

6 November 2015

# Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center

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## U.S. MILITARY

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### Cold weather injuries, Active and Reserve Components, U.S. Armed Forces, July 2010–June 2015

October 2015 - From July 2014 through June 2015, the number of active and reserve component service members treated for cold injuries (n=603) was much lower than the 719 cases diagnosed during the previous, unusually cold winter of 2013-2014. Army personnel accounted for the majority (51%) of cold injuries. Frostbite was the most common type of cold injury in each of the services except the Marine Corps for which immersion foot was unusually common. Consistent with trends from previous cold seasons, service members who were female, younger than 20 years old, or of black, non-Hispanic race/ethnicity tended to have higher cold injury rates than their respective counterparts. Numbers of cases in the combat zone have decreased in the past 3 years, most likely the result of declining numbers of personnel exposed and the changing nature of operations. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

### Deployment environmental reports not in military health records



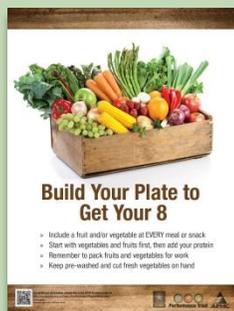
1 November - For more than three years, the military services have been allowed to ignore a Defense Department order requiring the inclusion of environmental assessments of combat environments in troops' medical records. The Pentagon in 2006 published an instruction requiring the services add occupational and environmental risk assessments generated for locations during a certain period into medical records of troops who served in the affected place and time. ... Since at least 2012, however, the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness waived that requirement, and a memo written in 2013 extended the waiver for another two years, with acting Undersecretary of Defense (P&R) Jessica Wright saying the reports, known as Periodic Occupational and Environmental Monitoring Summaries — POEMS — are summaries of "population-level health risks," and not an indication of exposure to individual service members. ... [The] information is available upon request and also is [being published online in the Military Exposure Surveillance Library](#), with plans to post more "upon completion and after clearance for public release." [Military Times](#)

### Were you or your relatives exposed to mustard gas? Search our database

3 November - NPR has compiled the first public database of American veterans who were secretly exposed to mustard gas in military experiments conducted during World War II. Officials at the Department of Veterans Affairs told NPR that since 1993, the agency could

#### Performance Triad: Build your Plate to Get Your 8

A new poster is available on the [APHC Health Information Products eCatalog](#) that highlights the importance of eating eight fruits and vegetable a day.



## A Never-Ending Battle

Even if the war they fought is long over, many veterans are perpetual prisoners of an ongoing inner war that rages silently in their heads. Men and women on active duty may be forced to commit actions that directly conflict with their ethical and moral beliefs. Their stoicism and "battlemind" may serve them well as long as their psychological defenses are intact.

At the end of life, however, their previous coping strategies may crumble, especially if they're taking mind-altering medications to relieve pain. Many may even prefer to bear severe pain and avoid pain medications, which make them fuzzy-headed and can unleash war-related nightmares and flashbacks.



only locate 610 test subjects, to offer compensation to those who were permanently injured. NPR's database, compiled over six months, includes more than 3,900 individuals and information about the last known location of more than 1,700 of them. Information in the database comes from records NPR obtained in the course of reporting on the secret experiments. Our investigation found that the VA denied compensation to veterans who qualified for it, and that in addition to evaluating protective suits and gas masks, some of the tests were conducted to look for racial differences that could be exploited in combat. This is not a complete list of participants, and it will be updated periodically as NPR gains access to additional documentation and names. [NPR](#)

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## GLOBAL

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### Call for action against 'twin scourge' of diabetes and TB

3 November - More needs to be done to tackle a dual threat of patients having both tuberculosis (TB) and diabetes, global health experts say. A declaration made at a summit in Indonesia warns that the convergence of the two illnesses represents a "looming co-epidemic". ... Six countries projected to have significant numbers of diabetes patients - China, India, Brazil, Indonesia, Pakistan and Russia - are also classed as having a high burden of TB. ... In India, for example, there's a national policy for TB patients to be screened for diabetes. But it's only been implemented in a couple of southern states. [BBC News](#)

### CDC updates polio travel advice for Madagascar, Ukraine, Laos, Guinea

4 November - The CDC yesterday raised its travel alert level for Madagascar, Ukraine, Laos, and Guinea because of local vaccine-derived polio cases in each country. The level for the countries is at "Alert," which is the second level of notice (above "Watch" and below "Warning"). Madagascar had had 9 recent polio cases, Ukraine 2, and Laos and Guinea 1. ... Other regions at the Alert level are Sierra Leone because of Ebola and the Arabian Peninsula for MERS (Middle East respiratory syndrome). Guinea is at the Warning level because of Ebola. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (fourth item)

