NOTE:
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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How the Military Health System Registry targets the opioid epidemic

18 October - ... Developed in under a year in 2016 and released to all sites in 2017, the Military Health System (MHS) created an Opioid Registry with the objective of reducing the number of opioid prescriptions and therefore potential dependence on these pain medications. The MHS Opioid Registry keeps track of patients who have been prescribed opioids and utilizes a patient look-up tool whereby physicians and pharmacy professionals can manage patients and intervene where necessary. The MHS Opioid Registry tracks more than 200 variables, including opioid risk factors, urinalysis results, medications, and morphine equivalence dose. According to Captain Mike Colston, Director of Mental Health Policy and Oversight for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, military prescriptions for opioids have reduced by 15%. MD Magazine


September 2018 - ... During 2013–2017, there were 359 incident accidental drowning episodes (includes drownings and near drownings) for a crude rate of 5.7 cases per 100,000 person-years. Compared with their respective counterparts, the overall incidence rates of drowning episodes were highest among males, those aged 29 years or younger, those who were unmarried, and enlisted service members. Across the services, crude overall rates were highest among Marine Corps and Navy members and lowest among Air Force members. Overall rates of drowning episodes were highest among those working in motor transport and lowest among those in repair/engineering or communications/intelligence occupations. The overall rate of drowning episodes among service members with any history of alcohol-related disorder was nearly twice that of those without any history of alcohol-related disorder. Between 2015 and 2017, annual rates of drowning episodes decreased in each service, with the greatest decline observed among Navy and Marine Corps members. Medical Surveillance Monthly Report

VA to add Naloxone to AED cabinets

12 October - Veteran Affairs, building on a project that began in Boston, aims to add naloxone kits to the automated external defibrillator (AED) cabinets in its buildings across the country. Naloxone, also known as Narcan, can be used to reverse opioid overdoses. After a 2015 incident at the Boston Veteran Affairs building in which it took more than 10 minutes for paramedics to arrive to administer naloxone to an overdose victim, Boston VA patient safety Manager Pam Bellino wanted to find a way to have the overdose reversal
GLOBAL

23 percent lower risk of ovarian cancer with low-dose aspirin

14 October - ... Researchers have found that women who regularly took a low-dose aspirin — generally 81 milligrams — were 23 percent less likely to develop ovarian cancer than were women who did not take this type of aspirin. The finding ... looked at medical data from 205,498 women, including their use of low-dose aspirin, standard dose aspirin (325 mg), acetaminophen and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) that do not contain aspirin, such as ibuprofen and naproxen. In more than two decades, 1,054 of the women developed ovarian cancer. Although those taking low-dose aspirin had a lower cancer risk, it appeared there was no beneficial link between ovarian cancer development and taking either standard-dose aspirin or acetaminophen. In fact, the researchers wrote that their “results suggest that heavy use of [NSAIDs] may be associated with an increased risk” for ovarian cancer. The Washington Post

Experts underscore need for improved bioterrorism preparedness

17 October - As part of a series on bioterrorism, US and Israeli experts point out in a review article in The Lancet Infectious Diseases yesterday that preparedness for intentional outbreaks has the added value of strengthening preparedness for natural epidemics, and vice versa. The scientists outline the current threat of bioterrorism, biological agents most likely to be used by terrorists, how the pathogens might be disseminated, and details on disease caused by such agents. The also discuss protecting healthcare workers during outbreaks, the role of vaccines, risk communication, and international preparedness, among other topics. CIDRAP News Scan (third item)

Grandma was right: Sunshine helps kill germs indoors

18 October - ... Researchers at the University of Oregon set up a study of dusty, dollhouse-size rooms to compare what happens in rooms exposed to daylight through regular glass, rooms exposed to only ultraviolet light and those kept dark. They used a mix of dust collected from actual homes in the Portland area and let the miniature rooms sit outdoors while keeping the insides at a normal room temperature. ... Rooms exposed to daylight have fewer germs. In fact, the study showed that the lit rooms had about half the viable bacteria (those that are able to grow), compared with dark rooms. Rooms that were
Army Public Health Center
Heat Illness Report

In September 2018, 222 heat illnesses were diagnosed (180 heat exhaustion cases, 42 heat stroke cases). A 43% decrease in the number of heat illnesses was noted in September 2018 when compared to August 2018. September 2018 had the highest number of heat illnesses on record for any September during the surveillance period (2014-present).

