

17 January 2020

Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center

NOTICE: There will be no Army Public Health Weekly Update next week.

Publication will resume on 31 January 2020.



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If you are viewing the Army Public Health Weekly Update using Internet Explorer on a government computer with Windows 10, the external hyperlinks will be disabled per the [Security Technical Implementation Guide](#) (V-64927).

As a workaround, opening the Update using **Chrome** will enable the links.

We're sorry for the inconvenience.

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Army Housing Summit set to forge path forward in housing reinvestment

10 January- Nearly a year after assuming responsibility for all Army housing, Army Materiel Command will host a comprehensive review of the sweeping reforms and improvements made across the enterprise to ensure Soldiers and families have access to high quality on-post housing. During a Housing Summit set for Jan. 14-16 at AMC Headquarters at Redstone Arsenal, representatives of the Army's seven privatized housing companies and Army leaders from 34 installations will review strategies and programs to provide the best options for Soldiers, Civilians and their families. "We are absolutely committed to provide safe and secure housing on every installation, and making every installation an installation of choice for our Soldiers and families" said Gen. Gus Perna, commander of Army Materiel Command. "The summit is another step in our commitment to hold ourselves and privatized housing companies accountable to provide a high-quality standard of living and to earn back the trust of our housing residents." Since March 2019, the Army and AMC have set conditions for improvements, beginning with visits to 100 percent of housing units, the establishment of 24/7 housing hotlines at every installation, and quarterly town halls hosted by installation leadership. In July 2019, more than 25,000 residents provided input through the Resident Satisfaction Survey that gave the Army insight into housing experiences and further pinpointed issues that needed to be addressed. In addition, an Army Inspector General report yielded feedback to improve housing. [Dvids Hub](#)

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The Army is tweaking its training model as soldiers feel the strain of readiness needs

10 January- The Army is making changes to its training regimen in part to ease the constant pressure soldiers are under to be ready for deployments, Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy said on Friday. "We've been at war for over 18 years, and the strains are there, people are tired but we're an extraordinarily resilient bunch, and we're trying to make some tweaks within the training models so they can get more nights on the pillow," he said at the Brookings Institution think tank on Friday. "It takes a lot of effort but it's going to be tough right now — demand is as high as it could be." When asked to expand on what exactly is looking to be changed in the training model, McCarthy said they want to refine the repetition in training. "When you read the book outliers, they say, 'Well, you need 10,000 repetitions to master a skill.' You need 10,000 good ones," McCarthy said. "So when you look at the number of repetitions you have in the training cycle, whether as an individual or as a brigade combat team, you want to make sure you're doing the right ones perfectly." Once they perfect the training model, he said, soldiers will in turn be able to "get time back," meaning more time at home, which is the key "to keeping the force rested and ready to go." Concerns over how the Army's unending push for readiness is impacting soldiers

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Cold Weather Casualties and Injuries

Cold weather-related injuries include: injuries due to decreased temperature (hypothermia, frostbite, nonfreezing cold injury), injuries due to heaters, carbon monoxide poisoning, and accidents due to impaired physical and/or mental function resulting from cold stress. Cold weather injuries can also occur in warmer ambient temperatures when an individual is wet due to rain or water immersion.



and their families were raised recently in transition documents compiled for the then-incoming Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville, as Task & Purpose has previously reported. "Readiness requirements are almost impossible to meet," a male Army captain said in a survey included in the transition documents. "The [Sustainable Readiness Model] is breaking the force." [Task and Purpose](#)

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Treating service members without painkillers reduces risk of mental health concerns

