considered it a low priority for research and vaccine/treatment investments.

One crucial need, they say, is for affected countries to change their regulations to allow registration and importation of anti-leishmaniasis drugs. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

Superbug review says more vaccines needed to reduce antibiotic use

11 February - More use of vaccines would reduce the need to use antibiotics and help fight the rise of drug-resistant superbug infections, according to a British government-commissioned review of the threat. In the latest report on so-called antimicrobial resistance, published on Thursday, the head of the review, British treasury minister Jim O'Neill, said more focus should be put on using existing vaccines and developing new ones. Vaccines can combat drug resistance because they reduce cases of infection and lessen the need for

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.

Links

[A-Z Index](#)

[About APHC](#)

[Army Public Health Weekly Update Archives](#)

[Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

[Medical Threat Briefings \(AKO\)](#)

[Request APHC Services](#)

[APHC Resource Materials](#)

[APHC Homepage](#)

[APHC Training](#)

[Contact APHC](#)

antibiotics. Any use of antibiotics promotes the development and spread of multi-drug-resistant infections, or superbugs, he said. [Reuters](#)

Textile workers at higher risk for rheumatoid arthritis

11 February - Breathing textile dust on the job is linked to an almost tripled risk of developing rheumatoid arthritis, an immune system disorder that causes debilitating swelling and pain in the joints, a Malaysian study suggests. While smoking is a known risk factor for this disease, the findings add to evidence suggesting that environmental factors could trigger rheumatoid arthritis in some people. ... The investigators suspect that textile dust might cause changes in the lung tissues, and those changes might trigger the immune response that leads to rheumatoid arthritis in individuals with genetic risk factors for the disease. [Reuters](#)

What the science says about long-term damage from lead

6 February - ... The percentage of children under age 5 in Flint with lead levels [of 5 micrograms per deciliter, or µg/dL] has been estimated to have doubled, from 2.4 percent to 4.9 percent. ... In the areas with the highest levels of lead, more than 10 percent of children have now had a blood lead level at least that high. Jessica Wolpaw Reyes, a leading expert on the effects of lead exposure in children, found that not only did elevated lead levels correspond to low achievement test scores in third and fourth grade, but also that communities where people managed to lower their lead levels in the 1990s saw increased scores in the 2000s. ... Economists examined data on a cohort of more than 5,500 World War II soldiers who took the Army General Classification Test, used to assess the intellectual capacity of enlistees. They found that, after controlling for other factors, growing up in a city with water with a pH (a measure of acidity) of 5.5, versus a pH of 6.0, was associated with a five-point drop in the intelligence test. For those who were exposed to more acidic water, and therefore to more lead, there was an even greater negative effect. [The New York Times](#)

Whooping cough booster shot may offer only short-term protection

5 February - The rapidly fading effectiveness of the pertussis booster vaccine may help explain recent widespread outbreaks of whooping cough. The United States stopped using a whole-cell pertussis vaccine in the 1990s and began using an acellular version called DTaP. Five vaccinations are given during childhood, and a booster vaccine, called the Tdap, is given to adolescents and adults. Researchers looked at 1,207 pertussis cases among children who had had the acellular vaccine in childhood. The study ... found that when these children got the Tdap booster, it was 69 percent effective after the first year, then dropped to less than 9 percent two to three years later. A new, more effective vaccine against whooping cough is needed, but ... a change in schedule might be effective until one is developed. [The New York Times](#)

ZIKA VIRUS

C.D.C. issues Zika advisory for pregnant women and sex partners

4 February - Pregnant women whose male sexual partners have spent time in a country with confirmed transmissions of the Zika virus should either abstain from sex or use condoms during intercourse for the duration of their pregnancy, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has announced. The recommendation on Wednesday came a day after public health officials in Dallas reported the first case in the United States of the Zika virus being transmitted by sex. [The New York Times](#)

CDC reports link between Zika virus and microcephaly

10 February - Traces of the Zika virus have been identified in the tissue of two babies who died in Brazil from a birth defect marked by underdeveloped heads and brains, U.S. health officials said Wednesday. The discovery doesn't prove the Zika virus is the cause of thousands of cases of microcephaly in Brazilian babies since the spring. But, it's the firmest connection yet that the mosquito-borne pathogen may be to blame, Dr. Thomas Frieden, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told a Congressional panel, *USA Today* reported. [Medline Plus](#)

Chart: Access to contraception and abortion in Zika-affected countries

11 February - Don't get pregnant. That's the advice given to women by the governments of Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and El Salvador in light of a possible link between the Zika virus. ... One thing is certain: The outbreak has sparked a public debate about issues of contraception and abortion. More than half of pregnancies in Latin America are not planned. In this heavily Roman Catholic part of the world, women don't always have access to modern methods of contraception, and abortion may be restricted ([see chart](#)). [NPR](#)

Mayo researchers find new Lyme disease-causing species

8 February - A team of researchers from the Mayo Clinic and state and federal health agencies have discovered a new species of *Borrelia*, the tick-borne bacteria that causes Lyme borreliosis, according to findings published Feb 5 in *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*. The bacterium, provisionally named *Borrelia mayonii*, was identified in six specimens (five blood and one synovial fluid) out of 100,545 routine diagnostic samples obtained at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., from 2003 to 2014. All six specimens that tested positive for *B mayonii* were taken in or after 2012. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