### Could self-disseminating vaccines cut off emerging infectious diseases at source?

2 November - ... Dr. Michael Jarvis ... identifies self-disseminating vaccines as one potential way forward to deal with future pandemics with potential to cut off such diseases at the animal source before they spread to human populations. ... The challenge, identified in the expert review, is to discover vaccines for [emerging infectious] diseases [EIDs] and find ways

## Classified Version of the Weekly Update

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in which to deliver those vaccines to target animal populations. Self-disseminating vaccines are designed to use virus-based vectors (cytomegalovirus (CMV) which are viruses that are unique to individual species but which have little or no significant impact on that species' health). The vectors in effect become 'carriers' for the vaccine which allow for vaccination across populations where it is difficult to inoculate every animal. ... [Dr. Jarvis says,] "We suggest that state-of-the-art disseminating vaccines may have a role to play as a new and potentially powerful strategy to circumvent EID at the animal source before their establishment as the next human pandemic." [Science Newsline](#)

## Early clinical trial shows promise for recombinant ricin vaccine

5 November - A phase 1 study of a recombinant ricin vaccine (RVEc) developed by US Army researchers found that it was immunogenic with no serious adverse events and that a single booster dose in a subset of participants enhanced protection and was safe, according to a study in *Vaccine*. Ricin is a potent biological weapon, and because cells take in the toxin so rapidly, a vaccine would be the preferred countermeasure approach. Currently, there are no approved countermeasures for ricin intoxication. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

## First known transmission of cancer cells from parasite to human identified: U.S. CDC

5 November - Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said Wednesday they have found the first known case of a person becoming ill from cancer cells that arose in a common parasite. ... [Cancer] cells originating in a tapeworm called *Hymenolepis nana* took root in a 41-year-old man who was HIV positive, causing cancer-like tumors. The results raised concern that other similar cases, if they occur, may be misdiagnosed as human cancer, especially in less developed countries where this tapeworm is widespread. [Xinhua](#)

## Having children might reduce woman's death risk from several common conditions: study

31 October - Researchers found that women who had given birth might have a reduced risk of death from several common conditions than those who had not, according to a study released Friday by the Imperial College London (ICL). ... Researchers analyzed data from 322,972 women across 10 countries, including the UK, France, Germany and Sweden, with an average age of 50. Each woman was followed for an average of 12.9 years. During this period, there were 14,383 deaths overall, which included 5,938 deaths from cancer and 2,404 deaths from circulatory system diseases, according to the study. ... The researchers found that women who had given birth had a 20 per cent reduced risk of death than those who had not. It was also found that there was a reduced risk of death (eight per cent) in women who had breastfed compared to those who did not. The risk of death from cancer was lower in those that had given birth compared to those that had not. Within this group,

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the risk was reduced even further in women that gave birth to two or three children in comparison to those who had one child. [Xinhua](#)

## Japanese expo showcases hi-tech preventive medicine

5 November - A variety of new preventive measures to help Japan's rapidly aging population avoid illness and injury went on display at a medical exposition in the port town of Yokohama. ... One innovation on display was a smartphone application called Mind Monitoring Systems - Mimosys for short - that is designed to track a user's emotions and state of mind throughout the day, via voice measurements. ... Shimizu says he hopes the app will help doctors diagnose patients over long distances by phone. ... Cyberbyne Robo Care Center, creators of the Hybrid Assistive Limb (HAL), says its robot suit will help the elderly and infirm walk and carry heavy objects with relative ease. [Reuters](#)

## New approach for attenuated RSV vaccine shows early promise

5 November - Early results are encouraging in young children for a new approach for developing a vaccine against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), a genetically engineered one that involves a weakened form of the virus, researchers reported yesterday. ... Researchers ... developed an attenuated vaccine that they engineered to delete the gene for the M2-2 protein. The deletion allows the vaccine to produce more of the viral proteins that provoke an immune response, but with less infectious virus that causes illness. [CIDRAP](#)

## Stand more at work, sit more at home

4 November - ... [For] the new study, [researchers] recruited 40 healthy but sedentary university office workers and had them wear two types of activity monitors for 14 days. One of the monitors carefully tracked changes in posture that reveal how much someone is sitting or standing. ... Then the researchers provided all of their volunteers with sit-stand workstations and asked them to don the monitors after a week of using the new desks, after six weeks and after three months. ... Then the researchers examined how people's daily activity patterns changed after they began using the sit-stand desks. ... Before receiving the new desks, most of the workers had spent about 10 hours each day in a chair either at the office or at home and less than five hours standing up. ... After six weeks, the workers were standing for about six hours a day, and after three months, their daily standing time had fallen to about 5.5 hours and their sitting time had climbed back to a little over nine hours. ... [They] found that while the workers were sitting less at the office, they were spending more time seated at home than they had been at the start of the experiment. [The New York Times](#)

