

9 October 2015

Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center



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

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**Electronic
Cigarettes: Public
Health Peril or
Promise?**

An upcoming session of CDC's **Public Health Grand Rounds** will address e-cigarettes.
October 20, 2015:
1 - 2 p.m. (ET)

Registration is not required. [Watch live and archived broadcasts.](#)



USSOUTHCOM

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U.S. MILITARY

College wins grant for work on preventing military injuries

6 October - University of Kentucky researchers secured a \$4.2 million grant Monday to look for ways to prevent training injuries among elite U.S. military members. It's part of a new campus initiative to reduce injuries from athletic fields to military training fields. The university's team will work directly with Marine Special Operations Command, university officials said. The Defense Department grant will back research to help optimize performance among those elite forces. The goal is to help them during military service and enable them to lead healthy, productive lives after their time in the military, university officials said. [Military Times](#)

Incidence of syphilis, active component, U.S. Armed Forces, 1 January 2010 through 31 August 2015

September 2015 – ... During the surveillance period, 2,976 cases of syphilis were diagnosed. Crude incidence rates increased from 30.9 cases per 100,000 person-years (p-yrs) in 2010 to 47.4 cases per 100,000 p-yrs in 2015. Males accounted for 88.7% of cases. Incidence rates of syphilis were highest among service members who were black, non-Hispanic or who were aged 20–29 years. About one-quarter of syphilis cases (24.4%; 727 cases) were diagnosed as HIV infected. Primary and secondary syphilis cases comprised 42% of all syphilis cases. Increasing rates of primary and secondary syphilis in active component service members reflect similar trends reported in the U.S. civilian population. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

Military breastfeeding advocate: New Army policy has multiple flaws

1 October - The congresswoman who backed legislation asking the Army to develop a servicewide policy for nursing mothers called the guidelines released Wednesday "a positive first step." An advocate for breastfeeding mothers in uniform ... said the step wasn't nearly far enough. ... [The] Army's version leaves out some details found in the directives issued by the other branches. ... The Army's guidance doesn't offer any recommendations or requirements for breaks. ... The Army guidance states that restrooms may be offered as a location for soldiers expressing breast milk. ... Nursing mothers are responsible for their own breast-pumping equipment and milk-storage materials [which] could include refrigeration equipment. [Army Times](#)

**National Depression
Education and
Awareness Month
October 2015**

The Army theme for 2015 is "Screening -- A Step on the Journey to Maintaining Your Health."

Symptoms of depression may include persistent sadness, difficulty concentrating, hopelessness, helplessness, fatigue, changes in appetite, insomnia, irritability, persistent aches and pains, and in some instances, thoughts of suicide. It is time to seek help when these feelings persist and begin to interfere with everyday life.

The Army conducts routine behavioral health screening at five recognized points throughout the deployment cycle. This reduces stigma associated with seeking behavioral health treatment. Behavioral health screening into every Soldier's is also incorporated into annual Periodic Health Assessment, regardless of deployment.

STAND-TO!
THE OFFICIAL FOCUS OF THE U.S. ARMY

More than 1,300 Guard members respond to flooding throughout East Coast

5 October - Roughly 1,300 Guard members in three states are on duty Monday responding to severe flooding as a result of heavy rainfall from Hurricane Joaquin. In hard-hit South Carolina, Soldiers and Airmen with the South Carolina National Guard have been performing a variety of missions. On Saturday, Guard members delivered more than 14,000 sandbags to numerous locations throughout areas affected by flooding. ... Soldiers from the South Carolina Army Guard also used UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters to respond to multiple rescue missions over the weekend, said South Carolina Guard officials. Additionally, Guard members have used Humvees and other trucks to transport first responders through high water and also used HEMTT trucks to recover fire trucks stranded in high water areas.

[National Guard](#)

New tool can identify soldiers most likely to commit violent crimes, study shows

6 October - ... Using the military records of all 975,057 soldiers who served during a six-year period, researchers have developed an algorithm they hope can help prevent severe, violent crimes by identifying those at greatest risk of becoming perpetrators. ... Using a technique known as machine learning, researchers looked for patterns among the violent offenders and used what they found to create a risk model that took account of their demographic characteristics, health histories, career details and other factors predating their crimes. For men, who accounted for the vast majority of both soldiers and offenders, 24 factors were found to be at play. Those most at risk were young, poor, ethnic minorities with low ranks, disciplinary trouble, a suicide attempt and a recent demotion. ... The highest-risk group — just 5% of the total population of male soldiers — accounted for 36% of the crimes perpetrated by men, the researchers found. Each year, on average, 15 of every 1,000 of those men committed a violent offense. That was more than seven times the overall rate for male soldiers. ... To test their model, researchers applied it to a sample of 43,248 soldiers who served between 2011 and 2013. They found that the 5% identified as most at-risk were responsible for 51% of the violent crimes committed by those soldiers. [Los Angeles Times](#)

