

24 July 2015

Army Public Health Weekly Update

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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

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StandDesk – Live Long and Posture

According to a Gallup Poll, the average American works 47 hours a week. That's more than 9 hours a day, which in turn can have a significant impact on one's health. While many people now know the physical impact of sitting at a desk all day, there are simple actions you can take to improve your health and even boost productivity during work hours.

LIVE LONG & POSTURE
Office tips to help you live longer

STAND MORE
According to a Gallup Poll, the average American works 47 hours a week. That's more than 9 hours a day, which in turn can have a significant impact on one's health. While many people now know the physical impact of sitting at a desk all day, there are simple actions you can take to improve your health and even boost productivity during work hours.

Spending more time for:
 3 hours a day for standing more
 5 days a week for standing more
 8 lbs. of fat burned per year for standing more

TAKE BREAKS
The brain is like a muscle; you can strengthen it or fatigue it. Giving your brain time to replenish drastically improves decision making and performance.

Research shows that 10% of all the most productive people take frequent breaks.

Work intervals for: 52 mins. Break for: 17 mins.

DRINK WATER
Don't like water for yourself, at least consider for your pets and babies.

Drinking water is the easiest way to immediately boost energy.

Four glasses make up 64 oz. water.

Drinking a glass of water can temporarily raise your energy factor by 14%.

WEAR FITNESS TECH
The best way to reach your personal, health, and financial goals is to measure and track your performance. However, you can't improve what you can't measure.

Wearables can also boost productivity at work, as a recent University of London study found:

8.5% more productivity
 3.5% rise in job satisfaction

TAKE THE EASIEST FIRST STEP
Standing desks & sit-stand chairs are great ways to improve your health. You don't need to invest money in a gym membership you'll barely use or follow some strict diet. It's simply counting how many hours a day at work, you can stand and how much you can walk, breathe, and move continuously. The key is to move your body for your health.

ST-NID-2018

- Tuna used in widely-sold sushi recalled due to *Salmonella* risk

WELLNESS

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- Saudi Arabia: MERS total grows by four

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- Bulgaria: Anthrax update: 4 men arrested for selling tainted meat
- Georgia: Launch of a nationwide hepatitis C elimination program — Georgia, April 2015

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- Canada: Measles vaccinations of toddlers at 89%, below 'herd immunity' level
- U.S.: Aggressive vaccination prevented Amish measles contagion from spreading broadly
- U.S.: Costly to treat, hepatitis C gains quietly in U.S.
- U.S.: Drug prices soar, prompting calls for justification
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- U.S.: Robotic surgery linked to 144 deaths in the US
- U.S.: Stillbirths now outnumber deaths among infants, study finds
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USPACOM

- American Samoa issues alert over 'suspected' dengue outbreak
- India: Doctors and medical students in India should stop wearing white coats
- North Korea: UN - more North Korean children treated for malnutrition
- Republic of Korea: MERS totals stable for more than 2 weeks
- Republic of Korea: Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV)
- Marshall Islands: Chikungunya outbreak spreads, more than 1,000 cases reported
- Nepal: Typhoid reported in quake-affected areas

USSOUTHCOM

- Brazil: 10 Guillain-Barré syndrome cases confirmed in Maranhão, most linked to Zika and dengue

World Hepatitis Day July 28, 2015

July 28, 2015, marks the fifth annual World Hepatitis Day, established in 2010 by the World Health Organization to increase awareness and understanding of viral hepatitis.

Millions of acute hepatitis infections occur each year, and approximately 400 million persons are living with chronic hepatitis B or hepatitis C. An estimated 1.4 million persons die each year from the various forms of viral hepatitis.

The theme of this year's World Hepatitis Day is "Prevent Hepatitis. Act Now." Key messages will focus on risks, safe injection practices, vaccination, and testing and treatment.



- [Chile's abortion reform in trouble with ruling coalition split](#)
- [Venezuela: Mother of all battles in scarcity-hit Venezuela - having a baby](#)

U.S. MILITARY

Agent Orange plus PTSD equals extra dementia risk

21 July - Exposure to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War doesn't seem to increase the risk of dementia on its own, but it may exacerbate the effects of other risk factors like PTSD, researchers reported here. In an analysis of Veterans Affairs data, having been exposed to Agent Orange and having PTSD together was associated with a significantly increased risk of dementia (hazard ratio 1.67, 95% CI 1.27 to 2.18), according to Deborah Barnes, PhD, MPH, of the University of California San Francisco and the San Francisco VA Medical Center. [MedPage Today](#)

Congress scuttles bill on fertility treatment for troops, vets

22 July - The hopes of veterans who need help starting a family as a result of injuries sustained in combat were dashed Wednesday when Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., pulled a bill that would have allowed the Veterans Affairs Department to fund fertility treatments. Murray had planned to present her legislation to the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Wednesday afternoon but pulled it after Senate Republicans, led by Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., added amendments that, among other things, questioned the funding for the initiative and would have prohibited the VA from working with Planned Parenthood and other organizations that provide fertility and abortion services. [Military Times](#)

