24 March 2017

Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center

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

USAFRICOM | USCENTCOM | USEUCOM | USNORTHCOM | USPACOM | USSOUTHCOM

Subscription or Comments

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

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

Contents

U.S. MILITARY

- DoD releases report on sexual harassment and violence at military service academies
- Health center sees success in medical readiness reset
- House passes contentious bills on veterans gun rights, VA accountability
- Pentagon would see 10% spending boost under Trump’s ‘hard-power budget’
- Report: More than one-fourth of veterans’ suicide hotline calls to go to backup lines
- Screening for symptomatic mefloquine exposure among veterans with chronic psychiatric symptoms

GLOBAL

- #CuriousGoat: How to prepare for a pandemic
- Can science rob snakes of their deadliest weapon?
- Common blood tests can help predict chronic disease risk
- Critical step found in DNA repair, cellular aging
- Doctor turns up possible treatment for deadly sepsis
- Governments must recognise wastewater as resource - U.N.
- Loss of spouse or partner to suicide linked to physical, mental disorders
- Lungs aren't just for breathing, a new study suggests
- Most dengue infections transmitted in and around home
- Mylan recalls 81,000 EpiPens outside U.S. after reports of failure
- New vaccine could slow disease that kills 600 children a day
- Rise of superbug tuberculosis hampers global control efforts
- Scientists use graphene to power ‘electronic skin’ that can feel
- Spider venom may offer stroke therapy
- ZIKA VIRUS
- Study: South America Zika attack rates lower than in French Polynesia
- Zika, dengue testing on your smartphone

INFLUENZA

- AFHSB: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary
- APHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report
- China’s fifth wave H7N9 total climbs by 21
- ECDC: Flu News Europe

Approved for public release, distribution unlimited.
VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

- China, EU cut imports of Brazil meat amid scandal
- Cross-sectional surveillance of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in dromedary camels and other mammals in Egypt, August 2015 to January 2016
- Wal-Mart supplier recalls U.S. frozen pizzas over possible listeria

WELLNESS

- DoD campaign guides military community on use of supplements
- Happiness report: Norway is the happiest place on Earth
- NSC: Americans with opioid addiction miss almost 50 percent more work
- Poison control centers receive 32 calls a day about children exposed to opioids
- Should 15,000 steps a day be our new exercise target?
- The best exercise for aging muscles
- ‘Wide awake drunk’ on energy drinks and alcohol mix

USAFRICOM

- Democratic Republic of the Congo: Monkeypox outbreak info update
- Kenya: Fearing disease, Kenyans burn animal carcasses as drought deepens
- Niger: Why have four children when you could have seven? Family planning in Niger
- Nigeria: Meningitis kills 7 in Sokoto State

USCENTCOM

- Egypt: First citizen death due to mystery virus at Imbaba fever hospital
- Kazakhstan: Soviet-era nuclear testing is still making people sick in Kazakhstan

USEUCOM

- Europe: Hepatitis A outbreaks in MSM
- Europe: Tuberculosis deaths fall in Europe
- Italy: Italy’s struggling economy has world’s healthiest people

USNORTHCOM

- Canada: Canadian youth hockey injuries cut in half after national policy change
- U.S. (California): Lead poisoning afflicts neighborhoods across California
- U.S.: Estimated perinatal HIV infection among infants born in the United States, 2002-2013
- U.S.: Melanoma incidence, mortality on the rise
- U.S.: Should the U.S. government buy a drug company to save money?
- U.S.: The forces driving middle-aged white people’s ‘deaths of despair’
- U.S.: Tuberculosis — United States, 2016

USPACOM

- Bangladesh: So what do you do with the ... poo ... in a pit latrine?
- Bangladesh: Toxic tanneries
- China: Experts fear return of Hong Kong’s No 1 killer, TB
- China (Hong Kong): Heightened vigilance warranted under persistently high scarlet fever activity
DoD releases report on sexual harassment and violence at military service academies

15 March - Today, the Department of Defense (DoD) released its Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the United States Military Service Academies for Academic Program Year (APY) 2015 – 2016. Anonymous survey results indicate that rates of past-year occurrence of unwanted sexual contact for academy men and women returned to levels last seen in APY 11-12. This reflects a statistical increase from rates measured in APY 13-14. The three academies received a total of 86 reports of sexual assault involving cadets or midshipmen in APY 15-16. Cadets and midshipmen made thirteen reports for an incident that occurred prior to their entering military service. Defense.gov

Health center sees success in medical readiness reset

15 March - As of Dec. 5, 2016, the Army began executing an Army-wide reset to ensure that all Soldiers, including National Guard and Reserve, are medically ready to deploy, with a deadline of completion of March 31. Of the 144,000 Soldiers considered non-deployable for medical and dental reasons, 55,000 of those are classified as such because they need to have their annual periodic health assessment or dental exam completed, according to the Army Medical Command. Soldiers who have not had their annual exams completed are given a Medical Readiness Classification (MRC) of 4, medical and dental status unknown. The reset places a mission on MEDCOM’s medical treatment facilities ... to complete those exams and remove Soldiers from their MRC 4 status. Redstone Rocket

House passes contentious bills on veterans gun rights, VA accountability

16 March - House lawmakers approved a pair of contentious veterans policy measures on Thursday which would make it easier to fire Veterans Affairs employees and allow some “mentally incompetent” veterans to own firearms. The two bills, both sponsored by House Veterans’ Affairs Committee Chairman Phil Roe, R-Tenn., received the backing of the White House and Department of Veterans Affairs. But they face an uncertain future in the Senate, where Democratic opposition could stall their progress indefinitely. Military Times
Pentagon would see 10% spending boost under Trump's 'hard-power budget'

16 March - President Trump’s first budget proposal calls for the largest increase in Pentagon spending since President Reagan’s defense buildup in the 1980s, proposing more money to fight Islamic State and to buy stealth fighter jets, warships and new weapons. The president's plan asks Congress to allocate $639 billion for the military in the next fiscal year, a boost of $52 billion over current spending. "This is a hard-power budget," Mick Mulvaney, director of the Office of Management and Budget, told reporters Wednesday. ... The White House also sent a letter to Congress on Thursday seeking additional money for the final five months of the current fiscal year, which includes a $25-billion increase in base defense spending. ... When combined with the special $65-billion fund that Congress gives the Pentagon to fight overseas wars, that would produce a total defense budget of $705 billion, more than Trump has proposed. The Los Angeles Times

