Contents

U.S. MILITARY

- Federal agencies partner for military and veteran pain management
- Pentagon releases interim guidance on military transgender policy
- Suicide among veterans highest in western U.S., rural areas
- VA’s suicide prevention hotline expanding to third site

GLOBAL

- Distraction isn’t only way virtual reality might ease pain
- Expert discusses advances in aircraft air quality
- Global Burden of Disease
- Leprosy is not quite yet a disease of the past
- New hosts for Chagas disease vectors identified
- The breadth of viruses in human semen
- WHO plans global war on cholera as Yemen caseload nears 700,000
- WHO report paints dire picture of antibiotic development
- You can’t blame a toothache on bad genes

STORMS

- IRMA
- Public health crisis looms after Irma
- VA to make beds available to non-veterans in hurricane’s aftermath
- When Irma arrived, most Florida health care facilities were ready
- MARIA
- Antigua and Barbuda: Barbuda begins difficult road to recovery after Hurricane Irma
- Hurricane Maria lashing the Dominican Republic and Turks and Caicos
- Hurricane Maria smashes Dominica, now menaces Puerto Rico
- Hurricane Maria: Whole of Puerto Rico without power

INFLUENZA

- Mid-season influenza vaccine effectiveness estimates for the 2016–2017 influenza season
- NHRC: Operational Infectious Diseases - Weekly Surveillance Report
- Seven people get flu after contact with pigs at Charles County fair
Study shows co-circulating flu strains on Chinese pig farms
WHO: Influenza Update

VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Eye worm infection 'could spread to UK'
Multistate Cyclospora outbreak approaches 1,000 cases

WELLNESS

10 foods that science suggests really do contribute to long-term health
Bayer halts non-U.S. sales of its contraceptive implant
Depression’s role in increased suicides in military
FDA approves new 1-dose antibiotic for treating bacterial vaginosis
Gut bacteria may play a role in weight loss
Intermittent fasting vs. daily calorie-cutting diets: Both help you lose weight
Just one e-cigarette might raise adrenaline in the heart
Life-saving post-ER suicide prevention strategies are cost effective
Louisiana Center gets grant to study military nutrition
Opioid-related hospitalizations rising faster among women
Poor sleep associated with higher risk of chronic pain
Shedding pounds gradually and steadily may be best way to keep weight off
Smokers with HIV face higher risk from lung cancer than from AIDS
Study: HPV screen bests Pap smear at detecting cervical cancer
Teen wants a tattoo? Pediatricians say here’s how to do it safely

USAFRICOM

Africa: U.S. AIDS strategy to focus on 13 countries close to controlling epidemic
Nigeria: Two cases of yellow fever confirmed in Nigeria
Rwanda: Drones, sun — and a strong will — elevate Rwanda’s health care

USCENTCOM

Afghanistan: U.S. military surgeons in Afghanistan treat civilian injuries
Yemen: Yemen’s cholera outbreak totals almost 700,000 cases

USEUCOM

Europe: Excess pollution from diesel cars leads to 5,000 premature deaths a year in Europe
Italy’s chikungunya outbreak spreads to Rome

USNORTHCOM

Mexico: Earthquake - military criticized over search and rescue missions – as it happened
Mexico: Strong earthquake shakes Mexico, killing more than 200 people
U.S.: Eagle Creek fire about to be soaked by rains - hundreds of firefighters to head home
U.S.: Energy-efficient green buildings may emit hazardous chemicals
U.S.: Gulf spill oil dispersants associated with health symptoms in cleanup workers
U.S.: More U.S. Candida auris cases confirmed
U.S.: Snow falling in Montana, helping extinguish wildfires
U.S.: UC Irvine aims to transform public health with record-breaking $200-million donation
U.S.: U.S. states, territories report 6 more babies born with Zika defects

USPACOM

Thailand: Trafficking, debt bondage rampant in Thai fishing industry, study finds
Vietnam: 70 pct of Vietnamese population infected with HP bacteria
Vietnam: Superbug’s spread to Vietnam threatens malaria control
Veterinary Connections
The Fall issue of Veterinary Connections has articles on microchipping your pet, dangerous household items, intestinal parasites, lunch bag food safety.

USSOUTHCOM
- Americas: More chikungunya cases noted in Americas
- Brazil: How big business got Brazil hooked on junk food

U.S. MILITARY
Federal agencies partner for military and veteran pain management
20 September - Through an interagency partnership, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announce a multi-component research project focusing on nondrug approaches for pain management addressing the needs of service members and veterans. Twelve research projects, totaling approximately $81 million over six years (pending available funds), will focus on developing, implementing, and testing cost-effective, large-scale, real-world research on nondrug approaches for pain management and related conditions in military and veteran health care delivery organizations. ... Types of approaches being studied include mindfulness/meditative interventions, movement interventions (e.g., structured exercise, tai chi, yoga), manual therapies (e.g., spinal manipulation, massage, acupuncture), psychological and behavioral interventions (e.g., cognitive behavioral therapy), integrative approaches that involve more than one intervention, and integrated models of multi-modal care. NIH

Pentagon releases interim guidance on military transgender policy
18 September - The Pentagon released the details of its transgender policy Monday, outlining how the department will navigate tricky personnel issues while it finalizes a decision on whether any transgender military members will be allowed to continue to serve. The interim guidance remains in effect until at least Feb. 21, 2018. ...
- First, no new accessions into the military will be allowed for men or women who are currently being treated for gender dysphoria. ....
- Second, current service members receiving treatment for gender dysphoria will be allowed to continue to serve and continue to receive treatment. However, no new sex reassignment surgeries will be allowed after March 22, 2018, “except to the extent necessary to protect the health of the individual.”
- Third, service members who have completed their transitions will be able to continue to serve in their preferred gender while the Pentagon continues its study.
- Last, transgender service members may reenlist during the interim period and may not be involuntarily separated from service on the basis of a gender dysphoria diagnosis. Military Times
Suicide among veterans highest in western U.S., rural areas