13 January- A new study says we may need to take a long, hard look at how we treat pain in those returning from military service. It's not uncommon for those returning from military service to have both physical pain and mental health concerns, such as post-traumatic stress disorder. But this new study in the Journal of General Internal Medicine says how we treat one might really impact the other. Painkillers are often used when military personnel return from service with the common pain concerns seen in this study. The most common complaints were chronic pain in the joints, back and neck. But this study found treating that pain with alternatives to painkillers, such as acupuncture, heat and ice therapies, spinal manipulation and even stimulation devices to treat pain lowers the risk for mental health problems and reduces the risk of suicide. Researchers looked at military health records of more than 140,000 active Army personnel who had reported chronic pain after deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan from 2008 to 2014. They say U.S. Army service members who received non-drug therapy had a significantly lower risk of alcohol or drug use disorders, accidental poisoning with opioids, thoughts of suicide and self-inflicted injuries, including suicide attempts. Researchers say this is an important finding because as many as half of all service members report chronic pain, and suicide among those returning to civilian life is on the rise. These other therapies not only teach coping mechanisms, they also reduce the risk of accidental overdoses and addiction to these prescription painkillers. [Local 12](#)

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GLOBAL

Alcohol deaths have risen sharply, particularly among women

10 January- The number of women drinking dangerous amounts of alcohol is rising sharply in the United States. That finding was among several troubling conclusions in an analysis of death certificates published Friday by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. The analysis looked at deaths nationwide each year from 1999 through 2017 that were reported as being caused at least partly by alcohol, including acute overdose, its chronic use, or in combination with other drugs. The death rate tied to alcohol rose 51 percent overall in that time period, taking into account population growth. Most noteworthy to researchers was that the rate of deaths among women rose much more sharply, up 85

The Surgeon General Weekly Read Book

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<https://intelshare.intelink.sgov.gov/sites/medcom-g2/SitePages/Home.aspx>

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

percent. In sheer numbers, 18,072 women died from alcohol in 2017, according to death certificates, compared with 7,662 in 1999... Experts said that the new findings could partly reflect the fact that baby boomers are aging and the health effects of chronic alcohol use have become more apparent. The increase in deaths might also reflect the increase in opioid-related deaths, which in many cases can involve alcohol as well, and that would be reflected on death certificates. [The New York Times](#)

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Crash avoidance tech saves lives

13 January- Mandating electronic stability control in all new cars in G20 countries could avert 190,000+ deaths and serious injuries, according to a Bloomberg Philanthropies-commissioned report released this morning. The crash avoidance technology embraced by 13 G20 countries already is inexpensive—and cost-effective. The cost/benefit study, conducted by the UK-based Transport Research Laboratory, estimates the remaining 7—including Brazil, China, India and others—would see a \$21.5 billion benefit if they upgrade. “Given this new analysis finding that the benefits of ESC regulations would outweigh the relatively inexpensive costs, all remaining G20 countries should urgently require the safety technology in cars,” says Kelly Henning, director of Public Health at Bloomberg Philanthropies. [Global Health Now](#)

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Early-season influenza B dominance—why it's hard on kids

13 January- Most areas of North America are in the throes of a flu season marked by an unusual early dominance of influenza B, a strain not typically seen in large numbers until the later months of the flu season. “We had a paucity of influenza B last year, so we may have anticipated community immunity would be low,” said Danuta Skowronski, MD, MHSc, an epidemiologist with the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control in Vancouver. In fact, a few months ago, Skowronski said she gave a Grand Rounds talk about the upcoming flu season and the risk of influenza B. “My concern was we had not seen influenza B/Victoria make a strong showing since the 2015-2016 season,” Skowronski told CIDRAP News. “So immunity to that virus would be low.” And that low immunity may be behind the season’s more severe illness in children. In a special Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reports (MMWR) report last week, researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Louisiana detailed early flu activity at a large pediatric hospital in New Orleans. The facility reported 1,268 laboratory-confirmed influenza B virus infections, including 23 hospitalizations from Jul 31 to Nov 21, 2019, a time when influenza activity is typically low. And clinic visits for influenza-like illnesses started even earlier, in mid-August, before most patients had the chance to get a flu vaccine. “B/Victoria viruses did not circulate widely during the past three influenza seasons, accounting for <10% of influenza virus isolates reported during the 2016–17 to 2018–19 seasons,” the authors of the MMWR report said. “Even though influenza B viruses are less common than influenza A viruses in most seasons,

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influenza B virus infection can be severe in children." Last week the CDC also released a Health Alert Network (HAN) advisory, warning clinicians that in previous season's influenza B has been associated with a higher proportion of influenza-related pediatric deaths. So far in the 2019-20 flu season, 32 children have died, with 21 of those deaths linked to influenza B. [CIDRAP](#)