PTSD common among female Vietnam-era veterans

7 October - Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may be more common than previously thought among female veterans of the Vietnam War era, suggests a new study. Up to one in five women who served in the U.S. military during the 1960s and 1970s experienced PTSD at some point in their lives and many are still living with the condition, researchers found. ... About 20 percent of the women who served in Vietnam met the criteria for PTSD at some point in their lives, compared to about 12 percent of those who served near Vietnam and about 14 percent who served in the U.S. [Reuters](#)

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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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VA's Million Veteran Program hits 400K milestone

8 October - The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Million Veteran Program (MVP) has enrolled its 400,000th Veteran volunteer, squarely putting it on track to become one of the world's largest medical databases, linking genetic, clinical, lifestyle and military-exposure information, with the goal of learning more about the role of genes in health and disease. ... Veterans who volunteer for the program donate blood, from which DNA is extracted, and periodically fill out surveys about their health, health-related behaviors and military experiences. [eNews Park Forest](#)

Women at war

6 October - Federal Practitioner is hosting four articles on providing health care for women on deployment: *Medical Issues for Women Warriors on Deployment*; *Female Service Members in the Long War*; *Women, Ships, Submarines, and the U.S. Navy*; and *The Challenges of Malaria Prevention for Women at War*. [Federal Practitioner](#)

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GLOBAL

Brain scans could predict patients at risk of major depression

7 October - Scientists studying people with depression say brain scans could be used to predict who is most likely to relapse, an approach that could help doctors make better decisions about who should stay on antidepressants and who should stop. In a small study of 64 patients, the researchers found that significant differences showed up in brain scans of those who later went on to have a recurrence of their depression. [Reuters](#)

Global burden of leptospirosis: estimated in terms of disability adjusted life years

2 October - ... Leptospirosis is a zoonotic bacterial disease that affects vulnerable populations such as rural subsistence farmers and urban slum dwellers. Although leptospirosis can cause life-threatening clinical manifestations such as pulmonary hemorrhage syndrome and has a worldwide distribution, to date, the global burden of leptospirosis has not been estimated. The estimated 1.03 million cases annually result in a total of approximately 2.90 million Disability Adjusted Life Years. For comparison, this is over 70% of the global burden of cholera. Most of this burden of leptospirosis is the result of premature death and is suffered disproportionately by young adult males in resource-poor tropical countries. These estimates place leptospirosis as a leading cause of disease burden amongst zoonotic agents. [PLOS](#)

Meta-analysis finds low levels of group B meningococcal disease

7 October - Serogroup B meningococcal disease is widespread globally but at low levels, with higher incidence in some regions, according to a systematic review yesterday in *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*. An international team reviewed 37 articles and data on 12 Web sites to determine a yearly incidence of fewer than 2 cases of group B meningococcal disease per 100,000 people in most countries. They noted, however, that New Zealand, Australia, and some European countries had notably higher levels. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

Tobacco carve-out in TPP, major victory for public health

5 October - In a major victory for public health, negotiations for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement concluded this morning with built-in protections to prevent private corporations from suing governments over anti-tobacco regulations. The victory comes after years of pressure from a vast coalition of health groups and pro-health legislators, including Action on Smoking and Health (ASH), to protect the right of governments to regulate tobacco without fear of expensive lawsuits. The tobacco industry, along with its allies in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other groups, fought hard to ensure that overseas marketing of tobacco products ... could continue unabated. [PR Newswire](#)

UN upgrades adolescent health standards

6 October - Current health care for adolescents is substandard and fails to provide critical prevention and care services, say U.N. health officials, who've introduced new standards to improve their quality. Young people between the ages of 10 and 19 confront many physical and emotional changes. ... Lifelong behaviors begin during puberty, says Anthony Costello, WHO's director of maternal, children's and adolescents' health. ... The authors cite the top three causes of death among adolescents, in descending order, as road traffic injuries, AIDS-related illnesses and suicide. [VOA](#)

Work on parasite diseases earns Nobel Prize for medicine

5 October - The medicines they helped develop are credited with improving the lives of millions. And now three researchers working in the U.S., Japan, and China have won the 2015 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. Among the winners: William C. Campbell of Drew University in Madison N.J., for his work on the roundworm parasite. Born in Ireland, Campbell shares half the prize with Satoshi Omura of Kitasato University in Japan, who has researched the same parasite. The other half of the award goes to Youyou Tu of the China Academy of Traditional Medicine in Beijing, China, for her work in developing therapies for malaria. Taken together, the three "have transformed the treatment of parasitic diseases," according to the Nobel Prize committee. "The global impact of their discoveries and the resulting benefit to mankind are immeasurable." [NPR](#)