## Survey finds moms' flu, pertussis vaccination increases 'cocooning'

5 November - A survey designed to assess flu and pertussis vaccination patterns and

attitudes in women who recently delivered babies found that both moms' vaccination and recommendations from obstetricians were linked to infant vaccine cocooning. ... Cocooning means immunizing people who come in close contacts with babies, such as family members and caretakers. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

## The future of public health

29 October - ... In the future, clinical medicine could see costs increase without substantial improvement in health outcomes. Alternatively, new delivery models and technology could substantially increase healthy life expectancy. The public health field, for its part, may not be able to keep pace with changing risks and increased opposition to core public health actions that promote healthy living — or it could expand its past successes to further reduce tobacco and alcohol use, control persistent infectious diseases, increase physical activity, improve nutrition, and reduce harms from injuries and other environmental risks. By working more closely together, clinical medicine and public health can help each other improve health maximally — and emphasize society's responsibility to promote both healthy environments and consistent, high-quality care. Public health organizations can publicize information on health outcomes and risks that clarifies the need for, or achievement of, substantial progress. Clinical experts can identify and validate preventable harms and effective interventions to protect patients. [New England Journal of Medicine](#)

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## INFLUENZA

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### AFHSC: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary

For Week 42:

NORTHCOM: Influenza activity was minimal.

EUCOM: There was minimal influenza activity.

PACOM: Influenza activity was minimal.

CENTCOM and AFRICOM: Both show minimal influenza activity.

SOUTHCOM: Influenza activity remains low. [Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center](#)

### APHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report

For the week ending 24 October 2015 (Week 42), RHC-P reported the most influenza A cases (4) during week 42. However, influenza-like illness activity remains low in both Army and civilian populations.

- ILI Activity: Army incident ILI outpatient visits in week 42 were 12% higher than the same week last year.

- Influenza cases: One hospitalized influenza case was reported to APHC (P) through DRSi in week 42. Two cases have been reported to date this influenza season.
- Viral specimens: During week 42, 55 of 599 (9%) laboratory specimens tested positive for respiratory pathogens. RHC-P reported the most influenza A positive specimens (57%), followed by RHC-A, RHC-C, and RHC-E which each reported one positive specimen (14%). WRMC and CENTCOM reported zero positive specimens. [APHC](#)

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

During week 42 (October 18-24, 2015), influenza activity was low in the United States.

- Viral Surveillance: The most frequently identified influenza virus type reported by public health laboratories in week 42 was influenza A viruses, with influenza A (H3) viruses predominating. The percentage of respiratory specimens testing positive for influenza in clinical laboratories is low.
- Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality: The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was below their system-specific epidemic threshold in both the NCHS Mortality Surveillance System and the 122 Cities Mortality Reporting System. [CDC](#)

## ECDC: Flu News Europe

Week 43/2015 (19 October – 25 October 2015):

- Influenza activity in the WHO European Region is at low levels in all 42 countries that reported data this week
- Influenza virus was detected in 16 sentinel and non-sentinel specimens and in two hospitalized patients.

Season: As is usual for this time of year, influenza activity in the European Region continued to be low, with few influenza viruses detected (<1% of sentinel specimens). [European Center for Disease Prevention and Control/WHO](#)

## NHRC: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For 2015 Week 43 (through 31 October 2015):

- 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 FRI rates were moderately elevated at Fort Benning. [Naval Health Research Center](#)

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## CDC: Multistate outbreaks show need for more food industry action

3 November - Multistate foodborne outbreaks cause a disproportionate number of deaths compared with single-state events, but enhanced steps by industry can help blunt the impact, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said today in a Vital Signs report. The CDC's analysis of outbreaks from 2010 to 2014 found that multistate events are linked to 56% of all foodborne outbreak-related deaths even though they made up just 3% of all outbreaks. An outside expert, however, said that addressing multistate outbreaks is important, but there are pitfalls in comparing ones that cross state lines with more local events. [CIDRAP](#)

## Chipotle *E coli* cases increase to 41

4 November - Cases of *Escherichia coli* infections linked to Chipotle restaurants in Washington and Oregon increased by 19, to 41 cases, according to updates today and yesterday from health officials in the two states. Patients in Washington range in age from 1 to 67 years, and nearly all of the 25 patients reported eating at Chipotle before falling ill, according to the Washington State Department of Health (WSDH). Eleven patients are hospitalized. The agency had reported 19 outbreak cases on Oct 31. The cases are tied to five restaurants in four cities, and the chain has closed a number of restaurants in the state. ... Three of the 12 *E coli* patients in Oregon have required hospitalization, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) said in a news release. The OHA had reported 3 outbreak cases on Oct 31. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