Nearly 100 nerve disorder cases linked to Zika in Colombia, health officials say

9 February - Nearly 100 Colombians suffering from the Guillain-Barre syndrome, a rare nerve disorder, also have symptoms of the mosquito-borne Zika virus, Colombia's National Health Institute has said. Colombian health authorities recently announced that three people who had been infected with the Zika virus had died after developing the Guillain-Barre syndrome, the first time health officials had said the Zika virus could cause deaths. [Fox News](#)

Obama asks congress for \$1.8 billion to combat Zika virus

8 February - President Obama on Monday requested more than \$1.8 billion in emergency funding to fight an outbreak of the Zika virus, which has spread to 26 countries and territories in Central and South America, though not yet to the United States. The money would go toward expanding programs that control mosquitoes, which transmit the virus, as well as research into vaccines and new public education programs, particularly for pregnant women, the president said. [The New York Times](#)

Portuguese scientists report probable person-to-person Legionnaires'

4 February - A Portuguese team reported in the *New England Journal of Medicine* today on a likely case of human-to-human transmission of *Legionella pneumophila*, which causes Legionnaires' disease. ... The researchers detail the case of a 48-year-old man who worked at a cooling tower complex in Vila Franca de Xira, Portugal. His 74-year-old mother cared for him till he was admitted to the hospital about 8 hours later. ... She died on Dec 1, and her son died on Jan 7, 2015. Both later tested positive for an *L pneumophila* strain that matched an outbreak strain attributed to the son's workplace. The authors conclude, "Factors that suggest person-to-person transmission are the severity of the respiratory symptoms in Patient 1, the very close contact that occurred during the 8 consecutive hours when Patient 2 took care of Patient 1, and the small area of the nonventilated room where this contact took place. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

Study in Brazil links Zika virus to eye damage in babies

5 February - Infants infected with the Zika virus may be born not only with unusually small heads, but also with eye abnormalities that threaten vision, researchers reported. ... The study described damage to the retina or optic nerve in 10 of 29 newborns examined at Roberto Santos General Hospital in Salvador, Brazil. ... Seven out of the 10 newborns had defects in both eyes, while three infants had damage in a single eye. The most common problems were black speckled lesions in the back of the eye, large areas of tissue damage in the retina itself, or damage in the layer of blood vessels and tissue below the retina. ... The

lesions themselves can't be repaired. But "the earlier you make the diagnosis, the better," said Dr. Rubens Belfort Jr., the paper's senior author and a professor of ophthalmology at the Federal University of São Paulo in Brazil. "Based on my experience, I would say a large number of these kids will be blind," he added.

[The New York Times](#)

WHO lists Zika R&D priorities; groups probe microcephaly, GBS

8 February - The World Health Organization (WHO) said today it is mapping research and development (R&D) projects under way for Zika virus and will be prioritizing some for fast-track development, similar to the role it played when Ebola vaccines and therapeutics were first discussed. ... For Zika virus, the WHO said diagnostic tests are a top priority, to help separate Zika virus infection from other flavivirus illnesses. The agency said on Feb 5 it issued a call for companies to submit potential products that could be considered under its emergency assessment procedure. ... The WHO added that some studies on Zika virus prophylaxis have begun and are similar to those for malaria. The agency said that fogging followed by release of genetically modified mosquitoes is also worth considering. ... In other news, Brazilian researchers recently posted some findings from microcephaly surveillance that hint the virus could have been in the country much earlier than thought. The data indicate that the condition of smaller-than-normal heads and underdeveloped brains in infants could be caused by Zika virus infection or something else. ... They found that the microcephaly level was about 1,000 times higher than they expected, going as far back as 2012, with peaks in spring and summer and the biggest peak in 2014—well before the current Zika outbreak emerged. Mattos told ABC, however, that the spike in 2015 was especially worrisome, because cases were more severe. She added that another unusual feature is that most recent cases aren't paired with heart, limb, and other defects, as is typically seen. ... Meanwhile, in GBS developments, the WHO today posted statements on findings so far in Brazil and on two cases in Martinique. Brazil on Jan 22 reported an increase in GBS cases to the WHO: 1,708 cases between Jan 1 and November of 2015. However, it said the pattern is hard to interpret, because some states saw increases, though others recorded stable or even decreasing numbers compared with 2014. [CIDRAP](#)

Zika may not spread in saliva or urine, health officials say

5 February - U.S. health experts cautioned Friday that the apparent discovery of the Zika virus in saliva and urine from people in Brazil does not necessarily mean the virus can be spread by more casual contact with infected people, such as through kissing. "I think we need to be careful that don't we jump to any conclusions about transmissibility," Anthony Fauci, who leads the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said during an interview on NPR's *Morning Edition*. "When you find a virus or fingerprints of a virus in a body secretion, it absolutely does not mean that it is transmitted that way," Fauci said. The virus may be present in a form that is incapable of spreading, or in such low levels that transmission is impossible or unlikely, several scientists said. There also could be substances present in saliva that prevent the virus from spreading. More research will be needed to

determine what role, if any, the presence of the virus in saliva plays in the spread of the Zika virus, the scientists said. [NPR](#)