Infectious diarrhea spores survive high temperatures of hospital laundering

16 October - Washing contaminated hospital bedsheets in a commercial washing machine with industrial detergent at high disinfecting temperatures failed to remove all traces of *Clostridium difficile*, a bacteria that causes infectious diarrhea, suggesting that linens could be a source of infection among patients and even other hospitals. ScienceDaily

Marburg vaccine: Walter Reed Army Institute of Research begins phase 1 clinical trial

15 October - The Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) this week administered the first vaccine in a Phase 1 clinical trial to evaluate the safety and immunogenicity of a Marburg vaccine candidate in healthy adult volunteers. The WRAIR study evaluates the VRC-MARADC087-00-VP vaccine, developed by the Vaccine Research Center (VRC) of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), National Institutes of Health (NIH). The recombinant chimpanzee adenovirus type 3-vectored Marburg virus vaccine candidate being tested is aimed at stimulating rapid but durable immunity. This vaccination strategy is considered optimal to protect both first-line health workers and general populations in areas where outbreaks occur. Outbreak News Today

Market study finds new antibiotics often not widely distributed globally

16 October - Antibiotics launched since 1999 took awhile to attain fairly wide geographic dispersal and often targeted common conditions rather than antibiotic-resistant infections, according to a study today in PLoS One. Of 25 new antibiotics reaching the market from 1999 through 2014, only 12 had registered sales in more than 10 countries. Those with the widest geographic availability had sales in more than 70 countries within 10 years, and in 30 countries within 3 years. Just 13 (52%) of the new antibiotics had an indication for infections caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria, with little diversity as far as the target pathogen and indication. CIDRAP Stewardship/Resistance Scan (fourth item)

New DNA-based test to verify blood compatibility approved by FDA

12 October - The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved the ID CORE XT DNA-
Defense Support of Civil Authorities

Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) is a total force effort by all federal military forces -- to include DOD civilians, contract personnel and reserve component forces and assets. This effort is in response to domestic emergencies, to include homeland defense, homeland security, terrorist attack, natural and man-made disasters and other events.


During the 2017 Atlantic Hurricane Season, 2,253 Army Reserve Soldiers mobilized from 40 units conducted response operations.

In 2018, U.S. Army Reserve Command worked closely with Army Forces Command to provide any required assets to support National Guard or Army relief efforts.

NIH programs shed light on gene variants and their connections to health and disease

12 October - Programs supported by the National Institutes of Health are establishing which genes and genomic variants play a role in human disease, enabling their use in genomic medicine and research. NIH's Clinical Genome Resource (ClinGen) and ClinVar programs address a major barrier to incorporating genomic medicine into healthcare, which is a lack of evidence about the relationship between gene variants and diseases. A special issue of Human Mutation, published on Oct. 12, highlights the broad array of advances made through these programs, which work in concert to advance knowledge connecting human genomic variation to human health. NIH

Report urges burger chains to hold the antibiotics

17 October - A new report on antibiotic use in the burger industry gives all but three chain restaurants a failing grade. The fourth annual Chain Reaction scorecard, released today, surveyed the top 25 US burger chains on their policies and practices around antibiotics in their beef supply chain and gave 22 of them an "F" for not having any announced policy to source beef raised without antibiotics. Two small but growing chains—Shake Shack and BurgerFi—earned an "A" grade for serving only beef raised without antibiotics. Wendy's was the sole large burger chain to get a passing grade, receiving a "D-" for buying 15% of its beef from producers that have reduced the use of the medically important antibiotic tylosin in cattle by 20%. CIDRAP News

Report: World support for mental health care is 'pitifully small'

15 October - ... [A] comprehensive report from the Lancet Commission on Global Mental Health, three years in the making [was] released this past week. ... Threaded throughout the 45-page report is a lament that the world is ignoring millions of suffering people. That neglect is reflected in "pitifully small" levels of financial support from governments and assistance groups for research and patient care, say the 28 mental health researchers, clinicians and advocates from across five continents who authored the report. And there are far-reaching economic as well as psychological consequences, the report notes: Untreated
One Health Day

The goal of One Health Day is to build the cultural will necessary for a sea change in how planetary health challenges are assessed and addressed. One Health Day will bring global attention to the need for One Health interactions and allow the world to 'see them in action'.

Terrorism and health

18 October - Terrorist attacks present a major challenge to society, placing governments, citizens, infrastructure, and health systems under acute pressure. This Series of papers commissioned jointly by The Lancet Infectious Diseases and The Lancet Psychiatry reviews the history of terrorism and mental health, and preparedness planning for biological and nuclear incidents. It provides a balanced, practical approach on necessary steps for the prevention of incidents, preparation, management of response, and communication of vital information regarding necessary actions and risk to the general public. The Lancet

Tiny nanoparticles to treat a huge problem: Snakebites

12 October - An Epi-Pen to treat a snakebite? It's still a distant dream, but a Californian chemist and Costa Rican venom expert are reporting progress in a novel effort to make injectable nanoparticles that can neutralize snake venom and can be carried in backpacks. In a recent study in PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases, their particles protected mice against tissue damage from spitting-cobra venom without triggering allergic reactions. ... While screening them against common venoms, [Dr. Kenneth J. Shea] isolated some nanoparticles that bind with and neutralize two poisons produced by snakes like cobras, kraits, coral snakes, sea snakes and mambas. José María Gutiérrez ... injected dozens of mice with the venom of the black-necked spitting cobra. He found that Dr. Shea’s nanoparticles significantly reduced tissue damage in the mice. Importantly, the nanoparticles did not appear to interfere with normal proteins or to trigger dangerous allergic reactions. The New York Times

