

3 June 2016

Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center

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Motorcycle-Related Injuries

Motorcycle-related injuries have devastating impacts on the U.S. military and the Army. Over 1,000 active duty Service Members were **killed** in motorcycle crashes between 1999 and 2012.

For every Army motorcycle death there are five motorcycle-related hospitalizations and 22 motorcycle-related outpatient visits.

Traumatic brain injury is one of the leading causes of injury from motorcycle crashes. Fractures of legs and arms are also common.



USSOUTHCOM

- [PAHO reports 1,100 new chikungunya infections](#)
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U.S. MILITARY

3 dead, 6 missing after Army tactical vehicle swept away in floodwaters near Fort Hood

2 June - Three soldiers were killed, three others injured and six were missing after a US Army truck was swept from a low-water crossing and overturned in a swollen creek at Fort Hood, Texas on Thursday. It was the third tragic incident of the day for the US military, after a Blue Angels fighter pilot was killed in a crash in Tennessee and the pilot of an Air Force jet participating in a Colorado graduation ceremony's flyover was slightly injured after he ejected before the craft crashed in a field. The Texas soldiers involved are from the Army's famed 1st Cavalry Division, which is based at Fort Hood. ... The bodies of the three deceased soldiers were recovered from the water downstream. Three other soldiers were rescued from the swift water and were listed in stable condition at Coryell Memorial Healthcare System in Gatesville, Texas. [Fox News](#)

Ambulatory visits among members of the active component, U.S. Armed Forces, 2015

April 2016 - ... During 2015, there were 18,693,989 reported ambulatory visits of active component service members. The crude annual rate (all causes) was ... 14.4 visits per person-year (p-yr). ... In 2015, 44.0% of ambulatory visits were classified into the "Other" category. ... Three diagnoses accounted for 48.5% of the visits in the "Other" category: general medical examination (including deployment health assessments) (28.6%), care involving use of rehabilitation procedures (13.1%), and encounters for administrative purposes (e.g., disability examinations, issuance of repeat prescriptions) (6.8%). In 2015, there were 10,468,409 documented ambulatory visits for illnesses and injuries. ... The crude annual rate of illness and injury-related visits was 8.0 visits per p-yr. ... In 2015, four major diagnostic categories accounted for 69.7% of all illness- and injury-related ambulatory visits among active component service members: musculoskeletal system/connective tissue disorders (30.6%); mental disorders (18.0%); signs, symptoms, and ill-defined conditions (11.1%); and disorders of the nervous system and sense organs (10.1%). [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

Army Medicine works to increase unit readiness

23 May - ... Army Medicine is working to increase the number of Soldiers that are medically available to deploy. The active-duty Army currently has 490,000 Soldiers, but

Foot Marching and Load-Carriage Injuries

A new fact sheet addresses activities associated with foot marching injuries such as "ruck marches," "forced marches," "loaded marches," "road marches," and "patrolling."

During these activities, heavy loads are carried on the back in backpacks or rucksacks. Body armor, protective clothing, ammunition, and other supplies are also worn on other parts of the body.

This load-carriage puts repeated stress on the body's skin, bones, muscles and nerves and can cause injuries. The lower extremities (knees, lower leg, ankles, feet) and back are most frequently affected.



military records show that 16 percent of that force is nondeployable. ... "As we decrease our total troop strength to 450,000 we also have to be able to cut that non-deployable percentage," said Lt. Col. Dave Hamilton, deputy commander for health and readiness at Fort Carson's Medical Department Activity. "Just by cutting it in half to 8 percent we can actually increase the number of available Soldiers (355,500) to our force, to our commanders." To help decrease the number of nondeployables, Army Medicine's Medical Readiness Transformation is launching the Commander Portal June 1. This new system will allow company command teams to view their units' overall readiness on one system. "The Commander Portal is going to give commanders and first sergeants a quick overview of their company's medical status," said Hamilton. [Army.mil](#)

Deployed US military service members more likely to suffer noncombat bone and joint injuries

1 June - ... [According] to retired Army Colonel Philip J. Belmont, MD, lead study author of a new literature review ... deployed military service members who were engaged in sustained combat operations over a 15-month period were three times more likely to suffer non-combat musculoskeletal injuries than combat musculoskeletal injuries. In fact, even though 75 percent of musculoskeletal injuries are non-combat related, Dr. Belmont, an orthopaedic surgeon, says "80.5 percent of military air medical transports were for disease and non-combat injuries." "Some common non-combat bone and joint injuries that military service members report when they return from their deployment include anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injuries of the knee and shoulder dislocations. Those injuries occur nearly five times more often among military service members than they do in the civilian population. Also common are ankle sprains and plantar fasciitis," says Dr. Belmont. [Medical Xpress](#)

In U.S. Army, enlisted soldiers' risk of suicide attempts varies over time

26 May - The risk of attempted suicide peaks at several points during enlisted soldiers' time in the U.S. Army, a new study found. Soldiers who were never deployed were at highest risk for suicide attempts during their second month of service. Risk among soldiers on their first deployment was highest during the sixth month of deployment. And among those who'd completed deployment, risk peaked again five months after they'd returned home, researchers found. ... Their new report focused on 163,178 enlisted Army soldiers on active duty between 2004 and 2009. During that time, 9,650 soldiers attempted suicide. About 86 percent were male, about 68 percent were younger than 30, and most were white, high school graduates and married. While 40 percent of the total population had never been deployed, that group accounted for about 61 percent of the soldiers who attempted suicide. Previously deployed soldiers accounted for 29 percent of the suicide attempts, and currently deployed soldiers accounted for about 10 percent. [Reuters](#)

Vector-borne Disease Report

From January 1, 2015 through May 25, 2016, 591 Zika virus cases have been reported in the U.S., all travel-associated. 935 locally acquired and 4 travel-associated cases were reported in Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa. More information in the latest issue of the Army Vector-borne Disease Report:



No talking, no drugs—spec-ops vets pioneer quiet PTSD therapy

30 May - ... Accelerated Resolution Therapy [is] a new tool to treat acute trauma, post-traumatic stress, anxiety, and depression that is being adopted into the menu of treatments available at Walter Reed and other army centers, and a vanguard of trailblazing veterans groups. Partly because it works so fast, military leaders hope it could help handle a backlog of PTSD cases, and encourage more troops to seek treatment. ... [Unlike] talk therapy or other commonly used methods, where the subject shares what's bothering them out loud, the soldier need share nothing with the therapist. Instead, the patient watches the therapist's hand with their eyes, while bringing up in their own mind the disturbing memories or images, first tuning in to how the body reacts. Through deep breathing, the patient focuses on the tension and releases it.