16 September - Suicide among military veterans is especially high in the western U.S. and rural areas, according to new government data that show wide state-by-state disparities and suggest that social isolation, gun ownership and access to health care may be factors. The figures released Friday are the first-ever Department of Veterans Affairs data on suicide by state. It shows Montana, Utah, Nevada and New Mexico had the highest rates of veteran suicide as of 2014, the most current VA data available. Veterans in big chunks of those states must drive 70 miles or more to reach the nearest VA medical center. The suicide rates in those four states stood at 60 per 100,000 individuals or higher, far above the national veteran suicide rate of 38.4. The overall rate in the West was 45.5. All other regions of the country had rates below the national rate. Military.com

VA's suicide prevention hotline expanding to third site

16 September - Veterans Affairs officials will open a third call center for the Veterans Crisis Line in Kansas in coming weeks, a move that’s expected to add about 100 new personnel to the emergency response service. The new office will be located in Topeka on the campus of VA Eastern Kansas Health Care System. More than 500 staffers currently operate the around-the-clock hotline out of locations in New York and Georgia. Military Times

top of page...

GLOBAL

Distraction isn’t only way virtual reality might ease pain

15 September - Virtual reality games might help ease pain not just by distracting players from what ails them, but also by triggering changes in the brain, a recent research review suggests. Distraction may indeed play a role in pain relief, the review of six small studies suggests. But it’s also possible that the technology could help produce changes in the nervous system when it’s used to help reprogram how a person responds to pain. “Guided imagery has long been a treatment for psychological disorders, and virtual reality is a more immersive way to provide guided imagery,” said lead study author Dr. Anita Gupta. Reuters

Expert discusses advances in aircraft air quality

20 September - Professor Peter Childs from the Dyson School of Design Engineering discusses air quality in aircraft cabins in his Q&A. The recent announcement by the airline company EasyJet that they will be fitting filters to stop toxic fumes entering its passenger cabins and cockpits to prevent so-called “aerotoxic syndrome” has shone the spotlight on cabin air quality. ... There is actually much debate in the industry about whether there is a
Epi-Tech Training: Influenza Surveillance

The next scheduled Epi-Tech Training will discuss “Influenza Surveillance.”

Class registration through Continuing Medical Education is required for ALL attendees.

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condition called aerotoxic syndrome, but there have been incidences when toxic fumes may have leaked into aircraft cabins, which has been associated with cabin crews feeling “spaced out”, light headed and experiencing symptoms like vomiting. What we do know is that inadequacies in the air system could lead to complications for crew and passengers.

Phys.org

Global Burden of Disease

16 September - The Global Burden of Disease Study (GBD) is the most comprehensive worldwide observational epidemiological study to date. It describes mortality and morbidity from major diseases, injuries and risk factors to health at global, national and regional levels. Examining trends from 1990 to the present and making comparisons across populations enables understanding of the changing health challenges facing people across the world in the 21st century. The Lancet

Leprosy is not quite yet a disease of the past

16 September - ... According to a report in The Lancet: Infectious Diseases, some 200,000 new cases [of leprosy], including 25,000 in children, are reported each year. About half of these new cases are in India. ... [T]he disease can be easily cured with freely available multidrug therapy when it is caught early. ... But there is no simple diagnostic test for leprosy to catch it early. “To diagnose it, you have to have symptoms, and a health care worker has to notice the symptoms,” says [Ann] Aerts. The initial symptoms are subtle. ... In some places, digital technology is helping with early diagnosis. Health care workers can take pictures of skin patches and send them to a regional center familiar with leprosy skin lesions for diagnosis. NPR

New hosts for Chagas disease vectors identified

19 September - Solitary weasel-like animals called tayra might look pretty harmless, but some may actually be incubators for a parasite that causes Chagas disease, a chronic, debilitating condition that is spread by insects called kissing bugs and affects more than 8 million people worldwide. In a study published today in the journal PeerJ, researchers from the University of California, Riverside have identified several new hosts for parasite-spreading kissing bug species, including tayras, new world monkeys, sloths, porcupines, and coatis—which are the South American cousins of raccoons.

Outbreak News Today

The breadth of viruses in human semen

November 2017 - ... To investigate the breadth of viruses in semen, we performed a PubMed search. ... Our search revealed that 27 viruses that can result in viremia have been found in human semen. For many of these, data on sexual transmission are lacking. Of these 27 viruses, many cause chronic or latent infection (e.g., HIV virus, cytomegalovirus). However, several cause acute infections, including Lassa fever, Rift Valley fever, and
chikungunya viruses. Of those causing acute infections, only Zika and Ebola viruses have been systematically screened for in semen (i.e., in case series or cohort studies rather than case reports). Emerging Infectious Diseases

**WHO plans global war on cholera as Yemen caseload nears 700,000**

18 September - The World Health Organization will next month launch a strategy to stop cholera transmission by 2030, it said on Monday, as an unprecedented outbreak in Yemen raced towards 700,000 suspected cases with little sign of slowing down. The WHO is also trying to keep the lid on a flare-up in Nigeria while tackling many entrenched outbreaks in Africa and an epidemic in Haiti, where almost 10,000 people have died since 2010. ... Epidemics often arise in war zones. The WHO is sending an expert to Bangladesh to assess the risk for Rohingya Muslims fleeing from violence in Myanmar. Reuters

