

7 August 2015

# Army Public Health Weekly Update

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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

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## NOTICE:

The Army Public Health Weekly Update will not be published next week. Publication will resume on 14 August 2015.

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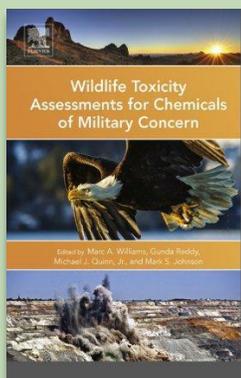
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## Mindfulness-based therapy eases veterans' PTSD symptoms

4 August – Some veterans may experience a sharper decline in symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) with mindfulness-based stress reduction therapy than with other

**Toxicology Portfolio  
publishes book on  
wildlife toxicity  
assessments**

The Toxicology Portfolio of the Army Institute of Public Health recently authored a new book: *Wildlife Toxicity Assessments for Chemicals of Military Concern*. The book includes best practices and methodological approaches for deriving and evaluating Toxicity Reference Values, and discusses different chemicals and compounds that had effects on wildlife and the environment.



forms of group treatment, a study suggests. Researchers gave one group of veterans with PTSD eight weekly 2.5-hour sessions focused on mindfulness and meditation, as well as a day-long retreat, and compared their progress to their peers who received nine weekly 1.5-hour group sessions designed to address specific problems stemming from PTSD in daily life. [Reuters](#)

## Post-deployment screening and referral for risky alcohol use and subsequent alcohol-related and injury diagnoses, active component, U.S. Armed Forces, 2008–2014

July 2015 - Risky alcohol use among service members is a threat to both military readiness and the health of service members. This analysis identified that 3.4% of PDHA forms and 4.8% of PDHRA forms completed indicated severe risk for alcohol abuse. ... Among those at severe risk on the PDHRA who were not already under care for alcohol abuse, only 37.7% received a referral for treatment: 21.7% to primary care, 13.4% to behavioral health in primary care, 7.5% to mental health specialty care, and 5.6% to a substance abuse program. Referrals for treatment for those at severe risk were lower than their respective counterparts among males, white non-Hispanics, members of the Air Force, junior officers, and pilots/air crew. There were significant trends of increasing frequencies of subsequent injury and alcohol-related conditions as alcohol use levels increased. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

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### GLOBAL

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## Combating emerging threats — accelerating the availability of medical therapies

5 August - Life-threatening emerging or reemerging infectious diseases increasingly inspire demands for access to novel, often untested therapies. Recent concern about transmission of the Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in Asia underscores the need to rapidly evaluate investigational therapies during outbreaks, identify those that actually benefit patients, and protect against those that cause harm. Although a traditional sequence of studies in animals followed by phased clinical trials works well for many therapeutics, that process may be too slow during public health emergencies. We propose establishing a new paradigm for accelerating evaluation of investigational therapies during public health emergencies so that therapies shown to be safe and effective can reach patients as soon as possible. [New England Journal of Medicine](#)

## 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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## Creating a global health risk framework

5 August - ... The Global Health Risk Framework (GHRF) initiative will build on lessons from the current Ebola outbreak and other major outbreaks to develop a comprehensive framework for improving our response to future global public health threats. The Commission will rigorously analyze options for improving governance, finance, health system resilience, and research and development for global health security. To foster trust internationally with various levels of government, civil society, academia, and industry, the Commission intends to keep the framework from being influenced by politics or the interests of any one country or organization. [New England Journal of Medicine](#)

## Insulin's potential to treat dementia outlined in new study

4 August – Researchers at the UW Medicine, Veteran's Administration Puget Sound and Saint Louis University have made a promising discovery that insulin delivered high up in the nasal cavity goes to affected areas of brain with lasting results in improving memory. The findings were published online July 30 in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease. "Before this study, there was very little evidence of how insulin gets into the brain and where it goes," said William Banks, UW professor of internal medicine and geriatrics, VA Puget Sound physician and the principal investigator of the study. "We showed that insulin goes to areas where we hoped it would go." [EurekAlert!](#)