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INFLUENZA

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

For 2014-2015 Influenza Season Week 38 ending September 26, 2015:

- Pneumonia and Influenza (P&I) Mortality Surveillance: During week 38, 5.5% of all deaths reported through the 122 Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to P&I. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 5.9% for week 38.
- Outpatient Illness Surveillance: Nationwide during week 38, 1.2% 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%. [CDC](#)

Flu drug given out "indiscriminately"

8 October - The experts said many thousands of patients had received treatment that may have done no good at all. They are calling for comprehensive trials during the next pandemic, with some patients receiving the drug and others being given routine care. The report was put together by the Academy of Medical Sciences. Together with the Wellcome Trust the team reviewed all recent evidence on Tamiflu. Their new analysis suggests the antiviral pills are helpful in certain, limited circumstances - for example for people unwell in hospital with seasonal flu. But when it comes to pandemic flu, researchers say there needs to be much more work to find out if the drugs will provide a good defence. [BBC News](#)

Influenza vaccine might lower risk for flu-associated pneumonia

6 October - Influenza vaccination is associated with lower risk for acquiring influenza-associated pneumonia, according to a case-control study in JAMA. Researchers studied nearly 2800 patients (aged 6 months and older) hospitalized for community-acquired pneumonia in four U.S. cities during three flu seasons. Some 6% of patients also tested positive for influenza (i.e., influenza-associated pneumonia cases), while the remainder tested negative (controls). The patients with influenza-associated pneumonia were significantly less likely than controls to have received the flu vaccine (17% vs. 29%). The estimated vaccine effectiveness against influenza-associated pneumonia was 57%. [NEJM Journal Watch](#)

NHRC: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For the week ending 3 October 2015:

- Influenza: One case of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza (A/H3) among US military basic trainees.

- Adenovirus: Type 14 adenovirus cases continue at MCRD Parris Island, though FRI rates remain low
- FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates were at or below expected values. [Naval Health Research Center](#)

Study: Influenza A and B result in similar clinical course

2 October - The clinical presentation of influenza A and influenza B infection is very similar, according to a study yesterday in PLoS One of patients in France and Turkey. In international team of researchers performed descriptive analyses and employed a multiple regression model to investigate disease characteristics of 774 influenza cases, including 419 influenza B cases and 355 influenza A cases during the 2010-11 and 2011-12 seasons. ... The investigators found no differences in clinical presentation or the number of consultations with a healthcare practitioner between flu A and B patients. The only difference was in use of antivirals, which was higher among flu B patients in both countries. The researchers noted that illness duration increased with age but did not differ by virus type. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (fourth item)

UK study notes benefits of expanded flu vaccination in schoolkids

2 October - Expanding the coverage of live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) in Britain last season led to fewer flu-related disease outcomes among elementary-age schoolchildren but not older children in pilot areas. ... After rolling out an LAIV program in England in 2013, officials expanded the effort in the 2014-15 season to all children 2 to 4 years old, as well as an expansion of several pilot areas in which LAIV was offered to primary-age (4 through 11 years) and secondary-age (11 through 13 years) children. ... An estimated 196,994 children of primary school age received at least one LAIV dose in the pilot areas, for an uptake of 56.8%, and 184,975 kids of secondary school age received at least one dose, for an uptake of 49.8%. The researchers found that primary school children in the pilot areas saw the following reductions in lab-confirmed influenza: 94% among general practitioner (GP) consultations for flulike illness, 94% among hospital admissions, and 74% in respiratory-related emergency department visits. The reductions were even seen among children in this age-group who were not targeted for intervention. No such reductions were seen among the older children, whether targeted or not. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

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

During 30 August - 3 October 2015 (Surveillance Weeks 35-39), a total of 172 specimens were collected and received from 36 locations. Results were finalized for 146 specimens from 29 locations. A total of six influenza viruses were identified. One influenza A(H3N2) was identified during Week 36, two influenza A(H3N2) were identified during Week 37, and three influenza A(H3N2) were identified during Week 38. There were no influenza viruses

identified during Weeks 35 and 39. [US Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

WHO: Influenza Update

5 October - Globally, influenza activity generally decreased or remained low, with only a few countries reporting elevated respiratory illness levels.