[The Daily Beast](#)

Reebok announces new tactical boot

27 May - Reebok is marketing a military boot that it says fuses athletic and tactical performance and complies with Army Regs for wear with the Army's operational camouflage pattern uniform. The Reebok Strikepoint 8- and 6- inch boots come in Coyote Brown. ... The Strikepoint was engineered with Reebok's "U-FORM" technology, which it describes as a heat-activated mid-foot wraps that mold to the wearer's foot for a custom fit with no break-in period. ... You "bake" them in a standard oven – and then simply put the boots on and remain seated. The U-FORM material molds to your foot. The company also says the Strikepoint has an anti-friction lining that reduces hot-spots than cause blisters. [Kit Up!](#)

Those with multiple tours of war overseas struggle at home

29 May - ... After 14 years of war, the number of veterans with multiple tours of combat duty is the largest in modern American history — more than 90,000 soldiers and Marines, many of them elite fighters who deployed four or more times. ... An analysis of Army data shows that, unlike most of the military, these soldiers' risk of committing suicide actually drops when they are deployed and soars after they return home. For the 85 percent of soldiers who make up the rest of the service and were deployed, the reverse is true. ... The idea that these elite fighters can adapt solely by addressing emotional trauma, some experts said, is badly misplaced. Their primary difficulty is not necessarily one of healing emotional wounds; they thrived in combat. It is rather a matter of unlearning the very skills that have kept them alive: unceasing vigilance; snap decision making; intolerance for carelessness; the urge to act fast and decisively.

[The New York Times](#)

Stimulants: Get Up to Speed

Operation Supplement Safety (OPSS) has a new infographic about stimulants. Do you want to know what types of dietary supplements commonly contain stimulants? Or how to tell if your supplement contains a stimulant? Or what can happen if you take too much or too many stimulants?

Get up to speed and check out the infographic with information on what you need to know about these dietary supplement ingredients. Use it in conjunction with the OPSS stimulants list to help you with these ingredients often found in dietary supplements.



Too fat to fight: Is the obesity crisis a national security risk?

30 May - ... According to [Gregory Poland, a medical doctor at the Mayo Clinic], "one in three young adults of military recruitment age in the United States is too overweight to enlist. "In fact, obesity and overweight is the No. 1 cause of ineligibility in the armed services," he says. "By the year 2020, only two out of every 10 recruits will be able to meet the weight-fitness qualifications to serve." ... According to the 2011 Health Related Behaviors Survey, the latest year for which numbers are available, among active duty service members more than 50 percent of males of all races across all age groups were classified as overweight, according to their BMI (body mass index). More than 34 percent of active duty females were classified as overweight. ... An overweight military, [Poland] asserts, presents real risks to this country's national security. "Young Marines are often expected to carry 70 pounds of equipment in active duty. How is someone who is overweight or obese going to do that?" [NBC News](#)

To protect soldiers from bombs, military scientists build a better dummy



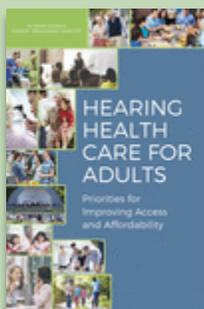
30 May - ... For years now, military scientists have been looking for ways to defend soldiers in armored vehicles from explosives like R.P.G.s and, more recently, improvised explosive devices or I.E.D.s. ... In Afghanistan, land of the 100-pound I.E.D., insurgents ... came at vehicles from below, burying the explosives in the middle of the road rather than on the sides of it. ... The underbody blast scenario was soon dire enough that United States Central Command rolled out a Joint Urgent Operational Need statement. The gist was this: Get us some combat vehicles that can drive over bombs and keep everyone inside alive. Nine vendors submitted prototypes for what would come to be known as MRAPs (em-raps): mine-resistant, ambush-protected. ... At the same time that the Army was working to make vehicles like the Stryker safer, they were scrambling to evaluate the new MRAPs. When Dr. Brockhoff arrived, her colleagues were using the crash test dummy that the auto industry uses: the Hybrid III. ... Automotive crash-test dummies were designed for measuring force mainly along two axes: front to back (for head-on impact), and side to side (for "T-bone" crashes). But with a blast coming up from below, the axis of impact runs vertically through the body: heels to head. ... So the Army began building a dummy of its own. WIAMan — the Warrior Injury Assessment Manikin — will be specifically tailored to assess the impact of underbody explosions. [The New York Times](#)

VA to review 24,000 brain injury diagnoses

1 June - Some post 9/11 veterans with traumatic brain injuries who were denied disability compensation by VA between 2007 and 2015 have another chance to receive

Hearing Health Care for Adults: Priorities for Improving Access and Affordability

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine convened an expert committee to study the accessibility and affordability of hearing health care for adults in the United States. Using a set of guiding principles to help shape its work, the committee recommends key institutional, technological, and regulatory changes that would enable consumers to find and fully use the appropriate, affordable, and high-quality services, technologies, and supports they need. The report provides those recommendations.



their benefits. The Veterans Affairs Department announced Wednesday that more than 24,000 veterans could qualify to receive another medical exam for brain injury without having to refile a claim. Their compensation will be awarded back to the date of the initial claim if they are found to have experienced a TBI. ... VA in 2007 began requiring veterans get medical assessments for TBI from one of four specialists. ... It denied claims of some veterans whose initial TBI exam was done by another medical provider. [Military Times](#)