Report: More than one-fourth of veterans' suicide hotline calls to go to backup lines

20 March - More than one-fourth of calls to the Veterans Crisis Line end up being redirected to other emergency response services because of ongoing problems with the services’ operations, according to a new report released Monday. Those problems persist despite leadership changes and promised reforms at the crisis hotline in the last year, and a years-long emphasis on suicide prevention efforts from Department of Veterans Affairs officials. "Staff did not respond adequately to a veteran's urgent needs during multiple calls to the (crisis line) and its backup call centers," officials from the VA Inspector General's office said in the report. “Supervisory staff did not identify the deficiencies in their internal review of the matter.” Military Times

Screening for symptomatic mefloquine exposure among veterans with chronic psychiatric symptoms

March 2017 - ... As the boxed warning indicates, certain psychiatric symptoms that occur with mefloquine use may become chronic and may confound psychiatric diagnosis. Particularly among veterans, these symptoms risk being misattributed, potentially affecting treatment decisions. Clinicians caring for veterans with persistent psychiatric symptoms should therefore screen for prior symptomatic mefloquine exposure and consider the possible [adverse effects] of the drug when formulating a differential diagnosis and treatment plan. Federal Practitioner
#CuriousGoat: How to prepare for a pandemic

17 March - No matter how you slice it, outbreaks are becoming more common. ... Deforestation lets animal viruses jump into people. Factory farming amplifies the problem. And then international tourism spreads the new diseases around the globe. ... Listeners and readers sent in 250 questions about pandemics. One kept popping up: "If we believe that an unknown pandemic is overdue, what precautions are reasonable to take now?" asked Wade Schuette. ...

- Vaccines ... [To] maximize your protection from a new disease, make sure you and your family are up to date on vaccines for known diseases, from the flu and pneumonia to shingles and whooping cough.
- Virus knowledge ... One of your best weapons during a disease outbreak is knowledge, says Dr. Jonathan Temte of the University of Wisconsin. "Keep up with the news and try to understand what threats might be out there," he says.
- Very clean hands ..."Every emerging disease is different,"[Dr. Abigail Carlson] says. "But many of the basic control measures — like washing your hands — will work to combat it. They are still the most effective ways." NPR

Can science rob snakes of their deadliest weapon?

21 March - ... [Jeffrey O'Brien's] work, in a chemistry lab here at the University of California, Irvine, could, perhaps, lead to a universal antidote to snake venom. And it’s just one of several new high-tech efforts — coming from an unlikely cast of characters far outside the pharmaceutical mainstream — to tackle the staggering toll of death and disability caused by snakebite worldwide. Those in the hunt for newer, better antivenoms include an emergency physician in San Francisco so keen to push ahead in his research that he had himself paralyzed in order to test an experimental drug; a 29-year-old biotech entrepreneur so hip he’s been dubbed “Denmark’s coolest engineer”; and an Indian physician who sought out advanced degrees in nanomedicine in Ireland so he could help prevent snakebite deaths in his home state of Tamil Nadu. Backing them: investors ranging from the Pentagon to the Talking Heads’s Jerry Harrison. STAT

Common blood tests can help predict chronic disease risk

17 March - A score based on common blood tests may someday help people gauge their risk of developing a chronic disease like diabetes or dementia within three years of taking the test. The Intermountain Chronic Disease Risk Score was 77 to 78 percent accurate in predicting whether someone would be diagnosed with diabetes, kidney failure, coronary artery disease and dementia, among other illnesses. It’s based on the results of a comprehensive metabolic panel, which includes tests for blood glucose and liver function, and complete blood count, which measures the quantity of different types of blood cells. The hope is that the score could eventually help physicians better allocate their time and
Critical step found in DNA repair, cellular aging

23 March - DNA repair is essential for cell vitality, cell survival, and cancer prevention, yet cells’ ability to patch up damaged DNA declines with age for reasons not fully understood. Now, research led by scientists at Harvard Medical School (HMS) reveals a critical step in a molecular chain of events that allows cells to mend their broken DNA. The findings offer a critical insight into how and why the body’s ability to fix DNA dwindles over time and point to a previously unknown role for the signaling molecule NAD as a key regulator of protein-to-protein interactions in DNA repair. NAD, identified a century ago, is already known for its role as a controller of cell-damaging oxidation. Additionally, experiments conducted in mice show that treatment with the NAD precursor NMN mitigates age-related DNA damage and wards off DNA damage from radiation exposure. Harvard Gazette

Doctor turns up possible treatment for deadly sepsis

23 March - ... Dr. Paul Marik was running the intensive care unit at Sentara Norfolk General Hospital. A 48-year-old woman came in with a severe case of sepsis — inflammation frequently triggered by an overwhelming infection. ... Marik had recently read a study by researchers [that] had shown some moderate success in treating people who had sepsis with intravenous vitamin C. ... He added in a low dose of corticosteroids, which are sometimes used to treat sepsis, along with a bit of another vitamin, thiamine. His desperately ill patient got an infusion of this mixture. ... [The next morning the] patient was well on the road to recovery.... [H]e started treating his sepsis patients regularly with the vitamin and steroid infusion. ... [O]nly four of those 47 patients [he treated] died in the hospital — and all the deaths were from their underlying diseases, not from sepsis. For comparison, he looked back at 47 patients the hospital had treated before he tried the vitamin C infusion and found that 19 had died in the hospital. NPR

Governments must recognise wastewater as resource - U.N.

22 March - Wastewater from households, industries and agriculture should not be seen as a problem but a valuable resource which could help meet the demands for water, energy and nutrients from a growing global population, a U.N. water expert said. Globally, more than 80 percent of wastewater is released into rivers and lakes without treatment with a negative impact on health and the environment, according to the 2017 U.N. World Water Development Report published on Wednesday. Pollution from human and animal waste affects nearly one in three rivers in Latin America, Asia and Africa, putting millions of lives at risk, it said. But wastewater contains nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrates which can be turned into fertiliser, said Richard Connor, editor-in-chief of the report. Treated sludge can be turned into biogas that could power wastewater treatment plants or be sold on the market, he added. "Wastewater itself is a valuable resource, even the term wastewater is an oxymoron," Connor [said.] Thomson Reuters Foundation News
Loss of spouse or partner to suicide linked to physical, mental disorders

22 March - People who lose a partner to suicide are at increased risk for a number of mental and physical disorders, including cancer, depression, herniated discs and mood disorders than those in the general population. ... The study ... followed 4,814 Danish men and 10,793 Danish women bereaved by partner suicide for up to 35 years, from 1980 to 2014, and compared them to the general population of Denmark. ... Those who lost partners to suicide were at increased risk of cancer, cirrhosis of the liver and spinal disc herniation than the general population. After long-term follow-up, there was an increased risk of sleep disorders and, for women only, chronic respiratory disease. Like earlier research, the study found that the risk was particularly elevated during the first five years after the loss. The study found that suicide bereaved had an increased risk for mood disorders, PTSD, anxiety disorders, alcohol use disorder as well as self-harm compared to the general population.