Faulty protocols behind live anthrax shipments to labs: Pentagon

23 July - The shipment of live anthrax spores to researchers in the United States and seven other countries was "a failure" that exposed "a major problem" in Defense Department handling of the deadly bacteria, U.S. Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work said on Thursday. Releasing a 38-page report on the investigation of the shipments to researchers at 86 facilities, Work said that although few live spores were found in the samples and no one was infected, the incident raised huge concerns. ... He said the investigation into the shipments of live anthrax, which were first discovered in late May, uncovered no single root cause for the problem. Instead, officials found that ineffective protocols plus the practice of inactivating large batches of anthrax at a single facility had led to the problem. [Reuters](#)

New burn pit report: Lung disease, high blood pressure common in exposed vets

22 July - Troops who worked at burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as those exposed to multiple dust storms during war-zone deployments, have higher rates of common respiratory illnesses like asthma and emphysema, as well as rare lung disorders, according

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<http://phc.army.smil.mil>

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to data drawn from the Veterans Affairs [Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry](#). Service members who experienced frequent exposures to dust and burn pits also report increased health problems like insomnia and high blood pressure. But they don't appear to have higher rates of cancer when compared with troops who deployed but had little or no such exposure, according to a new Department of Veterans Affairs report. [Military Times](#)

New insights into the circuitry of PTSD and mild traumatic brain injury

23 July – ... Dr. Jeffrey Spielberg and his colleagues at the VA Boston Healthcare System examined brain networks in veterans with trauma exposure using functional magnetic resonance imaging and graph theory tools. As the authors explain, graph theory is a sophisticated analysis that allows us to understand brain networks at a level of complexity that was previously impossible. It permits examination of the patterns of brain connections, as opposed to examining individual connections. ... They found that veterans who had more severe PTSD re-experiencing symptoms (e.g., flashbacks or reliving the event) showed weaker connectivity in two networks. The first altered network includes the hippocampus and prefrontal cortex, and is involved in providing contextual information. This suggests that perhaps the hippocampus may be overgeneralizing trauma-related memories, and therefore, fails to correctly classify non-threatening cues as "safe". The second network, which was identified only in veterans with comorbid mild TBI, includes the basal ganglia and prefrontal cortex, and plays a role in working memory. [EurekAlert!](#)

Study finds some Vietnam vets currently have PTSD 40 years after war ended

22 July – While it has been 40 years since the Vietnam War ended, about 271,000 veterans who served in the war zone are estimated to have current full posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) plus subthreshold (meeting some diagnostic criteria) war-zone PTSD and more than one-third have current major depressive disorder, according to an article published online by *JAMA Psychiatry*. [EurekAlert!](#)

Update: Accidental drownings, active component, U.S. Armed Forces, 2005–2014

July 2015 - Service members are at risk for unintentional drownings during training, occupational activities, and off-duty recreation. During 2005–2014, there were 1,193 incident episodes of accidental drowning with a rate of 8.4 per 100,000 person-years. Approximately one in six (n=162; 13.6%) of drowning episodes resulted in death. The overall incidence rate of accidental drowning decreased during the surveillance period; however, the death rate remained relatively stable. Incidence rates overall and death rates were relatively high among service members who were male, young, and in either the Navy or Marine Corps. The percentage of cases that were fatal was greatest among black, non-Hispanic service members. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

Veteran genome project serves as early test bed for customized care

23 July - ... [The] Million Veteran Program (MVP), aimed to get complete health information and DNA analysis from one million volunteers receiving health services through the Veterans Health Administration (commonly called the VA). Now, as other research groups try to scale up their own efforts for the president's initiative, the VA effort is one of the lone guideposts in a field with few landmarks. The fledgling VA project now boasts almost 400,000 blood samples matched to electronic health care records and specially designed questionnaires. The blood samples are each analyzed for more than 700,000 single nucleotide polymorphisms, or SNPs—common genetic variations that could be associated with various diseases depending on their location or effect on gene function. Thousands of those blood samples have also been more fully sequenced for specific research projects that require scientists to get a more in-depth picture of volunteers' genetic makeup. [Scientific American](#)

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GLOBAL

Bionic eye implant world first

21 July – Surgeons in Manchester have performed the first bionic eye implant in a patient with the most common cause of sight loss in the developed world. Ray Flynn, 80, has dry age-related macular degeneration which has led to the total loss of his central vision. He is using a retinal implant which converts video images from a miniature video camera worn on his glasses. He can now make out the direction of white lines on a computer screen using the retinal implant. [BBC](#)

Brain scans reveal how poverty hurts children's brains

20 July - ... An analysis of hundreds of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) brain scans found that children from poor households had smaller amounts of gray matter in areas of the brain responsible for functions needed for learning. ... The anatomical difference could explain as much as 20 percent of the gap in test scores between kids growing up in poverty and their more affluent peers, according to the research. ... Children in households below the federal poverty level—an annual income of about \$24,000 for a family of four—had gray matter volumes 7 percent to 10 percent lower than what would be expected for normal development. About 20 percent of American children lived at this income level in 2013, according to Census data. [BloombergBusiness](#)