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GLOBAL

Air pollution tied to high blood pressure risk

31 May - Short and long-term exposure to air pollution from vehicle exhaust or burning coal is associated with high blood pressure. ... The researchers analyzed 17 studies of air pollution and hypertension, defined as blood pressure higher than 140/90 millimeters of mercury (mm Hg). In total, the studies included more than 80,000 people with high blood pressure and more than 220,000 people without it. They found that short-term exposure to sulfur dioxide from burning fossil fuels and to particulates like dust and dirt in the air were associated with high blood pressure risk, as was long-term exposure to nitrogen dioxide, which comes from power plants and vehicle exhaust. [Reuters](#)

Cigarette plain packs to 'go global'



31 May - Plain packaging for cigarettes is about to "go global" in a move that will have a "huge impact" on health, the World Health Organization says. The body said moves to introduce standardised packaging in the UK, France and Australia will influence policy around the globe. But the Tobacco

Manufacturers' Association said policy was being "driven more by dogma than hard fact". ... Plain, or standardised, packaging has a uniform colour across all brands except for health warnings. Any brand names are in small, non-distinctive lettering. The premise is that the move kills the glamour and attractiveness of smoking and Benn McGrady, from the WHO, said "the evidence is in" that the measure curbs smoking rates. [BBC News](#)

First discovery in United States of colistin resistance in a human *E. coli* infection

26 May - The Multidrug Resistant Organism Repository and Surveillance Network (MRSN) at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) characterized a

Points of Dispensing Webinar

The National Center for Disaster Medicine and Public Health (NCDMPH) will host a webinar, Points of Dispensing (POD) for Those with Access and Functional Needs, on

June 9th at 1:00 pm ET.

Glenda Ford-Lee, MHR, from the Emergency Preparedness and Response Service Division of the Oklahoma State Department of Health, will explain how those tasked with planning and establishing PODs can ensure they take into account the various resources required to serve vulnerable populations in such emergencies.

Access

Call in: 1-888-537-7715
Participant Code: 39933371



transferrable gene for colistin resistance in the United States that may herald the emergence of truly pan-drug resistant bacteria. Colistin is the last agent used to combat bacteria that are resistant to the strongest antibiotics. Colistin has remained the best tool available to treat multidrug resistant bacteria because bacteria were not exchanging genes for its resistance. This latest discovery shows that colistin may be losing its effectiveness in antimicrobial therapy. Now, bacteria may be exchanging resistance genes for colistin. Alarms sounded in the microbiology community in late 2015 when the first transferrable gene for colistin-resistance was identified in China. Since the report, the global health community has monitored and searched for the occurrence of this gene in the food supply and in humans. This colistin-resistance gene has been reported in Europe and Canada and, as of now, is reported in the U.S. [Science Daily](#)

NSABB finalizes GOF guidance; White House to weigh in

1 June - A federal advisory group last week finalized a set of recommendations for the government to use in assessing and funding gain-of-function (GOF) studies on H5N1 avian influenza and other viruses. ... GOF studies have triggered "dual-use" worries—that methods meant for beneficial purposes could be used to create bioterror threats if they found their way into the wrong hands. Some experts have also raised concerns about accidental release of the experimental pathogens, especially in light of recent safety lapses involving federal facilities. ... [The] recommendations list examples of which GOF studies are of concern, slightly modifies its definition of GOF research of concern to reflect that not all nations are able to deploy public health countermeasures, sets out a process for reviewing studies, and calls for a new federal advisory board to publicly review GOF policies, but not specific experiments. The NSABB's report also suggests that oversight be extended to privately funded studies and that federal officials establish a system for tracking lab accidents and a system for institutional review boards to share their GOF proposals. [CIDRAP](#)

Study: Unmet surgical needs high for world's 60 million refugees

26 May - New research ... suggests that the world's estimated 60 million refugees, displaced from their homes due to conflict, persecution or human rights violations, may need at least 2.78 million surgeries a year, something thought to be very difficult to arrange in the midst of their upheaval. The researchers say that the findings ... shed light on something that few governments and humanitarian aid organizations plan for when preparing for a large influx of displaced persons who are far from home and often in countries where there are already great unmet needs for surgical procedures. ... The types of necessary surgeries run the gamut, from the repair of hernias and broken limbs, to C-sections and cleft lips and gallbladder removals, even stitches and burn care – any type of procedure that would be needed in any other population. In times of war, surgeries related to trauma, violence and burns may be particularly needed. The

**CDC: Zika
What's New**

June 1: [ZAP Follow-Up Teleconference – Pregnancy Planning in Areas with Zika](#)

June 1: [ZAP Follow-Up Teleconference – Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Zika](#)

May 31: [Zika Training Resources](#)



researchers could not say exactly how many refugees receive surgical care annually.

[Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News](#)

ZIKA VIRUS

Baby with Zika-related microcephaly born at New Jersey hospital

1 June - A baby girl with Zika virus-related microcephaly was born in New Jersey on Tuesday, hospital officials said. ... The mother is visiting the United States from Honduras and does not want to be identified. This is the second known case of a baby born with Zika-related birth defects in the United States. The first baby was born in Hawaii. ... Ultrasound screening revealed the baby had "significant microcephaly," he said. ... The baby also had calcification and dilated ventricles in the brain, according to Al-Khan. Tests were done to rule out other causes of these abnormalities. ... The mother, who has relatives in New Jersey, traveled to the United States from Honduras in hopes of receiving better medical care because she knew her baby may have Zika-related problems. [CNN](#)

Genetically modified mosquitoes newest weapon in war on Zika

25 May - Genetically modified mosquitoes may soon be employed in the fight against the deadly Zika virus, if the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approves the release of these minuscule warriors. ... Aedes aegypti mosquitoes normally carry the virus, but a biotechnology company specializing in insect control has created a new form of the insect designed to destroy its own population. The genetically altered mosquito is programmed to die before reaching adulthood. Only male insects are to be used, as they do not bite, preventing any threat to human populations. Altered males breed with wild females, spreading their genetic modification onto their young, which die before they can reproduce. The genetic modifications designed into the newly developed insects do not produce poison but instead interfere in the life processes of the Zika virus.