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News

Lungs aren't just for breathing, a new study suggests

23 March - Scientists studying the lungs of mice discovered to their surprise that the lungs produced about half the platelets, blood components necessary for stanching, in the creatures' circulation, according to a release. It’s been long assumed that most if not all of these platelets were generated in bone marrow, not the lungs. What’s more, they also discovered that lungs have what New Atlas describes as "a backup reservoir of blood stem cells that can step in when those in the bone marrow run dry," and that these cells travel freely between the marrow and lungs.

Fox News

Most dengue infections transmitted in and around home

23 March - Transmission of the mosquito-borne dengue virus appears to be largely driven by infections centered in and around the home, with the majority of cases related to one another occurring in people who live less than 200 meters apart. ... For their study, the researchers genetically sequenced the viruses of 640 dengue infections that occurred between 1994 and 2010 in both densely populated Bangkok, Thailand, and less densely populated regions outside the capital, then overlaid this information on a map showing where the people infected with the virus lived. Their results show that in people living fewer than 200 meters apart (typically in houses in the same neighborhood), 60 percent of dengue cases come from the same transmission chain, meaning they were infected by a virus that was only recently introduced into the area. In people who were separated by 1 to 5 kilometers, just 3 percent of cases came from the same transmission chain.

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News

Mylan recalls 81,000 EpiPens outside U.S. after reports of failure

22 March - Generic drugmaker Mylan NV has recalled about 81,000 EpiPen devices in
countries outside the United States, following two reports of the life-saving allergy shot failing to work in emergencies. In both situations, patients were able to obtain treatment through the use of an alternate EpiPen, Mylan said on Wednesday. The recall affects devices distributed in Australia, New Zealand, Europe and Japan only, according to the company.

Reuters

New vaccine could slow disease that kills 600 children a day

22 March - A new vaccine against a diarrheal disease that kills about 600 children a day worked well in a large trial in Africa and appears to be a practical way to protect millions of children, scientists said on Wednesday. The new vaccine against rotavirus, the most common cause of death from diarrhea in children under age 5, is made by an Indian company and was tested in Niger by Doctors Without Borders. The vaccine is expected to be as cheap as or cheaper than current alternatives. More important, it can last for months without refrigeration, which makes it far easier to use in remote villages with no electricity.

The New York Times

Rise of superbug tuberculosis hampers global control efforts

22 March - Rising rates of superbug tuberculosis (TB) are threatening to derail decades of progress against the contagious disease, experts said on Thursday, and new drugs powerful enough to treat them are few and far between. TB kills more people each year than any other infectious disease, including HIV and AIDS. In 2015 alone, it is estimated to have killed 1.8 million people, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). While some new antibiotics with the potential to treat some drug-resistant strains are becoming available for the first time, experts who conducted a global study said that without accurate diagnostics, better case tracking and clear treatment guidelines, their effectiveness could rapidly be lost.

Reuters

Scientists use graphene to power 'electronic skin' that can feel

23 March - Scientists have found a way to power an experimental kind of electronic skin using solar energy in a further step towards the development of prosthetic limbs or robots with a sense of touch. Teams around the world are working to develop flexible versions of synthetic skin that can feel by mimicking the different kinds of sensory receptors found in human skin. Powering such systems is a challenge, but now researchers at the University of Glasgow’s School of Engineering have developed a way to use graphene, an ultra-thin form of carbon, to generate electricity via solar power. Graphene, which is just one atom thick, is strong, highly flexible, electrically conductive and
transparent, making it ideal for gathering the sun’s energy to generate power, the scientists said on Thursday. Smart prosthetic hands, in particular, can already reproduce many mechanical properties of human limbs and giving them a skin-like sense of touch would make them even more useful for amputees. Reuters

Spider venom may offer stroke therapy

21 March - A protein in spider venom may help protect the brain from injury after a stroke, according to research. Scientists found a single dose of the protein Hi1a worked on lab rats. They said it showed “great promise as a future stroke treatment” but had not yet been tested in human trials. ... They found that the protein blocked acid-sensing ion channels in the brain - something the researchers say are key drivers of brain damage after stroke. ... "Hi1a even provides some protection to the core brain region most affected by oxygen deprivation, which is generally considered unrecoverable due to the rapid cell death caused by stroke." BBC News

ZIKA VIRUS

Study: South America Zika attack rates lower than in French Polynesia

22 March - A study yesterday in Scientific Reports found that attack rates of Zika varied from 78% in French Polynesia to 21% in Colombia and 32% in the state of Bahia, Brazil. In this comparison study, researchers contrasted numbers from the 2013-14 French Polynesia outbreak with data collected 1 year after the current Zika outbreak began in Colombia and Brazil. For all three locations, Zika infection rates reached their peak within the first 6 months of disease detection, and the first wave of the disease was underreported. ... "The low attack rate in Colombia implies that parts of population were not infected during the 2015-16 ZIKV outbreak, hence a second wave of the epidemic could sweep the country," the authors write. "The lower attack rate in Colombia could partly be due to higher altitude and cooler weather than the other places." CIDRAP News Scan (second item)

Zika, dengue testing on your smartphone

20 March - Add rapid, mobile testing for Zika and other viruses to the list of things that smartphone technology is making possible. Researchers at Sandia National Laboratories have developed a smartphone-controlled, battery-operated diagnostic device that weighs under a pound, costs as little as $100 and can detect Zika, dengue and chikungunya within 30 minutes. Testing for these mosquito-borne viruses currently requires a laboratory, and patients can wait days for results. The tests require instruments that are roughly the size of a microwave oven and can cost up to $20,000. ... Smartphone technology is a key feature of the device. "In addition to creating an app that serves as a
simple interface to operate the device, we were able to adapt smartphone camera sensors to replace traditional laboratory sample analysis tools, allowing for unprecedented mobility,” chemical engineer and lead author Aashish Priye said. Outbreak News Today

top of page...