[top of page...](#)

INFLUENZA

AFHSB: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary

For Week 4:

- NORTHCOM: Influenza activity was minimal to moderate for most states.
- EUCOM: Influenza activity was minimal with the exception of Italy which had low activity.
- PACOM: Influenza activity was minimal with the exception of Japan, which had low activity.
- CENTCOM and AFRICOM: Influenza activity was minimal to low in CENTCOM and AFRICOM.
- SOUTHCOM: Influenza activity in Honduras was minimal based on DMSS data.
[DHA -Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch](#)

APHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report

For the week ending 30 January 2015 (Week 4)

- Influenza activity among Army MTFs has significantly increased in the past week, which mirrors a current trend in the civilian population.
- ILI Activity: Army incident ILI outpatient visits in week 4 were 18% lower than the same week last year.
- Influenza cases: No hospitalized influenza cases were reported to APHC(P) through DRSi in week 4. Four hospitalized cases have been reported to date this season.
- Viral specimens: During week 4, 153 of 916 (17%) laboratory specimens tested positive for respiratory pathogens. RHC-C reported 15 influenza A-positive specimens, RHC-P reported 13, RHC-A reported 9, and RHC-E reported 6. CENTCOM did not report any influenza A-positive specimens. [APHC](#)

CDC: Flu View - Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 4 (January 24-30, 2016), influenza activity increased slightly in the United States.

- Viral Surveillance: The most frequently identified influenza virus type reported by public health laboratories during week 4 was influenza A, with influenza A (H1N1)pdm09 viruses predominating. The percentage of respiratory specimens testing positive for influenza in clinical laboratories increased.

- Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality: The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was below their system-specific epidemic threshold in both the NCHS Mortality Surveillance System and the 122 Cities Mortality Reporting System. [CDC](#)

China: Human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus

10 February - On 5 February 2016, the National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFPC) of China notified WHO of 28 additional laboratory-confirmed cases of human infection with avian influenza A (H7N9) virus, including five deaths. Onset dates ranged from 21 December 2015 to 25 January 2016. Cases ranged in age from 14 to 91 years, with a median age of 58 years. Of these 28 cases, 18 (64%) were male. The majority (25 cases, 89%) reported exposure to live poultry or live poultry markets; the exposure history of three cases is unknown or no clear exposure to poultry. No clusters were reported. [WHO](#)

Earlier may be better for flu vax in pregnant women

7 February - The flu vaccine was linked to slightly better protection for pregnant women in the first trimester compared with later in pregnancy because of an improved immunologic response, according to a small study presented here. Among 36 pregnant women, 11 received the inactivated influenza vaccine in the first trimester, 12 got it in the second, and 13 in the third (up to 34 weeks). ... "Our findings may suggest that women in the second and third trimesters may not mount as robust a response to vaccination. This may also contribute to the increased morbidity and mortality due to respiratory illness as pregnancy progresses," she said. "For this reason, future work may evaluate the need for a booster vaccine in pregnancy." [MedPage Today](#)

ECDC: Flu News Europe

Week 04/2016 (25-31 January 2016):

- Thirty-one of the 50 Member States that reported epidemiological data from surveillance for influenza-like illness (ILI) and acute respiratory infection (ARI) indicated increasing rates; 34 countries reported influenza virus detections in specimens from sentinel sources for week 04/2016, indicating increased influenza activity in the WHO European Region as a whole.
- Belarus, Greece, Ireland and Malta indicated high-intensity influenza activity, as in the previous week, and Finland, the Russian Federation and Ukraine reported very high activity.
- A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses predominated, accounting for 67% of sentinel surveillance detections of influenza in the WHO European Region.
- The predominance of A(H1N1)pdm09 corresponded to an increase in cases of severe disease, mainly in people aged 15–64 years.
- For week 04/2016, countries reported increasing numbers of cases of severe acute respiratory infection (SARI), as well as a high percentage of influenza-positive specimens. [European Center for Disease Prevention and Control/WHO](#)

Influenza-related hospitalizations and poverty levels — United States, 2010–2012

12 February - ... The age-adjusted incidence of influenza-related hospitalizations per 100,000 person-years in high poverty ($\geq 20\%$ of persons living below the federal poverty level) census tracts was 21.5 (95% confidence interval [CI]: 20.7–22.4), nearly twice the incidence in low poverty ($< 5\%$ of persons living below the federal poverty level) census tracts (10.9, 95% CI: 10.3–11.4). This relationship was observed in each surveillance site, among children and adults, and across racial/ethnic groups. These findings suggest that persons living in poorer census tracts should be targeted for enhanced influenza vaccination outreach and clinicians serving these persons should be made aware of current recommendations for use of antiviral agents to treat influenza. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

NHRC: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For 2016 Week 5 (through 6 February 2016):

- Influenza: Seven cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza (type B) among US military basic trainees.
- FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates were elevated at Fort Leonard Wood. [Naval Health Research Center](#)

WHO: Influenza Update

8 February - Update based on data up to 24 January, 2016. Globally, increasing levels of influenza activity continued to be reported in the temperate zones of the northern hemisphere with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 as the most detected virus.