**WHO report paints dire picture of antibiotic development**

19 September - A new report today from the World Health Organization (WHO) argues that the antibiotics currently in clinical development are not sufficient to counter rising antimicrobial resistance (AMR), particularly in the pathogens that present the greatest threat to human health. The authors of the report ... say that while the current pipeline of antibiotics and biological drugs could produce 10 new drugs over the next 5 years, these new treatments "will add little to the already existing arsenal and will not be sufficient to tackle the impending AMR threat." Few of the drugs currently in clinical trials can counter multidrug-resistant gram-negative pathogens, many of them are modifications of currently existing antibiotic classes and therefore only short-term solutions, and too few are truly innovative, they say. CIDRAP

**You can’t blame a toothache on bad genes**

15 September - Even though people are born with microbes in their mouth that they inherited from their parents, these bacteria aren’t associated with toothaches and cavities, a recent study suggests. Scientists and dentists have long understood that streptococcus bacteria in the mouth are linked to the formation of cavities. For the current study, researchers examined the so-called oral microbiome, or blend of bacteria, in the mouths of 485 pairs of twins and one set of triplets who were 5 to 11 years old. ... Older children in the study had fewer inherited strains of bacteria and more types of bacteria that are associated with what we eat, researchers report. ... Bacteria that were associated with fewer cavities were in lower abundance in twins who had a lot of added sugar in their food and drinks, the study found. Reuters
September is Sepsis Awareness Month!

Get Ahead of Sepsis offers exciting new resources for healthcare professionals and patients – including fact sheets, brochures, infographics, digital and social media, and shareable videos.

Get Ahead of Sepsis is a national effort to improve sepsis early suspicion and recognition and timely treatment, as well as prevent infections that could lead to sepsis.

**STORMS**

**IRMA**

Public health crisis looms after Irma

17 September - Emergency responders in the Everglades City area, a low-income fishing community wallop by Hurricane Irma last weekend, may be faced with a deadly public health crisis as families spend day after day in the mud, mold and water left behind by 10 feet of storm surge that destroyed hundreds of homes. The deluge of potentially toxic stormwater has raised the specter of widespread infection, sent at least half a dozen to the hospital, cost one man his leg and may have sickened another who died Saturday. ... “It’s basically sewage down here,” said Mackenzie Yates, an EMT stationed near the firehouse Sunday. “We’re definitely dealing with bacteria.” Standing sewage water can crack skin on people’s legs, creating open wounds at high risk of infection. Mold in homes tends to irritate lungs and could cause respiratory infections. “High 90s, super humid, it’s like a petri dish for mold,” said Frank Zeigon, an insurance claims consultant in California. He said people working in those conditions should be wearing hazmat gear to prevent infection.

USA TODAY

VA to make beds available to non-veterans in hurricane's aftermath

15 September – The Department of Veterans Affairs nursing homes will open their doors to non-veterans in an effort to help house some of the thousands of Florida residents displaced by Hurricane Irma last week. ... VA officials said under federal rules, the department can make its facilities available to non-veterans in cases of national, state and local emergencies. The department manages eight assisted-living facilities in the state with nearly 1,000 beds, and several more in neighboring states. VA leaders said unused beds will be made available through local emergency response authorities, “while ensuring VA continues its primary mission of providing healthcare to veterans.” Military Times

When Irma arrived, most Florida health care facilities were ready

19 September - Another hurricane, another health care horror story. At least that’s how it looked when eight patients died at a nursing home in Hollywood, Florida. The facility lost its air conditioning several days after Hurricane Irma struck. ... But it would be misleading to attribute the Florida deaths primarily to Irma. And it would be a mistake to assume that most other health care facilities in southern Florida were unprepared for a hurricane. ... [O]ther health care facilities in Florida did pretty well after the hurricane. Just 10 of the state’s more than 300 hospitals were closed by the storm. NPR
International Service Members, Veterans Join for 2017 Invictus Games

The third Invictus Games, to be held in Toronto, Ontario, from September 23-30, 2017, is an international Paralympic-style competition which draws together athletes from 17 allied nations to participate in nearly a dozen adaptive sports, including archery, athletics, cycling, indoor rowing, powerlifting, sitting volleyball, swimming, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby, and wheelchair tennis. New to this year’s lineup is adaptive golf, which incorporates modified equipment for competitors facing physical or cognitive disabilities.

MARIA

Antigua and Barbuda: Barbuda begins difficult road to recovery after Hurricane Irma

18 September - Barbuda was the worst hit of all the Caribbean islands by Irma – a category 5 hurricane. It swept through Codrington, the main town, on 6 September, severely damaging over 40 percent of its buildings, leaving just 5 percent untouched, according to a preliminary survey. The whole island of up to 2,000 people was evacuated, and until water and electricity are restored, civilians are not allowed to stay here. ... The walls of most concrete buildings remain standing in Codrington, but wooden structures and roofing in general collapsed or was ripped away. ... Stabilising environmental health is a first step to preparing the island to be reoccupied. A large “vector control” crew has finished a first round of spraying to control mosquitoes, a sewage tanker is sucking up the ponds of standing water. Next on the list: disposal of dead domestic animals, mainly dogs, which are swarming with maggots and powerfully smelly. ... To prepare for reconstruction, surveyors are cataloguing the damage. IRIN