INFLUENZA

AFHSB: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary

For Week 10:
- NORTHCOM: Influenza activity decreased to minimal to low for most of the country.
- EUCOM: Influenza activity was minimal across EUCOM.
- PACOM: Influenza activity remained minimal in Japan and Guam, but low activity was seen for the ROK and Hawaii.
- CENTCOM and AFRICOM: Influenza activity was minimal for locations with available data in CENTCOM and AFRICOM.
- SOUTHCOM: Influenza activity was minimal in Honduras this week based on DMSS data. DHA - Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch

APHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report

For the week ending 11 March 2017 (Week 10):
Following a trend seen in the civilian population, influenza-like activity continues to decrease among military populations.
- ILI Activity: Army ILI (influenza-like illness) outpatient visits in week 10 were 16% lower than the same week last year.
- Influenza cases: Two hospitalized influenza-associated cases were reported to APHC through DRSi in week 10 and all were non-AD beneficiaries.
- Viral specimens: During week 10, 855 of 2667 (32%) lab specimens tested positive for respiratory pathogens. Of 467 influenza A-positive specimens, RHC-A reported 236 (50.5%), followed by RHC-C (202, 43.3%), RHC-E (16, 3.4%), and RHC-P (13, 2.8%). CENTCOM did not report any positive influenza A specimens. APHC

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

During week 10 (March 5-11, 2017), influenza activity decreased, but remained elevated in the United States.
- Viral Surveillance: The most frequently identified influenza virus subtype reported by public health laboratories during week 10 was influenza A (H3). The percentage of respiratory specimens testing positive for influenza in clinical laboratories decreased.
- Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality: The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was above the system-specific epidemic threshold in the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) Mortality Surveillance System.
- Influenza-associated Pediatric Deaths: Five influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported. CDC

China's fifth wave H7N9 total climbs by 21

20 March - Hong Kong’s Centre for Health Protection (CHP) on Mar 17 announced in one of its regular updates that China reported 21 more H7N9 avian influenza cases, 4 of them fatal, from Mar 10 to Mar 16. The mainland continues to report a steady stream of cases in its fifth and biggest wave of H7N9 activity, which peaked in February. Illness onsets for the latest group of patients range from Feb 28 to Mar 13. The latest cases are in seven different provinces, with about half from Guangxi and Hunan. Eighteen of the people had known exposure to poultry or poultry markets. China has now reported at least 565 cases and 174 deaths in the fifth H7N9 wave. Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macao have also reported cases that were imported from the mainland. CIDRAP Flu Scan (second item)

ECDC: Flu News Europe

Week 10/2017 (6 - 12 March 2017):
- Influenza activity across the region continued to decrease with the great majority of countries reporting low intensity.
- The proportion of influenza virus detections among sentinel surveillance specimens decreased to 21% from 27% in the previous week.
- The great majority of detected and subtyped influenza viruses were A(H3N2) and while the proportion of type B viruses increased, as commonly seen in the second half of an influenza season, their numbers remained low.
- The number of reported hospitalized laboratory-confirmed influenza cases from ICU and other wards, primarily in people aged 65 years or older, as well as severe acute respiratory infections continued to decrease.

NHRC: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For 2017 Week 10 (through 11 March 2017):
- Influenza: Among U.S. military basic trainees, 27 cases of influenza [(20 influenza A/H3, 5 influenza B, and 2 influenza A(untyped)] were laboratory confirmed at NHRC. New cases presented for care 14-27 February. Four cases had been vaccinated more than 14 days prior.
- FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates were elevated at Fort Jackson, NRTC Great Lakes, and CGTC Cape May.

Naval Health Research Center
USAFSAM & DHA: DoD Global, Laboratory-Based, Influenza Surveillance Program

During 26 February - 11 March 2017 (Surveillance Weeks 9 & 10), a total of 473 specimens were collected from 47 locations. Results were finalized for 374 specimens from 47 locations. During Week 9, four influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, 71 influenza A(H3N2), one influenza A(H3N2) & influenza B, and 45 influenza B viruses were identified. During Week 10, one influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 & influenza B, 38 influenza A(H3N2), and 21 influenza B viruses were identified. Approximately 43% of specimens tested positive for influenza during Week 9. Approximately 32% of specimens tested positive for influenza during Week 10. The influenza percent positive for the season is approximately 35%.

US Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine & Defense Health Agency

WHO: Influenza Update

20 March - Influenza activity in the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere appeared to decrease. Influenza activity in many countries especially in East Asia and Europe already peaked. Worldwide, influenza A(H3N2) virus was predominant. In South Asia influenza activity with mainly H1N1 has been increasing. The majority of influenza viruses characterized so far were similar antigenically to the reference viruses contained in vaccines for use in the 2016-2017 northern hemisphere influenza season. Nearly all tested viruses collected recently for antiviral sensitivity were susceptible to the neuraminidase inhibitor antiviral medications. WHO

VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

China, EU cut imports of Brazil meat amid scandal

20 March - China and the European Union curtailed meat imports from Brazil on Monday after police, in an anti-corruption probe criticized by the government as alarmist, accused inspectors in the world’s biggest exporter of beef and poultry of taking bribes to allow sales of rotten and salmonella-tainted meats. As the scandal deepened, Brazil’s Agriculture Minister Blairo Maggi said the government had suspended exports from 21 meat processing units. … Police on Friday named BRF SA (BRFS3.SA) and JBS SA (JBSS3.SA), along with dozens of smaller rivals, in a two-year probe into how meatpackers allegedly paid off inspectors to overlook practices including processing rotten meat, shipping exports with traces of salmonella and simply not carrying out inspections of plants. JBS is the world’s largest meat producer and BRF the biggest poultry exporter. The companies have denied any wrongdoing, and authorities have said no cases of death or illness have been linked to the tainted meat investigation. Reuters
Cross-sectional surveillance of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in dromedary camels and other mammals in Egypt, August 2015 to January 2016