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HPV vaccine now recommended for those up to age 45

14 January- The Food and Drug Administration has raised the recommended age to receive the vaccine for human papillomavirus, or HPV to 45. Health care experts say that's good news for women and men who did not receive the anti-cancer vaccine in childhood. "There are hundreds of different strains of HPV," said Navy Cmdr. Shannon Lamb, a urogynecologist and the U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery's Women's Health Branch chief. "The vaccine doesn't protect from all of them, but it does protect from the most common ones that cause different types of cancers as well as genital warts." HPV spreads through intimate skin-on-skin contact. Typically, the vaccine is recommended for girls and boys as young as age 9, and women and men up to age 26. "It's recommended for young people so they're protected before they're ever exposed to the virus," Lamb said. "HPV is a very common infection. Over 80 percent of people will be infected in their lifetime." In 2018, the FDA approved the vaccine for women and men up to age 45. While many adults have been exposed to some strains of HPV, most have not been exposed to all nine types covered by the vaccine. [Health.mil](#)

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Is Juul safe? 1.3 Million users complained over leaky pods

15 January- On Jan. 13, Bloomberg reported that approximately 1.3 million user complaints were received by Juul company, an e-cigarette company provider, from 2015 to 2018. The most evident health issue that Bloomberg found out is the effect of leaky nicotine pods that are accidentally making Juul users swallow the juice, causing them to feel ill and even resulted to throat burns. [Tech Times](#)

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Most people wait too long for knee replacement surgery, study says

13 January- Living with knee pain? A new study has found that 90% of Americans with osteoarthritis suffer too long before having a knee replacement that could improve their quality of life. "When people wait too long, they lose more and more function and can't exercise or be active, thus leaving them open to weight gain, depression and other health problems," said lead investigator Hassan Ghomrawi, associate professor of surgery at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine. In addition, the surgery may not be as successful, Ghomrawi said. "There are multiple studies that have shown that patients who do surgery when their function is very deteriorated may improve quite a bit, but their improvement is still not to the average," Ghomrawi said. "They lag behind in optimal benefit." On the flip side, the study also found that 25% of people who do choose knee surgery are getting it too early, running significant risks, including potential complications, while incurring the cost of major surgery potentially without getting much extra benefit in mobility. "There are a million knee surgery procedures occurring in the United States each year," Ghomrawi said, "and 25% of those are premature. That's a lot of patients." Because artificial knees wear out after 20 years or so, early adopters are also setting themselves up for yet another knee replacement later in life, Ghomrawi said, which is typically a much more difficult surgery with a poorer outcome than the original. [CNN](#)

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SGLT2 Inhibitors in T2D tied to new risk reduction benefit

13 January- Individuals with type 2 diabetes on sodium-glucose cotransporter-2 (SGLT2) inhibitors may see a reduced gout risk, according to a population-based cohort study. Compared to patients on a newly initiated glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP1) receptor agonist, those on a SGLT2 inhibitor had a 36% reduced risk for developing gout (HR 0.64, 95% CI 0.57-0.72), reported Michael Fralick, MD, PhD, of Sinai Health System in Toronto, and colleagues. Appearing in *Annals of Internal Medicine*, this equated to 2.9 fewer cases of incident gout per 1,000 person-years (95% CI -3.6 to -2.1). [MedPage Today](#)

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Texas teen, 15, becomes nation's youngest vaping-related fatality