[Tech Times](#)

U.S. researchers estimate range of microcephaly risk from Zika infection

26 May – U.S. researchers are estimating a wide range of potential risk for the birth defect microcephaly following Zika infection in the mother, putting the figure at anywhere between 1 percent and 13 percent, according to newly-released findings. Their findings are based on statistics from a 2013 Zika outbreak in French Polynesia and ongoing reports of the virus and birth defects in Brazil's Bahia state during the current

Sleep Is a Weapon

All of the military services — land, sea and air — spend a great deal of time awake. This is a direct result of the high tempo of operations we conduct while forward deployed well outside our national borders. For officers in the Army and Marine Corps, for example, while conducting combat operations it is not unusual to get only a few hours sleep each night.

All of this comes at a high cost — as people become more and more exhausted from a lack of sleep, they are prone to making the most costly mistakes imaginable. When a military officer makes a bad decision in combat, terrible consequences often unfold. People die, and they are often innocent civilians who die as a result of collateral damage from an attack of some kind; or they are the men and women working for the exhausted military officer whose judgment is impaired.

Admiral Jim Stavridis (Ret.)
Supreme Commander of
NATO (2009-2013);
Dean, Fletcher School of
Law and Diplomacy, Tufts
University



outbreak. ... The CDC researchers said the highest potential risk for microcephaly appears to be when the mother is infected during the first three months of pregnancy, after which the risk was greatly reduced. ... They also cautioned that microcephaly may be just one of a range of potential problems with fetal development that are linked to Zika. [Reuters](#)

WHO cites Zika funding gap, rejects call to move Olympics

31 May - In new Zika virus developments over the past few days, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued a response update showing a large funding gap, rejected a call to lobby for relocation or postponement of the Olympic games in Brazil, and expanded the recommended safe-sex or abstinence period for men who visit affected areas. In another development, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) today updated its guidance on Zika antibody testing to address difficulties in weeding out cross-reactions from related viruses. [CIDRAP](#)

Zika: Africa 'reasonably well prepared'

25 My - Parts of West Africa are ... bracing themselves for the next potentially devastating epidemic. Last week the World Health Organization announced that the Asian strain of Zika currently sweeping through Latin America had arrived on the doorstep of Africa in Cape Verde. The archipelago sits just off the north west coast of Africa, not far from where Ebola first struck. But lessons from that disaster are being learned and applied to this latest global health emergency, according to WHO Regional Director for Africa, Dr Matshidiso Moeti. "Following the Ebola outbreak, countries made a real effort to improve their preparedness, their surveillance systems, their response systems and to some extent their lab diagnostic capacity. "If you're talking about (the worst Ebola affected countries) Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, they are better prepared than most." Dr Moeti said. [BBC News](#)

Zika data point to sexual transmission in women

27 May - Women in the sexually active age-group are overwhelmingly more likely than men to be infected with Zika virus, with sexual transmission the most likely cause, according to a new report based on data from the city of Rio de Janeiro from Brazilian researchers. ... The team set out to see if there were any age-related patterns for Zika infections and to gauge the role of sexual transmission in disease incidence using data from the city's health secretariat. ... Even after correcting for bias due to systematic testing for Zika virus in pregnant women, they found 90% more registered Zika cases per 100,000 population in women ages 15 to 65, defined as the sexually active age-group, compared with men of the same age. [CIDRAP](#)

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Classified Version of the Weekly Update

An Army Public Health Weekly Update is available with articles classified up to the **SECRET** level from the USAPHC SIPRNet site:

<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.

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INFLUENZA

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

During week 20 (May 15-21, 2016), influenza activity decreased in the United States.

- **Viral Surveillance:** The most frequently identified influenza virus type reported by public health laboratories during week 20 was influenza A. 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 both the NCHS Mortality Surveillance System and the 122 Cities Mortality Reporting System.
- **Influenza-associated Pediatric Deaths:** Two influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported. [CDC](#)

ECDC: Flu News Europe

Week 20/2016 (16-22 May 2016)

- Influenza activity continued to decrease in the WHO European Region in week 20/2016. Most countries (98%) reported low intensity. The percentage of positive specimens and the absolute number of influenza virus detections decreased compared to the previous week.
- Type B viruses accounted for 90% of influenza detections in specimens from sentinel sources and 72% from non-sentinel sources.
- Of the eight western countries reporting on hospital-admitted laboratory-confirmed influenza cases, only the United Kingdom reported: eight cases admitted to intensive care units (ICUs); four each were associated with types A and B viruses. [European Center for Disease Prevention and Control/WHO](#)

Large trial in Mali finds maternal flu shots protect newborns

1 June: In a large trial in the West African country of Mali, influenza vaccination in pregnant women was found to be more than 60% effective in preventing lab-confirmed flu in newborn infants for the first 4 months of life. ... The prospective, randomized controlled trial was conducted at six referral centers and four community health centers in Bamako, Mali's capital, from September 2011 to January 2014. ... The team followed 1,797 infants in the [trivalent inactivated flu vaccine (TIV)] group and 1,793 infants in the control group for 6 months, recording 131 lab-confirmed flu cases among 5,279 flu-like illness episodes. There were 52 first episodes of flu in the TIV group and 77 in the control group. [CIDRAP Flu Scan](#) (first item)

NHRC: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For 2016 Week 21 (through 28 May 2016):

- Influenza: No new cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza among US military basic trainees.
- FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated elevated FRI rates at MCRD Parris Island and CGTC Cape May. [Naval Health Research Center](#)

Review: Wide range of bacterial co-infections found in flu patients

31 May - The prevalence of bacterial co-infections in patients hospitalized with influenza ranges from 2% to 65%, a variation that highlights the importance of conserving antibiotic treatment for only those bacterial cases diagnosed by a positive test, according to a May 27 study in *Influenza and Other Respiratory Diseases*. Researchers conducted a meta-analysis of 27 studies published since 1982 and comprising 3,215 patients hospitalized with lab-confirmed flu. The prevalence of bacterial co-infection was from 2% in a population of US newborns to 65% in French adults, the authors said. When seven studies accounting for more than half of the variation were excluded, the range of co-infection prevalence among 2,058 patients narrowed to 11% to 35%.