Hurricane Maria lashing the Dominican Republic and Turks and Caicos

21 September – Story Highlights:

• Maria is now spreading its damaging winds, flooding rain and storm-surge impacts into the Dominican Republic and Turks and Caicos.
• Heavy rain is still contributing to a flood threat in Puerto Rico.
• After passing near the Dominican Republic, Maria will approach the southeast Bahamas Thursday night.
• Maria is likely to bring high surf and rip currents to the U.S. East Coast starting this weekend. The Weather Channel

Hurricane Maria smashes Dominica, now menaces Puerto Rico

19 September - Hurricane Maria smashed into Dominica with 160 mph winds, ripping the roof off even the prime minister’s residence and causing what he called "mind-boggling" devastation Tuesday as it plunged into a Caribbean region already ravaged by Hurricane Irma. ... Dominica Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit said on his Facebook page that "initial reports are of widespread devastation" and said he feared there would be deaths due to rain-fed landslides. "So far the winds have swept away the roofs of almost every person I have spoken to or otherwise made contact with," Skerrit wrote. MSN
Hurricane Maria: Whole of Puerto Rico without power

20 September - Hurricane Maria has knocked out power to the entire island of Puerto Rico, home to 3.5m people, emergency officials have said. Abner Gómez, head of the disaster management agency, said the hurricane had damaged "everything in its path". None of the customers of Puerto Rico’s Electric Power Authority had any electricity, he said. Maria weakened to a category three storm with winds of 115 mph (185km/h) as it moved across the island. "The information we received is not encouraging," Mr Gómez told a briefing, urging people to stay in their homes. BBC News

top of page...

INFLUENZA

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

2016-2017 Influenza Season Week 36 ending September 9, 2017 - Pneumonia and Influenza (P&I) Mortality Surveillance: Based on National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) mortality surveillance data available on September 14, 2017, 5.3% of the deaths occurring during the week ending August 26, 2017 (week 34) were due to P&I. This percentage is below the epidemic threshold of 5.9% for week 34. CDC

Mid-season influenza vaccine effectiveness estimates for the 2016–2017 influenza season

August 2017 - ... Adjusted [vaccine effectiveness (VE)] for dependents and civilians against all influenza types was similar across studies and showed statistically significant protection. [The Defense Health Agency Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch (AFHSB)] found that, for all influenza types, VE was 42% similar to [the Naval Health Research Center’s (NHRC’s)] overall VE of 45%. VE against influenza A(H3N2) for dependents and civilians was also similar across studies with AFHSB estimating influenza A(H3N2) VE at 42% and NHRC estimating influenza A(H3N2) VE at 46%. VE against influenza B was slightly higher at 53% as estimated by AFHSB. Medical Surveillance Monthly Report

NHRC: Operational Infectious Diseases - Weekly Surveillance Report

14 September - Febrile respiratory illness cases:
- Elevated FRI rate at MCRD San Diego
- Military Recruits - 20 positive of 46 tested
- CDC Border Infectious Disease Surveillance and Zika Surveillance - 7 positive of 24
Seven people get flu after contact with pigs at Charles County fair

20 September - Seven fair-goers in Maryland have tested positive for a strain of the flu after coming in close contact with pigs at the Charles County Fair, health officials say. The Maryland Department of Health said the seven people tested positive for the influenza virus strain H3N2v, or variant flu. None of the infected have been hospitalized or developed serious illness, the health department said. Eighteen other cases of H3N2v have been detected in other states this year, according to the health department. NBC4

Study shows co-circulating flu strains on Chinese pig farms

18 September - A new study published in Clinical Infectious Diseases determined multiple strains of 2009 H1N1, swine-lineage H1N1, and swine-lineage H3N2 co-circulated and likely reassorted among people and animals on six Chinese swine farms monitored for 1 year. Researchers from Duke University and the Beijing Institute of Microbiology and Epidemiology used a One Health approach, which takes into account human, animal, and environmental health. … Between March 2015 and February 2016, 4,884 samples were screened for IAVs. Flu strains were detected in 11.6% of environmental samples, 7.1% of swine oral secretions, and 4.8% of fecal samples. … According to the authors, “Sequencing results showed that swine-lineage H1N1 and H3N2, and A(H1N1)pdm09 –like viruses were detected in pig oral secretion and environmental swabs.” … The authors concluded that enhanced biosecurity is needed on swine farms. CIDRAP News Scan (fourth item)

WHO: Influenza Update

18 September - Influenza activity remained at low levels in the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere. High levels of influenza activity continued to be reported in the temperate zone of the southern hemisphere and in some countries of South and South East Asia. In Central America and the Caribbean influenza activity continued to be reported in a few countries. Worldwide, influenza A(H3N2) viruses were predominating. WHO
Eye worm infection 'could spread to UK'

19 September - An eye infection caused by a parasitic worm increasingly common in mainland Europe could spread to the UK, pet owners are being warned. The disease, *Thelazia callipaeda* or oriental eye worm, is transmitted by a type of fruit-fly that lands on the eyes and deposits infective larvae. Cats, dogs and people catch it from the flies, which feed on eye secretions. There have been three recent canine cases reported in the UK, but the animals had been imported from abroad. One had been brought to the UK from Romania. The other two had recently travelled to mainland Europe with their owners. All made a full recovery following drug treatment and eye washes to flush out the adult worms. Britain has the same type of fruit-fly - *Phortica variegata* - and the concern is these could become infected and then spread the condition to people and animals in the UK, says veterinary expert John Graham-Brown. BBC News