11 January- A 15-year-old Texas resident has become the nation's youngest vaping-related fatal victim, officials said on Thursday. The Dallas County of Health and Human Services (DCHHS) announced the death on Dec. 31 but did not identify the patient or what he or she had vaped prior to falling ill. The teen had a "chronic underlying medical condition," according to county health officials, who did not specify the condition. "As of December 30, 2019, DCHHS has received reports of 53 confirmed or probable cases in patients hospitalized in Dallas County facilities, including one teen who reported just starting vaping one month ago," officials added. "Reporting a death in a teen due to EVALI is so tragic," said DCHHS Director Dr. Philip Huang in a statement. "We are seeing that severe lung damage, and even death, can occur with just short term use of these products." As of Jan. 7, there have been 2,602 cases of EVALI across the nation, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said on Thursday, adding some 57 deaths across 27 states and the District of Columbia have been confirmed. The median age of the deceased is 51, with ages ranging from 15 to 75. The minimum age appears to have changed to reflect the Texas teen's death, reported The New York Times. Previously, a 17-year-old from the Bronx in New York was the nation's youngest EVALI death. Illegal THC-containing vaping products – primarily those that also contain the additive vitamin E acetate – are likely to blame for the illnesses, the CDC said in December. That said, federal health officials, who continue to investigate the outbreak, have cautioned there may be more than one cause and noted tobacco-containing e-cigarettes are not considered safe either. [Fox News](#)

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WHO says new China coronavirus could spread, warns hospitals worldwide

14 January- There may have been limited human-to-human transmission of a new coronavirus in China within families, and it is possible there could be a wider outbreak, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Tuesday. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause infections ranging from the common cold to SARS. A Chinese woman has been quarantined in Thailand with a mystery strain of coronavirus, Thai authorities said on Monday, and the first time the virus has been detected outside China. In all, 41 cases of pneumonia have been reported in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, which preliminary lab tests cited by state media showed could be from a new type of coronavirus. One of the patients has died. "From the information that we have it is possible that there is limited human-to-human transmission, potentially among families, but it is very clear right now that we have no sustained human-to-human transmission," said Maria Van Kerkhove, acting head of WHO's emerging diseases unit. The WHO is however preparing for the possibility that there could be a wider outbreak, she told a Geneva news briefing. "It is still early days, we don't have a clear clinical picture." Some types of the virus cause less serious diseases, while others - like the one that causes MERS - are far more severe. The U.N. agency has

given guidance to hospitals worldwide about infection control in case the new virus spreads. There is no specific treatment for the new virus, but anti-virals are being considered and could be “re-purposed”, Van Kerkhove said. [Reuters](#)

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INFLUENZA

APHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report

Week ending 4 January 2020 (week 1): The number of positive influenza A laboratory results decreased by 8.4% from week 52 of 2019 to week 1 of 2020 while the number of influenza B positive specimens decreased by 28.4%. Influenza A accounted for 45% of the total positive specimens, followed by influenza B with a 41.7%. In week 1, the average age of patients with any positive respiratory test was 26.5 years old. Ten influenza-associated hospitalizations were reported with an onset date in week 1. Of those hospitalized so far this season, 38 (59.3%) tested positive for influenza B, and 26 (40.6%) were positive for influenza A. A 220% increase in the number of hospitalizations was observed compared to the same week in the previous season. [APHC](#)

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

Key Updates for Week 1, ending January 4, 2020: Key indicators that track flu activity remain high, but indicators that track severity (hospitalizations and deaths) are not high at this point in the season. [CDC](#)

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Influenza activity remains elevated and widespread in the US

12 January- In the United States, influenza activity remains elevated and widespread, and the season is likely to last several more weeks, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As of January 4, CDC estimates there have been at least 9.7 million flu illnesses, 87,000 hospitalizations and 4,800 deaths from flu this season to date. CDC reports ongoing elevated activity is due to influenza B/Victoria viruses, increasing circulation of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses, and low levels of influenza B/Yamagata and influenza A(H3N2) viruses. So far this season, influenza B virus infections account for about half of hospitalizations reported through CDC’s laboratory-confirmed influenza hospitalization surveillance network and the majority of reported influenza-associated pediatric deaths. Health officials say it’s not too late to get vaccinated. Flu vaccination is always the best way to prevent flu and its potentially serious complications. Antiviral medications are an important adjunct to flu vaccine in the control of influenza. Almost all (>99%) of the

influenza viruses tested this season are susceptible to the four FDA-approved influenza antiviral medications recommended for use in the U.S. this season. [Outbreak News Today](#)
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WHO: Influenza Update

6 January: Update number 358

In the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere, respiratory illness indicators and influenza activity continued to increase in most countries.