[CIDRAP Flu Scan](#) (fourth item)

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

During 8 - 21 May 2016 (Surveillance Weeks 19 & 20), a total of 78 specimens were collected and received from 32 locations. Results were finalized for 76 specimens from 32 locations. During Week 19, one influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, one A(H3N2), and four influenza B viruses were identified. Two influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and five influenza B viruses were identified during Week 20. Approximately 12% of specimens tested positive for influenza during Week 19. The percent positive for Week 20 increased to approximately 28%, as fewer specimens were received. The influenza percent positive for the season is currently 26%. [US Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

WHO: Influenza Update

30 May - Influenza activity in the northern hemisphere continued to decrease with a predominance of influenza B virus reported. In temperate countries in the southern hemisphere, influenza activity started to increase slightly in South America and South Africa, but remained low overall in most of Oceania. [WHO](#)

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CDC says *E coli* outbreak 'likely' caused by General Mills flour

1 June - A 38-case outbreak of *Escherichia coli* infections in 20 states has been linked to General Mills flour, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said today. Yesterday the company recalled 10 million pounds of its flour "out of an abundance of caution," saying no *E coli* has been detected in the flour or at its manufacturing plant. Of 21 patients interviewed, 16 (76%) reported that they or someone in their household had used flour in the week before they fell ill. Nine of 22 patients (41%) reported eating raw homemade dough or batter, while 3 reported eating or playing with raw dough at a restaurant. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

China's dog meat festival will go on despite growing protests

2 June - Held every year, the Yulin Dog Meat Festival results in the slaughter of thousands of dogs, which are then served in some of the restaurants in this city in south China. ... Unlike South Korea, another Asian country where dogs are consumed, China does not have any large-scale dog-breeding farms. ... "The vast majority of so-called "meat dogs" are in fact stolen companion animals and strays," says the group's 2015 report. ... Studies have linked incidences of rabies in Asia to the trade and consumption of dog meat. People butchering and handling dogs are at risk of being infected. In addition, the meat sold in dog restaurants is not inspected and could pose a risk to those who eat it. In 2008, the World Health Organization warned that consumption of dog meat might have contributed to an outbreak of cholera in Vietnam. [NPR](#)

GAO calls for improvements in FDA's handling of imported food risk data

27 May - In a report released yesterday, the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) requested that the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) develop standards for how it will use open source data to predict risks posed by imported food. The GAO, which serves as Congress's investigative arm, evaluated how data is collected and used by the FDA's Predictive Risk-based Evaluation for Dynamic Import Compliance Targeting (PREDICT), which generates risk scores for imported food based on information from government agencies and open-source tools (eg, domestic news, food recalls, and natural disaster reports). [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

Human rabies — Wyoming and Utah, 2015

3 June - In September 2015, a Wyoming woman was admitted to a local hospital with a 5-day history of progressive weakness, ataxia, dysarthria, and dysphagia. Because of

respiratory failure, she was transferred to a referral hospital in Utah, where she developed progressive encephalitis. On day 8 of hospitalization, the patient's family told clinicians they recalled that, 1 month before admission, the woman had found a bat on her neck upon waking, but had not sought medical care. The patient's husband subsequently had contacted county invasive species authorities about the incident, but he was not advised to seek health care for evaluation of his wife's risk for rabies. On October 2, CDC confirmed the patient was infected with a rabies virus variant that was enzootic to the silver-haired bat (*Lasiurus noctivagans*). The patient died on October 3. Public understanding of rabies risk from bat contact needs to be improved; cooperation among public health and other agencies can aid in referring persons with possible bat exposure for assessment of rabies risk. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Update](#)

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WELLNESS

'Fast casual' restaurant dishes have more calories than fast food

1 June - Main courses served at fast-casual restaurants tend to be higher-calorie than traditional fast-food entrees, despite public perception that the offerings at these outlets are healthier, U.S. researchers say. Comparing more than 3,000 entrees, they found the average fast-casual meal had 200 more calories than the average fast food meal. Overall, more of the fast-casual dishes were at the high end of the calorie range as well. ... The researchers examined the calorie counts of 3,193 entrees sold at restaurants representing 24 different fast food chains and 28 fast-casual chains, according to the report in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*. They found the average fast-casual entree had about 760 calories compared to the typical fast food entree with about 560 calories. [Reuters](#)

Florida drug database and 'pill mill' regs curbed state's top opioid prescribers, study suggests

2 June - In the first year that two Florida laws aimed at curbing opioid prescriptions were in effect, the state's top opioid prescribers wrote significantly fewer prescriptions of this type of pain medication, a new analysis led by researchers at the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health finds. At the same time, the law did not affect the extreme concentration of opioid prescribing among a small group of providers: Approximately 4 percent of prescribers accounted for 40 percent of the prescriptions for opioid painkillers that made up two-thirds of all such pills prescribed in Florida. [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News](#)

Should you take a vitamin? Do you know what a vitamin is?

26 May - Many people can rattle off the names of the most popular vitamins and the foods that contain them in abundance. But understanding exactly what vitamins are and what roles they play in the body is far more complicated. In fact, though scientists recognize that there are 13 vitamins that are essential for good health, there is no real consensus on what they actually do and exactly how much of them we truly need.