- Increasing influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 activity continued to be reported in Europe. Some countries in northern and eastern Europe reported a sharp increase in influenza like illness (ILI) and an increase in severe cases due to influenza A(H1N1)pdm09. A few countries in Europe reported an increase in activity predominantly of influenza B virus.
- In North America, a slight increase of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 was reported, but overall levels were still low.
- In eastern Asia influenza activity was increasing in Japan and the Republic of Korea due to predominantly influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus. In North China, influenza A(H3N2) and B were the predominant circulating viruses detected.
- In western Asia, influenza activity remained at high levels in Israel but appeared to have peaked in Jordan, Oman and Iran.
- Few influenza virus detections were reported by countries in tropical Africa.
- In tropical countries of the Americas, Central America and the Caribbean, influenza and other respiratory virus activity were overall at low levels in most countries. Puerto Rico and Guadeloupe reported increased influenza and ILI activities in recent weeks. In Costa Rica, influenza activity continued at high but decreasing levels.
- In Tropical Asia, countries in Southern and South East Asia continued to report ongoing low influenza activity.

- In the temperate countries of the southern hemisphere respiratory virus activity remained low. [WHO](#)

[top of page...](#)

VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Army: 1 in 3 dining facilities will close or shrink within three years

8 February - About 1 in 3 Army dining facilities will close or shrink over the next three years based on the findings of an ongoing Army study into DFAC use. Planners hope to turn the remaining facilities into "the soldier's preferred dining choice," according to the order outlining closure plans — improving selection and reducing costs while establishing more grab-and-go options like food trucks and kiosks "outside of the traditional DFAC footprint." The order calls for 14 of the Army's approximately 180 worldwide facilities to close and 45 others to lose floor space. It requires installations to conduct multiple surveys designed to find mobile food service points, as well as report a variety of DFAC statistics to help determine which facilities are being underutilized or could see dwindling numbers in the face of manpower cuts. [Army Times](#)

Beyond meat: The end of food as we know it?

6 February – [A] a group of young scientists in Chile are working on alternatives for a sustainable and meatless future. ... [They] are developing new plant-based food and are determined to bring it to people in their local market. Part of what motivates them is what they consider to be the biggest drawback of classic animal farming: It requires massive amounts of land and it affects global warming. ... The main scientist of the Not Company team is a computer, an artificial intelligence algorithm programmed to become the smartest food scientist in the world. It uses deep learning parameters to understand food at a molecular level, helping the team to deliver tasty and affordable nutrition while using less water, less land, less energy, and without the need to cultivate harmful bio systems like animals. It's a complicated process but it's designed to understand human perception of taste and texture which allows it to suggest clever recipes for sustainable and tasty plant-based foods. And it even understands the availability and use of resources for every single plant in the company's database.

[Al Jazeera](#)

[top of page...](#)

WELLNESS

As men age, their sperm contains more disease-causing mutations

10 February - For the first time, scientists have pinpointed the source of some severe disease-causing mutations in sperm-producing tubes inside the testicles of healthy men. ... [Special] stem cells called spermatogonia generate sperm cells. A spermatogonium divides into two cells - one that eventually matures into a sperm cell, and the other is a new spermatogonium so the cycle can repeat itself. ... At each cell cycle, the DNA in the old spermatogonium is copied into the two new cells. ... But every so often, a copy error - a mutation - arises in the DNA, which carries on in new generations of cells. Some DNA mutations ... can give rise to genetic disorders. ...[Some] mutations that occur in the spermatogonia enhance their own chances of propagating forward - they call them "selfish mutations." It appears that the effect of selfish mutations is to cause spermatogonia to give rise to more than one new spermatogonium at each cell cycle, each carrying the mutation. Thus, as a man ages, and his sperm production undergoes more cell cycles, his sperm contains an increasing proportion of cells with selfish mutations. [Medical News Today](#)

CDC: A few women continue to smoke while pregnant

10 February - Less than 10% of women continued to smoke at any point during pregnancy, and less than a quarter of those reported quitting later in the pregnancy, according to 2014 birth certificate data released by the CDC. Overall, 8.4% of women said they smoked at any point during pregnancy, with 20.6% of women who smoked during the first or second trimesters quitting by the third trimester, reported Sally C. Curtin, MA, and T.J. Matthews, MS, both of the CDC. In fact, the majority of women (72.0%) who did quit smoking during pregnancy did so between the first and second trimesters, they wrote in the *National Vital Statistics Report*. [MedPage Today](#)

Dementia dropping, but will the trend continue?

10 February - The incidence of dementia in the U.S. has fallen over the last 3 decades, but that shouldn't lull providers into a false sense of complacency, researchers said. In an analysis of data from the Framingham Heart Study, dementia incidence fell about 20% per decade since 1977, driven by declines in vascular dementia -- not Alzheimer's disease. ... The drop has paralleled improvements in cardiovascular health and risk factor control, even though some contributors to heart disease -- and, potentially, dementia -- such as diabetes and obesity have been on the rise, they said. Also, the significant declines in dementia were seen only among those who had at least a high school education, they noted. [MedPage Today](#)

Expanding use of vaccines could save up to \$44 for every dollar spent, study suggests

8 February - Vaccinations, long recognized as an excellent investment that saves lives and prevents illness, could have significant economic value that far exceeds their original cost, a new study from researchers ... has found. In what is believed to be among the first studies to examine the potential return on investment of vaccinations, the researchers assessed the economic benefits of vaccines in 94 low- and middle-income countries using projected vaccination rates from 2011 to 2020. When looking only at costs associated with illness, such as treatment costs and productivity losses, the return was \$16 for every dollar spent on vaccines. In a separate analysis taking into account the broader economic impact of illness, vaccinations save \$44 for every dollar spent.

[Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News](#)

Flashes of light may stop jet lag

9 February - Exposure to short flashes of light at night could help sleeping travellers adjust to new time zones and avoid jet lag, according to US scientists. The light beams travel through the eyelids and this tells the brain to re-set the body's inner biological clock, the Stanford researchers believe. They tested the method in 39 volunteers and found it shifted a person's body clock by about two hours. ... Some try phototherapy - light boxes that simulate daylight. Dr Jamie Zeitzer and colleagues at Stanford University School of Medicine believe sleeping in front of a strobe light could work better. [Volunteers] were asked to sleep in the lab, where some were exposed to continuous light and others a strobe light (two-millisecond flashes of light, similar to a camera flash, 10 seconds apart) for an hour. The flashing-light group reported a nearly two-hour delay in the onset of sleepiness the following night. In comparison, the delay in sleepiness was 36 minutes for the continuous-light group. [BBC News](#)

Homemade 'dewshine' can be deadly



9 February - Experts are warning about the dangers of a potentially deadly homemade concoction known as "dewshine," which is a mixture of racing fuel and Mountain Dew, a soft drink. In a recent case, two Tennessee teens died after drinking the toxic combination. It was the first known incident in the state. Two other teens were also treated, but survived,

according to doctors. The dewshine mixture is used to get drunk quickly, but the racing fuel can cause severe symptoms, including blindness and death, said Dr. Donna Seger, medical director of the Tennessee Poison Center. "Racing fuel, used for drag racing, is almost 100 percent methanol. This affects the body at a cellular level and causes the cells to die," said Seger, who is also a clinical professor at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville. Drinking homemade dewshine can trigger nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, blurred vision, seizures, coma and death, depending on how much methanol is consumed, Seger said in a

university news release. Methanol also affects the retina and can lead to permanent blindness. [Medline Plus](#)

'Metabolically healthy' obesity linked to CKD

Obese and overweight adults were at increased risk for chronic kidney disease (CKD) even if they didn't have any metabolic risk factors such as high blood pressure, poor lipid profiles, or insulin resistance, according to a South Korean study. Compared with normal-weight individuals, the difference in 5-year cumulative incidence of CKD in so-called "metabolically healthy" obese individuals was 6.7 cases per 1,000 persons, reported Yoosoo Chang, MD, PhD, of Sungkyunkwan University in Seoul, and colleagues. [MedPage Today](#)

Risk of suicide increases three-fold after concussion

9 February - Adults who suffer a concussion are at three times the long-term risk of suicide compared to the general population, according to a new study from Canada. Unlike some previous research, the new work focused on adults in the general population rather than either athletes or military personnel with head injuries. ... The researchers analyzed medical records for adults in Ontario with a diagnosed concussion that was not serious enough to require hospitalization and followed them from 1992 to 2012. More than 230,000 people fell into this category. Over an average follow-up period of 9 years, 667 people who had experienced concussions committed suicide, which is equivalent to a rate of 31 suicides per 100,000 people per year. That's more than three times higher than the suicide rate in the general population, according to the results. [MedPage Today](#)

Why we get running injuries (and how to prevent them)



10 February - ... [Researchers] at Harvard Medical School and other universities decided to look at running injuries ... and to focus their attention, in part, on those rare long-time runners who have never been hurt. ... The researchers recruited 249 experienced female recreational runners, who were chosen in part because they all struck the ground with their heels when they ran. ... The researchers tracked the runners for two years. During that time, more than 100 of the runners reported sustaining an injury that was serious enough to require medical attention. [But] 21 of the runners not only did not become injured during the two-year study but also had not had a prior injury. ... The never-injured runners, as a group, landed far more lightly than those who had been seriously hurt, the scientists found, even when the researchers controlled for running mileage, body weight and other variables. That finding refutes the widely held belief that a runner cannot land lightly on her heels. [The New York Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

Angola: 37 killed by yellow fever in Angola

11 February - A yellow fever outbreak in Angola has killed 37 people since December with eight new cases reported in the last 24 hours, the country's national director of health Adelaide de Carvalho said late on Wednesday. The outbreak of yellow fever, which is transmitted by mosquito bites, began in the Luanda suburb of Viana but has spread to other areas of the southern African country with 191 people infected so far. De Carvalho said health officials were monitoring suburbs around the capital of Luanda where infections have been worsened by unsanitary conditions caused by a garbage collection backlog.