- In the Northern Hemisphere, influenza activity continued at low, inter-seasonal levels with sporadic detections. Increased respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) activity was reported in the United States of America (USA).
- Few influenza detections were reported by countries in Africa. In Eastern Africa, in countries with reported influenza activity, influenza type A viruses predominated. In Western Africa, influenza activity decreased overall.
- In tropical countries of the Americas, Central America and the Caribbean, influenza activity remained at low levels, with the exception of Cuba, where high numbers of severe acute respiratory infections (SARI) were still reported, associated with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus and RSV. Colombia experienced slightly elevated acute respiratory activity (ARI) in recent weeks with elevated RSV activity.
- In tropical Asia, countries in Southern and South East Asia reported low influenza activity overall except in India and Lao People's Democratic Republic where increased activity mainly due to A(H1N1)pdm09 virus in India and A(H3N2) virus in Lao PDR continued to be reported. Influenza activity declined in southern China.
- In temperate South America, respiratory virus activity decreased or remained low in general. However, ILI activity remained elevated in Chile with increasing influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 detections.
- In South Africa, influenza activity remained at low levels with influenza type B viruses predominating in recent weeks.
- In Australia, influenza activity in general seemed to be past the peak except in South Australia where it continued to rise with predominantly influenza B virus followed by influenza A(H3N2) virus detections. In New Zealand, influenza activity may have peaked in the second week of August with influenza A(H3N2) and B viruses predominating during the season. ILI activity was still above the seasonal threshold but below the alert threshold. [WHO](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

4 dead, 732 sickened in cucumber salmonella outbreak. Toll keeps going up, CDC says.

6 October - Four people have died and at least 732 sickened in a salmonella outbreak linked to cucumbers imported from Mexico, federal officials announced Tuesday. In late September, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced three people had died and 445 people had been infected in the outbreak that has now been reported in 35

states, including Maryland. The deaths occurred in Arizona, California, Texas and Oklahoma, and more than half of the people sickened by salmonella poona are children, according to the CDC. Laboratory tests have diagnosed additional infections after companies voluntarily recalled garden cucumbers, the kind of dark green cucumbers typically sold in bulk display in grocery stores and measuring seven to 10 inches long. [Washington Post](#)

Alabama Dept. of Public Health begins dropping rabies vaccine from planes and helicopters

5 October - The Alabama Department of Public Health and the US Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services Division on Monday began airdropping rabies vaccine pills from planes and helicopters in 10 north Alabama counties, according to a report by local NBC affiliate WAFF. ... Public health officials say the oral rabies vaccine is being dropped in rural areas in hopes that rabid raccoons will consume the pills, and therefore reduce the risk of passing rabies to people or other animals. Workers are also distributing the vaccine on foot in some cities, including Huntsville. North Alabama residents are being encouraged to wear gloves and remove any pills they find in their yards, although they do not pose any threat to pets. They should be easy to identify. The plastic bags containing the pills emit a terrible odor because they're covered with fishmeal crumbs to attract animals. [Yellow Hammer](#)

Livestock disease outbreak hits 14 Colorado counties

8 October - There are now 42 locations in 14 counties under quarantine after horses, mules and cattle herds tested positive for Vesicular Stomatitis, the Colorado Department of Agriculture's State Veterinarian's Office announced Thursday. The U.S. Department of Agriculture says VS is a viral disease that can cause a drop in livestock products and infect humans handling the animals. ... The state veterinarian's office says prolonged warm temperatures this season have contributed to the outbreak. [9News](#)

Scotland: Tenth patient diagnosed in raw venison E. coli outbreak

8 October - A tenth person has been diagnosed with E. coli in an outbreak linked with venison, Health Protection Scotland has revealed. All of those affected by the same strain of E. coli O157 had consumed venison which was purchased raw and cooked at home before falling ill. Health watchdogs have linked the outbreak to Dundee firm Highland Game. One of the ten patients is being treated in hospital, while the other nine are recovering at home. Food Standards Scotland identified four different products affected, including Scottish Slimmers venison sausages, Scottish Slimmers venison meatballs, grillsteaks, and venison steaks with pepper sauce. ... A spokesman said the products "should not present a risk to health if they are handled and cooked properly", but said consumers should contact the company or retailer if they had concerns. [BBC News](#)

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Eating organic lowers pesticide levels in children

8 October - Researchers have found that when children eat organic fruits and vegetables, the amount of pesticides in their bodies declines significantly. ... The study, in the October issue of *Environmental Health Perspectives*, included 20 children living in Oakland, Calif., and 20 in the agricultural community of Salinas, about 100 miles south. The children ate a conventional diet for four days, an organic diet for seven days and then five days back on the conventional diet. About 72 percent of their urine samples, collected daily, contained evidence of pesticides. Among the six most frequently detected pesticides, two decreased by nearly 50 percent when children were on the organic diet, and those of a common herbicide fell by 25 percent. Three other frequently detected pesticides were not significantly lower on the organic diet. Levels were generally higher in the Salinas children than in the Oakland children. [New York Times](#)