[The New York Times](#)

“Smart tampons” could save lives

2 June - Even for women who get to see an OB-Gyn each year, annual trips are not always enough to catch many serious illnesses in time—cervical cancer, endometriosis, polycystic ovarian syndrome, uterine fibroids. Determined to arm women with more frequent information, entrepreneur Ridhi Tariyal and scientist Stephen Gire teamed up to develop a "smart tampon" that tests blood for a range of biomarkers in the privacy of a woman's home. Currently, they're conducting clinical trials on potential tests. The Quote: "You can pick up a disease any time, and letting it sit there for a year until your next visit can have consequences downstream that you don't want. The system has to change," Tariyal says. [Global Health Now](#)

Talc linked to ovarian cancer risk in African-American women

2 June - African-American women who reported regular use of body powder were at greater risk for ovarian cancer compared to their peers who didn't use talc, a new study shows. Regular use of powder was associated with ovarian cancer regardless of where the women used it, the researchers report. Users of genital powder had more than a 40 percent increased risk of cancer, while those who used only non-genital powder had an increased risk of more than 30 percent. ... Schildkraut's team interviewed 584 black women with ovarian cancer and 745 black women without the disease from the southern, eastern and midwestern U.S. Nearly 63 percent of the women with ovarian cancer and nearly 53 percent of the healthy controls dusted themselves with powder, the researchers report in *Cancer Epidemiology*. [Reuters](#)

U.S. unveils guidelines to reduce salt in restaurant, packaged food

1 June - From pizzas and soups to deli meats, dips and hamburgers, Americans' diets are often packed with salt. On Wednesday the Food and Drug Administration moved to cut average salt consumption by a third in an effort to reduce heart attacks and strokes. The agency issued draft guidelines for major food manufacturers and big chain restaurants designed to reduce salt in hundreds of products, with separate sodium reduction targets

set for two and 10 years. More than 70 percent of the salt in the average diet comes in the form of processed and prepared food. ... The average American consumes almost 50 percent more sodium than recommended by most experts, the FDA said. [Reuters](#)

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USAFRICOM

Africa: Attention finally for a neglected disease

28 May - By the time mycetoma—a terrifying and obscure tropical infection—reached the discussion floor of the World Health Assembly at the end of last week, most officials had flown home. ... [It] was Ahmed Fahal, the Sudanese director of the world's only Mycetoma Research Center, who remained to ask WHO's member nations to make the condition number 18 on the official list of 17 neglected diseases. "Mycetoma affects the poorest of the poor in remote communities," Fahal told the Assembly. "The patients are of low socioeconomic status, they have a lot of problems." ... If mycetoma could not be added to the list, donors who fund research and medicine would continue to overlook people in two dozen nations who suffer with limbs and lungs overwhelmed by flesh-eating microbes. ... When the resolution passed at 10am Saturday morning—meaning mycetoma would be added to the WHO's Neglected Tropical Disease list—tears welled up in Fahal's eyes. [Global Health Now](#)

Burkina Faso: *Wolbachia*-infected mosquitoes less likely to carry malaria

1 June - A strain of *Wolbachia* bacteria that exists in *Anopheles* mosquitoes in Burkina Faso seems negatively related to the prevalence of malaria parasites in the insects, suggesting that the bacteria may have important effects on malaria transmission in sub-Saharan African. ... The researchers analyzed 221 female *A coluzzii* collected from houses in one village and found that 116 (52.5%) were infected with a *Wolbachia* strain that they have named *w*Anga. *Plasmodium* (malaria) infections were found in 12 (5.4%) of the insects, only 1 of which was also infected with *Wolbachia*. "This highly significant reduction—over 90%—suggests that *w*Anga may interfere with *Plasmodium* development in the mosquito vector, as shown in artificial *Anopheles*–*Wolbachia* combinations," the authors wrote. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (fourth item)

Guinea: WHO declares Guinea to be Ebola-free

1 June - The World Health Organization (WHO) today declared that Guinea has passed 42 days since the last patient was declared free of Ebola, officially ending Ebola virus transmission. Guinea now enters a 90-day period of heightened surveillance to quickly identify any new cases that might arise. "The source of infection in this latest outbreak is

likely to have been due to exposure to infected body fluid from an Ebola survivor," the WHO said in a news release. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

Kenya: Double outbreak of cholera and chikungunya placing huge strain on Mandera medical services

27 May - Mandera County in Kenya's North Eastern Region is the latest county to be affected by a cholera outbreak that has been ongoing in the country for approximately 17 months. Since April, almost 800 cases have been reported in Mandera including 11 deaths. The outbreak is mainly concentrated in Mandera Township, home to around 90,000 people. At the same time, an outbreak of the mosquito-borne disease chikungunya is placing further pressure on already stretched health services. There are an estimated 260 suspected cases according to the Ministry of Health, seven of which have been confirmed by laboratory tests. Several health staff are among those affected. Mandera Referral Hospital has been quickly overwhelmed with cholera patients, and teams from Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) are now urgently supporting the Ministry of Health to respond. [Médecins Sans Frontières](#)

Nigeria: WHO reports 273 Lassa fever cases in Nigeria, 149 deaths

31 May - Nigeria has had 273 cases of Lassa fever since August 2015, an increase of more than 100 cases since late January, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported on May 27. Of the 273 cases, 149 (55%) have been fatal; 165 cases have been lab-confirmed, or 54% of the total, including 89 deaths. Twenty-three states have reported cases. The total includes 10 health workers, 4 of whom contracted the disease in a healthcare setting. Two of the 10 died. As of May 17, eight states are still reporting cases or are following up on contacts of cases for the 21-day incubation period. The other 15 states have completed the 42-day period following the last known transmission. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (fifth item)

South Africa's foetal alcohol syndrome problem

27 May - ... The Foundation For Alcohol Related Research (FARR) recently concluded a three-year study in the Saldanha Bay Municipality, which includes five small seaside towns on South Africa's scenic West Coast. It found a Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) - the umbrella term used to describe a spectrum of conditions of which FAS is the most extreme - prevalence rate of 6.42 percent (64 per 1,000) among children in Grade 1. "This is not an insignificant number," explains Leana Olivier, the CEO of FARR. "The prevalence rate of FASD in South Africa is several times higher than elsewhere in the world." Education campaigns have made people more aware of the syndrome, which is linked to alcohol consumption during pregnancy. [Al Jazeera](#)