Cell transplant 'regenerates' liver

21 July – Transplanting cells into livers has the potential to completely regenerate them, say

scientists. The Medical Research Council team showed severely damaged organs in mice could be restored to near-normal function. They say the findings, published in *Nature Cell Biology*, could eventually help people stuck on a waiting list for a transplant. Further tests are now taking place with human tissue. [BBC](#)

Experts propose \$2 billion global vaccine fund

23 July - To avoid the world being empty-handed again when the next disease threat such as Ebola strikes, a trio of vaccine experts today called for establishment of a \$2 billion global fund to help researchers navigate the complex, costly development process. Such a fund would allow move vaccines for diseases such as Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) from the laboratory to initial human trials, a period some have called the "valley of death," a time when momentum stalls from a lack of resources, as occurred in the wake of West Africa's Ebola outbreak. [CIDRAP](#)

Largest trial for AIDS treatment planned after French teen's remission

20 July - A French teenager has been effectively cured of AIDS, showing no signs of active infection a dozen years after stopping treatment ... The French girl ... was infected at birth and treated until she was about six years old. Doctors then lost track of her for about a year, and her parents stopped the therapy for unknown reasons. ...When the girl was next seen by a doctor, the virus was not running rampant in her blood as would normally be expected in a person who had stopped treatment. Doctors decided to monitor her and only resume therapy if the virus rebounded. She's now 18, and while the virus is still detectable, it's lying dormant and doesn't require drugs to keep it subdued. ... Scientists hypothesize that early and aggressive use of such drugs can prevent the virus from gaining a foothold, allowing them to stop treatment. ... [They] will attempt to batter HIV into submission with treatment initiated shortly after infection, then interrupt the regimen to see whether the virus returns. [BloombergBusiness](#)

Mowing dry detention basins make mosquito problems worse, team finds

22 July - A study of the West Nile virus risk associated with "dry" water-detention basins in Central Illinois took an unexpected turn when land managers started mowing the basins. The mowing of wetland plants in basins that failed to drain properly led to a boom in populations of *Culex pipiens* mosquitoes, which can carry and transmit the deadly virus, researchers report... "We suspect bacteria quickly colonize the waterborne debris, and mosquito larvae feed on the bacteria," said Illinois entomology professor Brian Allan. [Reuters](#)

Parental occupational exposure to electronic scrap could expose kids to lead

17 July - Parental workplace exposure to lead can result in lead poisoning in children, a case

report in MMWR highlights. Investigating high blood lead levels in two Ohio siblings (18 and 14 µg/dL, well above the 5 µg/dL level at which corrective action is needed), the authors found that the children's father worked in an electronics recycling facility where cathode ray tubes were crushed. Cathode ray tubes are made from leaded glass. The father's blood lead level was 25 µg/dL. After the father stopped working at the facility, the children's lead levels dropped to 8.7 and 7.9 µg/dL. An independent investigation of the facility identified high lead levels, including on workers' hands even after they had washed with soap and water. [NEJM Journal Watch](#)

Polio: The lowest number of cases ever reported in first 6 months of 2015

19 July - With a global tally of just 33 cases from two countries during the first six months of 2015, health officials are reporting the lowest number of cases ever during this time frame. During the same period last year, 122 cases in 9 countries were seen. With two additional wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) cases reported in the past week in Pakistan, that country's total is only 28, compared to 94 at this time last year. Afghanistan, the only other country reporting WPV1 this year, has seen 5 cases. [Outbreak News Today](#)

Test accurately, quickly identifies EV-D68

23 July - Researchers at Washington University in St. Louis have developed a diagnostic test to quickly identify enterovirus D-68 (EV-D68) that outperforms other tests. ... The researchers isolated segments of viral DNA sequences that are common to every D68 subtype but to no other virus and developed a computer program that compares many sequences simultaneously. This technique led to a test that identifies every known subtype of enterovirus D68 while excluding all other known viruses. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (sixth item)

The light of fireflies for medical diagnostics

22 July - In biology and medicine, we often need to detect biological molecules. For example, in cancer diagnostics, doctors need quick and reliable ways of knowing if tumor cells are present in the patient's body. Although such detection methods exist, they often require a lot of time, work and money. EPFL scientists have chemically tweaked the enzyme responsible for the light of fireflies to make it "sniff out" target biological molecules and give a light signal. The result is a cheap, simple and highly accurate detection system that can change the face of the field. [Reuters](#)

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INFLUENZA

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

- During week 27 ending July 11, 2015, 5.6% of all deaths reported through the 122 Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to pneumonia and influenza. This percentage was

below the epidemic threshold of 6.0% for week 27.