## Zoonotic leprosy in the southeastern United States

December 2015 - Nine-banded armadillos (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) are naturally infected with *Mycobacterium leprae* and have been implicated in zoonotic transmission of leprosy. ... We screened 645 armadillos from 8 locations in the southeastern United States not known to harbor enzootic leprosy for *M. leprae* DNA and antibodies. We found *M. leprae* -infected armadillos at each location, and 106 (16.4%) animals had serologic/PCR evidence of infection. ... In comparison, 52 human patients from the same region were infected with 31 *M. leprae* types. However, 42.3% (22/52) of patients were infected with 1 of the 2 *M. leprae* genotype strains associated with armadillos. The geographic range and complexity of zoonotic leprosy is expanding. [Emerging Infectious Diseases](#)

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## Americans are using more prescription drugs; is obesity to blame?

3 November - Prescription drug use is rising across the United States. More people are taking medications and they're taking more of them. A study published Tuesday by researchers at Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health shows that 59 percent of adults used a prescription drug in a 30-day period. That's up from just 50 percent when the survey was last conducted a decade earlier. The study also shows a rising number of people are taking multiple meds. The share of people who took more than five prescription drugs in a month nearly doubled to 15 percent. ... Kantor says the increase in prescription use may be driven in part by the rise in obesity. That's because many of the widely used drugs treat conditions that can be related to obesity, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. [NPR](#)

## Brain imaging can predict success of large public health campaigns

28 October - ... In a study soon to be published in the journal *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, the researchers found that brain activity in just 50 smokers in Michigan was able to predict the outcome of an anti-smoking email campaign sent to 800,000 smokers in New York State. [The] researchers recorded 50 smokers' brain activity using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) as each smoker viewed 40 anti-smoking images, one by one. In particular, Falk's team focused on the medial prefrontal cortex (MPFC), an area of the brain that helps us decide what information is relevant and valuable to us. ... [Interestingly,] the negative anti-smoking images which elicited the most powerful brain response in the MPFC of 50 smokers in Michigan were also the most successful at getting the hundreds of thousands of New York smokers to click for help in quitting. (And research has shown that visits to a quit-smoking site correlate with the likelihood that someone actually will quit.) [Science Newsline](#)

## Everything in moderation' diet advice may lead to poor metabolic health in US adults

31 October - Diet diversity, as defined by less similarity among the foods people eat, may be linked to lower diet quality and worse metabolic health, according to researchers. ... "'Eat everything in moderation' has been a long-standing dietary recommendation, but without much empiric supporting evidence in populations. We wanted to characterize new metrics of diet diversity and evaluate their association with metabolic health," said [the] first author. ... Using data from 6,814 participants in the Multi-Ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis, ... the authors measured diet diversity through different measures. These included the total count (number of different foods eaten in a week), evenness (the distribution of calories across

different foods consumed), and dissimilarity (the differences in food attributes relevant to metabolic health, such as fiber, sodium or trans-fat content). ... Participants who had the greatest food dissimilarity actually experienced more central weight gain, with a 120 percent greater increase in waist circumference than participants with the lowest food dissimilarity. ... At ten years, higher diet quality was associated with about a 25 percent lower risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. [Medical Xpress](#)

## Federal officials raise alarm on dietary pill use

2 November - Federal officials, in a scientific journal set for release Monday, raise an alarm about the huge popularity of unregulated — and in some cases, unsafe — dietary supplements among military personnel and young athletes. ... The journal included articles written by officials at the Pentagon and the US Anti-Doping Agency, who joined medical researchers and public health watchdogs in producing a special edition of the journal *Drug Testing and Analysis*. ... Among the most striking statistics in the new studies: Three-quarters of all military personnel use dietary supplements each month. Health supplement stores such as GNC operate on almost every base in the United States and in many military zones abroad. ... At least 23,000 emergency room visits in the United States each year can be traced to supplements, according to a report last month by researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Boston Globe](#)

## Find way to focus on dietary supplement safety, experts say

3 November - A former principal deputy commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration is proposing a solution to the current gridlock over the regulation of dietary supplements: Focus less on whether these vitamins, minerals and herbal extracts actually do what they claim and instead take important steps to improve their safety. ... [Despite] hundreds of recalls and outbreaks associated with death and disability, federal law on supplements has not shifted to strengthen oversight and protect the integrity of the market. What's keeping progress from being made, Sharfstein and Kapoor say, is an ongoing dispute over whether the products work. Manufacturers and many consumers think they do. Many public health officials and doctors think they don't. Calling a truce on these questions of efficacy, Sharfstein and Kapoor argue, can bring people together to improve safety. [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News](#)

## Opioid, heroin treatment stagnates as abuse and overdose deaths increase

13 October - Opioid abuse has been a serious problem in the U.S. for decades now. ... In just the last 10 years, there's been a dramatic rise in prescription painkiller-related deaths, and heroin overdose deaths have quadrupled. Despite this, the percentage of people getting treatment for opioid use and dependence has remained about the same. According to new research from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health research, more money has been spent on treatment in recent years, but wider access to treatment has not improved.