South Sudan: Mysterious hemorrhagic fever outbreak stumps disease detectives

31 May - ... So far, there have been 51 cases — including 10 deaths — from an unknown disease in the northern part of South Sudan. The main symptoms of the disease are ... unexplained bleeding, fever, fatigue, headache and vomiting. But the culprit definitely isn't Ebola. ... Scientists don't know yet how the disease is transmitted. Scientists have tested 33 of the cases for Ebola, and all of them came back negative. The samples also tested negative for other viruses known to cause unexplained bleeding, such as Marburg virus and Crimean-Congo fever. Five samples did test positive for O'nyong-nyong ... [but] O'nyong-nyong doesn't cause bleeding and isn't fatal. ... "The cause of death is typically not loss of blood from bleeding, but from multi-organ failure — especially the kidneys and liver — and shock syndrome from low blood pressure in patients with severe illness," Dr. Charles Chiu, an infectious disease expert ... wrote in an email. A few bacteria can also cause internal bleeding and organ failure, Chiu wrote. "But if I had to guess, I would think an undiagnosed mosquito- or tick-borne viral illness [is causing the outbreak in South Sudan]," Chiu wrote. [NPR](#)

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USCENTCOM

Afghanistan: Failed promises to help people displaced by war

31 May - Afghanistan has failed to live up to a 2014 pledge to care for people displaced by conflict within its borders, according to a report released today, even as the number of displaced has doubled to 1.2 million over the past three years. In its 2014 National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons, Afghanistan's government promised to provide IDPs with access to basic living standards including food, water, shelter, and healthcare. Yet, researchers with Amnesty International found that many IDPs are living "on the brink of survival". ... The policy was supposed to ensure that IDPs could either: return to their homes; be integrated into the communities where they had settled; or be offered the opportunity to resettle elsewhere in the country. But the researchers found that little has been done to implement the agreement, while IDPs have been forcibly and violently evicted from some sites. [IRIN](#)

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EU set to consider temporary extension of glyphosate license over cancer row

1 June - The European Commission will propose a temporary 12 to 18 month extension of EU authorization for the weed killer glyphosate, used in Monsanto's Roundup, to allow time for a new scientific study into fears it may cause cancer. After failing to win support for an initial proposal for a 15-year approval, the EU executive proposed the compromise to avoid a six-month phase-out period when the current license lapses at the end of June. The proposal will be put to a vote by experts from the 28 EU nations on Monday. [Reuters](#)

Heavy rains cause deadly floods in France and Germany

2 June - Torrential rains have caused deadly flooding in central and northeastern France this week, forcing the evacuation of thousands of people, some on boats or kayaks, and threatening works of art stored in Paris's most celebrated museums. A man on horseback was swept away by floodwaters on Thursday and found dead ... 30 miles southeast of Paris. ... In Germany, heavy rains claimed the lives of nine people. ... The Louvre announced that it would be closed on Friday to move, as a precautionary measure, works of art in areas vulnerable to flooding. ... Officials in France and Germany were bracing for even more rain this week. [The New York Times](#)

United Kingdom: For some U.K. teens, sun doesn't provide enough vitamin D



1 June - At one point in the year, almost 80 percent of teens in a UK study had insufficient vitamin D that should come from sun exposure, and one quarter had insufficient levels even at the peak of summer, according to a new study. ... In January, April, June and September 2011, the researchers collected blood

samples from 131 Caucasian adolescents ages 12 to 15. ... The teens tended to get more sun exposure during the school week than on weekends, and they had low levels of vitamin D intake in their diets year-round. None reported wearing dedicated sunscreen products in any season, though a few female teens were using SPF-containing face cream. On average, 25OHD levels were 24.1 nanograms per milliliter (ng/mL) in September at their peak and 15.5 ng/mL in January, their lowest point. [Reuters](#)

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U.S.: First rise in U.S. death rate in years surprises experts

1 June - The death rate in the United States rose last year for the first time in a decade, preliminary federal data show, a rare increase that was driven in part by more people dying from drug overdoses, suicide and Alzheimer's disease. The death rate from heart disease, long in decline, edged up slightly. Death rates — measured as the number of deaths per 100,000 people — have been declining for years, an effect of improvements in health, disease management and medical technology. While recent research has documented sharp rises in death rates among certain groups — in particular less educated whites, who have been hardest hit by the prescription drug epidemic — increases for the entire population are relatively rare. [The New York Times](#)

U.S.: Measles cases rise to 11 at immigrant detention center in Arizona

31 May - A measles outbreak at a federal detention center for immigrants in central Arizona has grown to 11 cases, the Associated Press (AP) reported yesterday. The outbreak began last week when an infected detainee was brought to the center and spread the disease to a vaccinated worker. Officials have confirmed that seven inmates and four workers now have measles at the Eloy Detention Center, Pinal County Health Services spokesman Joe Pyritz said. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

U.S.: National Preparedness Report

31 May - The [National Preparedness Report](#) provides all levels of government, the private and nonprofit sectors, and the public with practical insights into preparedness to support decisions about program priorities, resource allocations, and community actions. The 2016 [National Preparedness Report](#) identifies cross-cutting findings that evaluate core capability performance, key findings in the Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery mission areas, and notable examples of preparedness progress over the past five years. [FEMA](#)

U.S.: New York Legislature cuts taxes on tampons and other feminine hygiene products

25 May - The State Legislature has given its final approval to a bill exempting tampons and other feminine hygiene products from sales taxes. Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, a Democrat, said he would sign the exemption into law. It will take effect in the subsequent sales-tax quarter. The bill exempts tampons, sanitary napkins and panty liners from the 4 percent state sales tax and from local taxes, which are generally about 5 percent. State Assemblywoman Linda B. Rosenthal, a Democrat whose district covers

part of the West Side of Manhattan, said the bill was not limited to those items and would exempt menstrual products introduced in the future. [The New York Times](#)

U.S.: Playbook gives hospitals array of antibiotic stewardship options

1 June - A playbook developed by three national organizations and released last week offers numerous options for implementing or enhancing antibiotic stewardship programs (ASPs) in acute care hospitals. "Antibiotic Stewardship in Acute Care: A Practical Playbook" relies on guidance from more than 25 experts to present tailored solutions for specific contexts and barriers faced by clinicians and pharmacists tasked with minimizing inappropriate or unnecessary antibiotic use. [CIDRAP](#)