- Nationwide during week 27, 0.9% of patient visits reported through the U.S. Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) were due to influenza-like illness (ILI). This percentage is below the national baseline of 2.0%. [FluView](#)

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

18 July - On 16 July 2015, the National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFPC) of China notified WHO of 5 additional laboratory-confirmed cases of human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus, including 3 deaths. Onset dates ranged from 26 May to 18 June 2015. Age of cases ranged from 58 to 77 years with a mean age of 66 years. All 5 cases were male. There were 3 deaths and the remaining 2 cases, at the time of report, were in severe condition. Every case reported exposure to poultry related environment. No clusters were reported. [WHO](#)

Flu News Europe

This site is currently being blocked at the Army NETCOM level. We hope to get access again shortly. [Flu News Europe](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For week 28 (through 18 July 2015):

Influenza

- No new cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza among US military basic trainees.
- Recent clusters of influenza A and B cases at MCRD San Diego. No evidence of vaccine breakthrough at this time.

[FRI surveillance](#) at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated elevated FRI rates were at Fort Benning and Fort Jackson. [NHRC Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Addicted to antibiotics, Chile's salmon flops at Costco, grocers

23 July – Chile's salmon farmers are using record levels of antibiotics to treat a virulent and pervasive bacteria, driving away some U.S. retailers including Costco Wholesale Corp, which

is turning to antibiotic-free Norwegian salmon. The coastal waters of Chile, the world's second-largest producer of salmon, are awash with a bacteria known as SRS, or Piscirickettsiosis. The bacteria causes lesions and haemorrhaging in infected fish, and swells their kidneys and spleens, eventually killing them.. Unable to develop an effective vaccine, Chilean farmers have been forced to increase antibiotic use. [Reuters](#)

Armadillos are spreading leprosy in Florida

22 July - Local health officials are warning Floridians to stay away from [armadillos] after nine people were infected with leprosy after coming into contact with the leathery armored creatures. Typically, Florida sees just 10 cases of leprosy in a year. The centuries-old bacterial infection, also known as Hansen's disease, causes nerve damage and disfigurement and was once a considered a sentence to death or life in isolation. Thanks to antibiotics, the disease is now treatable and only rarely spreads from person to person in the U.S., typically via coughing or sneezing. [Washington Post](#)

Kenya: Anthrax outbreak kills more than 100 animals at Lake Nakuru National Park



22 July - Agriculture officials in Nakuru County, Kenya are investigating an anthrax outbreak that has killed scores of animals at Lake Nakuru National Park. According to local media, more than one hundred buffaloes and two rhinos have died in the past five days. In addition, officials have killed animals suspected of having the lethal bacterial disease. *Bacillus anthracis*, the agent of anthrax, was confirmed by Kenya Wildlife Service veterinarians at the Lake Nakuru National Park. Nakuru County Executive for Agriculture Dr. Stanley Chepkwony said, "We are also warning people not to come into contact with these animals or their meat products." [Outbreak News Today](#)

Purdue team wins FDA's Food Safety Challenge

22 July – A team from Purdue University has won the \$300,000 grand prize in the US Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) Food Safety Challenge for 2014, with a San Antonio, Tex., company winning \$100,000 as runner-up, the FDA said in a news release today. The Purdue scientists won for developing a method to concentrate *Salmonella* to detectable levels using automated microfiltration. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

Research suggests retail meat is a potential vehicle for disease-causing *Klebsiella*

23 July – Chicken, turkey and pork sold in grocery stores harbors disease-causing bacteria known as *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, according to a new study. The research ... shows that contaminated meat may be an important source of human exposure to *Klebsiella*. The U.S. food safety system has traditionally focused on a few well-known bacteria like *Listeria*, *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*. ... The research published today suggests that *Klebsiella* may need to be added to the list. [EurekAlert!](#)

Tuna used in widely-sold sushi recalled due to *Salmonella* risk

23 July - Osamu Corporation, a seafood distributor out of California, is recalling the yellowfin tuna sent out from a specific processing plant in Indonesia. The fish, potentially infected with *Salmonella*, was sold to AFC — a sushi company that ships its products across the country. The recall comes after two people fell ill with salmonella in Minnesota, according to an FDA statement. State Health Department investigators found the bacteria contaminating AFC sushi at one retail location. [Yahoo! News](#)

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WELLNESS

Disrupting the normal microbiota might make us fat, allergic, asthmatic, and lead to celiac disease

18 July – ... [Martin Blaser] has been a long-time champion of the concept that our normal bacterial flora strongly influence our health. ... He makes a compelling case that the overuse of antibiotics over the years has contributed to several modern health epidemics, including obesity, allergic diseases, asthma, and celiac disease, along with some cancers. [NEJM Journal Watch](#)

How much food does that exercise earn you? You might be surprised

21 July – In a small new study, volunteers who were shown chocolate and sports drinks after an exercise workout could not correctly guess how much would be an equal 'reward' for the calories they had just burned. Surprisingly, they chose amounts that were much too small – either underestimating how many calories they had burned or overestimating how many were in the foods. [Reuters](#)