When a feather-light touch is agony

16 October - After a bad sunburn even the feeling of clothing brushing against the skin can be unbearable. The phenomenon in which normally unremarkable sensations become painful is called allodynia. Now researchers have pinpointed the tiny protein on nerve endings, called Piezo2, which triggers those painful sensations in mice and humans. ... Allodynia is a daily symptom for millions of people with chronic pain conditions, including inflammatory pain such as that caused by osteoarthritis as well as from nerve damage related to diabetes or chemotherapy. The new findings could pave the way for a future treatment for people with chronic pain or those recovering from burns or wounds—without compromising normal pain sensations, the studies suggest. Scientific American
INFLUENZA

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

2018-2019 Influenza Season Week 40 ending October 6, 2018

Influenza activity in the United States remained low throughout the summer months and early October.

- Viral Surveillance: While influenza B viruses were more commonly detected from May until late June, influenza A viruses have predominated from the beginning of July onward. The percentage of respiratory specimens testing positive for influenza in clinical laboratories is low.
  - Virus Characterization: The majority of tested influenza viruses were characterized antigenically and genetically as being similar to the cell-grown reference viruses representing the 2018–2019 Northern Hemisphere influenza vaccine viruses.
  - Antiviral Resistance: All tested viruses showed susceptibility to antiviral drugs.

- Outpatient Illness Surveillance: The proportion of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) remained low and was 1.4%, which is below the national baseline of 2.2%. All 10 regions reported ILI below region-specific baseline levels. CDC

ECDC: Flu News Europe

Week 40/2018 2018 (1-7 October 2018)

- This is the first weekly report for the 2018-2019 influenza season.
- Influenza activity was low throughout the European Region.
- Influenza viruses were detected sporadically in specimens from persons with respiratory illness presenting to medical care.
- Both influenza A and B type viruses were detected.
- For week 40/2018, data from the 19 countries or regions reporting to the EuroMOMO project indicated all-cause mortality to be at expected levels for this time of the year. European Center for Disease Prevention and Control/WHO

During a flu epidemic, dispensing flu vaccines at pharmacies could save lives and costs

16 October - A new study ... finds that in the event of a flu epidemic caused by a novel virus, using pharmacies to administer flu vaccines could save thousands of lives and billions of dollars. ... Traditional health care locations alone, such as doctors’ offices and hospitals, may not have the capacity or convenience to get enough people vaccinated. Using a computer...
simulation model, the study found that adding pharmacies as locations that dispense flu vaccinations during a mild epidemic averted up to 17.1 million symptomatic cases, prevented up to 104,761 deaths and saved $1 billion in direct medical costs, $49.3 billion in productivity losses and up to $50.3 billion in societal costs (direct medical and indirect costs combined). Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News

NHRC: Operational Infectious Diseases - Weekly Surveillance Report

11 October - For Week 52 FY18, febrile respiratory illness surveillance data among military recruit, DoD beneficiary, and U.S.-Mexico border (CDC-BIDS) populations indicated 0 positive samples out of 3 received.
- Military Recruits – 0 received
- DoD Beneficiaries – 0 received
- CDC Border Infectious Disease Surveillance – 0 positive, 3 received

USAFSAM & DHA: DoD Global Respiratory Pathogen Surveillance Program

During 30 September—6 October (Surveillance Week 40), a total of 60 specimens were collected and received from 23 locations. Results were finalized for all specimens. During this time period, there were no influenza viruses detected.

WHO: Influenza Update

15 October - In the temperate zones of the southern hemisphere, influenza activity appeared to decrease overall though influenza percent positivity remained elevated in Southern Africa. In Australia and New Zealand, influenza activity remained at low levels and even below seasonal threshold during the entire season. Increased influenza detections were reported in some countries of Southern and South-East Asia. In the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere influenza activity remained at inter-seasonal levels. Worldwide, seasonal influenza subtype A viruses accounted for the majority of detections. WHO
China urges more oversight of large pig farms amid disease epidemic

17 October - China’s vice agriculture minister said on Wednesday that local governments should step up their oversight of large-scale pig farms and breeding farms as another province reported a fresh outbreak of the highly contagious African swine fever. China has reported almost 40 separate outbreaks of the deadly disease in 10 provinces and municipalities since the first case in early August, leading to the slaughter of almost 50,000 animals. Yu Kangzhen’s comments, published on the website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, came after a 20,000-head pig farm in northeast Liaoning province reported an outbreak of the disease earlier this week. It was the first large-scale farm to be hit by the deadly disease. Reuters