In North America, influenza activity further increased and although all seasonal influenza subtypes were co-circulating there was a high proportion of influenza B viruses.

In Europe, influenza activity continued to increase across the region and was reported at moderate levels in some countries of Northern Europe.

In Central Asia, influenza activity increased with influenza A and B viruses co-circulating.

In Northern Africa, influenza activity was low overall.

In Western Asia, influenza activity remained elevated overall and continued to increase in Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Turkey and Yemen.

In East Asia, ILI and influenza activity continued to increase overall.

In the Caribbean and Central American countries, influenza activity was low overall, except for Cuba where increased detections of influenza B/Victoria lineage viruses were reported.

In tropical South American countries, increased influenza activity was reported from Ecuador and Colombia in recent weeks.

In tropical Africa, influenza activity was elevated in some countries of Eastern and Middle Africa.

In Southern Asia, influenza activity was low in most reporting countries, but remained elevated in the Islamic Republic of Iran, though decreased.

In South East Asia, influenza activity was reported in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Malaysia.

In the temperate zones of the southern hemisphere, influenza activity remained at inter-seasonal levels.

Worldwide, seasonal influenza A(H3N2) viruses accounted for the majority of detections.

[WHO](#)

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Egg burritos recalled for misbranding as cilantro lime chicken burritos

11 January- Vernon, CA-based Culinary International, LLC has recalled approximately 626 pounds of egg burrito products labeled as chicken burrito products due to misbranding and undeclared allergens, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). The products contain eggs, a known allergen, which was not declared on the product label. The frozen, not ready-to-eat (NRTE) chicken burrito items were produced on Sept. 10, 2019. The product that is subject to recall: 6-oz. packages containing "CILANTRO LIME CHICKEN BURRITO" with lot code B9253 J1 P6009 and "BEST BY 03 MAR 2021CB" represented on the label, and Item #00300, Lot CB03031C11 and "BB: 03MAR2021-CB" on the case. The recalled product bears establishment number "P-6009" inside the USDA mark of inspection on the case, and on the back of the immediate packaging with the lot code. These items were shipped to retail locations nationwide. The mistake was discovered after FSIS and the firm received consumer complaints reporting that the cilantro lime chicken burritos were actually egg burritos. [Food Safety News](#)

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Hundreds ill in France after eating contaminated raw shellfish

9 January- More than 650 people have fallen ill in France this past month after eating contaminated raw shellfish. Since the start of December 2019, Santé publique France has received 123 reports of collective food poisoning suspected to be linked to consumption of raw shellfish, mainly oysters. The majority, 87 of the 123 alerts, occurred from Dec. 23, 2019, and forward. A peak of illnesses hit from December 25 to 27. A total of 668 people were sick and 17 needed hospital treatment. Most are more than 15 years old. Of the 415 patients with age information available, 15 were younger than 15. [Food Safety News](#)

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Lipari recalls two brands of sandwiches in 11 states because of Listeria findings

8 January- Positive test results for Listeria in a supplier's production plant have spurred Lipari Foods to recall certain sandwiches distributed to foodservice operators and retail stores. "This was brought to our attention by JLM Manufacturing after environmental sampling returned a positive test result for Listeria monocytogenes. Lipari Foods began shipping this product on Dec. 31, 2019," according to the company's recall notice posted by the Food and Drug Administration. There is concern that consumers may have unused sandwiches in their homes because the best-by dates on the packages run through Jan. 23.