Just drink water when you're thirsty like a normal person, study finds

17 July - Drink water. Not too much. Mostly when thirsty. After much deliberation, a 17-member expert panel representing four countries and nine specialties, including sports medicine, body fluid homeostasis and exercise physiology, have come to the research-based consensus that people should really just, well, drink water when they're thirsty, you know? The experts came together in Carlsbad, California, in February to address exercise-associated hyponatremia (EAH), a condition in which a person's sodium levels drop dangerously low, often as a result of drinking too much water. The subsequent guidelines,

derived from the Third International Exercise-Associated Hyponatremia Consensus Development Conference, were published in July, and the message is clear: Use your innate thirst mechanism. [Huffington Post](#)

One chart shows why it's nearly impossible to lose weight and keep it off

18 July - In a given year, the average obese woman has roughly a 1 in 124 chance of returning to a normal weight. And for obese men, the odds are even worse: 1 in 210. As if that weren't bad enough, obese men and women have very low odds attaining even a 5 percent weight loss in a given year: 1 in 10 for women, and 1 in 12 for men. Those are the main findings of a new study out today in the *American Journal of Public Health*, which analyzed electronic health records of over 278,000 people living in England over a nine-year period. "For patients with a BMI of 30 or greater kilograms per meters squared, maintaining weight loss was rare and the probability of achieving normal weight was extremely low," the study's authors conclude. "Research to develop new and more effective approaches to obesity management is urgently required." [Washington Post](#)

One night of sleep loss can alter clock genes in your tissues

21 July – Swedish researchers at Uppsala University and the Karolinska Institute have found that genes that control the biological clocks in cells throughout the body are altered after losing a single night of sleep. ... "Previous research has shown that our metabolism is negatively affected by sleep loss, and sleep loss has been linked to an increased risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes." [EurekAlert!](#)

Poor sleeping patterns link to cancer

21 July – Irregular sleeping patterns have been "unequivocally" shown to lead to cancer in tests on mice, a study suggests. The report, in *Current Biology*, lends weight to concerns about the damaging impact of shift work on health. The researchers said women with a family risk of breast cancer should never work shifts, but cautioned that further tests in people were needed. [BBC](#)

Teeth reveal lifetime exposures to metals, toxins

22 July – Is it possible that too much iron in infant formula may potentially increase risk for neurodegenerative diseases like Parkinson's in adulthood – and are teeth the window into the past that can help us tell? This and related theories were described in a "Perspectives" article authored by researchers from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and the University of Technology Sydney and Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health in Australia, and published online recently in *Nature Reviews Neurology*. [EurekAlert!](#)

Viruses, not bacteria, cause many pneumonia cases

15 July - Viruses cause more pneumonia-related hospitalizations among American adults than bacteria, although the cause of the lung infection is undetected in most cases, a new

federal study says. The findings show the need for improved diagnostic tests, according to Dr. Tom Frieden, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which conducted the study. [WebMD](#)

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USAFRICOM

Guinea and Sierra Leone: Ebola cases ebb a bit, with Conakry, Freetown as hot spots

22 July – The number of new Ebola cases in Guinea and Sierra Leone declined a bit last week, with much of the disease activity centered in the two capital cities for the second week in a row, the World Health Organization (WHO) said in its weekly epidemiologic update today. Tests confirmed 26 Ebola cases among the two countries, 22 in Guinea and 4 in Sierra Leone. The total is down from 30 reported the previous week, but progress against the disease has been stagnant over the past several weeks, hovering around 25 to 30 cases.

[CIDRAP](#)

Liberia: Ebola patients discharged, last of the country's latest wave

20 July - The last four Ebola patients in Liberia were discharged Monday from a clinic in the capital, Monrovia, meaning there were no more confirmed carriers of the deadly virus in the West African country. The group of four, released to cheers and applause, were part of a new wave of Ebola infections in Margibi County, just outside Monrovia, discovered in late June. Two other people confirmed to have had Ebola have since died. ... Health experts are not sure why Ebola resurfaced in Liberia, although genetic tests on the first case in the new wave of infections show the virus probably remained latent in the country. Officials think that sexual transmission is the most likely explanation. [New York Times](#)

South Sudan cholera outbreak update: 1,244 cases including 39 deaths

22 July - Hundreds of additional cholera cases have been reported in past week in South Sudan bringing the total cases in this outbreak to 1,244, up from 984 on July 14. The Government of South Sudan adds that the death toll in the outbreak is now 39, up 5 since the last update. Juba County accounts for the bulk of the cases and fatalities with 1,138 cases and 38 deaths. Two weeks ago, UNICEF reported that 20 percent of the fatalities were in children 5 years of age and younger. ... The probable risk factors fueling transmission include: residing in a crowded internally displaced persons (IDP) camp with poor sanitation and hygiene; using untreated water from the Water tankers; lack of household chlorination

of drinking water; eating food from unregulated roadside food vendors or makeshift markets; open defecation/poor latrine use; and attending/eating food at a funeral. [Outbreak News Today](#)

