

29 April 2016

# Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center

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#### MILITARY

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### After combat stress, violence can show up at home

27 April - ... The debate about the relationship between domestic violence and post-traumatic stress disorder has waxed and waned since the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, but has never quite gone away. ... Veterans' advocates are anxious about the stereotype of combat vets as ticking time bombs, which is contradicted by the vast majority of former

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## Army Vector-borne Disease Report

The first issue of the season addresses Zika virus, mosquito surveillance, tick testing, and vector-borne disease prevention.



troops who live with post-traumatic stress and never hurt anyone. There is a link, however, between PTSD and violence. ... Vets with PTSD are three times more likely to be violent. ... Victims of domestic violence have many reasons for staying in their relationships. In the military, there are more reasons: reporting abuse can end a soldier's career badly, which can mean not only disgrace but no benefits for the family. ... One challenge, however, is that the VA is focused on veterans, not their wives. And veterans' groups don't talk much about domestic violence — and most domestic violence groups don't have expertise about veterans and post-traumatic stress. [NPR](#)

## Army combat boot is not female friendly, lawmakers say

27 April - As more frontline jobs open to women, lawmakers say the Army needs to consider adopting a combat boot specially designed for female soldiers. The House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness inserted a requirement for a survey of at least 2,000 female soldiers in a markup of the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act. "The Army is the only service that does not use female-specific lasts — the mold/model around which the boot is built — to design their combat footwear," said Adam Carbullido. ... "Instead, the Army uses lasts designed for male feet, despite women having served in combat for years." [Army Times](#)

## Carter Center names Dean Sienko as new vice president for health programs

27 April - Dean G. Sienko, M.D., M.S., has been appointed vice president for health programs at The Carter Center, effective June 2016. Currently, Sienko is associate dean for prevention and public health at Michigan State University College of Human Medicine. At The Carter Center, he will provide leadership for programs working to prevent or eliminate six tropical diseases in 18 nations, as well as efforts to improve mental health care in the United States and abroad. He replaces Dr. Donald Hopkins, who joined the Center in 1987, and remains as special advisor for Guinea worm eradication. "Dr. Sienko brings a lifetime of experience in disease prevention and public health leadership to the Center's efforts to fight preventable diseases in many of the world's poorest nations," said Carter Center CEO, Ambassador (ret.) Mary Ann Peters. ... Sienko recently completed a distinguished 33-year career as a U.S. Army officer, retiring in January 2015, at the rank of major general. His last assignment in the Army was as the commanding general of the Army Public Health Command. [The Carter Center](#)

## DEA approves PTSD marijuana study

23 April - The Drug Enforcement Administration has given its blessing to a study on the effect of medical marijuana on post-traumatic stress disorder, the first randomized, controlled research in the U.S. for PTSD that will use the actual plant instead of oils or synthesized cannabis. According to the research's nonprofit sponsor, Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, or MAPS, the DEA's approval gives researchers the go-ahead to buy the marijuana for the study from the National Institute of Drug Abuse. Once

## MRCM: Acute Mountain Sickness App

The U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command has transitioned a mobile mission-planning tool, which was developed by U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine researchers, directly to the field.

The Altitude Readiness Management System, or ARMS, is an Android-based app that can predict how likely Soldiers are to experience mountain sickness and reduced physical performance at different altitudes and provides an acclimatization module to minimize these deficits.



the marijuana has been secured, the group will begin recruiting and enrolling participants, perhaps as early as June, MAPS spokesman Brad Burge said. ... Participants will include 76 veterans who have treatment-resistant PTSD. The study will use marijuana of various strains and potency for comparison purposes. [Military Times](#)

## Hormone insufficiencies may be prevalent after blast concussion in veterans

22 April - Blast-related concussions, which are often linked to hormonal changes leading to problems such as sleep disturbances, fatigue, depression, and poor quality of life, may be prevalent in US military veterans, according to results from a new study conducted in male US service members who had been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan. In civilians, chronic hypopituitarism, defined as a deficiency in the production of 1 or more pituitary hormones for at least 1 year after injury, affects a significant portion of people who have experienced concussions, also referred to as mild traumatic brain injury (TBI), researchers who presented the findings at ENDO 2016 reported. [Endocrinology Advisor](#)