No illnesses had been confirmed in relation to the implicated sandwiches as of the posting of the recall notice. Lipari, based in Warren, MI, reports exclusively distributing the “wedge sandwiches” throughout Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, West Virginia and Wisconsin. “Consumers who have purchased these recalled products should not consume them. Consumers should discard the products or return them to the point of purchase,” according to the company’s recall notice. Anyone with questions should call Lipari at 800- 729-3354. [Food Safety News](#)

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More than 50 sick in Argentinian city due to Salmonella

13 January- An emergency committee to control the sale of food has been created in a city in northwest Argentina after a spike in Salmonella cases in early 2020. There have been 51 confirmed cases of Salmonella in Salta so far this year. At least five people have been hospitalized but recovered after treatment. The committee will be responsible for controlling food sold on public roads at street stalls and at commercial premises. It includes experts from the National University of Salta (UNSA) and Catholic University of Salta (Ucasal). Officials hope by increasing controls they can bring the rise in infections under control and minimize the risk to the public. The group, created by the Mayor of Salta Bettina Romero and Undersecretary of Health and Human Environment Mónica Torfe, held a meeting with Juan José Esteban, manager of the Hospital Señor del Milagro, and teams from the department of epidemiology of the province on preventive measures to tackle the Salmonella rise this past week. Norma Spontón, head of the microbiology sector; Teresita Cruz, of the epidemiological surveillance program of the province; Paula Herrera, from the Ministry of Health, and José Herrera, from the hospital also participated. Experts from the two universities are involved in training the inspectors who will be in charge of carrying out the control tasks. [Food Safety News](#)

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WELLNESS

Ready for your first marathon? Training can cut years off your cardiovascular age

12 January- If you've ever considered training for a marathon, but you're a bit intimidated by the idea of 26.2 miles, here's some motivation. A slow and steady six-month training program designed to gradually build up endurance and mileage gave a group of novice runners, ages 21 to 69, an impressive boost to their heart health. "What we found in this study is that we're able to reverse the processes of aging that occur in the [blood] vessels," says study author Dr. Anish Bhuvra, a British Heart Foundation Cardiology Fellow at Barts Heart Centre in the United Kingdom. Each of the 138 runners received a scan at the beginning and end of the training. Using these images, researchers documented reductions in aortic artery stiffness that were equivalent to a four-year reduction in vascular age. The

findings are published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology. "As you get older, the normal aging process causes changes in your heart and your vessels," Bhuva says. "When the main blood vessels in your body get stiffer, it means you get higher blood pressure." And hardening of the arteries increases the risk of heart disease, including a "higher risk of stroke, heart failure, kidney problems and dementia," Bhuva says. [NPR](#)

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USAFRICOM

Anthrax: Three in serious condition in Zimbabwe

11 January- Officials in Zimbabwe report at least three human anthrax cases in the Mahusekwa, Marondera district in Zimbabwe, according to an IOL report. The three people are in a serious condition after eating meat from animals that died of anthrax. Marondera district's veterinary officer, Dr. Kramer Manyetu, said that upon investigation, it was established that the affected trio consumed meat from two cattle that died on December 30. Anthrax vaccination of animals commenced in area Friday. Anthrax is a bacterial pathogen in livestock and wild animals. Ruminants such as bison, cattle, sheep and goats are highly susceptible, and horses can also be infected. Anthrax is a very serious disease of livestock because it can potentially cause the rapid loss of a large number of animals in a very short time. Affected animals are often found dead with no illness detected. When conditions become favorable, the spores germinate into colonies of bacteria. An example would be a grazing cow ingests spores that in the cow, germinate, grow spread and eventually kill the animal. Anthrax is caused by the bacterium, *Bacillus anthracis*. This spore forming bacteria can survive in the environment for decades because of its ability to resist heat, cold, drying, etc. This is usually the infectious stage of anthrax. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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USCENTCOM

Pakistan: Is the *Naegleria fowleri* strain seen in Karachi different?

14 January- Health officials in Karachi, Pakistan reported 16 *Naegleria fowleri* infections/deaths (primary amoebic meningoencephalitis [PAM]) in 2019. In fact, more cases of *N. fowleri* were reported in Karachi since the first case was reported in 2008, which stands at 146, than in the United States (145 cases were reported from 1962-2018). In a correspondence published in the recent *The Lancet Journal of Infectious Diseases*, researchers from the National University of Medical Sciences in Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan suggest of the possibility of a genetically unique strain of the parasite in Pakistan. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Pakistan reports most polio cases in years in 2019