Uganda: Uganda battles increase in HIV infections

21 July - Uganda had the third-highest number of new HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa last year, behind South Africa and Nigeria, reversing its reputation for successfully tackling the epidemic in the 1990s. Although the percentage of people living with HIV/AIDS is half of what it was in the 1980s, the increase in new infections is worrying to health workers. Health officials said one of the reasons for the rise in infections is that Uganda has become a victim of its own success, especially after the introduction of anti-retroviral drugs. [VOA](#)

Young South African women can adhere to daily PrEP regimen as HIV prevention, study finds

21 July – A clinical study funded by the National Institutes of Health has found that young, single black women in South Africa adhered to a daily pill regimen to prevent HIV infection – an HIV prevention strategy known as pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP. This finding is the first strong indication that this population at substantial HIV risk could accept and reliably adhere to daily PrEP dosing. [EurekAlert!](#)

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USCENTCOM

Jordan's rehabilitation clinic for victims of war

19 July - Over the past decade, conflicts in the Middle East have taken a huge toll on human life. Those people who survive the bombs and bullets can be left with incredibly complex injuries, which their countries' beleaguered health care systems are in no position to treat. In Amman, Jordan, the international medical charity Doctors Without Borders runs the region's only specialist reconstructive surgery hospital for victims of war, offering free treatment and rehabilitation for people with severe and complex injuries. It's thought to be one of the only hospitals in the world dedicated to carrying out highly sophisticated procedures such as facial reconstruction, microsurgery and tissue expansion for survivors of war. [Al Jazeera](#)

Saudi Arabia: MERS total grows by four

23 July - Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) has sickened four more people in Saudi Arabia of the past 2 days, one of them fatally, according to reports from the country's Ministry of Health (MOH). ... None are healthcare workers, but three of them had no known contact with a suspected or confirmed case in the community in the hospital. ...

The new developments lift Saudi Arabia's overall disease totals to 1,053 cases, 465 deaths, and 581 recoveries. Seven people are still being treated for their infections. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

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Bulgaria: Anthrax update: 4 men arrested for selling tainted meat



23 July - In a follow-up to the report of an anthrax death in Varna District, Bulgaria Saturday, the Bulgarian News Agency reports that at least four men have been arrested, acquaintances of the dead man, for selling infected meat and parts from the animal's carcass to several establishments. In a follow-up to the report of an anthrax death in Varna District, Bulgaria Saturday, the Bulgarian News Agency reports that at least four men have been arrested, acquaintances of the dead man, for selling infected meat and parts from the animal's carcass to several establishments. In a follow-up to the report of an anthrax death in Varna District, Bulgaria Saturday, the Bulgarian News Agency reports that at least four men have been arrested, acquaintances of the dead man, for selling infected meat and parts from the animal's carcass to several establishments. [Outbreak News Today](#)

Georgia: Launch of a nationwide hepatitis C elimination program — Georgia, April 2015

24 July - Georgia, a middle-income Eurasian country, has one of the highest estimated HCV prevalences in the world. In 2011, Georgia began offering treatment to a limited number of HCV-infected persons. Beginning in 2013, when new oral medications that can cure >90% of HCV infections were licensed, Georgia engaged partners to develop a comprehensive HCV prevention and control plan, during which the concept of elimination of HCV transmission and disease emerged. To prepare for the launch of an HCV elimination program, Georgia requested CDC's assistance to describe HCV epidemiology, evaluate laboratory and health care capacity, and conduct program monitoring and evaluation. This report describes the activities undertaken to prepare for the program, launched in April 2015, and early results of its initial phase, focused on improving access to affordable diagnostics and free curative treatment for HCV-infected persons with severe liver disease. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

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Canada: Measles vaccinations of toddlers at 89%, below 'herd immunity' level

21 July - Statistics Canada on Tuesday released the results of a national survey on childhood immunizations showing a high percentage of two-year-olds have been vaccinated against a variety of childhood diseases, though the figure is still short of so-called herd immunity. About 89 per cent of two-year-olds had received the recommended number of immunizations against measles, mumps and rubella, according to the 2013 Childhood National Immunization Coverage Study sponsored by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). Doctors say a 95 per cent vaccination rate for measles is ideally needed for "herd immunity" in the population to prevent outbreaks. [CBC News](#)

U.S.: Aggressive vaccination prevented Amish measles contagion from spreading broadly

23 July - An aggressive vaccination effort in response to the 2014 measles outbreak among North American Amish communities in Ohio significantly reduced the transmission of measles and the expected number of cases, according to a new study, even though under-vaccination among the North American Amish and in other communities around the United States led to the highest national annual number of reported cases in 2014 in the last 20 years. [Researchers] ... explored the impact of the 2014 outbreak response compared to no or only partial response. They concluded that "aggressive outbreak response efforts in Ohio probably prevented widespread transmission of measles within the entire North American Amish." [Newswise](#)

U.S.: Costly to treat, hepatitis C gains quietly in U.S.