16 March - A cross-sectional study was conducted in Egypt to determine the prevalence of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in imported and resident camels and bats, as well as to assess possible transmission of the virus to domestic ruminants and equines. ... Overall, of 1,031 serologically-tested camels, 871 (84.5%) had MERS-CoV neutralising antibodies. Seroprevalence was significantly higher in imported (614/692; 88.7%) than resident camels (257/339; 7.8%) (p < 0.05). Camels from Sudan (543/594; 91.4%) had a higher seroprevalence than those from East Africa (71/98; 72.4%) (p < 0.05). ... All tested samples from domestic animals and bats were negative for MERS-CoV antibodies except one sheep sample. Eurosurveillance

Wal-Mart supplier recalls U.S. frozen pizzas over possible listeria

16 March - A Wal-Mart Stores Inc supplier has recalled frozen pizzas available in 11 U.S. states due to concerns about possible listeria contamination, according to the retailer and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. About 6,700 pizzas sold under Wal-Mart's Marketside brand were affected by the recall, a representative of the supplier said on Thursday. RBR Meat Company recalled about 21,220 pounds of Marketside Extra Large Supreme Pizza that were shipped to retail distribution centers in California, Nevada, Utah and Washington, the USDA said on Wednesday. Business Insider

WELLNESS

DoD campaign guides military community on use of supplements

23 March - ... Operation Supplement Safety, a DoD initiative through the Human Performance Resource Center, offers guidance by educating the military community and DoD civilians about the potential benefits and dangers of using supplements. ... The OPSS website, offers a wealth of information about supplements, including links to topics such as fitness and performance, weight loss and dietary supplement ingredients. The website also provides alerts and announcements about
supplements and lists of high-risk supplements and dietary supplement ingredients prohibited by the DoD. Health.mil

Happiness report: Norway is the happiest place on Earth

20 March - Norway is the happiest place on Earth, according to a United Nations agency report - topping neighbour Denmark from the number one position. The World Happiness Report measures "subjective well-being" - how happy the people are, and why. Denmark, Iceland, Switzerland and Finland round out the top five, while the Central African Republic came last. Western Europe and North America dominated the top of table, with the US and UK at 14th and 19th, respectively. Countries in sub-Saharan Africa and those hit by conflict have predictably low scores. Syria placed 152 of 155 countries - Yemen and South Sudan, which are facing impending famine, came in at 146 and 147. BBC News

NSC: Americans with opioid addiction miss almost 50 percent more work

23 March - New data from the National Safety Council say workers with substance abuse disorders miss nearly 50 percent more days than their peers, adding up to 6 weeks of work every year. The analysis from the NSC, NORC at the University of Chicago (a research organization), and Shatterproof (an organization based in New York City that aims to help individuals overcome drug addiction) shows there is a persistent gap between employer perceptions of impact and the actual cost of substance abuse. The three organizations have developed the Substance Use Cost Calculator as a result, which employers can use to compute what addictions mean to their workforce. Occupational Health & Safety

Poison control centers receive 32 calls a day about children exposed to opioids

20 March - ... Over a span of 16 years, from January 2000 until December 2015, about 188,000 calls were placed to poison control centers regarding pediatric and teenage exposure to opioids, the study published in the journal Pediatrics found. Sixty percent of the children exposed to opioids were younger than 5, while teenagers accounted for 30 percent. ... Pediatric exposure to opioids increased by 86 percent from 2000 to 2009 but decreased overall for all ages under 20 from 2009 until 2015, the study found. Increasing awareness among people with prescription drugs, physicians putting more thought into prescribing opioids, and prescription drug monitoring programs implemented by many states and efforts by different organizations could have contributed to the decrease in exposure, said Marcel Casavant, study author. ... The most commonly cited medicines in the calls to poison control centers were hydrocodone (29 percent), oxycodone (18 percent) and codeine (17 percent). The Washington Post

Should 15,000 steps a day be our new exercise target?

22 March - ... [Researchers recruited] 111 of the postal-service workers [in Glasgow,
Scotland], both men and women, and most between the ages of 40 and 60. ... Those workers who sat for most of each day tended to have much larger waistlines, higher B.M.I.’s and worse blood sugar control and cholesterol profiles than those who frequently stood and moved. ... Those mail carriers who walked for more than three hours a day, covering at least 15,000 steps, which is about seven miles, generally had normal body mass indexes, waistlines and metabolic profiles. Together, these factors meant that they had, effectively, no heightened risk for cardiac disease. The New York Times

The best exercise for aging muscles

23 March - ... [R]esearchers ... recently conducted an experiment on the cells of 72 healthy but sedentary men and women who were 30 or younger or older than 64. ... Some [volunteers] did vigorous weight training several times a week; some did brief interval training three times a week on stationary bicycles (pedaling hard for four minutes, resting for three and then repeating that sequence three more times); some rode stationary bikes at a moderate pace for 30 minutes a few times a week and lifted weights lightly on other days. A fourth group, the control, did not exercise. After 12 weeks, the lab tests were repeated. In general, everyone experienced improvements in fitness and an ability to regulate blood sugar. ... The gains in muscle mass and strength were greater for those who exercised only with weights, while interval training had the strongest influence on endurance. ... Among the younger subjects who went through interval training, the activity levels had changed in 274 genes, compared with 170 genes for those who exercised more moderately and 74 for the weight lifters. Among the older cohort, almost 400 genes were working differently now, compared with 33 for the weight lifters and only 19 for the moderate exercisers.
The New York Times

'Wide awake drunk' on energy drinks and alcohol mix

21 March - Mixing energy drinks with alcohol could be a risky combination, leading to a greater risk of accidents and injuries, research from Canada suggests. The caffeine contained in energy drinks can make people feel wide awake and encourage them to drink more than normal. Medics say this could also cause problems sleeping and a raised heart rate, although more research is needed. ... In a review of 13 studies published between 1981 and 2016, researchers at the University of Victoria, Canada, found a link in 10 studies between intake of alcohol mixed with energy drinks and an increased risk of falls, fight and accidents. BBC News

...
Democratic Republic of the Congo: Monkeypox outbreak info update

22 March - In a follow-up on the report on the monkeypox outbreak in the Republic of the Congo, the World Health Organization (WHO) released some updated information last Friday. As of 9 March 2017, a total of 20 suspected cases including 3 deaths (CFR 15%) have been reported across four out of seven districts in Likouala province. There is no explanation of the difference in the death count reported one week prior (19 cases/7 deaths). Outbreak News Today