"We found that 80 percent of people with an opioid addiction are not getting treatment," said study leader Dr. Brendan Saloner, an assistant professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management at the Bloomberg School, in a press release. "This hasn't changed, despite the growing and more complicated problem of opioid abuse and dependence."

[MSN](#)

## Sleep interruptions worse for mood than overall reduced amount of sleep, study finds

30 October - A study led by Johns Hopkins Medicine researchers suggests that awakening several times throughout the night is more detrimental to people's positive moods than getting the same shortened amount of sleep without interruption. [Researchers] studied 62 healthy men and women randomly subjected to three sleep experimental conditions in an inpatient clinical research suite: three consecutive nights of either forced awakenings, delayed bedtimes or uninterrupted sleep. Participants subjected to eight forced awakenings and those with delayed bedtimes showed similar low positive mood and high negative mood after the first night, as measured by a standard mood assessment questionnaire administered before bedtimes. ... But the researchers say significant differences emerged after the second night: The forced awakening group had a reduction of 31 percent in positive mood, while the delayed bedtime group had a decline of 12 percent compared to the first day. [ScienceDaily](#)

## Sleepwalkers feel no pain, remain asleep despite suffering injuries

2 November - A new study of sleepwalkers found an intriguing paradox: Although sleepwalkers have an increased risk for headaches and migraines while awake, during sleepwalking episodes they are unlikely to feel pain even while suffering an injury. Results show that sleepwalkers were nearly 4 times more likely than controls to report a history of headaches (odds ratio = 3.80) and 10 times more likely to report experiencing migraines (OR = 10.04), after adjusting for potential confounders such as insomnia and depression. Among sleepwalkers with at least one previous sleepwalking episode that involved an injury, 79 percent perceived no pain during the episode, allowing them to remain asleep despite hurting themselves. [ScienceDaily](#)

## What happens if you try to prevent every single suicide?

2 November - Each year, nearly three times as many Americans die from suicide as from homicide. More Americans kill themselves than die from breast cancer. As Thomas Insel, longtime head of the National Institute of Mental Health, prepared to step down from his job in October, he cited the lack of progress in reducing the number of suicides as his biggest disappointment. While the homicide rate in the U.S. has dropped 50 percent since the early 1990s, the suicide rate is higher than it was a decade ago. ... An effort that began in Detroit in 2001 to treat the most common cause of suicide — depression — is offering hope. With a relentless focus on finding and treating people with depression, the Henry

Ford Health System has cut the suicide rate among the people in its insurance plan dramatically. The story of the health system's success is a story of persistence, confidence, hope and a strict adherence to a very specific approach. [NPR](#)

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## **USAFRICOM**

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### **Guinea: Newborn's Ebola infection adds to Guinea's total**

4 November - A newborn baby whose mother recently died from Ebola was the only new Ebola patient reported in Guinea last week, though the World Health Organization (WHO) said responders are monitoring a number of high-risk contacts related to the illness cluster. In other developments, a Nigerian doctor who survived Ebola delivered a healthy baby at a California hospital, and new clinical trial results suggest a boosted experimental ChAd3 vaccine could extend the duration of protection. [CIDRAP](#)

### **Mozambique sees nearly 500 cholera cases since September**

30 October - With the arrival of hot and rainy season, the country of Mozambique is on the verge of a cholera outbreak. ... Since September, the southern African nation has reported 479 cholera cases, including three fatalities. Health officials say most cases were diagnosed in Nampula province, particularly in the provincial capital (Nampula) and Malema district. "We are on high alert status, because we already have cases of cholera in some provinces. Nampula, for example, has declared itself in a cholera epidemic." [Outbreak News Today](#)

### **Sierra Leone: How traditional healers helped defeat Ebola**

5 November - Health experts say indigenous healers cannot be ignored as Sierra Leone rebuilds after deadly disease epidemic. ... On Saturday it is expected the country will reach 42 days since the last recorded case, meaning it will be officially declared Ebola free. Many of the almost 4,000 Sierra Leoneans killed by Ebola were medical personnel, says the World Health Organization. The small West African nation suffered the most cases and healthcare has "been extremely compromised with a disproportionate number of workers dying", according to a report on the United Nations' ReliefWeb site. ... "The Ebola experience has shown the importance of engaging with actors like traditional healers ... so that they are playing a positive role in the wider health system and don't become spoilers." Unless healers are asked to motivate and educate people to go to hospitals, she said, they will provide their services "underground in a manner that will make it harder to regulate". [Al Jazeera](#)