23 July - ... Mr. Wayman is part of an epidemic affecting young intravenous drug users across the country, particularly in Appalachia, where opiate abuse exploded in the late 1990s and never subsided. And that has health officials concerned, not just because the hepatitis C virus can lead to liver failure, cancer and sometimes death, but also because its spread can foretell another deadly disease: H.I.V., which can also be transmitted by shared needles. Earlier this year, in Scott County, just 90 miles from here in rural southern Indiana, more than 160 people tested positive for H.I.V., and 86 percent of those people were also found to have hepatitis C. Most of those infected had shared needles to inject a prescription opiate called Opana. [New York Times](#)

U.S.: Drug prices soar, prompting calls for justification

23 July - As complaints grow about exorbitant drug prices, pharmaceutical companies are coming under pressure to disclose the development costs and profits of those medicines and the rationale for charging what they do. So-called pharmaceutical cost transparency

bills have been introduced in at least six state legislatures in the last year, aiming to make drug companies justify their prices, which are often attributed to high research and development costs. ... In an article being published Thursday, more than 100 prominent oncologists called for support of a grass-roots movement to stem the rapid increases of prices of cancer drugs, including by letting Medicare negotiate prices with pharmaceutical companies and letting patients import less expensive medicines from Canada. [New York Times](#)

U.S.: Lawmakers seek probe of abortion rules after Planned Parenthood videos

22 July – Two senior Republican lawmakers are calling on the U.S. Department of Justice to review how it enforces abortion regulations following the release of a pair of videos that critics say show Planned Parenthood is involved in the illegal sale of aborted fetal tissue. The Center for Medical Progress, an anti-abortion group, secretly recorded the videos. They show interviews with two officials at the non-profit reproductive health organization discussing ways to perform abortions to preserve fetal tissue to research and the costs involved. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: Poor diabetes control found in older Americans

21 July – Only one in three older Americans have their diabetes under control as measured by guidelines set by the American Diabetes Association, new Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health research suggests. Some argue that ADA guidelines may be too stringent for some older adults. But even using less stringent measures, the researchers found, there are still many older Americans whose diabetes is not well managed, a condition that can lead to multiple long-term health problems ranging from kidney disease to blindness. [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health](#)

U.S.: Robotic surgery linked to 144 deaths in the US

22 July – A study into the safety of surgical robots has linked the machines' use to at least 144 deaths and more than 1,000 injuries over a 14-year period in the US. The events include broken instruments falling into patients' bodies, electrical sparks causing tissue burns and system errors making surgery take longer than planned. The report notes that the figures represent a small proportion of the total number of robotic procedures. [BBC](#)

U.S.: Stillbirths now outnumber deaths among infants, study finds

23 July - For the first time, stillbirths have slightly outnumbered deaths among infants before their first birthdays, a new report has found, ending a long period in which infant deaths were higher. Infant mortality has declined nationwide by 11 percent since 2006, but the mortality rate for fetuses in the second half of pregnancy has stalled, according to a report issued on Thursday by the National Center for Health Statistics, part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [New York Times](#)

U.S.: Study finds individual prescribing habits key to antibiotic overuse

21 July - The top 10% of healthcare workers in terms of antibiotic use prescribe the drugs for 95% or more of patients they see for colds, bronchitis, or other acute respiratory infections. ... The lowest 10%, in contrast, prescribe antibiotics at 40% or less of patient visits for ARI. Utah researchers analyzed data on 480,875 Veteran Affairs visits among 2,594 providers who treated at least 100 patients for ARI from 2005 through 2012. They determined that 59% of the variation in prescribing patterns was attributable to the habits of individual providers, compared with 28% to differences in practice among clinics and 13% to differences in practice among hospitals. They also found that the proportion of ARI diagnoses that led to antibiotic prescriptions increased from 67.5% in 2005 to 69.2% in 2012. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

U.S.: West Nile virus - Preliminary Maps & Data

21 July - As of July 21, 2015, a total of 33 states have reported West Nile virus infections in people, birds, or mosquitoes in 2015. Overall, 23 cases of West Nile virus disease in people have been reported to CDC. Of these, nine (39%) were classified as neuroinvasive disease (such as meningitis or encephalitis) and 14 (61%) were classified as non-neuroinvasive disease. [CDC](#)

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American Samoa issues alert over 'suspected' dengue outbreak

24 July - Some 100 people exhibiting symptoms of Acute Fever and Rash (AFR) in American Samoa, including the fatality of a 28-year-old man, has prompted a health alert by Samoa's Ministry of Health Wednesday. In a press conference yesterday, Dr. Seine Vaai-Neilsen said the symptoms of AFR is similar to that of dengue fever and is suspected to be a virus transmitted by a mosquito. Since July 7, American Samoa has reported 102 cases of the disease. In a Radio New Zealand interview yesterday, Monica Miller said, "So far the Department of Health and LBJ have called it the acute fever rash disease and that is basically because of the symptoms that people who have been afflicted by this disease have shown – basically fever, body aches and also great spots or blisters on the body. [Outbreak News Today](#)