Multistate *Cyclospora* outbreak approaches 1,000 cases

19 September - In its latest update on an ongoing multistate *Cyclospora* outbreak, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported 31 more cases, including 20 in people with no recent history of international travel. As of Sep 13, the CDC said it has received reports of 988 lab-confirmed cases. At least 553 people (56%) did not report international travel and were sick on or after May 1. Texas is the hardest-hit state, accounting for 163 of the case-patients who reported no travel history. The latest illness onset among the locally acquired cases was Aug 18. CIDRAP News Scan (second item)

10 foods that science suggests really do contribute to long-term health

18 September - ... Here in the U.S., it can sometimes seem that dietary advice changes all the time. But that's not really the case. With a couple of exceptions (like the famous fats vs. sugar debate), what we know about nutrition has been relatively stable in recent years, with new research mostly fleshing out the correlations between food and long-term health, and illuminating the underlying mechanisms. And there are some individual foods that are particularly well-studied and repeatedly linked to long-term health. Forbes
Bayer halts non-U.S. sales of its contraceptive implant

18 September - German drugs and pesticides group Bayer AG said in a statement on its French website that it would stop selling its contraceptive implant, Essure, in countries other than the United States. The company said the decision was taken for commercial reasons and was not linked to a safety or product quality problem. The device, which was approved in the United States in 2002, was billed as an alternative to tubal ligation for permanent birth control. The FDA has since received thousands of complaints, including reports of the device breaking or moving and causing injuries. Reuters

Depression’s role in increased suicides in military

15 September - ... The [Army’s Study to Assess Risk and Resilience in Servicemembers] project has already "knocked down some myths," [Dr. Robert ] Ursano says. For one, suicide is not explained by increased deployment. In fact, one study of more than 975,000 enlisted soldiers found the highest risk was among those who never deployed, and those soldiers were at greatest risk during their second month of service. A better predictor of suicide, it seems, is if one member of a unit attempts it, then others are more likely to follow suit. ... The characteristics of the unit – leadership style and quality, social support, group cohesion and the presence of bullying or hazing – may be the factors behind the likelihood of suicide attempts in the unit. ... [Depression] is certainly a risk factor, he says, but just one in a toxic mixture of factors, including military demotion, a history of criminal or family violence and post-traumatic stress disorder, that contribute in unknown ways. U.S. News and World Report

FDA approves new 1-dose antibiotic for treating bacterial vaginosis

18 September - Symbiomix Therapeutics announced yesterday that the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on Sep 15 approved its antibiotic Solosec (secnidazole) for treating bacterial vaginosis (BV) in adults, the first single-dose option for the condition. ... BV is the most common gynecologic infection in the United States, affecting 21 million girls and women aged 14 to 49 each year, Symbiomix said. The most commonly prescribed antibiotics for the condition require twice-a-day pills for 7 days. Solosec granules are designed to be sprinkled onto applesauce, yogurt, or pudding and consumed within 30 minutes without chewing the granules. CIDRAP Stewardship/Resistance Scan (first item)

Gut bacteria may play a role in weight loss

15 September - Whether a diet works might depend on which bacteria are in your gut. Using feces samples, Danish researchers analyzed the ratio of two gut bacteria, Prevotella and Bacteroides, in 62 overweight people. For 26 weeks, they randomly assigned them to a low-fat diet high in fiber, fruits, vegetables and whole grains or a diet comparable to that of the average Dane. Those on the high-fiber diet with a high Prevotella to Bacteroides ratio lost an average of 10.9 pounds of body fat, three and a half pounds more than those on the
diet with a low ratio. Those on the regular diet with a high *Prevotella* ratio lost four pounds, compared with five and a half pounds for those with a low *Prevotella* ratio, a statistically insignificant difference. *The New York Times*

**Intermittent fasting vs. daily calorie-cutting diets: Both help you lose weight**

17 September - Fasting every other day doesn’t lead to bigger weight loss than daily calorie-cutting and is more difficult to maintain, suggests a University of Illinois at Chicago study. ... The researchers followed 100 obese people for a year ... In this study, those who took the intermittent-fasting approach lost the same amount of weight, on average, as those who cut back on calories — to 75 percent of their needs — every day. Both groups dropped about 7 percent of their body weight after six months and regained about 1 percent of their weight during the six-month weight-maintenance phase. ... Thirty-eight percent of the alternate-day fasters dropped out, compared with 29 percent of the regular dieters. *The Washington Post*

**Just one e-cigarette might raise adrenaline in the heart**

20 September - Smoking just one e-cigarette might expose users to enough nicotine to trigger an adrenaline surge in the heart that can contribute to high blood pressure and other health problems, a small experiment suggests. For the experiment, researchers asked 33 healthy nonsmokers to come to a lab on different days to try an e-cigarette with nicotine, a nicotine-free alternative, and a sham device that wasn’t a real e-cigarette. Each time, participants wore a heart rhythm monitor to assess variability in the time between heartbeats, an indicator of increased adrenaline. People experienced increased adrenaline only when they smoked e-cigarettes with nicotine, and not with the nicotine-free alternatives or sham devices. *Reuters*

**Life-saving post-ER suicide prevention strategies are cost effective**

15 September - Three interventions designed for follow up of patients who are identified with suicide risk in hospital emergency departments save lives and are cost effective relative to usual care. ... They are:

- Postcards: hospital staff mail follow-up postcards each month for four months to all patients identified as at risk, and then every other month for a total of eight cards.
- Telephone outreach: One to three months after discharge, hospital staff call patients to offer support and encourage engagement in follow-up treatment.
- Cognitive behavioral therapy: Hospital staff connect patients to a suicide-focused cognitive behavioral therapy program. *NIH*

**Louisiana Center gets grant to study military nutrition**

18 September - A Louisiana research center will receive $6.7 million to study ways to improve the health of men and women in the United States military. LSU’s Pennington Biomedical Research Center announced Monday it has been awarded the grant from the
U.S. Department of Defense to provide research and information on nutrition and metabolism. ... Pennington says the project seeks to reduce the adverse effects of stress on health and performance and could allow for better prediction of dietary requirements when members of the military are sent on missions around the world.