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Multi-state *Salmonella* outbreak linked to raw chicken

17 October - The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is reporting five cases of multi-drug resistant *Salmonella* Infantis illness. This is part of a multi-state outbreak, which includes 92 cases in 29 states and is being investigated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The initial investigation indicates a link to raw chicken. Nearly 90% of cases report preparing or eating chicken products that were purchased raw, including ground chicken, chicken pieces, and whole chicken. ... The outbreak strain was identified in live chickens and many types of raw chicken products, indicating it might be widespread in the chicken industry. The CDC continues to investigate the outbreak. Fox News

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Scottish government identifies case of mad cow disease

18 October - Scotland’s government said on Thursday that a case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or mad cow disease, had been discovered on a farm in Aberdeenshire, the first in Britain since 2015. A quarantine area has been put in place around the farm while inspectors try to identify the origin of the disease. “I have activated the Scottish government’s response plan to protect our valuable farming industry, including establishing a precautionary movement ban being placed on the farm,” Scotland’s farming minister, Fergus Ewing, said in a statement. The infected animal did not enter the food chain and food safety body Food Standards Scotland said there was no risk to human health as a result of the isolated case. Reuters

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Secondary recalls issued for salads and wraps made with possibly contaminated corn

18 October - A flurry of secondary recalls have been issued after a producer, who has not been named, has recalled corn for possible *Salmonella* and *Listeria monocytogenes* contamination. There is zero tolerance for *Listeria* bacteria in any ready-to-eat product. These recalled foods are ready-to-eat salads and wraps. No illnesses have been reported to date. ... 7-Eleven recalled their Bistro Southwest Style Salad with Bacon in two sizes on October 16, 2018. These products were shipped to retail locations in Texas. ... GH Foods recalled salads made with the corn, including 365 by Whole Foods Market BBQ Chopped Salad, on October 17, 2018. ... Mary’s Harvest Fresh Foods recalled wrap and salad products made with the recalled corn on October 17, 2018. One of the products is Trader Joe’s Mexicali Inspired Salad with Chili Seasoned Chicken.” Food Poisoning Bulletin

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Survey finds widespread 'moral distress' among veterinarians

17 October - In some ways, it can be harder to be a doctor of animals than a doctor of humans. ... [Dr. Lisa Moses is] the lead author of a study published Monday in the *Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine* about “moral distress” among veterinarians. The survey of more than 800 vets found that most feel ethical qualms — at least sometimes — about what pet owners ask them to do. And that takes a toll on their mental health. ... Sometimes, owners elect to have their pets put to sleep because they can't or won't pay for treatment, she says. Or the opposite, "where we know in our heart of hearts that there is no hope to save the animal, or that the animal is suffering and the owners have a set of beliefs that make them want to keep going." ... The study’s senior author, Cambridge Health Alliance psychiatrist and Harvard bioethicist J. Wesley Boyd, sees a connection between the study’s findings and daunting statistics about veterinarians’ suicide rates: NPR

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WELLNESS

A device that makes running faster and easier

17 October - A newly invented wearable device could provide support, succor and an unexpected boost in speed to runners who might otherwise not be able to keep up with their training partners or former selves, as well as people who might like to try running but fear it is just too hard. The device, a kind of
lightweight harness worn around the midsection and legs, can increase someone’s running efficiency by about 8 percent or more, according to a new study, making running feel much easier and also raising interesting questions about whether and how we should augment natural human abilities. The New York Times

caption

'Cued care' approach helps new babies, parents to sleep

12 October - A new program in Australia is helping new parents to understand their infant’s sleep patterns - and get better sleep themselves, too, researchers say. Following the Possums Infant Sleep Program, parents reported less stress, less concern about sleep problems such as night-waking and day-time naps, and better quality of life, the study authors report in the journal Sleep Health. ... The Possums Infant Sleep Program educates parents about expectations around normal infant sleep and encourages them to experiment with strategies. In particular, the program explains sleep regulators such as the circadian clock and sleep pressure and encourages parents to respond to babies’ “cues” for eating and sleeping. Reuters

caption

HIV prevention drugs could dramatically cut new infections

17 October - An HIV-prevention drug pill, dubbed PrEP, dramatically reduced new infections in a large group of high risk gay men, Australian researchers report. Although HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) had been shown to be effective in past clinical trials, the Australian researchers write in The Lancet HIV that the current study looks at the impact of the medication in a more real-world situation. The researchers found that new diagnoses in gay men across one Australian state dropped by nearly a third, from 295 cases in the year prior to the study to 221 cases in the year after the drug was widely distributed. Reuters

caption

Linguistic red flags from Facebook posts can predict future depression diagnoses

15 October - In any given year, depression affects more than 6 percent of the adult population in the United States -- some 16 million people -- but fewer than half receive the treatment they need. What if an algorithm could scan social media and point to linguistic red flags of the disease before a formal medical diagnosis had been made? New research ... shows this is now more plausible than ever. Analyzing social media data shared by consenting users across the months leading up to a depression diagnosis, the researchers found their algorithm could accurately predict future depression. Indicators of the condition included mentions of hostility and loneliness, words like “tears” and “feelings,” and use of more first-person pronouns like "I" and "me." ScienceDaily
Rate of C-sections is rising at an 'alarming' rate, report says