India: Doctors and medical students in India should stop wearing white coats

21 July – Doctors and medical students in India should stop wearing white coats, argues a doctor in *The BMJ* this week. Edmond Fernandes... says evidence shows that long sleeved

coats spread infection and lead to avoidable harm and cost to patients. Although long sleeved white coats have traditionally been worn by doctors since the 19th century, we now know that white coats “harbor potential contaminants and contribute considerably to the burden of disease acquired in hospital by spreading infection,” writes Fernandes. [EurekAlert!](#)

North Korea: UN - more North Korean children treated for malnutrition

17 July - The number of North Korean children being treated for severe malnutrition increased more than 30 percent last year, a United Nations agency said. In a newly released report, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said the number of North Korean children being treated for severe acute malnutrition jumped by 38 percent in 2014 compared to the previous year. ... [The] increase coincided with the beginning of a drought period, a possible sign that the recent drought affecting North Korean crops might have aggravated children’s malnutrition. [VOA](#)

Republic of Korea: MERS totals stable for more than 2 weeks

20 July – South Korea has gone 15 days without reporting a new MERS-CoV case, keeping the total at 186 cases, the country’s Yonhap News Agency reported today. No deaths have been reported in 9 days, keeping the fatality count at 36. The country will be considered free of the virus if it goes two incubation periods, a total of 28 days, without a new case. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

Republic of Korea: Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

21 July - Between 18 and 21 July 2015, the National IHR Focal Point of the Republic of Korea notified WHO of no additional cases of infection and no new deaths related to Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV). To date, a total of 186 MERS-CoV cases, including 36 deaths, have been reported. One of the 186 cases is the case that was confirmed in China and also notified by the National IHR Focal Point of China. The median age of the cases is 55 years old (ranging from 16 to 87 years old). The majority of cases are men (59%). Twenty-six cases (14%) are health care professionals. To date, all cases have been linked to a single chain of transmission and are associated with health care facilities. ... The government of the Republic of Korea continues to implement intense case and contact management activities. As of 21 July, 5 contacts are being monitored. [WHO](#)

Marshall Islands: Chikungunya outbreak spreads, more than 1,000 cases reported

23 July - The number of chikungunya cases reported in the Marshall Islands has topped 1,000 since February and is spreading to more remote islands, according to a Radio New Zealand report today. The total case count stands at 1,046 with some 60 percent of cases

reported in the capital of Majuro. Numbers from the Auckland Regional Public Health Service are as follows: The Marshall Islands reported a total of 981 cases in the week ending on June 21, since early April 2015. Cases have been reported from outer islands like Ebeye, Aur and Maloelap. The Radio New Zealand is reporting that 10 percent of the population of Ailinglaplap Atoll has been infected with the mosquito borne virus. [Outbreak News Today](#)

Nepal: Typhoid reported in quake-affected areas

22 July - With the onset of monsoon, cases of typhoid fever, the most common communicable disease in the country, have been reported in various earthquake-affected districts. The Epidemiology and Diseases Control Division (EDCD) under the Ministry of Health reported fresh cases of typhoid in Batase VDC of Sindupalchok, one of the severely quake-affected districts, this week. ... According to EDCD, sporadic cases of typhoid and diarrhoea are found in other earthquake-affected districts as well. [eKantipur](#)

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Brazil: 10 Guillain-Barré syndrome cases confirmed in Maranhão, most linked to Zika and dengue

19 July - Health officials in Brazil are giving the public just one more reason to avoid mosquito bites and eliminate breeding sites—the risk of Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS). The Superintendent of Epidemiological Surveillance (SES) says that since the beginning of the year, 10 cases of GBS have been reported in the state of Maranhão. in northeastern Brazil. .. In addition, officials say of 10 patients with GBS, six reported having had symptoms of Zika virus or Dengue for 20 days before the manifestation of GBS. [Outbreak News Today](#)

Chile's abortion reform in trouble with ruling coalition split

20 July – President Michelle Bachelet's push to relax strict abortion laws in socially conservative Chile has created a rift inside her ruling coalition and key elements of the reform are likely to be scratched. Leading lawmakers in the Christian Democrat party, the coalition's senior partner, told Reuters that fewer than a third of its 21 legislators in the lower chamber of Congress fully support the proposed reform. That would mean Bachelet and her Socialist Party are short of the votes needed to pass the current bill. [Reuters](#)

Venezuela: Mother of all battles in scarcity-hit Venezuela - having a baby

23 July – Her belly bulging, Hilda Angarita hauls herself to five different drug stores in the sweltering Venezuelan city of Maracaibo until she finally finds post-cesarean patches. ...

Currency controls and flailing local production have fueled worsening scarcities that are now a blight of daily life for many Venezuelans – especially those expecting a child. These shortages are compounded in places like Maracaibo, a western city near Colombia. Many here offset inflation and a depreciating currency by selling price-controlled goods across the border or on the local black market, leaving less on shelves. [Reuters](#)

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