9 January- Two countries in the world continue to report ongoing wild poliovirus transmission (WPV1)–Pakistan and Afghanistan. 2019 saw a big increase in WPV1 cases, particularly in Pakistan. During the past year, Pakistan saw its numbers of WPV1 cases rise to 134, more than 10 times the number reported in 2018, with cases distributed as follows: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (91), Sindh (24), Balochistan (11) and Punjab (8). This total is higher than recent years, when 54, 20, 8 and 12 cases were reported in from 2015-2018, respectively. In 2014, Pakistan saw 306 cases and if you go back a few decades, the early 1990s, the annual incidence of polio was estimated at more than 20,000 cases a year. Pakistan has experienced serious difficulties in their battle with polio. An UN-funded drive to vaccinate all kids under the age of five faces opposition from Islamist militants and religious conservatives, who believe the vaccine, administered in multiple rounds, is intended to make Muslim children sterile. The militants have killed hundreds of health workers and the police officers who guard them. Afghanistan reported 28 WPV1 cases in 2019, bringing the global total to 156. In addition to the increase in WPV1 in 2019, circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV) cases increased to 249. Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Nigeria reported the most cases with 86, 63 and 18, respectively. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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USEUCOM

Iceland reports increase in flu cases

11 January- Iceland health officials report an increase in the number of people diagnosed with confirmed influenza in recent weeks. Most people have had influenza A (H3), but at the end of November, influenza A (H1) pdm09 was confirmed for the first time this winter and for the past three weeks, this strain has been diagnosed weekly in 4 to 5 individuals. Since the end of September-October, a total of 80 people have had confirmed influenza, including 57 with influenza A (H3), 17 with influenza A (H1) v and six with influenza B. In December, three people were admitted to hospital with influenza, of whom two were eighties with influenza A (H3) and one child with influenza A (H1) pdm09. Influenza has increased in Europe, both influenza A (H3 and H1pdm09) and influenza B are being reported. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Spain: Flu epidemic wave of the 2019-2020 season has officially begun

11 January- The Carlos III Health Institute in Madrid said this week the flu epidemic wave of the 2019-2020 season has officially begun, according to the disease transmissibility levels. According to the latest weekly report of the Influenza Surveillance System in Spain, the flu season is characterized by a predominant circulation of the virus called A (H1N1) pdm09. The year 2020 has begun in Spain with a global rate of incidence of influenza that is increasing, reaching 54.6 cases per 100,000 inhabitants according to the latest data. Of the detections notified from the beginning of the 2019-2020 season so far, 55.5% are type A - 80% of virus A (H1N1) pdm09- and 44.5% are type B. The report also notes that, of the confirmed serious hospitalized cases of influenza reported so far, 91% are influenza A viruses. 44% have registered in the group over 64 years old, while 30% appear in the group of 45 to 64 years (30%). According to Amparo Larrauri with the Carlos III Health Institute, "It is estimated that in the last two seasons of influenza, epidemics have produced between 500,000 and 700,000 cases of mild disease treated in primary care; between 35,000 and 52,000 hospitalizations with influenza, and between 2,500 and 3,000 admissions in ICU with laboratory-confirmed influenza. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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USINDOPACOM

Australia: Dangerous amoeba prompts closure of Serpentine Falls

15 January- Officials with Western Australia's Parks and Wildlife Service announced today that Serpentine Falls, in Serpentine National Park south of Perth, is closed for swimming until further notice. Water sampling detected the 'brain-eating amoeba', *Naegleria fowleri*, which can cause an infection known as amoebic meningitis, or primary amoebic meningoencephalitis (PAM). Amoebic meningitis is rare, but can be a fatal disease. Infection occurs where water is forced into a person's nose at pressure from jumping, falling or diving into the water. The following symptoms usually occur within 5 days of infection: severe and persistent headache, high fever, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, neck stiffness, confusion and hallucinations, drowsiness or coma. If you or someone you know has been swimming at Serpentine Falls and are experiencing any of these symptoms, please contact a medical professional. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Wuhan, China pneumonia outbreak update