12 October - The rate of cesarean sections around the world is increasing at an "alarming" rate, reported an international team of doctors and scientists on Thursday. Since 1990, C-sections have more than tripled from about 6 percent of all births to 21 percent, three studies report in The Lancet. ... C-sections now outnumber vaginal deliveries in parts of southeast Europe, Latin America and China. Even in poor countries, the rates can be extremely high at clinics. For example, in Bangladesh, less than 60 percent of births occur at a clinic, but when they do, about 65 percent of them are C-sections. The rates can be even higher in private clinics. For example, in Brazil, 80-90 percent of births in private clinics are now C-sections, compared with about 30-40 percent of births in public hospitals. NPR

Some dietary supplements contain potentially harmful drugs

12 October - Potentially harmful pharmaceuticals not listed on product labels were found in more than 700 over-the-counter dietary supplements, researchers report. The pharmaceuticals, which were found in so-called natural products, were most likely to appear in supplements marketed as weight loss aids, muscle builders and male libido enhancers, according to the report published in JAMA Network Open. Data for the study came from the Food and Drug Administration’s Tainted Products Marketed as Dietary Supplements, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research database. The researchers ... identified 776 tainted supplements in the database, from 2007 to 2016. Reuters

Zero Xtreme dietary supplement recalled for sibutramine

17 October - Fat Burners Zone is recalling one lot of Zero Xtreme capsules, a dietary supplement intended for weight loss, because it is contaminated with sibutramine, according to FDA analysis. Sibutramine is an appetite suppressant that was withdrawn from the U.S. market for safety concerns. That means Zero Xtreme is an unapproved drug. ... "Sibutramine poses an increased risk of heart attack and stroke.” The product can substantially increase blood pressure and pulse rate, and can present a health risk for anyone with a history of coronary artery daisies, congestive heart failure, arrhythmias, and stroke. Food Poisoning Bulletin
Angola: Zika in Africa - Rare birth defect on the rise in Angola

17 October – At least 72 babies [have been] born with microcephaly in Angola between February 2017 and May 2018, suspected victims of an emerging Zika outbreak. The cases have gone largely unreported, but an internal World Health Organization report reviewed by Reuters concluded in April that two cases of a potentially dangerous strain of Zika confirmed in early 2017, along with the microcephaly cases identified since then, provided "strong evidences" of a Zika-linked microcephaly cluster in Angola. A lack of data and diagnostic testing along with a woefully inadequate Angolan health system has made tracking the outbreak difficult. But new findings from a research team in Portugal suggest it is the first on the African mainland involving the Asian strain of the disease. Reuters

Democratic Republic of Congo: U.N. employee in eastern Congo tests positive for Ebola

12 October - A plumber working for the United Nations’ peacekeeping mission in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo has tested positive for Ebola, the health ministry said on Friday, the first case of a U.N. worker contracting the disease during the current outbreak. The plumber is believed to have contracted the virus at a health center in the city of Beni run by a traditional healer where someone with Ebola had sought treatment, the ministry said in a daily bulletin. The Ebola outbreak in Congo’s eastern borderlands with Uganda and Rwanda has worsened markedly in recent weeks due to community resistance to health workers and insecurity caused by rebel groups active in the area. The health ministry said five more confirmed cases and five new deaths had been recorded. That brings the total number of deaths to 130 and confirmed or probable cases to 205 since July. Reuters

Democratic Republic of Congo: Congo's Ebola outbreak to worsen without stepped-up response - WHO committee

17 October - The Ebola outbreak in Democratic Republic of Congo is likely to worsen significantly unless the response to it is stepped up, an emergency committee of experts convened by the World Health Organization said on Wednesday. However, it does not yet constitute a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC), the emergency committee said. ... There have been 139 deaths and 215 probable and confirmed cases in the outbreak, which was declared on Aug. 1. The WHO has said it could spread at any time to neighboring Uganda or Rwanda, although both countries were well prepared. “We do have some optimism that this outbreak will be brought under control in a reasonable time,”
committee chairman Robert Steffen told a news conference at WHO headquarters. Reuters
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Nigeria: Genomic analysis offers insight into 2018 Nigeria Lassa fever outbreak