**Opioid-related hospitalizations rising faster among women**

20 September - The crises of opioids and heroin abuse have skyrocketed, but in just 9 years, hospitalizations for women jumped 75%—much higher than the 55% among men and enough to bring hospitalization rates for the 2 sexes neck and neck. According to a report from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, men and women were hospitalized at virtually the same rate in 2014: about 225 hospitalizations per 100,000 people.

**Poor sleep associated with higher risk of chronic pain**

19 September - People who sleep poorly may be more likely to develop a chronic pain condition and have worse physical health, a study from the UK suggests. ...[Esther] Afolalu and colleagues reviewed 16 studies involving more than 60,000 adults from 10 countries. ... Overall, sleep reductions led to impaired responses to bacteria, viruses and other foreign substances, more inflammation, higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol and other biomarkers related to pain, fatigue and poor health. Newly developed insomnia doubled the risk of a chronic pain disorder and hip fracture problems, the study authors wrote.

**Shedding pounds gradually and steadily may be best way to keep weight off**

18 September - ... The researchers analyzed data on 183 adults (average age, 51) who had been overweight or obese and completed a one-year weight-loss program. ... Overall, weight loss early in the program predicted a long-term change in weight. However, people who lost a consistent number of pounds each week during the first six to 12 weeks of the program were likely to lose more weight during the program and more likely to have maintained their weight loss after two years than were those whose weight had fluctuated early on. For instance, when comparing people who had lost three pounds in three weeks, someone who lost one pound each week had a better long-term outcome than someone who lost four pounds one week, regained two the next and lost one pound the third week.

**Smokers with HIV face higher risk from lung cancer than from AIDS**

18 September - Smokers living with HIV who consistently take antiretroviral medications may be far more likely to die of lung cancer than of AIDS, a U.S. study suggests. Roughly
60,000 of the 644,200 adults aged 20 to 64 currently in treatment for HIV in the U.S. will die of lung cancer by age 80 if current smoking habits don’t change, researchers estimate. “Today, the number one killer of people with HIV on treatment in the U.S. is not the virus, it’s smoking,” said lead study author Dr. Krishna Reddy of Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School in Boston. ... More than 40 percent of people living with HIV in the U.S. smoke cigarettes, more than double the prevalence in the general population, researchers note. Reuters

Study: HPV screen bests Pap smear at detecting cervical cancer

20 September - Human papillomavirus (HPV) screening is better than traditional Pap smears at detecting precancerous cervical lesions, according to a large Australian study conducted in women who had been offered the HPV vaccine. As more data accumulate that HPV infection is linked to cervical abnormalities and that HPV tests find more high-grade precancerous lesions, more countries are considering a switch from cytology-based Pap smears to HPV screening. CIDRAP

Teen wants a tattoo? Pediatricians say here's how to do it safely

18 September - ... The AAP recommends that pediatricians talk with adolescent patients about the importance of hygienic practices in piercing and tattoo parlors, including making sure practitioners use new disposable gloves; needles from a sealed, sterile container; and fresh unused ink poured into a new disposable container with each client. ... People on medications that inhibit the immune system and can affect the healing process, such as steroids or Accutane, should avoid both tattoos and piercings, the pediatricians say. And everyone should be up to date on immunizations, especially tetanus. NPR

USAFRICOM

Africa: U.S. AIDS strategy to focus on 13 countries close to controlling epidemic

19 September - The United States will concentrate its resources on 13 countries with high levels of HIV that have the best chance of controlling the AIDS epidemic under a strategy unveiled on Tuesday. U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson outlined the priorities of the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief or PEPFAR, a cornerstone of U.S. global health
assistance, which supports HIV/AIDS treatment, testing and counseling for millions of people worldwide. ... PEPFAR will continue to operate programs in more than 50 countries. To maximize its impact, however, it will focus much of its efforts on 13 countries that are nearing epidemic control - the point where there are more deaths each year from AIDS than there are new HIV infections. Those countries include Kenya, Zambia, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Lesotho, Ivory Coast, Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland, Haiti and Rwanda. Reuters

Nigeria: Two cases of yellow fever confirmed in Nigeria

20 September - The Kwara state government in Nigeria confirmed today that two girls, ages 10 and 12, have been diagnosed as having yellow fever, according to Nigerian newspaper This Day. Officials said the cases were confirmed by laboratory analysis in Lagos, and local health officials have already collected samples from 38 close contacts of the patients. According to local news reports, Kwara state is susceptible to yellow fever outbreaks. CIDRAP News Scan (third item)

Rwanda: Drones, sun — and a strong will — elevate Rwanda's health care

18 September - ... We came to this land of contradictions after experts pointed to it as an unlikely leader in health care. A constitutional amendment in 2003 listed health as a human right. The country has universal coverage. Malaria, tuberculosis, HIV and maternal and child mortality have plummeted. And Rwanda has opened more than 50 health facilities in the past 15 years, part of a policy to provide health care within an hour’s walk, for everyone. To achieve its aims, Rwanda has been trying new things. It’s given airspace to a Silicon Valley drone company that flies blood to hospitals in minutes. It’s worked with European startups and investors to help bring electricity to rural areas and the health clinics that serve them. And it’s inaugurated one of the first cancer centers in the region. CNET