Frequent HIV testing of MSM is cost-effective

7 October - Modeling HIV transmission risk for men who have sex with men demonstrates that testing as often as every three months may be cost-effective. In the U.S., men who have sex with men (MSM) have a high incidence of HIV infection. Now, CDC investigators have examined the potential cost-effectiveness of HIV testing for MSM and injection-drug users (IDUs) at 3- and 6-month intervals using fourth-generation and rapid, point-of-care tests. The researchers constructed a mathematical model of HIV transmission and detection and used it to assess the testing intervals in theoretical cohorts of 10,000 MSM and IDUs. The model incorporated transmission decreases due to earlier knowledge of serostatus and virologic suppression on antiretroviral therapy (ART), costs of HIV testing and starting treatment, and savings from transmission avoided due to treatment. ... For MSM, HIV testing was cost-effective over a 1-year period for both 6-month and 3-month intervals using either test. For IDUs, testing every 6 months with a fourth-generation test was moderately cost-effective over a 1-year period, whereas use of rapid tests or testing at 3-month intervals was not cost-effective. [NEJM Journal Watch](#)

Not all anti-bullying laws created equal

5 October - Anti-bullying policies in most U.S. states aim to protect kids against abuse from their peers in school and online, but their effectiveness varies widely depending on where students live, a study suggests. Researchers analyzed survey data on bullying from almost 62,000 students in grades 9 through 12 to see how their experiences varied based on the type of law on the books in their home state. In states where the laws followed at least one U.S. Department of Education (DoE) recommendation for anti-bullying policies, teens were 24 percent less likely to report bullying and 20 percent less likely to report cyber-bullying, the study found. ... Reported bullying rates ranged from about 14 percent in Alabama to almost 27 percent in South Dakota, with an average rate of 20 percent across all the states in the study. Rates of cyber-bullying ranged from roughly 12 percent in Alabama to nearly

20 percent in South Dakota, with an average of about 16 percent. [Reuters](#)

Opioid epidemic is driven by prescribers

8 October - Overprescribing is a key reason for the current opioid abuse epidemic, several speakers said here [in Washington]. "While our office wants to ensure that those patients who need access to pain medication get it, we know all of the morbidity and mortality associated with this epidemic can be tracked to the vast overprescribing of prescription drugs in the United States," Michael Botticelli, director of the White House Office on National Drug Control Policy. ... He noted that on average, medical students receive 11 hours worth of education on pain medication and virtually no education on substance use disorders. "That's why our office ... [plans] to call for mandatory education for every prescriber," Botticelli said. "I don't think that 10 years into this epidemic, it's unreasonable to ask prescribers to have a minimal amount of continuing medical education to stem the tide of prescription drug abuse." [MedPage Today](#)

Rates of testing for suspected abuse in young children highly variable

5 October - Most young children who present with rib fractures are diagnosed with abuse, but the rates of testing for suspected abuse vary widely, according to a retrospective study in Pediatrics. Some 30,000 children under age 2 years were evaluated at children's hospitals for injuries suspected to be caused by abuse. Abuse was most often diagnosed in children with rib fractures (56% of rib fracture cases), abdominal injury (25%), and intracranial hemorrhage (26% in those under 1 year old). Rates of radiographic skeletal surveys and tests that could identify occult injuries varied widely between hospitals and among injuries, leading the authors to suggest that skeletal surveys should be increased in children with putative sentinel injuries. They conclude: "Together, these facts suggest that increased, routine, or protocolized testing for children with these injuries can identify other children with abuse that might otherwise be missed." [NEJM Journal Watch](#)

Shopping at grocery stores down, unhealthy foods up

8 October - Americans are increasingly shopping from places other than grocery stores -- like warehouse clubs and convenience stores -- and have been purchasing unhealthier foods, according to a new study. Researchers found that from 2000 to 2012, households bought more food at mass merchandisers (from 13.1% of proportion of total volume of food to 23.9%), convenience stores (3.6% to 5.9%), and warehouse clubs (6.2% to 9.8%). They bought less of their food at grocery stores. ... In addition, top common sources of calories from packaged food purchases included unhealthy foods like savory snacks, grain-based desserts, and soft drinks. [MedPage Today](#)

The decline of 'Big Soda'



2 October - Five years ago, Mayor Michael A. Nutter proposed a tax on soda in Philadelphia, and the industry rose up to beat it back. ... The obvious lesson from Philadelphia is that the soda industry is winning the policy battles over the future of its product. But the bigger picture is that soda companies are losing the war. ... Over the last 20 years, sales of full-calorie soda in the United States have plummeted by more than 25 percent. Soda consumption, which rocketed from the 1960s through 1990s, is now experiencing a serious and sustained decline. ... The drop in soda consumption represents the single largest change in the American diet in the last decade and is responsible for a substantial reduction in the number of daily calories consumed by the average American child. From 2004 to 2012, children consumed 79 fewer sugar-sweetened beverage calories a day [and] obesity rates among school-age children appear to have leveled off. [New York Times](#)

When baby sleeps near mom, guess who doesn't sleep well?