12 January- The pneumonia outbreak in Wuhan, Hubei province, China has been a rapidly moving and fluid news story with new information coming out on a daily basis. In this video, I look at the most recent information as of January 12 from the World Health Organization and Chinese health authorities. In addition, a number of scientists have discussed the virus on Twitter and I look at some of these statements. I close it out looking at an article that asks some important questions about this "a lot still unknown" viral outbreak. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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USNORTHCOM

U.S.: LA County health asks health providers to be alert for disseminated gonococcal infections

13 January- The Los Angeles County Health Department is calling on physicians and other healthcare providers to be alert for disseminated gonococcal infections (DGI). This comes after a December letter from Director, Division of STD Prevention at the CDC, Gail Bolan, M.D., which reporting concerns of a troubling rise in DGIs. CDC has received increasing reports of DGI, an uncommon, but severe, complication of untreated gonorrhea. CDC is working with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services on a cluster of DGI cases, where the majority of cases have reported amphetamine and some opioid injection drug use. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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U.S.: Michigan reports 1st pediatric flu deaths of the season

12 January- The Michigan state health officials have confirmed the first influenza-associated pediatric deaths of the 2019-2020 flu season in Michigan. The reported deaths involve children from Shiawassee and Wayne counties who were infected with Influenza B. Nationally, there have been 32 influenza-associated pediatric deaths reported during the 2019-2020 flu season. "These tragic deaths are a reminder of how serious influenza can be," said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health for MDHHS. "I urge all Michiganders ages 6 months and older to get their flu shots if they have not already done so this season. It is not too late." According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), during last year's flu season there were an estimated 34,200 deaths from influenza. In Michigan, four children died last year due to flu-related complications, while nationally there were 136 flu-related deaths among children. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Brazil: Dengue cases up 318 percent in Piauí state last year

15 January- According to the State Secretariat of Health (Sesapi), from January 1 to December 24, 6,698 cases of dengue fever were confirmed in Piauí state in northeast Brazil. This is a 318 percent increase in cases of the disease compared to the same period of 2018. Only one dengue-related fatality was reported in the capital of Teresina. According to a Portalodia report, the state coordinator of Sesapi Epidemiology, Amelia Costa, draws the population's attention to the disproportionate growth of dengue cases in the state. According to her, most of the municipalities participating in the Aedes Aegypti Rapid Index Survey (LIRAA) have a high rate of contamination. "It's a wake-up call for people to really take care of where they put waste, garbage, with attention to depleting all breeding sites. For example, if you have a plant jar that you spend several days without changing the water, that Our concern as State and Surveillance is very big, because the growth from 2018 to 2019 was so big. We are concerned because we are in the rainy season, which is a period of accumulation of water. Regarding the cleanliness of its environment is necessary and fundamental", she declares. The coordinator also points out that Sesapi is developing actions to combat the spread of the disease in Piauí and map the municipalities with contagion rates. "Our highest priority is to identify all the most at-risk municipalities and we are also monitoring the disease by drawing hospitals' attention to all signs and symptoms of dengue. We are also distributing insecticides to the regional health and the municipality if needed we can look for regional insecticides", she says. Brazil saw a record year with dengue fever in 2019 reporting more than 2.2 million cases (1.2 million lab confirmed), according to PAHO, including 782 deaths. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Brazil distributes 1.7 million doses of pentavalent vaccine to states

12 January- Brazil Health Ministry officials reported Thursday the distribution of 1.7 million doses of pentavalent vaccine to the various states. This in turn will be sent to the cities. The pentavalent vaccine provides protection against five diseases: diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, hepatitis B and Haemophilus influenzae type b bacteria. The distribution of the vaccine was scheduled during the later half of 2019; however, supply issues postponed it. In July 2019, batches from the pre-qualified laboratory by the World Health Organization (WHO) failed the quality test of the National Institute for Quality Control in Health (INCQS) and analysis by the National Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA). In August, the Ministry of Health requested replacement of the product, but at that time, there was no immediate availability in the world. Brazil purchases the vaccine via the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) Strategic Fund, as there is no producer laboratory in the country. The vaccination schedule provides for three doses of vaccine: at 2 months, 4 months and 6 months. The folder directs

that the municipalities should regularize the vaccination book of children as soon as the stocks are regularized. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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