[Reuters](#)

Democratic Republic of the Congo: Monkeypox outbreak - dozens of cases reported in Bas-Uele District

10 February - Health officials in Bas-Uele District, Orientale Province of northern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are reporting a monkeypox outbreak, which has affected more than 50 and killed two, according to a Radio Okapi report today (computer translated). Dr Innocent Akonda said that 51 cases were reported during the first week of February, with cases reported in the Bombongolo health area, Aboso and other health areas. With the new cases, the health zone recorded 195 cases including 8 deaths, said Akonda. The battle against the outbreak is especially problematic due to lack of qualified medical personnel, equipment, collection kits and lack of sanitation. [Outbreak News Today](#)

Nigeria: Lassa fever outbreak kills more than 100

6 February - At least 101 people killed by the viral illness since August as Abuja battles to contain latest flare-up of the fever. More than 100 people have been killed by Lassa fever outbreak in Nigeria, as West Africa battles to contain a flare-up of the virus, according to data from the nation's health authorities. Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) statistics released on Saturday show that reported cases of the acute haemorrhagic disease - both confirmed and suspected - stood at 175 with a total of 101 deaths since August. [Al Jazeera](#)

Sierra Leone: Last Ebola patient in Sierra Leone released from hospital

8 February - Sierra Leone's last remaining Ebola patient was recently discharged from a hospital, according to reports from BBC/Reuters correspondent Umaru Fofana on his social media accounts. The 38-year-old woman was confirmed to be infected with Ebola virus on Jan 22. She contracted the virus while caring for her niece, now deceased, and the two women's illnesses ended Sierra Leone's Ebola-free status. ... The 38-year-old patient's recovery and release starts the 42-day countdown to declaring Sierra Leone free of Ebola

virus. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

[top of page...](#)

USCENTCOM

Syria: Investigators identify site of possible sarin attack in Syria

8 February - The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has identified the Damascus suburb of Daraya as the site of a possible sarin gas attack last year, citing blood samples provided by the Syrian government. In a report to the U.N. Security Council circulated Monday, the watchdog describes an incident on Feb. 15, 2015 near the Shrine of Sukayna where government soldiers reported a strange smell and began exhibiting symptoms consistent with sarin gas. The report marks the first time that OPCW investigators have identified the site of a possible attack involving the nerve agent in Syria. "The blood sample analysis indicates that four individuals were at some point exposed to sarin or a sarin-like substance," the report says. [CBS News](#)

Syria: U.N. says 300,000 people in key Syrian city are at risk of siege



11 February - The push by Syrian government forces and their allies has put around 300,000 civilians in the northern city of Aleppo at risk of being placed under siege and cut off from food and humanitarian supplies, according to the U.N. Since the start of last week, the offensive has displaced some 51,000 civilians from what was Syria's biggest city before the start of the war, the United Nations says. The offensive, which includes Russian air support, has cut off key supply routes used for aid delivery. ... The city's water supply is also cut off, the International Committee for the Red Cross says in a press release, so Aleppo residents must now rely on 100 water points set up by the ICRC, its local affiliate and local water boards. [NPR](#)

[top of page...](#)

USEUCOM

France: Guillain-Barré syndrome –Martinique

8 February - On 25 January 2016, the National IHR Focal Point of France notified PAHO/WHO of 2 cases of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) in Martinique. The first case is a 19-year-old with onset of symptoms (paraesthesia of hands and feet) on 26 December. Urine samples, which were taken on 7 January, tested positive for Zika virus. ... Currently, the patient is being intubated and ventilated in an intensive care unit. The second case is a 55-year-old who was admitted to an intensive care unit on 21 January. On the same day, urine samples were collected from the patient. The samples tested positive for Zika virus. ... Currently, the patient is being ventilated because of his respiratory failure. This report provides further evidence of a causal relationship between Zika virus infection and GBS.

[WHO](#)

Latest ECDC vector maps show new information on the presence of Aedes mosquitoes and ticks in Europe

8 February - New updated maps of [exotic mosquitoes](#), [phlebotomines](#) and [ticks](#) are available on the ECDC website. The maps show the current known distribution of the vector species at 'regional' administrative level (NUTS3) as of January 2015. New information is now available on the presence of *Aedes aegypti* and *albopictus* maps:

- *Aedes albopictus* is found introduced in new areas in the Netherlands
- *Aedes aegypti* is considered absent in the Netherlands as the last observation of this species in the Netherlands dates back more than five years. [ECDC](#)

[top of page...](#)

USNORTHCOM

Canada: British Columbia initiates formal outbreak response over syphilis; rates in gay men climb

12 February - Vancouver health officials are reporting a large increase in syphilis cases in 2015, prompting call from officials to urge gay men to get regularly tested as syphilis rates continue to rise. "Syphilis rates are at their highest in 30 years in British Columbia. In 2015, nearly 500 cases of infectious syphilis were reported in Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), more than double the yearly cases reported a decade ago," says Dr. Réka Gustafson, medical health officer with VCH. "Because new infections continue to climb, we have initiated a formal outbreak response." By calling an outbreak response, VCH is stepping up

its efforts by working directly with physicians and community groups to increase testing and promote awareness of the steps everyone can take to prevent, diagnose and treat syphilis.