## In the fight against tsetse flies, blue is the new black



4 August - ... "When the tsetse flies are looking for targets to bite, they're generally looking for something that contrasts with the green vegetation," explains Steve Torr, an entomologist at the University of Liverpool in the U.K. "They're attracted to bright colors, and for some reason they're especially attracted to

bright blue." With that in mind, Torr and his colleagues set out to design the ultimate flytrap. It consists of a small piece of blue cloth, "about the size of a handkerchief," Torr says, plus a panel of fine netting covered in insecticide. The blue material catches the flies' interest. As the tsetses circle the blue cloth, mesmerized, they hit the poisoned netting, which they can't see. The insecticide kills them within three minutes. Since last November, Torr's research team — with help from local health workers — has installed some 17,500 traps, covering about 1,500 square miles in northern Uganda. The researchers' early estimates show the strategy is working: The tsetse population in the region is down by almost 90 percent. [NPR](#)

## Mental health suffers most in major nuclear accidents, studies find

30 July - People caught up in a nuclear disaster are more likely to suffer severe psychological disorders such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder rather than any harm from radiation, scientists said on Friday. Factors such as having to evacuate homes or simply fear contribute to the trauma, the scientists said in studies published in *The Lancet* to mark the 70th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The studies counter the misconception that nuclear disasters have caused widespread death and physical illness, with the researchers finding that the mental health effects were far more profound. [Reuters](#)

## New Ebola vaccine has '100 percent' effectiveness in early results

31 July - In a development that could change the way the deadly Ebola disease is fought, researchers have announced promising results of a new vaccine's trial in Guinea, one of several countries affected by a historic outbreak in West Africa. "The estimated vaccine efficacy was 100 percent," a team of researchers say. ... Draguez and other experts are heartened by the new results — but they also warn that as testing expands, the effectiveness rate of the vaccine will likely fall below 100 percent. The trial used the "ring vaccination" method, in which all suspected contacts receive treatment. No placebos were administered. ... The trial vaccine, formally called rVSV-ZEBOV but more commonly known as VSV-EBOV, was supplied by the pharmaceutical firm Merck Sharp & Dohme. [NPR](#)

## New weapon in the fight against malnutrition

4 August – UBC scientists have opened the doors to new research into malnutrition by creating an animal model that replicates the imbalance of gut bacteria associated with the difficult-to-treat disease. Malnutrition affects millions of people worldwide and is responsible for one-fifth of deaths in children under the age of five. Children can also experience impaired cognitive development and stunted growth. The problem arises when people don't have enough food to eat and their diet lacks proper nutrients. The disease also has a lot to do with environmental factors and it has been a challenge to develop treatments to reverse malnutrition. [EurekAlert!](#)

## U.S. health regulator issues new cleaning guide for superbug-prone device

5 August - Hospitals that can afford it should take steps beyond those recommended by the manufacturer to clean and disinfect a type of device at the center of a recent superbug outbreak in the United States, health regulators said on Tuesday. Health care facilities that use duodenoscopes should meticulously follow the manufacturer's cleaning instructions, the Food and Drug Administration said in a safety update. Those with resources should also

take several other measures to reduce the risk of infection. ... In its latest safety update the FDA recommended hospitals also consider microbiological culturing to identify any bacterial contamination that may be present after the cleaning and disinfecting process has taken place. Another option recommended by the FDA includes ethylene oxide sterilization.

[Fox News](#)

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## **INFLUENZA**

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### **CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report**

For week 29 ending July 25, 2015:

- During week 29, 5.5% of all deaths reported through the 122 Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to pneumonia and influenza. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 5.9% for week 29.
- Nationwide during week 29, 0.7% of patient visits reported through the U.S. Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) were due to influenza-like illness (ILI). This percentage is below the national baseline of 2.0%.