2 October - Mothers have been warned for years that sleeping with their newborn infant is a bad idea because it increases the risk the baby might die unexpectedly during the night. But now Israeli researchers are reporting that even sleeping in the same room can have negative consequences: not for the child, but for the mother. ... Mothers who slept in the same room as their infants, whether in the same bed or just the same room, had poorer sleep than mothers whose babies slept elsewhere in the house: They woke up more frequently (approximately three times per night versus two), were awake approximately 20 minutes longer per night, and had shorter periods of uninterrupted sleep (approximately 136 minutes versus 166 minutes). ... Infants, on the other hand, didn't appear to have worse sleep whether they slept in the same or different room from their mothers. [NPR](#)

Women are missing from HIV drug trials

2 October - Although women make up roughly half of the world's HIV cases, they remain largely excluded from clinical trials testing drugs, vaccines and potential cures for the virus, a research review confirms. In an analysis spanning several decades that included work done as recently as 2012, researchers found that women typically comprised about 11 percent of participants in trials investigating cures for HIV. Similarly, drug studies were only about 19 percent female and just 38 percent of vaccine trial subjects were women. "Based on previous studies in other health areas, it wasn't surprising, but perhaps disappointing given that nearly half of those living with HIV are women," lead study author Dr. Mirjam Curno. [Reuters](#)

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Guinea: Health workers in Guinea had 42 times the risk of Ebola, report says

2 October - Healthcare workers (HCWs) in Guinea last year had an incidence of Ebola virus disease 42 times higher than non-HCWs, and lab technicians, physicians, and men were especially hit hard. ... Researchers from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization pored through data on 2,210 lab-confirmed or probable Ebola cases in 2014 among patients 15 years and older, 162 of which (7.9%) involved HCWs. The rate among the country's HCWs was 140.5 per 10,000, compared with 3.3 per 10,000 in the general population—a rate 42.2 times higher. ... Among Guinean HCWs, the incidence of Ebola infection was highest in laboratory technicians (34.7 per 1,000) and physicians (26.6 per 1,000), followed by midwives (8.7) and nurses (5.5). Of the 114 infected HCWs whose place of work was known, only 1 worked at an Ebola treatment unit. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

Nigeria: Ten quarantined in Nigeria over Ebola scare

8 October - Ten people have been quarantined after coming into contact with a patient with Ebola-like symptoms in the southern Nigerian city of Calabar, officials said on Thursday, a year after the country was declared free of the deadly disease. A patient came to the University of Calabar Teaching Hospital on Wednesday with symptoms consistent with the viral hemorrhagic fever, staff there said. Local media reported the patient had since died, though there was no official confirmation. "We have sent blood samples for testing and quarantined identified contacts," the hospital's chief medical director, Queeneth Kalu, said. Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency said 10 people were in quarantine. [Reuters](#)

Outbreak region passes full week with no new Ebola cases

7 October - For the first time since March 2014 when the World Health Organization (WHO) was first notified of a rapidly growing Ebola outbreak in southeastern Guinea, the affected region went a full week without any new lab-confirmed cases, according to an update today. The WHO, however, cautioned about a remaining risk due to several high-risk contacts linked to recent transmission chains that have been lost to follow-up in both Guinea and Sierra Leone. The encouraging further drop in cases means the outbreak region has stayed below 10 confirmed cases for 11 straight weeks. [CIDRAP](#)

Special issue spells out invasive *Salmonella* problems in Africa

8 October - The high burden of invasive *Salmonella* infections in African children and the rise of antibiotic resistant strains of nontyphoidal *Salmonella* are among the findings in a

special *Clinical Infectious Diseases* issue on the disease in Africa published today. ... Researchers found that [nontyphoidal *Salmonella*] NTS occurs in infants and young children, especially those with malaria and malnutrition. HIV-infected adults are also at risk for contracting the disease, which kills 20% of those with *Salmonella* blood poisoning. A report from Kenya notes that the majority of NTS strains are resistant to most antibiotics that are available in Africa. In a University of Otago press release, Crump said that currently *Salmonella* deaths linked to diarrhea are counted, but not ones linked to sepsis. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

Tanzania: Cholera outbreak 'kills 54' in Tanzania

8 October - An ongoing cholera outbreak starting in Tanzania's commercial capital Dar es Salaam has killed 54 people since August, the United Nations (UN) said in a report released on Wednesday in the east African nation. Latest figures from the report also show that 3 559 others were suspected or confirmed to have contracted the disease. The UN said in the report that measures being taken to halt the outbreak were being overpowered by the rate of new infections. According to the report, in Dar es Salaam alone 2 668 cases of patients with excessive diarrhoea have now been registered, and 33 deaths have occurred due to cholera, adding that the disease was now reported to have spread fast to 11 other regions. [IOL News](#)