## New U.S. military casualties: Vets sickened by base burn pits

25 April - ... U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar at the American Lung Association in St. Paul [is promoting] a bill called the Helping Veterans Exposed to Burn Pits Act. The legislation ... would create a "center of excellence" within the Department of Veterans Affairs to further "prevention, diagnosis, mitigation, treatment and rehabilitation of health conditions relating to exposure to burn pits." ... The senator compared the effects of burn pits to those of the infamous Agent Orange defoliant in Vietnam, noting that it took the government years to properly help veterans affected by that chemical. She wants to make sure that doesn't happen with burn-pit smoke. [The Dickinson Press](#)

## Officials cite research as key to progress in PTSD, TBI diagnosis, treatment

25 April - ... [Navy Capt. (Dr.) Michael] Colston and Navy Capt. (Dr.) Walter Greenhalgh ... updated a Senate Armed Services Committee panel on the Defense Department's research, diagnosis and treatment for PTSD and TBI. Colston and Greenhalgh talked about the necessity of continued medical research into PTSD and TBI diagnoses and treatment along with DoD's partnerships with medical academia, federal departments ... and private institutions. ... Colston said military medicine faces a particular challenge: ascertaining why PTSD, TBI, depression, substance-use disorders, and chronic pain all present together. While PTSD treatment has a wide evidence base that supports using therapy and medication regardless of the trauma the service member experienced, Colston noted, "we nonetheless face challenges in how best to structure our health system to support those interventions. Health systems research is imperative," he said. [U.S. Department of Defense](#)

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

Look under Hot Topics & Current Issues.

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

## Pentagon aims to curb tobacco use by military –memo

26 April - U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter has issued new policy guidelines aimed at curbing tobacco use within the U.S. military that include raising the prices of tobacco on military bases to match local market prices. The policy, which also includes widening smoke-free zones in areas frequented by children, was detailed in an April 8 memo seen by Reuters on Tuesday. [Thomas Reuters Foundation](#)

## Risks of mental health problems in military personnel reduce with length of service

27 April - The risk of developing a mental health problem among people who have served in the Armed Forces is greatest in veterans who have served for the shortest period of time and becomes less with longer service. ... This new study analysed the long-term risks of admission to hospital for common mental health problems - including depressive disorders, anxiety disorders (including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) and psychotic illness - in veterans by length of service. The researchers found that those who left earliest had a 50% higher risk than people with no record of service: that also included people who left before completing training. Longer service was associated with better mental health outcomes; people who completed at least four years' service were at no greater risk than civilians, whilst people with the longest service had a 40% reduction in risk. Lead researcher Dr Beverly Bergman said: "... We believe that pre-service vulnerabilities contribute to both early separation from service and long-term mental health problems. In this study longer service, which often means more deployments, was associated with better mental health in most veterans." [Medical Xpress](#)

## Update: Exertional rhabdomyolysis, active component, U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps, 2011–2015

March 2016 - Among active component members of the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps in 2015, there were 456 incident episodes of rhabdomyolysis likely due to physical exertion or heat stress ("exertional rhabdomyolysis"). Annual rates of incident diagnoses of exertional rhabdomyolysis increased 17% between 2014 and 2015. In 2015, the highest incidence rates occurred in service members who were male; younger than 20 years of age; black, non-Hispanic; members of the Marine Corps and Army; recruit trainees; and in combat-specific occupations. Most cases of exertional rhabdomyolysis were diagnosed at installations that support basic combat/recruit training or major ground combat units of the Army or Marine Corps. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

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## GLOBAL

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### Bed bugs repulsed by certain colours

25 April - Bed bugs appear to have a strong preference for particular colours - a quirk that could be used against the troublesome pests, say scientists. According to the work in the *Journal of Medical Entomology*, the blood-sucking insects love black and red but hate yellow and green. This information could help make better traps to lure and catch the bugs. But it is too soon to say if yellow sheets can stop them nesting in your bed, say the US researchers. [BBC News](#)