[FluView](#)

### **DoD Global, Laboratory-Based, Influenza Surveillance Program**

- During 5 July - 1 August 2015 (Surveillance Weeks 27-30), a total of 46 specimens were collected and received from 26 locations. Results were finalized for 34 specimens from 21 locations. One influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 was identified during Week 28. No other influenza viruses were identified.
- Outbreaks in birds of H5N2, H5N8, and a new H5N1 bird flu virus were first detected in the United States in late 2014. A new CDC study designed to improve understanding of the human health risk posed by H5N2 and H5N8 reaffirms that these viruses pose a low risk to the general public. Additional information can be found here: [CDC Flu News](#). [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

### **Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update**

For 2015 Week 30 (through 1 August 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 elevated at Fort Jackson and Lackland AFB. [NHRC Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)

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## VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

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### Input sought from FDA on raw milk cheese practices

4 August - In an effort to identify and evaluate measures that could minimize the impact of harmful bacteria in cheese made from unpasteurized milk, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on Jul 31 issued a 90-day request for comments from the public that began yesterday. Comments can include scientific data and information and are expected to aid the FDA in learning about the many and diverse standards and practices of the broad range of cheese producers, including those making artisanal cheeses. The risks accompanying consumption of cheese made from unpasteurized milk are greatest for immunocompromised persons, the elderly, pregnant women, and children, says the FDA's Jul 31 announcement of the comment period. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

### Perdue sharply cuts antibiotic use in chickens and jabs at its rivals



31 July - The floors are spotless in Hatchery 3 on the sprawling Perdue compound here. Doors have been rehung to open out, and temperature control and ventilation systems have been upgraded, all to minimize the potential for airborne contamination. The 1.5 million eggs that arrive here each week to begin the process of becoming the company's chicken supply are also clean, with none of the traces of feces or feathers that were common in the past. ... It took Perdue roughly a decade to perfect the raising of chickens without antibiotics of any kind, and now it has reached a tipping point: More than half of the chicken it sells can be labeled "no antibiotics ever," a first for a major poultry company. [New York Times](#)

### U.S.: Washington *Salmonella* clusters trigger pig-roast health alert

3 August - Triggered by illness clusters in Washington state, federal health officials on Jul 31 issued a public health alert about the risk of *Salmonella* illnesses linked to whole pigs used for pig roasts. In a press release, the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) said it was notified of *Salmonella* I 4,[5],12:i- illness clusters on

Jul 15, and, based on information from the Washington State Department of Health (WSDH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it suspects a link between whole roasted pigs and eight illness clusters. The WSDH said the number of illnesses that may be linked to the outbreak has grown to 90 and that it has asked the CDC to send a special team to help investigate. ... Roasting a pig is a complex process, rife with a number of food handling issues, the FSIS said. [CIDRAP](#)

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## WELLNESS

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### A little exercise goes a long way for older adults

4 August - Even a little exercise was associated with reduced mortality for adults over 60, according to a meta-analysis of nine cohort studies. In about 122,000 patients with an average follow-up period of 9.8 years, only 15 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity was associated with a 22% reduction in mortality when compared with those who did no activity. Participants who exercised for 150 minutes a week at a moderate intensity or for 75 minutes at vigorous intensity, the amounts recommended by the Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee Report, had a risk reduction of 28%. [MedPage Today](#)

### Alcohol-impaired driving among adults — United States, 2012

7 August - ... An estimated 4.2 million adults reported at least one alcohol-impaired driving episode in the preceding 30 days, resulting in an estimated 121 million episodes and a national rate of 505 episodes per 1,000 population annually. Alcohol-impaired driving rates varied by more than fourfold among states, and were highest in the Midwest U.S. Census region. Men accounted for 80% of episodes, with young men aged 21–34 years accounting for 32% of all episodes. Additionally, 85% of alcohol-impaired driving episodes were reported by persons who also reported binge drinking, and the 4% of the adult population who reported binge drinking at least four times per month accounted for 61% of all alcohol-impaired driving episodes. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