## Sudan: Ministry of Health reports dengue fever in Darfur

2 November - The under-secretary of the Sudanese Ministry of Health announced that samples taken from patients in West and Central Darfur tested positive on Dengue fever. Dr Esam Abdallah acknowledged the spread of more viruses in Darfur, but said that most of the patients in the region are afflicted with malaria. ... The Central Darfur Minister of Health, Eisa Mohamed Mousa, confirmed to Radio Dabanga the high incidence of haemorrhagic fever cases in the state. ... [According] to the Health Ministry, a total of 182 suspected VHF cases, including 103 deaths, were reported in the five Darfur states from 29 August to 25 October. [AllAfrica](#)

## Tanzania: Cholera outbreak in Tanzania prompts travel advisory

30 October - The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) today issued an advisory for travelers to Tanzania in response to the large cholera outbreak in the East African country. The cholera outbreak has more than quadrupled in the past two months as the latest data reveals as of October 15, 2015, Tanzania has reported 4,407 cholera cases and 68 deaths. ... The city most affected is Dar es Salaam. [Outbreak News Today](#)

## Tanzania: Fighting social stigma to prevent HIV spread

1 November - Staggering AIDS death toll has forced conservative Tanzania to help gay people long rejected by its health system. ... Tanzania has the fourth-highest number of deaths from AIDS in the world, and the HIV infection rate among gay men is more than four times the national average - numbers even the most homophobic of governments have been hard-pressed to ignore. ... Given that many gay men in this conservative society have wives or girlfriends, fighting HIV has an urgency even to Tanzanians who do not support gay rights. ... In 2013, TACAIDS, the government organisation that coordinates Tanzania's HIV/AIDS response, included men who have sex with men in its national HIV strategy. [Al Jazeera](#)

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**USCENTCOM**

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## Afghanistan: Report reveals grisly details of deadly U.S. airstrike on hospital

5 November - Doctors Without Borders released an internal report Thursday describing the deaths of patients and its workers in a hospital in northern Afghanistan that was bombed by U.S. forces last month. The international medical charity ... also said wounded Taliban

fighters were being treated in the hospital, but there were no armed men or fighting in the area at the time. The charity confirmed that U.S. forces had the exact coordinates of the clinic before launching an aerial assault on Oct. 3 that killed 30 people, including doctors and patients. The bombing lasted for more than an hour, during which time "patients burned in their beds, medical staff were decapitated and lost limbs, and others were shot by the circling AC130 gunship while fleeing the burning building," the report says. ... Many of the people killed were women and children, as well as doctors and nurses, Stokes said. [CBS News](#)

## **Cholera spreads from Iraq to Syria, Kuwait, Bahrain: UNICEF**

6 November - A cholera outbreak in Iraq has spread to neighboring Syria, Kuwait and Bahrain, and risks turning into a region-wide epidemic as millions of pilgrims prepare to visit the country, UNICEF's Iraq director said. ... "It (the outbreak) already has a regional dynamic and the risk of that can only be increased by people from all over the region coming into Iraq," UNICEF country director, Peter Hawkins, said on Thursday. "Kuwait, Bahrain and Syria have already had confirmed cases." [Reuters](#)

## **Iraq: Cholera cases top 2,000 in Iraq as WHO mobilizes vaccine efforts**

2 November - Cholera cases in Iraq have topped 2,000 as the World Health Organization (WHO) ramps up an immunization campaign, the agency said in a news release yesterday. ... The outbreak has now reached 2,173 lab-confirmed cases have been reported in 15 of the country's 19 governorates, up from 1,811 on Oct 20, the WHO said. Two people have died from the disease. Cases are dwindling, though, the agency said, especially in the north. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

## **Saudi Arabia: New Saudi MERS case as year-old Taif cluster detailed**

3 November - Saudi Arabia reported a new MERS-CoV infection today in Riyadh, while Saudi and US scientists yesterday detailed a prolonged 38-case hospital outbreak last fall and winter in Taif that hit healthcare workers (HCWs) hard and proved especially deadly. [CIDRAP](#)

## **Syria: Chemical weapons used by rebels in Syria – sources**

5 November - Chemical weapons experts have determined that mustard gas was used in a Syrian town where Islamic State insurgents were battling another rebel group, according to a report by an international watchdog seen by Reuters. A confidential Oct. 29 report by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), a summary of which was shown to Reuters, concluded "with the utmost confidence that at least two people were

exposed to sulfur mustard" in the town of Marea, north of Aleppo, on Aug. 21. [Yahoo! News](#)

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## USEUCOM

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### France: France's fertility, health seen as bright spots in crisis