### Parasitic worms may hold key to cutting spread of HIV: researchers

28 April - A parasitic worm which affects millions of the world's poorest people may hold an important but little-known key to cutting the spread of HIV, researchers said. ... Schistosomiasis affects at least 250 million people. It is caused by parasitic worms, picked up in infested waters, which drill through people's skin and lay eggs in their bodies. If the worms lay eggs in a woman's genital areas, including the vagina and cervix, they can cause lesions which make women more vulnerable to HIV, experts in the tropical disease said. Women are three times more likely to be infected with HIV if they have female genital schistosomiasis (FGS), studies carried out in Zimbabwe, Tanzania, South Africa and Mozambique have found. ... Men with the worms in their genitals show a sharp increase in the amount of HIV virus in their semen, researchers said. [Reuters](#)

### The high cost of norovirus worldwide

26 April - While norovirus is often linked in the news to outbreaks on cruise ships, the highly contagious stomach bug sickens nearly 700 million around the world every year and results in roughly \$4.2 billion in health care costs and \$60.3 billion in societal costs annually. ... The findings, published April 26 in *PLOS ONE*, are believed to be the first to look at the global economic burden of norovirus, which is common in both wealthy and poor nations. The researchers say their study suggests that much more attention and education are needed to combat a disease that also kills approximately 219,000 a year around the world. [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News](#)

### Traumatic brain injuries linked with lasting sleep problems

27 April - People who suffered a traumatic brain injury may still have sleep problems for up to a year and a half after, new research shows. What's more, the study ... found that many people with these brain injuries may be unaware of how much their sleep is disrupted. ... The study authors ... performed detailed sleep assessments on their subjects, including two weeks of a device worn on the wrist that measures body movement and a night in a sleep video lab, to measure brain activity, eye movements, muscle activity, and heart rhythm. They

also administered a test to evaluate daytime sleepiness, measured by how quickly people fall asleep in a quiet environment during the day. An analysis of the data showed that 67 percent of those who had suffered a traumatic brain injury experienced excessive daytime sleepiness, compared to 19 percent of those in the healthy group. However, those with traumatic brain injury didn't report feeling any sleepier than those without head injuries when asked how tired they were during the day. [CBS News](#)

## ZIKA VIRUS

### HHS supports blood sampling to foster new Zika tests

28 April - Federal officials yesterday announced efforts to gather blood samples from people in the continental United States and Puerto Rico who are infected with Zika virus to help diagnostic test developers gauge how well the products perform. ... The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) said the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) will support the collection of blood samples from infected patients, given the urgent need to expand capacity for blood tests to detect Zika-specific immunoglobulin M (IgM). The tests are used to assess if someone who was potentially exposed to the virus was infected. ... [The] the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said today the territories reporting local spread--Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the US Virgin Islands—have reported 596 cases, most of them in Puerto Rico. Zika infections have been reported in 8 more pregnant women in the US territories, raising that total to 56. One more potentially linked Guillain-Barre syndrome (GBS) case has been reported, lifting the number to five. [CIDRAP](#)

### Quest Diagnostics says its Zika virus test gets U.S. approval

28 April - Quest Diagnostics Inc said it has received emergency authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to sell the first commercially developed diagnostic test for Zika in the United States, a step that may help expand testing capacity and speed diagnosis of the virus. Previously, the only Zika blood tests that had Emergency Use Authorization, or EUA, were available from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and were only to be used in qualified laboratories designated by the CDC. Quest, in its announcement on Thursday, said it plans to make the new test broadly available to doctors for patient testing, including in Puerto Rico, by early next week. [Reuters](#)

### Zika funding battle steals states' public health emergency money

25 April - Cities and states preparing for possible Zika outbreaks this spring and summer are losing millions of federal dollars that local officials say they were counting on, not only for

on-the-ground efforts to track and contain the spread of the mosquito-borne virus but also to respond to other emergencies that threaten public health. ... The across-the-board funding cuts are part of a complicated shift of resources that the Obama administration blames on Congress and its refusal to approve the White House's \$1.9 billion emergency request to combat Zika. In early April, officials announced a stopgap measure that moved money originally intended for the government's Ebola response. But in that scramble, the administration also redirected about \$44 million in emergency preparedness grants that state and local public health departments expected to receive starting in July.