18 October - A surge in Lassa fever cases in Nigeria in 2018 does not appear to be linked to a single virus strain or increased human-to-human transmission, according to a genomic analysis published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. ... The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) reported an unusually large increase in Lassa fever cases in 2018, with 523 laboratory-confirmed cases and 135 deaths from January 1 through October 7. ... Public health officials were concerned that the Lassa fever outbreak in Nigeria in 2018 might be driven by a previously unknown factor, such as a new or more virulent Lassa virus strain, according to the authors. ... The authors ... discovered that Lassa genomes from 2018 were drawn from a diverse range of viruses previously observed in Nigeria rather than from a single dominant strain. This indicates that a single virus strain was not driving the surge in cases in 2018. Additionally, dating of the most recent ancestors of samples from 2018 showed limited support for human-to-human transmission. NIH
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Sudan: Chikungunya

15 October - On 31 May 2018, the State Ministry of Health (SMOH) of the Red Sea State in Sudan reported four suspected cases of chikungunya fever from Swakin locality, in Red Sea State. ... Since then cases have been reported in three localities of the State (Kassala, West Kassala and Rural Kassala). On 10 August, among 24 collected blood samples, 22 samples tested positive for chikungunya by PCR and ELISA at the National Public Health Laboratory (NPHL) in Khartoum. On 9 September, an additional 100 samples were collected and pooled in batches of ten: 50% of pools tested positive for mixed chikungunya and dengue viruses, and all pools were positive for chikungunya virus. From 31 May through 2 October 2018, seven States (Kassala, Red Sea, Al Gadaref, River Nile, Northern State, South Darfur, and Khartoum) have been affected with a total of 13 978 cases of chikungunya, 95% of which are from Kassala State. No hospital admission or death has been officially reported. Approximately 7% of the reported cases were children less than 5 years of age and 60% were females. WHO
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Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe cholera outbreak showing a downward trend, more than 9,000 cases reported

15 October - The Zimbabwe cholera outbreak that began over a month ago continues to grow with 9,116 cases, including 54 deaths as of Friday. Fortunately, the weekly case incidence has been on a downward trend in recent weeks. *Outbreak News Today*
Saudi Arabia: New case of MERS recorded in Saudi Arabia

16 October - Today the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Health (MOH) recorded a new case of MERS-CoV for epidemiologic week 42, which is this week. A 64-year-old man from Afif, Riyadh region, is hospitalized for MERS-CoV (Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus) infection. His case is listed as "primary," which means it is unlikely he contracted the virus from another person. The man did not have any contact with camels. Since 2012, at least 2,262 cases of MERS have been recorded, including 803 fatalities. The vast majority of cases have occurred in Saudi Arabia. CIDRAP News Scan (second item)

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Yemen: 13M people at risk of starving to death in Yemen, UN warns

15 October - Yemen is on the brink of a historic famine that could put as many as 13 million people at risk of death by starvation, the United Nations warns. Lise Grande, the UN's humanitarian coordinator for Yemen, issued the warning in an interview with the BBC yesterday. Grande said the fierce fighting between Saudi-backed government forces and Houthi rebels, and the ongoing blockade of aid shipments, have created the conditions for humanitarian disaster on a scale not seen since Ethiopia in the 1980s or the Soviet Union in the 1930s. ... Malnutrition is already rampant, with more than 22 million Yemenis — three quarters of the population — in need of food assistance, and somewhere between 8 and 10 million going hungry every day. What food there is available is increasingly out of reach for most Yemenis, as the collapse of the country's currency has seen prices double in just the past month. ... A report by an American academic, released last week, details a wide range of airstrikes and military actions that seem designed to cause food instability. They include the sinking of fishing boats and an attack on Hodeidah's main market in August that left at least 26 dead. CBC

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Europe: Report highlights declining sales of vet antibiotics in Europe

16 October - A report yesterday from the European Medicines Agency (EMA) shows a significant drop in overall sales of veterinary antibiotics across Europe. The data from the EMA's eighth European Surveillance of Veterinary Antimicrobial Consumption (ESVAC) report show a 20.1% decline in sales of antibiotics for food-producing animals in 25 European Union (EU) countries from 2011 through 2016, with notable decreases in the sales of antibiotics that are critically important in human medicine. The EMA says the reduction shows that efforts by the EU, its member states, and various stakeholders to promote prudent use of antibiotics in the animal sector are having a positive impact. CIDRAP News

Ukraine: Ukraine measles update: 32,489 cases year-to-date

13 October - Ukraine health officials reported (computer translated) an additional 554 measles cases (157 adults and 397 children) during the week ending October 6. This brings the total cases to date to 32,489 (13,013 adults and 19,476 children). In addition, 14 people died of complications of the measles: four adults and ten children. Outbreak News Today

United Kingdom: Infant mortality in England and Wales could soar without action, study warns