3 November - France has fared relatively better on key social metrics such as health and fertility than its European peers since the global financial crisis of 2008, according to a study released by the national statistics office INSEE on Wednesday. The two recessions that followed the 2007/2008 financial crisis hit European countries differently, with the mostly southern, heavily indebted 'peripheral' countries such as Greece and Portugal coming under pressure to cut their welfare spending while northern European countries were broadly spared. ... INSEE's Lengart said well-established family benefits and childcare provisions that encourage women not to give up work when they have children explained France's performance. ... INSEE said the number of healthy life years dropped in Italy to 60.9 years in 2013 from 62.6 in 2007, and to 65.1 years in Greece from 67.6 before the economic crisis. French people are expected to live 64.4 years in good health on average. [Reuters](#)

### France: France to lift ban on gay men giving blood

4 November - France said Wednesday it will lift a ban on gay men giving blood, but only if they abstain from sex in the months beforehand -- an exclusion denounced as discriminatory by rights groups. ... At first, donation of "whole blood" -- the combination of red cells, plasma and platelets -- will be open to gay men who report not having had sex for the preceding 12 months, the minister specified. For donations of only plasma, the liquid component of blood, donors will be considered if they have not had sex with another man for four months, or were in a monogamous relationship. Experts will then analyse whether the change in policy has increased risk, after which measures may be relaxed further in 2017, the minister said. [Yahoo! News](#)

### Greece: The latest sign of Greece's decay - children's teeth

5 November - ... In few places are the wounds of Greece's economic depression more evident than in the mouths of the nation's children. By most indicators of dental health, Greece is one of the unhealthiest places in Europe. The number of Greeks 16 years or older reporting unmet dental care needs was 10.6 percent in 2013, according to Europe's statistical agency Eurostat. That compares to a European Union average of 7.9 percent. Dental problems are particularly acute among children. [Reuters](#)

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## U.S.: Death rates rising for middle-aged white Americans, study finds

2 November - Something startling is happening to middle-aged white Americans. Unlike every other age group, unlike every other racial and ethnic group, unlike their counterparts in other rich countries, death rates in this group have been rising, not falling. That finding was reported Monday by two Princeton economists, Angus Deaton, who last month won the 2015 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Science, and Anne Case. Analyzing health and mortality data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and from other sources, they concluded that rising annual death rates among this group are being driven not by the big killers like heart disease and diabetes but by an epidemic of suicides and afflictions stemming from substance abuse: alcoholic liver disease and overdoses of heroin and prescription opioids. [The New York Times](#)

## U.S.: Drug-resistant gonorrhea bacteria increased in 2014

4 November - The decline seen in resistance of *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*—which causes gonorrhea—to cephalosporin treatment from 2011 to 2013 came to an end in 2014, when levels increased, according to a study yesterday in *JAMA*. ... The percentage of isolates with reduced cephalosporin susceptibility increased from 0.1% in 2006 to 1.4% in 2011, then dropped to 0.4% in 2013. In 2014, however, the percentage increased to 0.8%. The CDC said in 2012 that cephalosporin-based combination treatment is the single recommended therapy for gonorrhea. ... "The 2014 data, however, suggest that improvements in susceptibility may be short-lived." [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

## U.S.: Food policy - cutting waste, broadening systems

5 November - ... Previous studies indicate that Americans waste as much as 40 per cent, or 133 billion pounds, of the food that is produced or purchased. Globally, the figure is about 30 per cent of the food supply. This past fall, the United States and United Nations pledged to reduce by half the amount of food wasted in the U.S and abroad by 2030. If this goal is met, it's likely that future food production would not have to be increased as much to address hunger and meet the demands of a growing global population. Today, one in nine people around the world lack sufficient food, while 14 percent of Americans experience food insecurity, living without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. ... In a second article, researchers recommend taking a broader "systems" approach to food policy in order to tackle public health issues as far-ranging as climate change and antibiotic use in food animal production. [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News](#)

## U.S.: How racism impacts health

3 November - Public health professionals must not be afraid to use the word "racism" when they see health inequities linked to issues like poverty, segregation, and lack of access to care, Mary Travis Bassett, commissioner of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, told an audience at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health on October 26, 2015. "If we fail to explicitly talk about racism in health, especially at this time of public dialogue about race relations in this country, we may unintentionally bolster the status quo and enable the perpetuation of health inequities even as society is calling for change," Bassett said. ... Public health professionals can help by gathering data and conducting research to document the inequities, Bassett said. In New York City ... a survey found 11% of city residents (or about 1 in 6 in some neighborhoods) reported not getting needed medical care between 2011-13. The New York City health department also provided data that led to a series of maps showing worse health outcomes in poor neighborhoods compared with that of wealthier communities. Researchers analyzing the data found higher incidence of HIV/AIDS, asthma, and diabetes and more drug hospitalizations in poorer neighborhoods. They also found lifespans in those neighborhoods were up to 11 years shorter compared with wealthier neighborhoods. [Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health News](#)