[The Washington Post](#)

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## **INFLUENZA**

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### **AFHSB: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary**

For Week 15:

- NORTHCOM: Influenza activity remained similar to last week and ranged from minimal to low in most states.
- EUCOM: Influenza activity was minimal across EUCOM.
- PACOM: Influenza activity remained minimal throughout PACOM.
- CENTCOM and AFRICOM: Influenza activity remained minimal across CENTCOM and AFRICOM.
- SOUTHCOM: Influenza activity in Honduras was minimal based on DMSS data.

[DHA -Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch](#)

### **Better to get your flu shot in the morning**

26 April - You're better off getting your flu shot in the morning than in the afternoon, researchers from England say. ... Because a person's immune response varies through the course of the day, some researchers have suggested that vaccines might work better if they're given at some times of the day rather than at other times. Phillips's team randomly assigned 276 older adults to receive an influenza vaccine in the morning (9-11 AM) or in the afternoon (3-5 PM). One month later, they analyzed blood samples from each person to measure antibodies against the flu virus. Antibody levels went up in both groups, but the increases were significantly higher for those who got vaccinations in the morning instead of in the afternoon, the authors reported in the journal *Vaccine*. [Reuters](#)

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

During week 15 (April 10-16, 2016), influenza activity decreased in the United States.

- **Viral Surveillance:** The most frequently identified influenza virus type reported by public health laboratories during week 15 was influenza A, with influenza A (H1N1)pdm09 viruses predominating. 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 below the system-specific epidemic threshold in the NCHS Mortality Surveillance System and above the system-specific epidemic threshold in the 122 Cities Mortality Reporting System. [CDC](#)

## ECDC: Flu News Europe

Week 15/2016 (11-17 April 2016)

- Influenza activity continued to decrease in the WHO European Region. Most countries (92%) reported decreasing trends, with associated lower numbers of specimens being collected and fewer testing positive for influenza virus (32%) than in the previous week (35%).
- As is often seen late in the northern hemisphere's influenza season, a shift towards circulation of type B influenza virus has occurred. Type B accounted for 62% of influenza virus detections from sentinel sources and 17–23% of hospitalized severe cases.
- Fewer cases of severe disease were reported than in previous weeks, although numbers varied between countries. Cases occurred mainly in people under the age of 65, and the great majority of those testing positive for influenza virus were infected by A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses. [European Center for Disease Prevention and Control/WHO](#)

## NHRC: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For the week ending 2 January 2016:

- **Influenza:** One case of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza (A/H1) among US military basic trainees at NRTC Great Lakes.
- **FRI surveillance** at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates were elevated at Fort Benning and Fort Leonard Wood [Naval Health Research Center](#)

## USAFSAM: DoD Global, Laboratory-Based, Influenza Surveillance Program

During 10-23 April 2016 (Surveillance Weeks 15 & 16), a total of 199 specimens were collected and received from 45 locations. Results were finalized for 175 specimens from 43 locations. During Week 15, 19 influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, four A(H3N2), and 14 influenza B

viruses were identified. Ten influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, three A(H3N2), and 14 influenza B viruses were identified during Week 16. Approximately 30% of specimens tested positive for influenza during Week 15. The percent positive for Week 16 slightly increased to approximately 38%. The influenza percent positive for the season is currently 26%.