14 October - Infant mortality rates in England and Wales could be 140% higher than in comparable wealthy countries by 2030 without concerted action, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health has warned. The group also says that mental health problems and A&E attendances among children and young people will soar by the end of the next decade without a properly funded strategy. The infant mortality rate in England and Wales has risen for two consecutive years after more than a century of continuous improvement. The college says it is already 30% above the median rate across 15 EU countries, along with Australia, Canada and Norway (the EU15+). ... If trends continue, it also predicts that mental health problems among children and young people in England will increase 60% by 2020, while emergency department attendances rise by 50%. The Guardian
South Korea: Antimicrobial resistance of major clinical pathogens in South Korea, May 2016 to April 2017: first one-year report from Kor-GLASS

18 October - During the 1-year period, six sentinel hospitals sampled 67,803 patients for blood culture, 57,477 for urine, 12,782 for stool and 3,111 for genital cultures. A total of 3,523 (5.2%) target pathogens were recovered from blood. The predominant bacterial species was *E. coli* (n = 1,536, 43.6%), followed by *K. pneumoniae* (n = 597, 16.9%) and *S. aureus* (n = 584, 16.6%). Acinetobacter spp. was recovered more often (n = 229, 6.5%) than *P. aeruginosa* (n = 127, 3.6%). The majority of *Acinetobacter* spp. were *A. baumannii*.

Eurosurveillance

Vietnam: U.S. prepares for biggest-ever Agent Orange cleanup in Vietnam

17 October - U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis on Wednesday visited a former American air base in southern Vietnam that will soon become the biggest-ever U.S. cleanup site for contamination left by the defoliant Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. Standing near a skull-and-crossbones warning sign meant to keep people away from toxic soil, Mattis was briefed by Vietnamese officials about the massive contamination area. In a possible sign of the sensitivity surrounding Agent Orange in Vietnam, where millions of people are still suffering its effects, reporters were not allowed to attend the outdoor briefing for Mattis at Bien Hoa Air Base. ... Cleanup is expected to start getting under way early next year. Reuters

Canada: It's legal. In Canada, recreational marijuana gets green light

17 October - Starting Wednesday, the sale of recreational marijuana begins in Canada following a law passed over the summer. The law says anyone in Canada over the age of 18 is allowed to possess marijuana, provided it's less than 30 grams — just over an ounce. Canadians can also grow up to four marijuana plants in their home and buy from a provincially regulated retailer. ... The government of Canada will oversee production and manufacturing of the drug. Provincial and municipal governments have control over wholesaling, and will also be able to set laws on public consumption. In provinces without a regulated retail framework, Canadians can purchase marijuana online from a federally
licensed producer with “secure home delivery.” NPR

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U.S.: As e-scooters roll into American cities, so do safety concerns

15 October - Over the past year, companies have been rolling out electric scooters by the thousands in cities across the country. ... People download the app, find a nearby scooter and then just unlock and ride. But as these shared scooters have spread, so have concerns about safety. ... Part of the draw of these scooters is their flexibility — most riders we talked to hopped on a scooter on the spur of the moment. And, given the fact that most people would not want to share helmets with strangers (nor could integrity and safety be ensured if they did,) they don’t come with helmets attached. So people end up riding without any safety gear. ... And people on e-scooters are starting to show up in emergency rooms with injuries. ... While many cities are collecting transportation injury data, San Francisco is taking a comprehensive, science-based approach through its Vision Zero SF Injury Prevention Research (VZIPR) Collaborative. ... The collaborative aims to standardize data collection and work with the city to get a fuller picture of exactly what these injuries reveal. NPR

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U.S.: CDC and NIOSH offer key messages for cleanup workers

15 October - Cleaning up after Hurricane Michael will be a long process in the Florida Panhandle and other areas where the storm caused extensive damage. Fortunately, a guidance document from CDC and NIOSH offers a wealth of information about the hazards to which workers and residents cleaning up after a major storm and flooding may be exposed. The document is titled, “Hurricane Key Messages for Employers, Workers and Volunteers.” It covers the potential dangers involved in cleanup work and proper safety precautions, with links at the end of each section to additional resources. The topics addressed in it include carbon monoxide, chain saw use and tree removal, chemicals, electrical hazards, falls, fire ants, heat stress, mold, portable generators, motor vehicles, fatigue, and even working with livestock and poultry wastewater and sludge. Occupational Health and Safety

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U.S.: Distrust of health care system may keep black men away from prostate cancer research

17 October - Prostate cancer is the most common cancer for men in the U.S. (other than non-melanoma skin cancer) and one of the most deadly. It’s especially deadly for black men, who are more likely to get it and twice as likely as white men to die from it. Yet black men tend to be underrepresented in research for prostate cancer treatment. A study published Wednesday in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine captured a snapshot...
of the attitudes black men have regarding prostate cancer research and the evolving field of genomic testing, finding significant mistrust of the healthcare system and medical research. It builds on earlier research that has documented that African-Americans are less likely to trust clinical research than white Americans. NPR