### American Heart Association calls for focus on social factors

3 August – The American Heart Association said today that more attention needs to be paid to the social factors that influence heart health, such as race, education, and address. Those factors may be partly responsible for the increase in rates of cardiovascular disease expected over the coming decades, according to a statement in the journal *Circulation*. "What we're discovering is that this is a very complicated space and there may be a number

of variables beyond people's control that have an impact on their health," said Dr. Clyde Yancy, an author of the report. [Reuters](#)

## Believing you are overweight may lead to further weight gain

6 August – People who recognise they are overweight or obese are more likely to put on weight than those who are unaware that they may be heavier than doctors would advise, according to research by the University of Liverpool. In a study, published in the *International Journal of Obesity*, researchers ... analysed data from time periods after the children had reached adulthood to find out their perception of their own weight - whether or not it was correct - and their subsequent weight gain over time. ... They found that, those who identified themselves as being 'overweight' were more likely to report overeating in response to stress and this predicted subsequent weight gain. [EurekAlert!](#)

## Choosing the right running shoes

5 August - ... [For] the new review, which was published last week in *The British Journal of Sports Medicine*, Dr. Nigg and his colleagues trolled through decades' worth of studies about running injuries, shoes and their relationship. It soon became clear to the researchers that most of our beliefs about running injuries and shoes are, in fact, myths. Pronation, for instance, does not seem to be a problem requiring correction. ... Similarly, they found little evidence that forcefully striking the ground causes injuries or that changing or removing your shoes alters those impacts much anyway. ... What matters, the researchers conclude in their review, is comfort. ... After four months, the soldiers wearing the shoes fitted with inserts that felt comfortable to them had a much lower incidence of injury than those wearing standard shoes. [New York Times](#)

## Exercise during teen years linked to lowered risk of cancer death later

4 August – Women who exercised during their teen years were less likely to die from cancer and all other causes during middle-age and later in life, according to a new study. ... Investigators found that participation in exercise both during adolescence and recently as an adult was significantly associated with a 20 percent reduced risk of death from all causes, 17 percent for cardiovascular disease and 13 percent for cancer. [EurekAlert!](#)

## Experimental gel partially protects against genital herpes

5 August - An experimental vaginal gel containing a drug used to treat the AIDS virus could prevent half of cases of genital herpes, according to a study done in South Africa. Among women who used tenofovir gel, the annual rate of infection with the genital herpes virus, known as herpes simplex virus type 2 or HSV-2, was 10.2 percent versus a rate of 21 percent for women who used a placebo gel. [Reuters](#)

## Fitness experts warn of the pitfalls of going to exercise extremes

4 August – With challenging workouts from ultra-marathons to endurance events on obstacle courses all the rage, fitness experts say more and more weekend warriors are leaping into extreme activities before looking into the perils of overdoing it. The drive to push the body too far too fast can backfire in most unpleasant ways. Recent research studies suggest extreme over-exercising can cause conditions like sleeplessness, blood poisoning, fractures or heart damage. [Reuters](#)

## Fitness fundamentals still challenge Americans, poll finds

6 August - Despite an explosion of fitness advice from TV shows, blogs, books and online experts, a basic knowledge of health and exercise still eludes most Americans, according to a poll. It showed that almost three-quarters of more than 1,000 people questioned did not know that they had to burn 3,500 calories to lose a pound of fat, according to the poll by fitness equipment maker Nautilus Inc. The results were posted online, along with an interactive quiz. Only 39 percent grasped that an egg is a healthy source of protein and a mere 13 percent understood that women who weight train will not bulk up like a man. The average score was 42 percent out of 100. [Reuters](#)