Kenya: Fearing disease, Kenyans burn animal carcasses as drought deepens

22 March - Kenya Villagers in northern Kenya have begun to burn piles of animal carcasses, hoping to head off an outbreak of disease as their livestock starve to death in the region's worst drought in five years. ... The Kenyan government said 2.7 million people are affected by the drought. It estimates 20 percent of livestock has died in the arid and semi-arid counties, an area comprising about 80 percent of Kenya's landmass. ... The government is running a "destocking" program, which pays herders for animals they would struggle to sell. It pays 2,000 Kenya shillings ($20) for a goat or a sheep, and 15,000 Ksh for a cow. That's half of the price of a healthy animal. ... On the southern short of Lake Turkana, famed for the harsh beauty of its landscape, residents are burning carcasses to stop the bodies from infecting water supplies if the rains come. Reuters

Niger: Why have four children when you could have seven? Family planning in Niger

15 March - ... Women in rural Niger ... get married young, usually as teenagers, and have their first child at 18. Polygamy is legal and commonplace, especially in the rural areas where about 80% of the population resides. ... Women have an average of more than seven children apiece, the highest in the world. And they face a one-in-23 chance of dying from pregnancy or childbirth. ... Despite having the highest fertility rate in the world, women and men alike in Niger say they want more children than they actually have – women want an average of nine, while men say they want 11. ... The country's population exploded from 3.5 million people in 1960 to nearly 20 million today, with half of the current population under the age of 15. The overwhelming majority – 80% of Nigeriens – live in poverty. ... The Nigerien government has turned to the solution: modern contraception. What they haven't figured out, though, is how to get women to use it. The Guardian
Nigeria: Meningitis kills 7 in Sokoto State

17 March - The death toll caused by the outbreak of Cerebro Spinal Meningitis (CSM), in parts of Gada Local Government Area of Sokoto State has now risen to seven, according to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN). ... [Dr Abdullahi] Gada said that the deaths were recorded between January, this year, to-date. He stated that the deaths were recorded out of the 77 reported cases during the period under review. ... Gada further stated that the situation had now been brought under control as only ten persons were currently on admission at the Gada General Hospital. The Guardian

top of page...

USCENTCOM

Egypt: First citizen death due to mystery virus at Imbaba fever hospital

16 March - A citizen has died at Imbaba's specialized fever hospital after contracting an unknown virus that recently spread among several other Egyptians, who are also being held at this hospital and in Abbasseya, according to medical sources from the Imbaba hospital. The sources added that the patient died two days ago without any announcement from the Health Ministry, which has yet to disclose any details about the matter. The rest of the cases at the hospital are staying in the Intensive Care Unit; they are examined every now and then, fearing developments. Their symptoms are similar to influenza, including a severely sore throat, high temperature and vomiting, the sources added. ... Informed sources said most of the patients are from the Imbaba district and that the symptoms started to show up around a week ago. They headed to the hospital, where they were diagnosed with pneumonia. Egypt Independent

Kazakhstan: Soviet-era nuclear testing is still making people sick in Kazakhstan

13 March - ... Over four decades on the barren steppes of Kazakhstan, deep in Central Asia, the Soviets detonated 456 nuclear weapons. ... The last nuclear explosion here was in 1989. Today, 25 years later, villagers are still suffering the consequences of heavy radiation. An 82-year-old Eliugazy Nurgaliev remembers the first tests near his village of Qaynar. ... They were less than 10 kilometers from the explosions. Soldiers wearing gas masks later arrived to retrieve the 43 young men, who demanded to know what had just happened. ... Not long after the exposure, some died from unknown illnesses. Some lived for several years but then developed radiation-related illnesses. ... With the help of the Americans and the Russians, Kazakhstan buried and sealed two main underground testing sites. Now they're in the process of clearing every inch ... of radioactive remnants. ... Doctors in Kazakhstan are
Europe: Hepatitis A outbreaks in MSM

19 March - Europe is currently seeing three outbreaks of hepatitis A that are linked to adult men who have sex with men (MSM). Since February 2016, 287 cases have been reported in a total of 13 countries, according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. In December, England, the Netherlands and Germany informed the international disease network about increases in the number of hepatitis A cases, primarily among men who have sex with men (MSM). Molecular biological typing of the hepatitis A virus has shown that three different variants of the genotype IA are causing the increase, which has subsequently been reported in another 10 countries. Outbreak News Today

Europe: Tuberculosis deaths fall in Europe

20 March - The number of people developing and dying from tuberculosis (TB) is falling in Europe, but among the most vulnerable - including migrants, prisoners and people who are HIV positive - there have been worrying increases, data showed on Monday. Figures from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the Europe regional office of the World Health Organization (WHO) showed new TB cases and deaths in the 53 countries of the WHO’s European region fell each year by 4.3 and 8.5 percent respectively between 2011 and 2015. But new co-infections with TB and HIV together increased by 40 percent from 2011 to 2015, showing that efforts to control the disease need to be far more focused on high risk groups. Reuters

Italy: Italy’s struggling economy has world’s healthiest people

20 March - … [Italy] is ranked the healthiest country on Earth in the Bloomberg Global Health Index of 163 countries. A baby born in Italy can expect to live to be an octogenarian. But 2,800 miles south in Sierra Leone, the average newborn will die by 52. While Italy is among the most developed countries, growth has stagnated for decades, almost 40 percent of its youngsters are out of jobs and it’s saddled with one of the world’s highest debt loads relative to the size of its economy. … Each country in the index was graded based on variables such as life expectancy, causes of death and health risks ranging from high blood pressure and tobacco use to malnutrition and the availability of clean water. Iceland, Switzerland, Singapore and Australia rounded out the top five most-healthy countries in the index. Bloomberg Markets
Canada: Canadian youth hockey injuries cut in half after national policy change

21 March - Injuries fell by half and concussions were reduced by almost two thirds after Hockey Canada banned body checking for players younger than 13 years old, researchers say. ... To see how the new policy affected injuries, the research team looked at records for the 2011-2012 season, before the change, and for the 2013-2014 season that followed the change. ... In the first time period, there were 163 injuries during games, or 4.37 injuries per 1,000 game-hours, and 104 concussions, or 2.79 per 1,000 game-hours. In the second time period, there were 48 injuries, or 2.16 per 1,000 game-hours, and 25 concussions, or 1.12 per 1,000 game-hours. Before the policy change, body checking was the most common cause of injury, whereas afterward it was “accidental contact.” Reuters