[US Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

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## **VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY**

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### **Plague diagnosed in 3 Wyoming cats**

22 April - The Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) yesterday confirmed plague infections in three Park County cats. All three cats lived in Cody, Wyo., in the vicinity of South Fork Road. Veterinarians confirmed the plague diagnoses between Apr 12 and Apr 20, the WDH said. The agency didn't say whether the cats survived. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (fourth item)

### **Pakistan: Poisoned sweets kill 23 in Pakistan's Punjab**

25 April - At least 23 people have died after consuming poisoned sweets in central Pakistan, police officials say. ... "In addition, 52 people are still being treated at various hospitals." Rameez Bukhari, a senior police officer from the district, said three people - two brothers who run the bakery and a worker - have been arrested. "There was a pesticide shop close by which was being renovated and the owner had left his pesticides at the bakery for safekeeping," said Bukhari. "A baker may have used a small packet in the sweet mixture." Bukhari said police were awaiting laboratory results. [Al Jazeera](#)

### **Rice and rice products may expose infants to arsenic**

25 April - Infant rice cereal and rice snacks contain some arsenic, and babies who eat these products have higher levels of arsenic in their urine, a study shows. It's not clear yet whether the arsenic will affect their health down the line. ... Rice grains can take up arsenic from their environment, and U.S. rice has some of the highest arsenic concentrations in the world, she said. "Arsenic is a known carcinogen that can influence risk of cardiovascular, immune and other diseases," Karagas told Reuters Health by email. "There's a growing body of evidence that even relatively low levels of exposure may have adverse health impacts on young children including on growth, immunity and neurodevelopment." [Reuters](#)

### **Tests find evidence for MCR-1 transmission between pets and people**

22 April - Pet dogs and cats can be colonized with the MCR-1 antibiotic-resistance gene and pass it to people, Chinese researchers reported yesterday in a letter to *Emerging*

*Infectious Diseases*. Their findings came from an investigation into MCR-1–harboring *Escherichia coli* isolates from three men hospitalized in a Guangzhou facility's urology ward toward the end of 2015. After learning that one of the men worked in a pet shop, researchers collected fecal samples from dogs and cats at the store. Of 39 samples from dogs, 4 were positive on polymerase chain reaction testing for MCR-1, and of 14 samples from cats, 2 were positive. Further tests showed that all six of the positive samples were resistant to colistin, polymyxin B, cephalosporin, gentamicin, and ciprofloxacin. Genetic sequencing suggested that one of the human strains was related to four of the isolates from dogs, which suggests possible MCR-1 transmission between dogs and the patient. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

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## WELLNESS

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### Foods loaded with sugar, salt and fat? Bring it

22 April - ... Driven by fast-changing definitions of what is healthy to eat, people are turning to foods they shunned just a couple of years ago. Studies now suggest that not all fat, for example, necessarily contributes to weight gain or heart problems. That has left companies scrambling to push some foods that they thought had long passed their popularity peak — and health advocates wondering what went wrong. Under the new thinking, not all fat is bad, and neither are all salty foods. ... Nutrition experts are watching the shift warily. Margo Wootan, director of nutrition policy at the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a research and advocacy group, noted that companies have gone a long way toward reducing or eliminating saturated fats, which raise cholesterol in the blood and increase the risk of heart disease. [The New York Times](#)

### How the American Psychiatric Association wants to transform mental health care

25 April - As technology advances, accessing mental health care is getting easier. Apps, for example, can help with everything from anxiety to providing support from bullying to managing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. But innovators in psychiatry say they want to see much more creative problem solving in their field. It's an area with the potential to help large numbers of people. ... That's where the American Psychiatric Association's inaugural Innovation Lab comes in. ... The goal is to bring together seven teams of finalists ... to work on their ideas for improving mental health care, with the winners receiving \$2,500 at the end of the three-hour session. [The Week](#)

### Pastoral medicine credentials raise questions in Texas

25 April - You've probably heard of the credentials M.D. and R.N., and maybe N.P. The people using those letters are doctors, registered nurses and nurse practitioners. But what

about PSC.D or D.PSc? Those letters refer to someone who practices pastoral medicine — or "Bible-based" health care. It's a relatively new title being used by some alternative health practitioners. The Texas-based Pastoral Medical Association gives out "pastoral provider licenses" in all 50 states and 30 countries. Some providers call themselves doctors of pastoral medicine. But these licenses are not medical degrees. That has watchdog organizations concerned that some patients may not understand what this certification really means. ... In recent years, the Texas Medical Board has sent about a dozen cease and desist orders to people using the pastoral medicine certification. [NPR](#)