## Frequent travel is damaging to health and wellbeing, according to new study

4 August – Researchers from the University of Surrey and Lund University (Sweden) investigated how frequent, long-distance travel is represented in mass and social media. They found that the images portrayed do not take into account the damaging side effects of frequent travel such as jet-lag, deep vein thrombosis, radiation exposure, stress, loneliness and distance from community and family networks. Instead, the study found that those with 'hypermobility' lifestyles were often seen as having a higher social status. By assessing how first-class flights, 'must-see' destinations and frequent-flyer programmes are represented, glamorising hypermobility as exciting, appealing and exclusive, the study shows how the 'dark side' of travel is ignored. [EurekAlert!](#)

## Kellogg to stop using artificial products in cereals, snack bars

4 August – Kellogg Co's Corn Flakes and Rice Krispies are set to turn all-natural soon. The 109-year old company, whose cereals have been a popular breakfast choice for decades, said on Tuesday it was aiming to stop using artificial colors and flavors in its cereal and snack bars by the end of 2018. The world's biggest breakfast cereal maker is the latest in a string of U.S. food companies to bow to growing pressure to remove synthetic ingredients from products due to health concerns. [Reuters](#)

## Stress may sabotage diets by short-circuiting self-control

5 August – People are less likely to resist tasty, unhealthy foods when they're under stress because the promise of immediate reward trumps longer-term goals to eat well, a Swiss study suggests. Using brain scans, researchers found that circuits in the brain associated with reward are amped up and those linked to self-control are dialed down in participants under stress. The more stressed people felt themselves to be, the stronger the effect.

[Reuters](#)

## Toxic lead contaminates some traditional ayurvedic medicines



31 July - ... The New York health department issued an alert last week warning New Yorkers to stay away from some 20 Ayurvedic compounds after lab testing revealed dangerous levels of heavy metals there. Lead and mercury damage the nervous system and can cause permanent brain damage and death. Arsenic can cause cancer and death in high doses. ...

In a paper published online last month in the International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health, Breeher and her team report that 40 percent of the 115 people tested who were using Ayurveda had lead poisoning. [NPR](#)

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### USAFRICOM

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## New meningitis strain in Africa brings call for more vaccines

31 July - Meningitis may be poised for a ferocious comeback in Africa, international aid organizations are warning, and vaccine manufacturers must step up production if the outbreak is to be averted. Meningitis is caused by one of several strains of the bacteria *Neisseria meningitidis*. A vaccine introduced five years ago has all but defeated meningitis A infections in Africa. But infections with another strain, Type C, are on the rise. Some experts fear the new strain will explode next year, while others say too little is known to predict its course reliably. Meningitis C vaccines exist but are expensive: \$20 per shot is the lowest price offered thus far to an international public health consortium, led by the World Health Organization that stockpiles vaccines for emergencies. [New York Times](#)

## Only two Ebola cases reported in past week, but risks remain: WHO

4 August – Guinea and Sierra Leone each recorded a single cases of Ebola in the past week, putting a year-end goal of ending the deadly epidemic within reach, although risks remain, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Tuesday. Tight surveillance and tracing contacts of infected people remain crucial, WHO Assistant-Director Bruce Aylward said. They are especially challenging during the heavy rains in August. In the previous week to July 26, the two countries had seven confirmed cases, which was the lowest in the past year up until then, according to the WHO. [Reuters](#)

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### USCENTCOM

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## Saudi Arabia: Health officials give MERS warning to Hajj pilgrims

30 July - Officials in Birmingham are urging Muslims planning to travel to Saudi Arabia for the Hajj pilgrimage to check the latest health advice before booking their trips. The advice has been issued in light of on-going cases of Middle-East Respiratory Syndrome. The pilgrimage to Mecca is expected to fall between September 21-26. ... [The] Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia has recommended that the following groups postpone the performance of the Hajj and Umrah this year for their own safety:

- People over the age of 65
- People with chronic diseases - such as heart, kidney or respiratory disease, diabetes, cancer and terminal illnesses
- Pregnant women and children under the age of 12. [ITV](#)