[Outbreak News Today](#)

U.S.: Adult uptake of Tdap, shingles vaccine rises, but overall coverage low

5 February - The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that rates of tetanus and diphtheria with acellular pertussis (Tdap) and herpes zoster vaccination increased slightly in adults during 2014, although overall adult vaccination coverage remained similar to 2013 levels, according to today's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

U.S.: C.D.C. defends advice to women on drinking and pregnancy

5 February - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defended a recommendation that sexually active women refrain from drinking alcohol if they are not using birth control after it spurred a strong backlash, with many women saying they considered the suggestion insulting, severe and impractical. Anne Schuchat, principal deputy director of the C.D.C., said in an interview Friday, "We weren't as clear as we had hoped to be." ... [The] idea that fertile women who are not using contraception should indefinitely not drink alcohol was not well received by many women. Dr. Schuchat, however, said the C.D.C.'s intention was to explain the risk of drinking before a woman knows she is pregnant and to show that the harmful effects of alcohol on a developing baby were "completely preventable" — not to prescribe a lifestyle or suggest women "plan their entire lives around a hypothetical baby." [The New York Times](#)

U.S.: U.S. athletes should consider skipping Rio Olympics over health concerns

8 February - The United States Olympic Committee told U.S. sports federations that athletes and staff concerned for their health over the Zika virus should consider not going to the Rio 2016 Olympic Games in August. The message was delivered in a conference call involving USOC officials and leaders of U.S. sport federations in late January, according to two people who participated in the call. Federations were told that no one should go to Brazil "if they don't feel comfortable going. Bottom line," said Donald Anthony, president and board chairman of USA Fencing. The USOC's briefing to sport federations is the latest sign that Olympics officials are taking the Zika threat to the games in Rio de Janeiro seriously.

[Huffington Post](#)

U.S.: State of emergency on Hawaii's big island over dengue fever outbreak

10 February - The mayor of Hawaii County has declared a state of emergency on Hawaii's

Big Island over an outbreak of mosquito-borne dengue fever. The island has seen nearly 250 confirmed cases of the mosquito-borne virus since September 2015. ... Kenoi's declaration also lifts a law banning county landfills from accepting tires. Reuters explains that "tires which are left lying around are a known breeding spot for mosquitoes." [NPR](#)

U.S.: Why Americans have shorter lifespans than people in similar nations



9 February - Car crashes, shootings and drug overdoses, which cause more than 100,000 deaths a year in the United States, may explain why Americans' life expectancy is lower than in similar countries, a new study suggests. Americans' life expectancy is about two years shorter than residents of Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. ... "About 50 percent of the gap for men and about 20 percent for women is due just to those three causes of injury," said lead researcher Andrew Fenelon. He is a senior service fellow at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics. [Medline Plus](#)

[top of page...](#)

USPACOM

Indonesia: Unicef report finds female genital cutting to be common in Indonesia

4 February - Female genital cutting has always been seen as an ancient ritual practiced in Africa and to a lesser extent in the Middle East, but a new global assessment documents for the first time that it is widespread in one of the most populous countries in Asia: Indonesia, where almost half the women are estimated to have undergone it. ...[The] United Nations Children's Fund estimated Thursday that 60 million women and girls there have been cut based on national survey data collected by the Indonesian government. The addition of Indonesia is largely responsible for raising the global tally of women and girls who have undergone the practice to 200 million from 130 million, and the number of countries where it is concentrated to 30 from 29. [The New York Times](#)

Japan: How is Fukushima's cleanup going five years after its meltdown? Not so well.

10 February - ... Tokyo Electric Power Co. (Tepco), the utility company that runs the Fukushima plant and drew fierce criticism for its handling of the disaster, says the situation has improved greatly. ... Efforts to contain the contamination have progressed, according to

Tepco, including the completion Tuesday of a subterranean "ice wall" around the plant that, once operational, is meant to freeze the ground and stop leakage. Moves to decommission the plant — a process that could take 30 or 40 years, Ono estimated — are getting underway. ... A sign on the road to the plant showed a radiation reading of 3.37 microsieverts per hour, at the upper end of safe. At a viewing spot overlooking the reactor buildings, it shot past 200, a level at which prolonged exposure could be dangerous. Both readings are hundreds of times lower than they were a couple of years ago. ... Tepco is building more-secure welded tanks to hold the water, theoretically for up to 20 years. There are now about 1,000 tanks holding 750,000 tons of contaminated water, with space for 100,000 tons more. The company says it hopes to increase capacity to 950,000 tons within a year or two, as well as halve the amount of water that needs to be stored from the current 300 tons per day. [The Washington Post](#)

South Korea: The country with the world's worst drink problem

7 February - South Korea has more alcoholics than any other country, but it seems unlikely to quit the drink any time soon. ... [Alcohol] is an essential part of daily life for many, with South Koreans drinking more hard liquor than anyone else in the world, according to the research firm Euromonitor. It is cheap, considered a must if you want to get ahead in business and viewed as a way to relieve stress in a society with some of the world's longest working hours. But South Korea is also home to more alcoholics than any other country, and alcohol-related social costs amount to more than \$20bn a year, Ministry of Health and Welfare estimates show. ... Public health experts say part of the problem is that there are no laws restricting binge drinking. [Al Jazeera](#)