Uganda tackles high levels of antibiotic resistance

2 October - Although it is technically illegal to distribute antibiotics without a prescription in Uganda, pharmacies are often teeming with customers buying the drugs with little or no oversight. Over time, bacteria have built up resistance to the overused drugs. Studies find that in Uganda, 80 percent of the bacteria that cause diseases such as pneumonia and tuberculosis are resistant to antibiotics. Advocates say part of the problem is understaffing. Uganda has only 600 pharmacists for a population of 37 million. This leads many people to self-prescribe, especially in rural areas. ... The Rational Medical Use Campaign, now being rolled out by the Pharmaceutical Society of Uganda, is using social media and community outreach to urge citizens to get accurate diagnoses before starting medication. It also discourages the sharing of medicines and reminds people to finish their prescribed doses. [VOA](#)

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USCENTCOM

Afghanistan: Afghan medical NGOs faced growing danger long before hospital tragedy

8 October - The U.S. air strike in Afghanistan that killed at least 22 patients and staff at a Medecins Sans Frontieres hospital wasn't the first time the escalating war has affected an

aid-run medical facility. There have even been instances since. Foreign aid workers and Afghan colleagues shaken by the weekend tragedy in Kunduz, one of the worst incidents of its kind in the 14-year war, say increased violence around the country makes it harder to provide basic services in a country where NGOs help provide the vast majority of healthcare. In recent months, local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have seen equipment and ambulances damaged in suicide attacks, raids by Afghan security personnel and threats to their lives from militants, staff members told Reuters this week.

[Reuters](#)

Yemen: UN to help provide psychological support to Yemen victims

2 October - The United Nations says it will train members of civil society groups in Yemen to provide psychological support to victims of the ongoing conflict there and to document human rights violations. Several U.N. organizations, including the U.N. Development Program, U.N. WOMEN and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, are partnering to provide the training to 130 researchers and members of nongovernmental organizations. "Human rights violations in this war have occurred, and they need to be documented so victims can find relative peace and move on with their lives," said Mikiko Tanaka, UNDP's country director in Yemen. ... The United Nations also reported that four out of five Yemenis — 21 million people — were in need of humanitarian assistance. The World Food Program said 10 of Yemen's 22 governorates were facing food insecurity at an emergency level, which is just one step below famine. [VOA](#)

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Ukraine: Ukraine could destroy 3.7m polio vaccines despite risk of major outbreak

7 October - A healthcare lobby group is arguing for the destruction of 3.7 million polio vaccines donated to Ukraine by the UN, despite the risk (pdf) that a new outbreak of the disease could spread across the country and into the EU. The all-Ukrainian council for patients' rights and safety has alleged the vaccines are unsafe, because the frozen vaccines partially thawed while in air transit to Ukraine from the manufacturer, Sanofi Pasteur in France. Although the World Health Organisation (WHO) says the transport and refreezing were carried out in line with international best practice, the complaint alleges that the process contradicts a set of Ukrainian guidelines that state the vaccines cannot be refrozen.

[The Guardian](#)

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Bahamas, Bermuda: After destruction in Bahamas, relief efforts commence as Hurricane Joaquin threatens Bermuda

4 October - Having battered the central and southern islands of the Bahamas, Hurricane Joaquin continued to veer away from the East Coast on Sunday night and out toward the North Atlantic — brushing by the British territory of Bermuda and buffeting the island with wind and rain. The storm had weakened after its destructive pass over the Bahamas. Still, forecasts called for Joaquin to deliver hurricane conditions overnight in Bermuda, about 900 miles northeast of Nassau, as the storm's ragged eye passed just west of the island nation. The National Hurricane Center advised that the storm packed winds topping 100 mph, and warned of possible isolated tornadoes and a dangerous storm surge expected to produce significant coastal flooding in Bermuda, with large and destructive waves. [Miami Herald](#)

Canada: Fentanyl drugs heightens public health crisis in Calgary

6 October - According to the Calgary police, over the past two weeks, two people died and fourteen others were hospitalized after using the street drug fentanyl. They said records of death and hospitalization heightens the public health crisis which lead them to deal with it. Respectively, Alberta releases a tally of casualties connected to fentanyl from January to June of this year has been 145, and 45 of these was the biggest cluster in the province, which is found in Calgary. ... In response, last summer Alberta Health Services extensive a program to combat fentanyl deaths. From July to the middle of September, they gave about 140 of the kit containing naloxone, a drug that decreases the effect of fentanyl, and there were four lives that were saved. [Science Times](#)

U.S.: California governor signs bill legalizing physician-assisted suicide

5 October - Physician-assisted suicide will become legal in California under a bill signed into law on Monday by Democratic Governor Jerry Brown, despite intense opposition from some religious and disability rights groups. The law, based on a similar measure in Oregon, allows doctors to prescribe medication to end a patient's life if two doctors agree the person has only six months to live and is mentally competent. In a rare statement accompanying the signing notice, Brown [said,] "I do not know what I would do if I were dying in prolonged and excruciating pain," Brown said. "I am certain, however, that it would be a comfort to be able to consider the options afforded by this bill. And I wouldn't deny that right to others." [Reuters](#)