## Study: Even a little air pollution may have long-term health effects on developing fetus

27 April - Even small amounts of air pollution appear to raise the risk of a condition in pregnant women linked to premature births and lifelong neurological and respiratory disorders in their children. ... Fine particles from car exhaust, power plants and other industrial sources are breathed into the lungs, but the scientists have now found evidence of the effects of that pollution in pregnant women's placentas, the organ that connects a mother to her fetus and provides blood, oxygen and nutrition. They found that the greater the maternal exposure to air pollution, the more likely the pregnant women suffered from a condition called intrauterine inflammation, which can increase the risk of a number of health problems for her child from the fetal stage well into childhood. ... Current U.S. Environmental Protection Agency air pollution standards may not be stringent enough to protect her developing fetus. [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News](#)

## The dangers of 'polypharmacy,' the ever-mounting pile of pills

22 April - ... Geriatricians and researchers have warned for years about the potential hazards of polypharmacy, usually defined as taking five or more drugs concurrently. Yet it continues to rise in all age groups, reaching disturbingly high levels among older adults. ... Tracking prescription drug use from 1999 to 2012 through a large national survey, Harvard researchers reported in November that 39 percent of those over age 65 now use five or more medications — a 70 percent increase in polypharmacy over 12 years. ... More than a third [of people 62 to 85] were taking at least five prescription medications, and almost two-thirds were using dietary supplements, including herbs and vitamins. Nearly 40 percent took over-the-counter drugs. [The New York Times](#)

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## Angola: Malaria deaths rising in Angola as health crisis spreads

26 April - Deaths from malaria in Angola this year look set to outstrip 2015 as a health crisis that includes one of the country's worst yellow fever outbreaks in decades spreads, the World Health Organisation said. Angola recorded 2,915 deaths from malaria in the first quarter of this year, compared with 8,000 for the whole of 2015 and 5,500 the previous year. ... [Uncollected] garbage in Luanda due to government budget cuts and a record amount of rainfall had contributed to high cases of malaria, yellow fever and chronic diarrhea. [Reuters](#)

## Angola: WHO issues yellow fever warning as deadly outbreak grows

26 April - Amid rising concern over a deadly outbreak of yellow fever spreading from Angola, the World Health Organization on Tuesday urged travelers to the African country to heed its warnings and get vaccinated. At least 258 people have been killed and there have been around 1,975 suspected cases of the mosquito-borne disease since an epidemic erupted in December 2015. ... Angola's outbreak has already spread to other countries in Africa, including the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and at least 11 cases of yellow fever have been imported into China in people traveling from Angola. [Reuters](#)

## Tanzania: Cholera outbreak tops 24,000 cases

25 April - An outbreak of cholera in Tanzania has grown to 24,108 cholera cases and 378 deaths, the WHO said on Apr 22. Although the frequency and intensity of the cases have fluctuated since the outbreak started last year, countries neighboring Tanzania have also experienced outbreaks, the WHO said. Zanzibar, for instance, has reported 3,057 cases, including 51 deaths. WHO cites unclean water and unsanitary latrines as two factors of the disease's spread, adding that because Tanzania has international seaports and airports, cholera could spread well past its borders. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (fourth item)

## Tanzanian women face high rates of abortion-related deaths

25 April - Unsafe abortions kill many Tanzanian women, according to a recent study, but the deaths result from several factors and women in some regions die much more often than others. Birth control is hard to get, and public health clinics lack trained staff and vacuum aspiration kits used to perform abortions. In addition, the legality of abortion is ambiguous, forcing many women to try to do it themselves or see illegal abortion providers. Of one million unintended pregnancies in 2013, the study found, 39 percent ended in abortion. ... Tanzania's abortion rate — 36 per 1,000 women — is typical for East Africa. But abortions and related deaths are nearly five times higher for women in the north, near Lake Victoria,

and in the southern highlands, than for women living on the island of Zanzibar. Zanzibar is 98 percent Muslim; polygamy is common and extramarital sex is taboo, so unplanned pregnancies are rare. [The New York Times](#)