Taiwan earthquake: Tin cans found in the construction of toppled highrise

8 February - The Taiwanese government has ordered an investigation into the collapse of a highrise building, as images emerged showing tin cans built into the walls of the toppled complex. ... They appear to have been used as construction fillers in beams. The death toll from Saturday's magnitude-6.4 quake in the city of Tainan has reached 38, with the majority -- at least 24 -- from the Weiguan Jinlong highrise building. Efforts are underway to find 118 people still missing. Taiwan's interior minister and other officials said they would open an investigation into the building's collapse when the rescue operation ends, according to CNA. [CNN](#)

Thailand: Thai health policy seen as model for emerging economies

9 February - The President of the World Medical Association said Thailand's universal health program is a model for other emerging economies in Asia, including India, in providing health services to low income workers. ... Thailand's universal health program, introduced in

2002, has been seen as a model for comprehensive health systems in Asia, especially in India and Myanmar, where the health systems are still evolving. ... But health activists in Thailand point to growing tensions within the health system and pressure within the bureaucracy to end the highly popular 30-baht (80 U.S. cents) co-payment program. Recently the Thai Council of State, which provides advice to the executive branch, called for funds to be spent only on patient medical costs, excluding administrative and other expenditures. [VOA](#)

[top of page...](#)

USSOUTHCOM

Brazil: Guillain-Barré syndrome

8 February - On 22 January 2016, the National IHR Focal Point of Brazil notified PAHO/WHO of an increase of Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS) recorded at the national level. Data from the hospital-based surveillance system reveal that, between January and November 2015, 1,708 cases of GBS were registered nationwide. While a number of states reported significant increases in reported cases – especially, Alagoas (516.7%), Bahia (196.1%), Rio Grande do Norte (108.7%), Piauí (108.3%), Espírito Santo (78.6%), and Rio de Janeiro (60.9%) – other states reported stable or even diminishing number of GBS cases as compared to 2014. Most of the states in Brazil are experiencing the circulation of Zika, chikungunya, and dengue virus. [WHO](#)

Haiti: Number of Haitians needing food aid spikes amid drought

9 February - Drought-stricken Haiti is grappling with its most serious food crisis in 15 years as the number of people in need of urgent food aid has recently spiked, the head of the U.N. World Food Program's country office said Tuesday. Roughly 1.5 million Haitians are considered severely insecure when it comes to food, more than double the figure of those facing malnutrition from a government assessment in September. Haiti's northwest, southeast and some areas on the border with the Dominican Republic have been hit hard amid a long drought that has been worsened by the arrival of a strong El Nino weather pattern. ... If Haiti continues to be parched by drought in the next few months, Haitian farmers will lose their fourth consecutive harvest. [ABC News](#)

PAHO adds almost 5,000 cases to 2015, 2016 chikungunya totals

8 February - The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) late last week added almost 5,000 new chikungunya cases to its outbreak totals as it tallied reports from countries both

this year and last. Outbreak totals now include 3,582 new 2016 cases and 1,342 cases from 2015 as countries and territories catch up on reporting. ... Cases so far this year total 6,421; in 2015 they added up to 697,756. ... Nicaragua accounted for the largest increase of 2016 cases and added all the newly logged 1,342 cases from 2015, according to PAHO's Feb 5 update. It has recorded 1,778 cases this year, all of them new. ... Colombia reported 1,292 cases, for a total of 3,178 this year. Guatemala reported its first cases of the year, 243 of them. And Venezuela added 256 cases, for 1,046 total for the year. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

Peru: Rabies kill a dozen due to bat bites



12 February - Bat bites are being linked to a surge in rabies fatalities among indigenous Peruvians in native Achuar villages near the Morona river basin, according to a Yahoo Noticias report (computer translated). Governor of the Loreto region, Fernando Meléndez said at least 12 people in the remote communities in the Peruvian Amazon have died from rabies in recent months and several more remain sick after catching the disease from bats. Three of the 12 dead are children. ... Peru's central government was preparing a state of emergency to free up funds for additional vaccines and fly them into affected communities, which are far from roads, said the deputy health minister, Percy Minaya.

[Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

[U.S. Military](#) | [Global](#) | [Influenza](#) | [Veterinary/Food Safety](#) | [Wellness](#) | [Contact Us](#)

[USAFRICOM](#) | [USCENTCOM](#) | [USEUCOM](#) | [USNORTHCOM](#) | [USPACOM](#) | [USSOUTHCOM](#)

The *Army Public Health Weekly Update* does not analyze the information as to its strategic or tactical impact on the US Army and is not a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence is available from the [National Center for Medical Intelligence](#).

External Links: The appearance of external hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement by the U.S. Army of this Web site or the information, products, or services contained therein. For other than authorized activities such as military exchanges and MWR sites, the U.S. Army does not exercise any editorial control over the information you may find at these locations. Such links are provided consistent with the stated purpose of this product.

Although we avoid links to sites that may be blocked, all sites may not be accessible from all locations. While we verify the links at the time of publication, we cannot guarantee that they will be active in the future.

Articles appearing in the Update do not necessarily represent US Army Medical Command opinions/views, policy, or guidance, and should not be construed or interpreted as being endorsed by the US Army Medical Command.

The *Army Public Health Weekly Update* is published by the Public Health Information Directorate, Army Public Health Center.