U.S. (California): Lead poisoning afflicts neighborhoods across California

22 March - Dozens of California communities have experienced recent rates of childhood lead poisoning that surpass those of Flint, Michigan, with one Fresno locale showing rates nearly three times higher, blood testing data obtained by Reuters shows. The data shows how lead poisoning affects even a state known for its environmental advocacy. ... In one central Fresno zip code, 13.6 percent of blood tests on children under six years old came back high for lead. That compares to 5 percent across the city of Flint during its recent water contamination crisis. In all, Reuters found at least 29 Golden State neighborhoods where children had elevated lead tests at rates at least as high as in Flint. Reuters


21 March - ... We used the Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project Nationwide Inpatient Sample to identify patients admitted for firearm-related injuries from 2006 to 2014. We converted charges from hospitalization to costs, which we inflation-adjusted to 2014 dollars. We used survey weights to create national estimates. Costs for the initial inpatient hospitalization totaled $6.61 billion. The largest proportion was for patients with governmental insurance coverage, totaling $2.70 billion (40.8%) and was divided between Medicaid ($2.30 billion) and Medicare ($0.40 billion). Self-pay individuals accounted for $1.56 billion (23.6%) in costs. From 2006 to 2014, the cost of initial hospitalizations for firearm-related injuries averaged $734.6 million per year. Medicaid paid one third and self-pay patients one quarter of the financial burden. These figures substantially underestimate true health care costs. American Journal of Public Health

20 March - ... Data reported to the National HIV Surveillance System show that the estimated number of infants born with perinatal HIV infection decreased from 216 in 2002 to 69 in 2013. Maternal and infant factors associated with infant HIV infection include late maternal diagnosis and lack of antiretroviral treatment and prophylaxis. JAMA Pediatrics

U.S.: Melanoma incidence, mortality on the rise

23 March - The annual incidence of melanoma and melanoma deaths is on the rise, according to a new study. “This study provides an up-to-date number on the incidence and mortality that is easier for physicians to include in their daily practice,” the study’s lead author, Alex M. Glazer, MD, of the National Society for Cutaneous Medicine in New York, told MedPage Today. “The incidence of melanoma has continued to rise over the 7-year study interval. The mortality rate from melanoma is also rising, despite an increasing proportion of thin, early tumors being found.” He said he attributes the rising incidence and rates of melanoma to the following:

- An aging population with a high level of cumulative sun exposure
- Poor sun protection techniques in early childhood for many of the baby boomer generation
- Indoor tanning
- The fact that the incidence of earlier lesions (thin tumors and melanoma in situ) is rising faster than that of thicker tumors. MedPage Today

U.S.: Should the U.S. government buy a drug company to save money?

17 March - ... Dr. Peter Bach, the director of health policy and outcomes at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York, says the U.S. government could save money and treat everyone in the nation who has hepatitis C if it bought Gilead Sciences, rather than just buying Gilead’s products. ... A year after Gilead got FDA approval for Sovaldi, it launched Harvoni, — a combination medicine that includes Sovaldi’s key ingredient and a second medication that attacks the hepatitis C virus in a different way. ... When Harvoni came on the market, it was listed at $94,000 for a course of treatment that cures most patients. The price has since dropped to about half that, but ... Medicaid programs are limiting access and many insurance companies list it as a specialty drug and cover only a percentage of its cost. ... [T]he U.S. government, however, could cut the cost of treatment by almost two-thirds by buying Gilead on the open market – its market capitalization on March 17 was about $90 billion — and selling off all its assets except the U.S. rights to Sovaldi and Harvoni. The savings would be three-pronged, he explains. The cost of treatment would decline. The disease would stop spreading. And the number of liver transplants prompted by hepatitis C infections would drop significantly. NPR
U.S.: The forces driving middle-aged white people's 'deaths of despair'

23 March - In 2015, when researchers Ann Case and Angus Deaton discovered that death rates had been rising dramatically since 1999 among middle-aged white Americans, they weren't sure why people were dying younger, reversing decades of longer life expectancy. Now the husband-and-wife economists say they have a better understanding of what's causing these "deaths of despair" by suicide, drugs and alcohol. ... [T]hey say that a lack of steady, well-paying jobs for whites without college degrees has caused pain, distress and social dysfunction to build up over time. The mortality rate for that group, ages 45 to 54, increased by a half-percent each year from 1999 to 2013. But whites with college degrees haven't suffered the same lack of economic opportunity, and haven't seen the same loss of life expectancy. NPR


24 March - An annual decline in the number of cases and incidence of tuberculosis (TB) in the United States was found beginning in 1993 and continuing until 2015, when the case count increased and the incidence remained the same as the previous year. Provisional data for 2016 indicate a decreased TB case count and incidence compared with 2015. Current strategies are effective in controlling TB, but not sufficient to promote progress toward the goal of eliminating TB in the United States. Current TB control priorities remain important to prevent a resurgence of TB, but expanded measures and new strategies are needed to achieve TB elimination. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Update

Bangladesh: So what do you do with the ... poo ... in a pit latrine?

21 March - ... According to the World Bank, rates of "open defecation" (development jargon for pooing in public) in Bangladesh have dropped from 34 percent in 1990 to just 1 percent nationwide in 2015. ... But particularly in rural areas, many of the new sanitation facilities are no more than a bare-bones shack on top of a hole in the ground. And when those pits get full, emptying them can be an unpleasant, arduous ... and a financial burden for poor families. It currently costs roughly $13 to have a pit latrine emptied — roughly 14 percent of an average family's monthly income in rural Bangladesh. ... [Rizwan] Ahmed says that even when latrine owners pay to have the sewage removed, it likely ends up dumped in a waterway. ... [A new] program uses pumps to suck the sludge out of the pits, as opposed to the old shovel and bucket method. It sets up a monthly payment system so that families
aren’t hit with a big expense every three to four years when their latrine is overflowing. And it establishes a composting system to turn the sludge into fertilizer for flowers, rubber trees and other non-edible plants. NPR