## Saudi Arabia: More Saudi MERS cases and deaths from Riyadh hot spot

4 August - Signaling what appears to be ongoing healthcare and community clusters of MERS-CoV infections in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia's ministry of health (MOH) today reported four more cases, including three from the nation's capital, one of them fatal. The outbreaks in Riyadh come on the heels of similar clusters in Hofuf, a city located about 208 miles east of Riyadh. Those outbreaks involved at least two hospitals, and community clusters were reported as well. ... Today's cases boost Saudi Arabia's total from the disease to 1,063 cases,

471 of them fatal. Nine patients are still in treatment, and over the course of the outbreak 583 have recovered. [CIDRAP](#)

## Yemen: Health 'time-bomb' as Yemen runs dry

4 August - Yemen's water problem is not new but it is now so acute that the country is close to running dry. The vast majority of the population has no access to clean water, while state water companies are at risk of bankruptcy. Before the latest round of conflict erupted in March, around half of the country's 26 million people were reckoned to be using unsafe water. That percentage has now risen to almost 80, or an estimated 20.4 million Yemenis, according to Mahboob Ahmed Bajwa, head of UNICEF's water and sanitation operations in the country. This is leading to a spike in malnutrition and water-borne diseases, especially in rural areas where buying clean water is often impossible. "Without access to improved water supply, there are regular bouts of diarrhoea, particularly among young children, which will eventually have an impact on their nutritional conditions. They will lose weight and their growth will be significantly compromised," Bajwa said. "We are sitting on a time-bomb."

[IRIN](#)

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## USEUCOM

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## Vector maps: New information on ticks in Europe. Invasive mosquitoes in new areas in southern Europe

4 August - New information on the geographical distribution of ticks and invasive mosquitoes in Europe is made available through the latest vector maps. [For ticks, new] information on the geographical distribution (presence/absence) has been added to the *Dermacentor reticulatus*, *Hyalomma marginatum*, *Ixodes ricinus* maps. ... In addition, the new maps show the presence of tick species in Europe in greater detail. ... Two invasive mosquito species, important disease vectors, have been found in new areas in southern Europe. [ECDC](#)

## United Kingdom: Everyone 'should take vitamin D pills'

3 August - Everyone should consider taking vitamin D supplements to counter the lack of sunshine in the UK, government experts are proposing. The draft Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition guidelines suggest, from the age of one, 10 microgram pills be taken to ensure people get enough. The plans are now being consulted on until 23 September. Current advice is only at risk groups - including pregnant women, under fives and over 65s - should take supplements. But as there is no easy way of assessing who is getting enough vitamin D, SACN has proposed a blanket recommendation for everyone because of the benefits it would bring. The risk of getting too much vitamin D is considered to be extremely low. [BBC News](#)

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## Mexico: One-fourth of female sex workers in northern Mexican cities enter sex trade as minors

4 August – More than 1 in 4 female sex workers in the northern Mexico cities of Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez reported entering the sex trade as minors, and entering the sex trade as an adolescent vs as an adult was associated with a greater risk for HIV infection, according to a study in the August 4 issue of JAMA, a violence/human rights theme issue. Adolescents migrating from Central America and Mexico to the United States are at risk for being trafficked into the sex industry in Mexico's northern border cities. Research from other regions indicates that those entering the sex trade as adolescents (vs as adults) are more likely to experience sexual violence and to become infected with HIV. [EurekAlert!](#)

## U.S.: 8 dead in NYC Legionnaires' disease outbreak

6 August - Eight people have died and 97 have been sickened in a [Legionnaires'](#) disease outbreak in South Bronx, N.Y., according to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Ninety-two of the people infected since July 10 had to be hospitalized, the department said Wednesday. Legionnaires' disease is a type of pneumonia caused by the bacteria *Legionella pneumophila*. People are usually exposed by breathing in mist or vapor in the air that contains the bacteria. The disease isn't contagious, and it typically doesn't cause large outbreaks. [WebMD](#)