Afghanistan: U.S. military surgeons in Afghanistan treat civilian injuries

19 September - At U.S. military facilities in Afghanistan, roughly half of the surgeries done for local civilians during more than a decade of war have been for non-combat injuries and health problems, a recent study suggests. From January 2002 through March 2013, a total of 5,786 local civilians underwent 9,428 surgical procedures at U.S. military treatment centers in Afghanistan, accounting for 37,121 inpatient hospital days, researchers report in
JAMA Surgery. Overall, 2,853 of these patients, or 49 percent, were treated for conditions that weren’t directly related to the war, the study found. Reuters

Yemen: Yemen's cholera outbreak totals almost 700,000 cases

20 September - Yemen's ongoing cholera crisis is approaching 700,000 cases, but the country is resisting the World Health Organization's (WHO's) efforts to vaccinate more children in that country, Reuters reported yesterday. Since April, when the outbreak began, officials have reported 686,783 suspected cases and 2,090 deaths, from the disease that causes watery, severe diarrhea. After slowing for part of the summer, the outbreak has picked up in recent weeks with 40,000 suspected cases reported last week. In June, the WHO sent 1 million doses of cholera vaccine to Yemen, but government officials refused the vaccine, leading the United Nations to reassign the shipments to Somalia and Sudan, according to Reuters. Now the WHO is once again urging Yemen to consider launching a wide vaccination campaign before the year's end. CIDRAP News Scan (fourth item)

top of page...

USEUCOM

Europe: Excess pollution from diesel cars leads to 5,000 premature deaths a year in Europe

18 September - ... In a new study published in the journal Environmental Research Letters, researchers showed that in 2013, air pollution by diesel cars, vans, and light commercial vehicles contributed to roughly 10,000 premature deaths in 28 European Union countries plus Norway and Switzerland. About half of these deaths could have been avoided if these vehicles met the pollution limits set by countries. The Verge

Italy's chikungunya outbreak spreads to Rome

18 September - Italy has now confirmed 14 cases of locally acquired chikungunya, 6 of them in Rome, the World Health Organization (WHO) said in a Sep 15 statement. The other 8 cases are in the coastal region of Lazio in Anzio district, about 30 miles south of Rome. Italian health officials on Sep 8 reported 3 locally acquired cases in Anzio, the first in the country since 2015. Dates of illness onset range from Aug 5 to Sep 7. Officials ramped up mosquito control efforts and halted blood transfusions in the affected region. CIDRAP News Scan (first item)

top of page...
Mexico: Earthquake - military criticized over search and rescue missions – as it happened

21 September - ... The latest:
- A total of 273 people have died in the 7.1 magnitude earthquake, which struck Mexico on Tuesday. Officials said 1,900 people had been injured, while thousands have lost their homes. Hopes that more survivors would be found were fading on Thursday.
- Parts of Mexico City have been devastated, but the states of Morelos and Puebla were particularly badly hit. ...
- At least 21 children and four adults have died at the Enrique Rébsamen school, and volunteers and soldiers continued to search in silence for any survivors.
- Anger was growing at the armed forces, who were alleged to be razing collapsed buildings in some areas. The military has taken over many rescue operations initially led by volunteers, but less than 72 hours after the earthquake hit, they have reportedly begun to demolish piles of rubble. The Guardian

Mexico: Strong earthquake shakes Mexico, killing more than 200 people

20 September - A 7.1-magnitude earthquake struck central Mexico on Tuesday, collapsing buildings and killing scores of people on the anniversary of a 1985 quake that devastated Mexico City. ... Tuesday’s quake shook the ground with terrifying force, buckling walls and sending panicked residents fleeing into the streets. There were reports of fires and gas leaks. At least 217 people were killed, according to Luis Felipe Puente, head of Mexico’s civil protection agency. They included 71 in Morelos state south of Mexico City, 43 in the state of Puebla, four in Guerrero state, one in Oaxaca, 12 in the state of Mexico — which surrounds the capital — and 86 in Mexico City. Residents feared that more people were buried under rubble. At least 44 buildings collapsed or partly collapsed in Mexico City, according to Mayor Miguel Ángel Mancera. The Washington Post

U.S.: Eagle Creek fire about to be soaked by rains - hundreds of firefighters to head home

17 September - The Eagle Creek fire grew to about 48,000 acres by Sunday morning, but that could mark the last big advancement -- because of heavy rain forecasted for the next several days. ... Forecasters predict more than three inches of rain in the next several days. ... By week’s end, if the weather predictions hold, Troxel said the number of people assigned to the fire could stand at a few hundred. Oregon Live
U.S.: Energy-efficient green buildings may emit hazardous chemicals

19 September - Newly renovated low-income housing units in Boston earned awards for green design and building but flunked indoor air-quality tests, a new study shows. Researchers found potentially carcinogenic levels of toxic chemicals in the remodeled homes before and after residents moved in. All of the 30 eco-friendly homes in the study had risky indoor air concentrations for at least one chemical. The hazards seemed to come both from materials used to renovate the housing units as well as from occupants’ furnishings and personal-care products, the study found. ... Both before and after occupancy, all the tested units had indoor air concentrations of formaldehyde that exceeded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s cancer-based screening level. Reuters

U.S.: Gulf spill oil dispersants associated with health symptoms in cleanup workers