Bangladesh: Toxic tanneries

17 March - ... The neighborhood in the heart of Dhaka is home to about 150 leather tanneries and footwear factories and is, by many accounts, one of the most intensely polluted places on the planet. ...Open canals run with untreated effluent from the tanneries, garbage, and human and animal waste, which flows into the Buriganga River less than a mile away. ... Inside the tanneries, the work is dangerous, hot and dirty. Only a few of the workers were wearing gloves or boots when we visited. Most worked with their bare hands, standing barefoot in the soup of chemicals that slosh onto the tannery floor. Men crawled in and out of the giant drums where hides are tanned, effectively bathing themselves in chromium sulfate and other chemicals. Pulitzer Center

China: Experts fear return of Hong Kong’s No 1 killer, TB

20 March - ... Although concerted government effort has drastically reduced TB incidence since its peak [in 1951], it still affects thousands in the city, [Dr Chan Shiu-lun] says. The latest figures show there were 4,412 new cases in Hong Kong last year, resulting in 155 deaths. TB is rarely reported in mainstream media but there are growing fears of an international comeback. ... China has a huge challenge trying to control TB and is making vigorous efforts. ... In China, it is estimated there were 63,000 new multidrug resistant TB cases in 2015 and the country is the source of about one third of all the world’s multidrug resistant TB cases. ... With about 45 million visitors to Hong Kong from China in 2015, and a political agenda of greater integration, health experts are concerned.

South China Morning Post

China (Hong Kong): Heightened vigilance warranted under persistently high scarlet fever activity

21 March - The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (March 21) appealed to parents, schools/institutions and healthcare professionals for heightened vigilance against scarlet fever (SF) as its activity has been increasing in the past few weeks. According to the CHP’s surveillance data, the weekly number of SF cases increased from 41 in the week of February 26, 2017, to 49 and 59 in the two subsequent weeks. ... As of March 18, a total of 474 SF cases had been reported to the CHP in 2017, comprising 286 males and 188 females aged from 2 months to 31 years, nearly all of which (465, 98 per cent) were under 10. Most presented with mild illnesses and clinical presentations were largely similar to cases in previous years. Among them, 170 cases (36 per cent) have required hospitalisation. No severe cases requiring admission to an intensive care unit or deaths have been recorded so far. 7th Space

top of page...
Bolivia: Bolivia's Tsimane have healthiest hearts: study

18 March - Researchers have found an Amazonian tribe with the lowest levels of artery hardening - a portent of heart disease - ever observed. Scientists said the discovery points to the importance of reducing risk factors for heart disease: The Tsimane are physically active - exercising for about four to seven hours every day - and their diet is low in fat and sugar. They also do not smoke or drink often. “The average middle-aged Tsimane has arteries that are about 28 years younger than those of Westerners,” said Dr Randall Thompson, a cardiologist at St Luke’s Health System in Kansas City, Missouri, who helped lead the new work. ... The Tsimane’s health results were then compared to a sample of more than 6,800 Americans. Scientists concluded Americans were five times likelier to have heart disease than the Tsimane. Almost nine in 10 Tsimane had no risk of heart disease. Al Jazeera

Brazil: Two yellow fever cases confirmed outside of Rio de Janeiro

20 March - Despite fewer cases in Minas Gerais and Espirito Santo, Brazil has confirmed two cases of yellow fever in a city just 83 miles away from Rio de Janeiro, according to a new update from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). The ECDC’s update said that Brazil confirmed two cases of the mosquito-borne illness in Rio de Janeiro state on Mar 15 in the municipality of Casimiro de Abreu, located 135 km (83 miles) from the city of Rio de Janeiro. Since January, when the current outbreak first began in Minas Gerais, experts have warned that Aedes aegypti mosquitoes and unvaccinated populations in Brazil’s major cities could contribute to a yellow fever epidemic. However, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) said there is still no evidence that Aedes mosquitoes are involved in the current transmission cycle. The ECDC said there were 20 new cases reported in the last week, bringing totals as of Mar 16 to 1,357 cases (933 suspected and 424 confirmed), including 249 deaths (112 suspected and 137 confirmed). CIDRAP

Haiti: After bringing cholera to Haiti, U.N. can’t raise money to fight it

19 March - When the leader of the United Nations apologized to Haitians for the cholera epidemic that has ravaged their country for more than six years — caused by infected peacekeepers sent to protect them — he proclaimed a “moral responsibility” to make things right. The apology, announced in December along with a $400 million strategy to combat the epidemic and “provide material assistance and support” for victims, amounted to a rare public act of contrition by the United Nations. ... Since then, however, the United Nations’ strategy to fight the epidemic, which it calls the “New Approach,” has failed to gain traction. A trust fund created to help finance the strategy has only about $2 million, according to the latest data on its website. Just six of the 193 member states — Britain, Chile, France, India,
Liechtenstein and South Korea — have donated. Diplomats said part of the problem could be traced to simple donor fatigue, as well as too many countries’ reluctance to make financial commitments without certainty that the money will be used effectively.

*The New York Times*

**PAHO reports 7,000 new chikungunya cases, mostly in Brazil**

20 March - Three weeks’ worth of new data from Brazil helped boost the chikungunya total in the Americas this year by 7,091 cases, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) noted in an update late last week. The case count for 2017 has now reached 12,244, PAHO said in its Mar 17 update. Brazil, reporting new cases through late February, added 6,540 confirmed and suspected cases, raising its 2017 total to 10,294. Bolivia reported the next-highest increase as it noted its first 242 cases of the year. Nicaragua had 110 new cases and 317 total, while Paraguay reported 85 new infections, bringing its 2017 total to 508 cases.

*CIDRAP News Scan* (third item)

**Peru: More rain to plague Peru as death toll rises amid worst flooding in decades**

20 March - Rounds of heavy rain and thunderstorms have caused deadly flooding across Peru, and additional downpours are expected in the coming weeks. The flooding is the worst to impact Peru in two decades, according to the Associated Press. The latest report by the National Emergency Operations Centre (COEN) reports deaths from flooding at 75 since the beginning of December. The report also indicated that 20 people remain missing and another 100,000 people have been impacted directly by the flooding. The flooding has also impacted water supply in Lima after treatment systems became clogged. This abnormal ocean warmth could lead to additional rounds of flooding through April before the normally drier weather associated with Peru’s dry season begins to take hold in May and June. *AccuWeather*
The Army Public Health Weekly Update does not analyze the information as to its strategic or tactical impact on the US Army and is not a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence is available from the National Center for Medical Intelligence.

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

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

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

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