## U.S.: Advocates say mental health 'parity' law not fulfilling its promise

4 August - ... Seven years after Congress passed a landmark law banning discrimination in the treatment of mentally ill people, many families and their advocates complain it stubbornly persists, largely because insurers are subverting the law in subtle ways and the government is not aggressively enforcing it. The so-called parity law, which was intended to equalize coverage of mental and other medical conditions, has gone a long way toward eliminating obvious discrepancies in insurance coverage. Research shows, for instance, that most insurers have dropped annual limits on the therapy visits that they will cover. Higher copayments and separate mental health deductibles have become less of a problem. But many insurers have continued to limit treatment through other strategies that are harder to track, according to researchers, attorneys, and other critics. Among the more murky areas is "medical necessity" review -- in which insurers decide whether a patient requires a certain treatment and at what frequency. [MedPage Today](#)

## U.S.: CDC plots out impact of drug-resistant infection, *C diff* interventions

4 August - New estimates today from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on hospital-associated infections, specifically drug-resistant ones and *Clostridium difficile*, project big increases unless immediate changes in infection control and antibiotic prescribing changes are made. ... The team concluded that a coordinated two-part approach was needed to tackle both issues: public health department monitoring and alerting about drug-resistant organism outbreaks in hospitals and having health facilities work together to implement shared infection control practices to stop both types of infection. [CIDRAP](#)

## U.S.: CDC reports more cyclosporiasis cases in multistate outbreak

5 August - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) yesterday reported 26 new cases of cyclosporiasis in an outbreak that has sickened 384 people in 26 states. More than half (226, or 59%) of people became ill with the intestinal parasite *Cyclospora cayetanensis* after May 1 and did not have a history of recent international travel. The CDC is investigating case clusters in Texas, Wisconsin, and Georgia and has preliminarily identified cilantro as the source of *Cyclospora* in the Wisconsin and Texas clusters. An Aug 4 update from the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) lists 224 cases of cyclosporiasis in the state this year. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

## U.S.: HIV prevention pill remains a tough sell among gay Latinos



5 August - ... In California, New York, Texas and elsewhere, health workers are trying to get more high-risk Latino men to use the drug, Truvada. AltaMed's efforts are being paid for by Gilead, the pharmaceutical company that makes Truvada. The medication, which is used for "pre-exposure prophylaxis," or PrEP, was approved by the FDA in 2012 for HIV prevention and has been shown to be more than 90 percent effective when used correctly. But health workers are encountering barriers among Latinos. Those barriers include a lack of knowledge about the drug, and the stigmas attached to sleeping with men and to perceived promiscuity. Many Latinos also have concerns about costs and side effects. [NPR](#)

## U.S.: Huge California wildfire breaches vital containment line



4 August - There is a new battleground in Northern California's massive Rocky Fire after it crossed a vital containment line late Monday, north of Highway 20, reports CBS News correspondent Ben Tracy. Firefighters had a long night on the fire lines trying to beat back flames that crossed what they hoped would be a firm containment. Now, the fire is still just 12 percent contained after burning 62,000 acres and destroying 24 homes. The Rocky Fire is just one of more than two dozen wildfires in the West, and over 9,000 firefighters in California are battling blazes from the air and the ground. [CBS News](#)

## U.S.: Mumps outbreak at University of Illinois leads to call for re-immunization

4 August - Dozens of students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign have come down with mumps, prompting health officials to urge students to get re-vaccinated for the disease before returning to campus in late August. ... Dr. Nirav D. Shah, the state health department director, said most students were infected despite having been vaccinated on schedule. ... "While most cases on campus have already received two doses of MMR, a third dose may help control the outbreak," Shah said in a statement. "Although the vaccine against mumps is extremely effective, it is not perfect. This is why it is important for those who can be vaccinated to take this extra step and potentially help protect those around them." [Chicago Tribune](#)