U.S.: Plummeting U.S. teen birthrate hit record low in 2015 - CDC

2 June - The birthrate among U.S. teenagers dropped 8 percent last year to another record low, the latest sign of major progress in efforts to reduce teen pregnancies, a federal health agency reported on Thursday. The rate last year fell to 22.3 births per 1,000 teenage girls aged 15 to 19, down from 24.2 births in 2014, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in a preliminary study based on birth certificate data. The birthrate for teenagers has dropped 64 percent from its peak in 1991, the agency said. The 2015 rate was the lowest since the federal government began tracking teenage births in 1940. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: Supreme Court makes it easier for landowners to challenge environmental decisions

31 May - The Supreme Court on Tuesday made it easier for landowners to challenge the decision of federal regulators that the use of property is restricted by the Clean Water Act. The justices ruled unanimously that property owners could file suit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over the agency's determination that their land contains "waters of the United States" covered by the Clean Water Act, which provides criminal and civil liabilities for violations. ... [Applying] for a permit requires an "arduous, expensive and long" process that is different from challenging whether the land was properly designated, [Chief Justice John] Roberts wrote. [The Washington Post](#)

U.S.: Texas reports first local chikungunya case; Florida confirms dengue illness

1 June - Texas has reported its first locally acquired case of chikungunya, while Florida officials have confirmed that state's first local case of dengue this year, in Key West. Both diseases are transmitted by the bite of *Aedes* mosquitoes. ... The first locally acquired chikungunya cases in the United States were confirmed in Florida in July 2014. ... Last year [Florida] reported 1 locally acquired dengue case, in December, compared with 6 in

2014 and 23 in 2013. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

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USPACOM

Bangladesh: Anthrax outbreak tops 100 cases in northern Bangladesh

27 May - In a follow-up to the ongoing reports on the anthrax outbreak in Sirajganj District in Bangladesh, local media report that the total human cases reported has topped 100 in the past month, calling it the "highest ever anthrax infection across the country". The district has now seen 106 cases as more than a dozen additional were reported from Shazadpur and Kamarkhand upazilas (counties). There were no reports of fatalities. ... The outbreak has been linked to the slaughter and consumption of anthrax infected animals, which prompted government officials to issue a stop order on the slaughter of infected animals. In addition, health officials are trying to educate the public of the risks and medical teams are in the region to battle the outbreak.

[Outbreak News Today](#)

China: Botulinum toxin injections from Shenzhen: 3rd botulism case in Hong Kong

2 June - In a follow-up to previous reports of Hong Kong travelers to the Mainland contracting iatrogenic botulism, officials with the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) reported a third case Thursday. The female patient, aged 21 with good past health, has developed blurred vision, neck weakness and difficulty in swallowing since May 26. She attended the Accident and Emergency Department of North District Hospital today and was admitted for management with stable condition all along. The patient visited a beauty premises in Buji, Shenzhen, on May 24 where she received botulinum toxin injections to her both calves. The preliminary clinical diagnosis was suspected iatrogenic botulism. "We have no evidence at this stage that patients of the three recent cases had received injections in the same premises. Epidemiological investigations are ongoing," a spokesman for the Department of Health said. [Outbreak News Today](#)

India hospital transfusions infect thousands with HIV

31 May - At least 2,234 Indians have contracted HIV while receiving blood transfusions in hospitals in the past 17 months alone, say officials. ... The highest number of patients who had been infected with HIV as a result of contaminated blood in hospitals, were from the northern state of Uttar Pradesh with 361 cases. ... Under law, it is mandatory for hospitals to screen donors and the donated blood for HIV, hepatitis B and C, malaria and

other infections. "But each such test costs 1,200 rupees (\$18; £12) and most hospitals in India do not have the testing facilities. Even in a big city like Mumbai, only three private hospitals have HIV testing facilities. Even the largest government hospitals do not have the technology to screen blood for HIV," Mr Kothari said. [BBC News](#)

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USSOUTHCOM

PAHO reports 1,100 new chikungunya infections

31 May - The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) late last week reported 1,184 new chikungunya cases, bringing the 2016 total to 115,383 cases. During the previous week the agency reported a jump of 27,505 suspected and confirmed cases, but the weeks before that saw increases of only 996 and 3,095 cases. PAHO updated its numbers on May 27. Ecuador had the most new cases, with 486, bringing its total for the year to 1,053. Colombia was not far behind, with 481 new cases and 14,801 total. Many countries, though, have not reported new cases for many weeks. No new deaths were reported, keeping that number at 15, all in Brazil. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

Peru: Gold rush prompts public-health emergency

1 June - Long-running concerns about the environmental effects of gold-mining in the Peruvian Amazon came to a head last week. Peru's government declared a 60-day public-health emergency on 23 May in an attempt to address the problem of mercury pollution caused by unregulated gold-mining along the Madre de Dios River. Health-care and emergency workers will this week begin providing medical and food aid for 25 affected villages, after a flurry of studies showed high levels of mercury in people, fish and sediments in the Madre de Dios region. The government estimates that some 48,000 people across 85,301 square kilometres have been affected. [Nature](#)

Venezuela: Patients dying as crisis hits hospitals

30 May - Venezuela's economy is in trouble. With oil accounting for 95 percent of the country's export earnings, plummeting world prices have sent the South American economy reeling towards collapse. ... [The] economic crisis is hitting Venezuela's public health system the hardest. In the country's public hospitals, where treatment should be free, medicine, equipment and even food is increasingly not available. Orfram Moreno, a doctor working in a public hospital in Merida, said patients have to buy what is needed for their treatment privately. "Most of the time patients die because their families are out of the hospital looking for the treatments and they don't come at a time we can use the treatment," he told Al Jazeera. "When they bring the treatment, the patient's already dying." [Al Jazeera](#)

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