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## **USCENTCOM**

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### **Saudi Arabia: MERS sickens another Saudi; WHO weighs in on 11 cases**

25 April - Saudi Arabia's ministry of health (MOH) over the weekend reported a new MERS case that involved a household contact of an earlier case, and the World Health Organization (WHO) fleshed out details on 10 of the country's earlier cases, plus 1 recently reported in Bahrain. The WHO's overview of the recent Saudi cases shows familiar exposure patterns in the outbreaks, with four linked to camels or consumption of raw camel milk and three others with possible healthcare exposure in as many as three separate facilities. Sources still aren't known for three of the cases. ... Saudi Arabia's latest case lifts the country's overall total to 1,377 illnesses, 587 of them fatal. Eleven patients are still being treated for their infections. [CIDRAP](#)

### **Syria hospital bombing: Are the rules of war breaking down?**

28 April - The al-Quds hospital in Aleppo, Syria, is the latest health care facility to get blown apart. The 34-bed hospital was tucked into the lower floors of a five-story building in the Sukkari neighborhood of Aleppo. Sandbags blocked the windows and fortified the entrance. Concrete apartment buildings pressed on either side of it. Late Wednesday night, witnesses say, a low-flying fighter jet unleashed a missile that smashed directly into the hospital. The airstrike killed at least 27 people. ... "Over the last several years direct, targeted attacks on health care institutions that are clearly civilian facilities have escalated greatly," says Dr. Michael Van Rooyen, an emergency physician and the director of Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, "and Syria's been the most notable and notorious example." ... He says it's a clear violation of the Geneva Conventions to launch airstrikes on medical facilities. These attacks have made providing medical care in conflict zones incredibly dangerous, especially in Syria, he adds. [NPR](#)

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## United Kingdom: Duchess Kate, Princes William, Harry team up for mental health PSA

24 April - ... Prince William, Duchess Kate and Prince Harry all appear in a PSA for the new initiative called Heads Together, which will focus on removing the stigma around mental health. ... The Royal Foundation will work with a number of charities, including Best Beginnings, CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably), Mind, Place2Be, The Mix, and YoungMinds. Heads together will also headline the London Marathon in April 2017. [Today](#)

## United Kingdom: First all-out strike in the history of the National Health Service

26 April - Thousands of junior doctors posted picket lines outside hospitals around England on Tuesday in the first all-out strike in the history of Britain's National Health Service. The two-day strike marks the first time that vital NHS emergency services have been affected by an industrial action. The strike reflects the impasse between the government and the junior doctors — physicians with up to 10 years' experience — over the government's pledge to greatly expand National Health Service care on weekends. The financial dispute centers on whether day shifts on Saturday should be treated as a normal working day. The government proposal calls for extra pay for shifts on Saturday night and Sunday.

[U.S. News and World Report](#)

## United Kingdom: UK doctors urge wide promotion of e-cigs to help smokers quit

27 April - E-cigarettes are likely to bring benefits for public health and should be widely promoted to smokers to help them quit tobacco, Britain's Royal College of Physicians (RCP) said on Thursday. ... [The] influential British doctors group stressed that tobacco smoking is both addictive and lethal, and concluded that e-cigarettes are "much safer than smoking". E-cigarettes are not a gateway to smoking, the RCP said, and do not lead to the normalization of the habit - two issues often cited by critics who fear the devices can lure children and young people into smoking habits. [Reuters](#)

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## U.S.: From bioterrorism to Zika, readiness lags for U.S. health emergencies

25 April - The U.S. is generally prepared to manage public health emergencies like the Houston floods, a Zika virus outbreak or a potential bioterrorist attack, but health protections aren't distributed evenly across the country, according to a new state-by-state analysis. The 2016 National Health Security Preparedness Index, which measures how communities respond to and recover from "large-scale emergencies," shows states getting better in areas like health security and engaging their communities than 2014 and 2015. But the national index score of 6.7 on a 10-point scale shows plenty of room for improvement. ... "The nation's health protections are not distributed evenly across the U.S., with a preparedness gap of 36% between highest and lowest states in 2015," the preparedness summary said. [In Homeland Security](#)