19 September - Workers who were likely exposed to dispersants while cleaning up the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill experienced a range of health symptoms including cough and wheeze, and skin and eye irritation, according to scientists at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). ... The study estimated the likelihood of exposure to dispersants, based on the types of jobs the workers did and where. Individuals who handled dispersants, worked near where dispersants were being applied, or had contact with dispersant equipment reported the symptoms they experienced during oil spill cleanup as part of the Gulf Long-term Follow-up (GuLF) STUDY. ... Many of those who reported symptoms while they were involved in the oil spill response and cleanup, no longer had them one to three years later when the telephone interviews were conducted. NIH

U.S.: More U.S. Candida auris cases confirmed

21 September - The United States now has 126 confirmed cases of Candida auris as of Aug 31, according to a new case count update from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Fourteen of those cases were reported since the previous update, on Aug 21. ... New York and New Jersey have by far the most cases, with 86 and 26 confirmed cases, respectively. ... C auris is an emerging infectious fungus that causes severe illness in hospitalized patients. Based on limited data, the CDC reports that 30% to 60% of patients have died. CIDRAP Stewardship/Resistance Scan (third item)

U.S.: Snow falling in Montana, helping extinguish wildfires

17 September - ... [Montana] is already seeing some snowfall, which is a welcome change since the area has been affected by wildfires that have burned close to 800 square miles. Snowfall in Montana is about 60 days ahead of schedule. In some places, roads and passes have had to be closed off due to the amount of snow. However, because the fires are so
massive, fire crews are saying the snow will only slow them down, not fully put them out.

WHO TV

U.S.: UC Irvine aims to transform public health with record-breaking $200-million donation

18 September - ... On Monday, UC Irvine Chancellor Howard Gillman announced that [Susan and Henry Samueli] have donated $200 million to launch what he billed as the nation's first university-wide enterprise to embed integrative health approaches in research, teaching and patient care. ... The Samuelis said they hope their financial support for research will help build evidence for alternative therapies that would convince insurers to pay for them, thus letting more people benefit. Los Angeles Times

U.S.: U.S. states, territories report 6 more babies born with Zika defects

18 September - In one of its latest updates on the impact of Zika virus, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said two more babies have been born in the United States with birth defects linked to the virus, raising the total to 95. The number of Zika-related pregnancy losses held steady at 8, according to the CDC’s Sep 14 update.

Elsewhere, 4 more babies in the US territories have been born with Zika-related birth defects, pushing the total to 132. Seven pregnancy losses related to the virus have been reported in the territories, the same as in the CDC’s previous update.

CIDRAP News Scan (second item)

top of page...

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Thailand: Trafficking, debt bondage rampant in Thai fishing industry, study finds

21 September - More than a third of migrant fishermen in Thailand clearly were victims of trafficking over the past five years and even more workers in the industry were possibly trafficked as well, according to a report published on Thursday. Routinely underpaid and physically abused, three-quarters of migrants working on Thai fishing vessels have been in debt bondage, working to pay off an obligation, said the study by the anti-trafficking group International Justice Mission (IJM). Thailand’s multibillion-dollar seafood sector came under fire in recent years after investigations showed widespread slavery, trafficking and violence on fishing boats and in onshore food processing factories. Reuters
Vietnam: 70 pct of Vietnamese population infected with HP bacteria

18 September - Some 70 percent of Vietnam's population are infected with Helicobacter Pylori (HP) bacteria which can lead to duodenal ulcers and stomach cancer, according to one of the biggest hospitals in the country. Besides the high rate of people having HP bacteria in their stomachs, Vietnam faces another problem: the bacteria has developed resistance to many kinds of antibiotics due to abuse of antibiotics among patients, Bach Mai Hospital said on Monday. Many kinds of medicines are 80-90 percent effective in treating stomach diseases caused by HP bacteria in many countries, but they are only 50-70 percent effective in Vietnam. Xinhuane

Vietnam: Superbug's spread to Vietnam threatens malaria control

20 September - Vietnam's main malaria treatment is failing at an alarming rate because of a highly drug-resistant superbug that has spread into the southern part of the country from western Cambodia, scientists said Thursday. In their letter published in the Lancet Infectious Diseases journal, the scientists said the spread of the superbug across the enter Mekong sub-region is a serious threat to malaria control and eradication efforts. ... Vietnam's Ministry of Health had said in April that malaria resistant to artemisinin has been reported in five provinces and was threatening to spread nationwide. The New York Times

top of page...

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America: More chikungunya cases noted in Americas

18 September - ... In the Americas ... the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), in its weekly update late last week, reported 305 new cases as a handful of countries reported small increases. The new cases lift the 2017 total in the region to 145,473, PAHO said in its Sep 15 update. The agency reported 617 new cases the week before. Venezuela reported the largest increase, 143 new cases, to bring its total this year to 241. El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Peru, and the United States all recorded small upticks. The U.S. increase was only 8 cases, bringing its 2017 total to 46 infections, all of them imported cases. CIDRAP News Scan (first item)

Brazil: How big business got Brazil hooked on junk food

16 September - ... As their growth slows in the wealthiest countries, multinational food companies like Nestlé, PepsiCo and General Mills have been aggressively expanding their
presence in developing nations, unleashing a marketing juggernaut that is upending traditional diets from Brazil to Ghana to India. A New York Times examination of corporate records, epidemiological studies and government reports — as well as interviews with scores of nutritionists and health experts around the world — reveals a sea change in the way food is produced, distributed and advertised across much of the globe. The shift, many public health experts say, is contributing to a new epidemic of diabetes and heart disease, chronic illnesses that are fed by soaring rates of obesity in places that struggled with hunger and malnutrition just a generation ago. The New York Times