U.S.: Drugmakers may have to disclose prices of medicine in television ads

15 October - The nation’s top health official proposed on Monday that pharmaceutical companies be required to include the list price of medicines in television advertisements to consumers — the boldest in a series of efforts by the Trump administration to curb rampant drug spending. Under a major change laid out by Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar and drafted as a new federal rule, drug manufacturers would need to disclose in ads the list price of a 30-day supply of any drug that is covered through Medicare and Medicaid and costs more than $35 a month. ... The draft rule will now be debated through the fall, and its likelihood of becoming an actual requirement will hinge, in large part, on the intensity of the industry’s resistance. The Washington Post

U.S.: Paralyzing polio-like illness mainly affecting children confirmed in 22 states, CDC says

16 October - Federal health officials are worried about an increase in a mysterious and rare condition that mostly affects children and can paralyze arms and legs, with 127 confirmed or suspected cases reported as of Tuesday. Of those, 62 cases of acute flaccid myelitis or AFM have been confirmed in 22 states, according to Nancy Messonnier, a top official at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More than 90 percent of the confirmed cases have been in children 18 and under, with the average age being 4 years old. ... The increase in cases has been happening since 2014, with the number of cases spiking in August and September, she said in a news briefing with reporters. One child with the disorder died in 2017. Officials have been baffled by the increase, and are starting to count suspected cases as well as confirmed ones to better anticipate increases in confirmed cases over the coming months. The Washington Post

U.S.: Pertussis hospitalization study finds youngest, oldest most vulnerable

15 October - A study that looked at pertussis hospitalization beyond just infants—the group at highest risk of severe illness and death—found that infections severe enough for hospitalization can occur at any age, but that the youngest and oldest patients are most vulnerable. ... Of 15,942 pertussis (whooping cough) patients who had cough onsets from Jan 2011 through December 2015 in the seven states, 515 (3.2%) were hospitalized and 3
people died from their infections. Though babies younger than 2 months old accounted for only 1.6% of all cases, they made up 29.3% of hospitalizations. Infants ages 2 to 11 months and adults ages 65 and older also had high rates of pertussis hospitalization.

CIDRAP News Scan (third item)

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U.S.: West Nile Virus and other nationally notifiable arboviral diseases — United States, 2017

19 October - West Nile virus (WNV) is the leading cause of arboviral disease in the continental United States, but several other arboviruses cause sporadic cases and outbreaks of neuroinvasive disease. In 2017, eastern equine encephalitis virus transmission via organ transplantation was reported for the first time. More cases of Jamestown Canyon and Powassan virus neuroinvasive disease were reported in 2017 than in any previous year. Health care providers need to consider arboviral infections in the differential diagnosis of aseptic meningitis and encephalitis, obtain appropriate specimens for laboratory testing, and promptly report cases to public health authorities.

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USSOUTHCOM

Bolivia: Hantavirus outbreak sickens 13, killing one in Bolivia military camp

14 October - The Bolivia Ministry of Health reported this week that 13 military personnel were infected with hantavirus in the military camps of the Joint Task Force of the Yungas, including one death and two cases requiring intensive care. This has prompted health officials to send a team to the region. “In the three points of Inca Huara, Siguana Chico and Puerto Aroma of the municipality of La Asunta, 15 doctors, laboratory personnel, biologists, technical personnel, experts in zoonoses, rodents handling will take samples and verify of specimens of captured rodents,” officials said. Outbreak News Today

Hispaniola: Cholera cases down in Hispaniola

12 October - The number of cholera cases reported in Hispaniola is down this year compared to 2017. In 2017, a total of 13,803 suspected cases of cholera were reported on the island of Hispaniola: 13,681 cases (including 159 deaths) in Haiti and 122 cases (including 4 deaths) in the Dominican Republic. To date in 2018, a total of 3,224 suspected cholera cases have been reported in Hispaniola, 96% in Haiti. Outbreak News Today
Honduras: Navy entomologists team up to build disease detection capacity in Honduras

18 October - Entomologists from the U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No. 6 (NAMRU-6) and the Navy Entomology Center of Excellence (NECE) partnered with Joint Task Force-Bravo Medical Element (JTF-B MEDEL) preventive medicine to develop a disease detection capability for the region. This cutting-edge work is supported by the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Board—Global Emerging Infections Surveillance (GEIS). Navy Lt. Cmdr. Michael Fisher, NAMRU-6 entomology department head, is leading the effort to bring molecular capabilities as well as the latest in DNA sequencing technology to Soto Cano Air Base. As a regional capability, this technology will allow personnel to rapidly determine if locally-collected ticks, sandflies and mosquitoes are carrying pathogens of disease importance that can threaten the joint warfighter, Honduran Armed Forces and civilian populations.

Health.mil