## U.S.: Improvements in U.S. diet lower premature deaths

4 November - ... In the U.S. diet study, researchers analyzed how changes in dietary quality from 1999-2012 impacted disease and premature death. They examined dietary quality among 33,885 U.S. adults who participated in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey ... They found that healthier eating habits cumulatively prevented 1.1 million premature deaths over the 14 years, and the difference in dietary quality between 1999 and 2012 resulted in 12.6% fewer type 2 diabetes cases, 8.6% fewer cardiovascular disease cases, and 1.3% fewer cancer cases. [Harvard Gazette](#)

## U.S.: Small towns face rising suicide rates

3 November - ... Rural adolescents commit suicide at roughly twice the rate of their urban peers, according to a study published in the May issue of the journal JAMA Pediatrics. ... "The rates are higher, and the gap is getting wider." Suicide is a threat not just to the young. Rates over all rose 7 percent in metropolitan counties from 2004 to 2013, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In rural counties, the increase was 20 percent. The problem reaches across demographic boundaries, encompassing such groups as older men, Native Americans and veterans. The sons and daughters of small towns are more likely to serve in the military, and nearly half of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans live in rural communities. The C.D.C. reported last year that Wyoming has the highest suicide rate in the nation, almost 30 deaths per 100,000 people in 2012, far above the national average of 12.6 per 100,000. Not far behind were Alaska, Montana, New Mexico and Utah, all states where isolation can be common. [The New York Times](#)

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## **Australia: Northern Australia reports worst syphilis outbreak in 30 years**

2 November - An outbreak of syphilis that is believed to have claimed the lives of 10 babies across northern Australia has sparked new concerns among health authorities. While instances of the sexually transmitted infection (STI) decreased, an outbreak that started in northern Queensland in 2011 has taken a turn for the worse, Professor Basil Donovan of the Sydney-based Kirby Institute told the ABC. "We worry because if pregnant women catch syphilis, the result is very frequently disastrous. It leads to loss of pregnancy, still-births, [births] of very disabled babies," he said. Donovan said 10 babies had died as a result of congenital syphilis since the outbreak began. Donovan said that a rich country like Australia should not experience deaths like this. As of October 30, almost 2,000 new cases of syphilis have been diagnosed in 2015, making it the most severe Australian outbreak in 30 years.

[International Business Times](#)

## **China: Taiwan dengue outbreak tops 30,000 cases**

5 November - With addition of 377 locally acquired dengue fever cases, including 301 from Kaohsiung City alone, the total dengue fever cases that have been seen in Taiwan this year has reached a cumulative total of 30,298 since the summer. The number of cases in Kaohsiung City continues to rise from week to week, while the dengue situation in Tainan continues its decline. To date, 21,942 cases have been reported in Tainan City, 7,822 cases in Kaohsiung City, 153 cases in Pingtung City and imported and sporadic cases in other cities in counties, have been confirmed. 12 new deaths associated with dengue infection, including 11 men and 1 woman, were confirmed this week. 8 resided in Kaohsiung City and 4 resided in Tainan City. [Outbreak News Today](#)

## **India: Condom shortage hampers India's AIDS fight**

6 November - ... [A] funding crunch and procurement delays in the state-run HIV/AIDS program have disrupted supplies of free condoms. ... India provides free condoms under its community-based AIDS prevention program that targets high-risk groups like sex workers. That strategy, the World Bank estimates, helped avert 3 million HIV infections between 1995 and 2015. But government data released last week showed about two-thirds of India's 31 state AIDS units had less than a month's supply of condoms. Some states only have enough for a few days. [Reuters](#)

## U.S.: Why 10 cases of dengue fever in Hawaii are much scarier than the rest



3 November - Hawaiian mosquitoes have been busy it seems. Local health authorities just confirmed 10 new cases of dengue fever, an excruciating disease nicknamed "breakbone fever." That brings the total to 23 so far this year. There's something especially worrisome about these new 10 cases, though: They came from the bites of local mosquitoes. This ups the risk of an epidemic—an ominous prospect for a state that earns nearly a fifth of its GDP from tourism. [Quartz](#)

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### USSOUTHCOM

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## PAHO reports more than 13,000 new chikungunya cases

4 November - Nations in the Americas and Caribbean reported 13,476 new cases of chikungunya, bringing the outbreak total to 1,760,798, according to a Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) update from late last week that was not posted till yesterday. ... Nicaragua, reporting 4 weeks' worth of data, had the highest increase: 9,992 new infections. It now has 56,904 cases this year. Brazil was second, with 1,500 new cases over 2 weeks, bringing its total to 13,144. Colombia, which often tops the list, had 1,345 new cases last week, and its 2015 total now stands at 342,333. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

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