## U.S.: Suicide rate surges to a 30-year high

22 April - Suicide in the United States has surged to the highest levels in nearly 30 years, a federal data analysis has found, with increases in every age group except older adults. The rise was particularly steep for women. It was also substantial among middle-aged Americans, sending a signal of deep anguish from a group whose suicide rates had been stable or falling since the 1950s. The suicide rate for middle-aged women, ages 45 to 64, jumped by 63 percent over the period of the study, while it rose by 43 percent for men in that age range, the sharpest increase for males of any age. The overall suicide rate rose by 24 percent from 1999 to 2014, according to the National Center for Health Statistics, which released the study on Friday. The increases were so widespread that they lifted the nation's suicide rate to 13 per 100,000 people, the highest since 1986. [The New York Times](#)

## U.S.: Teen birth rates fall nearly 50 percent among Hispanic and black teens, dropping national teen birth rate to an all-time low

28 April - Births among Hispanic and black teens have dropped by almost half since 2006, according to a new analysis published by CDC. This mirrors a substantial national decline: births to all American teenagers have dropped more than 40 percent within the past decade. Despite this progress, key challenges persist for many communities, according to the report. While dramatic declines among Hispanic and black teens (51 percent and 44 percent, respectively) have helped reduce gaps, birth rates remain twice as high for these teens nationally compared with white teens. [CDC](#)

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## Japan: Fear over eating disorder care in Japan

25 April - Most people suffering with eating disorders in Japan are not receiving any medical or psychological support, according to doctors. The Japan Society for Eating Disorders claims the health system is failing hundreds of thousands of sufferers. ... Stigma around eating disorders - for both sufferers and their families - prevents many people from coming forward. ... The Japanese government said it was difficult to get an accurate picture of how many people are suffering with eating disorders because so few come forward for treatment. Doctors say the prevalence in Japan is "comparable with that of the UK". However, in 2014 only 10,000 people were getting treatment for eating disorders according to Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. That's compared to 725,000 people in the UK, a country with almost half the population of Japan. [BBC News](#)

## South Korea: Newborn disease outbreaks push South Korea to stiffen care center oversight

28 April - Like more than half of South Korean mothers, Kim Ju-yeon spent two weeks recuperating and relaxing in a health care center with her newborn after she gave birth last June. But her baby boy during their stay, one of 30 nursing assistant. ... Growing such facilities has prompted tighter regulation of the which usually put babies in newborns, separate from their mothers. ... The government says 265 babies caught infections, from respiratory to diarrheal diseases, in the first half of 2015, the latest data available. That figure compares with just 88 in all of 2014. [Reuters](#)



caught latent tuberculosis infants who was infected by a concern over infection risks in South Korea to propose sometimes luxurious centers, nurseries with other

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## PAHO notes more than 10,000 new chikungunya cases in the Americas

25 April - The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) late last week reported 10,662 new cases of chikungunya in the Americas, bringing the 2016 outbreak total to 54,286 confirmed and suspected cases. ... Brazil—which has reported an explosion of cases in recent months of Zika, another mosquito-borne disease—accounted for almost all the new cases. It reported 10,111 new chikungunya cases from just 1 week in late February and early March

and now has 13,676 cases this year. Even though Brazil is still well behind in reporting cases, it has now passed Colombia as the hardest-hit nation in 2016. ... PAHO did report did not report any new chikungunya-related deaths for the year, leaving that number at two.  
[CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

## Peru yellow fever update: 9 confirmed cases

26 April - In a follow-up to a previous report on yellow fever in Central Peru, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) reports that through the first week of April 2016, there were 25 suspected cases of yellow fever reported, including two deaths. Of the reported cases, nine were confirmed, 11 were classified as probable, and five were discarded. ... Currently, Peru is the only country in the Americas to report confirmed yellow fever in 2016. The number of cases reported to date in 2016 exceeds the total of cases reported in the preceding two years; with 15 cases reported in 2014 and 17 cases reported in 2015. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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