## U.S.: Puerto Ricans brace for crisis in health care

2 August - The first visible sign that the health care system in Puerto Rico was seriously in trouble was when a steady stream of doctors — more than 3,000 in five years — began to leave the island for more lucrative, less stressful jobs on the mainland. Now, as Puerto Rico faces another hefty cut to a popular Medicare program and grapples with an alarming shortage of Medicaid funds, its health care system is headed for an all-out crisis, which could further undermine the island's gutted economy. ... [More] than 60 percent of residents receive Medicare or Medicaid — an indicator of Puerto Rico's poverty and rapidly aging population. [New York Times](#)

## U.S.: Solitary confinement - punished for life

3 August - ... Research over the last half-century has demonstrated that [isolation] can worsen mental illness and produce symptoms even in prisoners who start out psychologically robust. But most studies have focused on laboratory volunteers or prison inmates who have been isolated for relatively short periods. Dr. Haney's interviews offer the first systematic look at inmates isolated from normal human contact for much of their adult

lives and the profound losses that such confinement appears to produce. ... Dr. Haney's work provides a vivid portrait of men so severely isolated that, to use Dr. Haney's term, they have undergone a "social death." [New York Times](#)

## U.S.: Study finds state policies influence vaccination, disease outbreak rates

5 August - Lax state vaccination laws contribute to lower immunization rates and increased outbreaks of preventable diseases--like whooping cough and measles--according to a new study from the University of Georgia. Through their research, released in the August issue of the journal Health Affairs, study authors David Bradford and Anne Mandich found higher rates of pertussis, or whooping cough, in states that allowed philosophical exemptions and used a standardized exemption form. [EurekaAlert!](#)

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### USPACOM

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## China to expand medical insurance for major illnesses

1 August – China will expand medical insurance to cover all critical illnesses for all urban and rural residents by the end of the year, the cabinet said on Sunday, the latest step in a plan to fix a healthcare system that has sparked public discontent. The State Council said 50 percent of the medical costs will be covered by insurance in a bid to "more effectively reduce the burden of medical expenses", in a statement posted on the government's website... Many people say the cost of serious illnesses such as cancer and diabetes can bankrupt households under the current system. [Reuters](#)

## India: 48 killed in floods in eastern India

4 August - At least 48 people have been killed in recent days by severe flooding in eastern India that was set off by heavy rains, authorities said Monday. The floods have affected an estimated 3.9 million people in the state of West Bengal, and the situation remains grim in many areas, said Javed Ahmed Khan, the state's disaster management minister. ... About 400,000 people have been moved to relief camps. [CNN](#)

## Myanmar scrambles to assess flood damage



3 August - Washed-out roads and bloated rivers are just two of the challenges facing relief workers who are trying to assess the damage caused by flooding in Myanmar, which has already killed 27 people and affected at least 150,000 and is expected to get worse. Myanmar's government declared a state of emergency in four areas that have been inundated by heavy

monsoon rains. A cyclone that formed in the Bay of Bengal unusually late in the year has worsened flooding in the western states of Rakhine and Chin over the past few days. ... "We are expecting the number of both fatalities and people affected to increase as information comes in," said Pierre Peron, a spokesman for the UN's emergency aid coordination body, OCHA, in Myanmar. [IRIN](#)

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## **USSOUTHCOM**

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### **Chikungunya cases rise by more than 8,000**

3 August - The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) on Jul 31 reported 8,636 new cases of chikungunya in the Caribbean and Americas, bringing the outbreak total to 1,622,954. The new total includes 470,546 suspected and 14,706 confirmed locally acquired cases and 755 imported cases reported in 2015. Colombia, which has reported thousands of cases per week for the past several months, reported the largest increase with 6,452 new cases, bringing its outbreak total this year to 308,522. ... No new fatalities were reported, and the 2015 outbreak death total stands at 61. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

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