U.S. could be on verge of measles outbreak, researchers warn

8 October - The United States could be on the verge of large outbreaks of the measles virus. One in eight children under the age of 17 is susceptible to measles and would likely get sick if exposed to the dangerous virus, researchers from Emory University in Atlanta reported Thursday. The situation is more acute among young children: Nearly a quarter of kids 3 and under are vulnerable to the highly infectious virus, the researchers say. The children are susceptible because they either are not vaccinated at all or have had only one of the two shots needed for full protection. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that children have one shot between the ages of 12 and 15 months and a booster shot between the ages of 4 and 6 years. Measles can be contained if between 92 and 95 percent of children are vaccinated. ... Using data from the National Immunization Survey-Teen, the researchers found that the percentage of children immune to measles is very close to the 92 percent threshold. [Stat/Boston Globe](#)

U.S.: Diagnoses and prevalence of HIV infection among Hispanics or Latinos — United States, 2008–2013

9 October - ... During 2008–2013, overall diagnoses of HIV infection among adult and adolescent Hispanics or Latinos decreased in the United States. However, decreases have not occurred uniformly because diagnoses of HIV infection among men who have sex with men increased. This increase might have resulted from increased incidence of HIV infection, an increase in HIV testing among Hispanic or Latino men who have sex with men, or a combination of both of these factors. An estimated 43% of Hispanics or Latinos who received an HIV diagnosis were not born in the United States or Puerto Rico (a U.S. territory), and among these Hispanic or Latino immigrants, 66% were men who have sex with men. The large proportion of HIV diagnoses in the United States among Hispanics or Latinos who are immigrants is important to consider when developing HIV prevention interventions. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

U.S.: Gun ownership as a risk factor for homicide in the home

7 October - ... To study risk factors for homicide in the home, we identified homicides occurring in the homes of victims in three metropolitan counties. ... During the study period, 1860 homicides occurred in the three counties, 444 of them (23.9 percent) in the home of the victim. After excluding 24 cases for various reasons, we interviewed proxy respondents for 93 percent of the victims. Controls were identified for 99 percent of these, yielding 388 matched pairs. As compared with the controls, the victims more often lived alone or rented their residence. Also, case households more commonly contained an illicit-drug user, a person with prior arrests, or someone who had been hit or hurt in a fight in the home. After controlling for these characteristics, we found that keeping a gun in the home was strongly and independently associated with an increased risk of homicide. Virtually all of this risk

involved homicide by a family member or intimate acquaintance. [New England Journal of Medicine](#)

U.S.: New U.S. ozone standards come under fire

6 October - The updated standards will reduce Americans' exposure to ground-level ozone, which is formed by reactions between nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds. It is hoped the new rules will improve public health protection, particularly for at risk groups like children, older adults and individuals with lung diseases like asthma, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The agency examined nearly 2300 studies in its review of the ozone standards [and] concluded that the scientific evidence shows that ozone can cause a variety of problems for the respiratory system, including difficulty breathing and inflammation of the airways, suggesting that the revised standards will result in fewer work days lost to ill health, asthma attacks and premature deaths. ... However, industry groups are not enthused. The president and chief executive of the National Association of Manufacturers, Jay Timmons, called the EPA's new rule 'overly burdensome, costly and misguided.' [Scientific American](#)

U.S.: Racial inequality even affects how long we wait for the doctor

5 October - ... For years, grim statistics have revealed the rampant and widespread disparities in the health of Americans of different races. ... These jarring inequities have drawn attention to differences in access to high-quality care. A brief study published Monday in JAMA Internal Medicine highlights one possible underlying factor: the total time it takes for people to see a health-care professional. That burden was 25 percent longer for minorities and unemployed people. And it wasn't because they were spending more time with the doctor. ... White Americans spent 80 minutes waiting for or receiving care. Black Americans, on the other hand, spent 99 minutes receiving care, on average, and Hispanic patients spent 105 minutes. White Americans spent 80 minutes waiting for or receiving care. Black Americans, on the other hand, spent 99 minutes receiving care, on average, and Hispanic patients spent 105 minutes. [Washington Post](#)

U.S.: South Carolina flooding - Dams breached, more trouble ahead

6 October - ... At least nine dams have breached or failed in South Carolina since Saturday, the state's emergency management agency said early Tuesday. One failure, of the Overcreek dam in Richland County's Forest Acres, sent a torrent of floodwater raging downstream and forced evacuations near Columbia. Officials allowed water to breach at least one other dam, also in Richland County. Officials conduct these controlled breaches "to prevent a much larger incident and a much larger amount of water escaping from the dam," emergency management spokesman Derrec Becker said. ... So far, at least 14 people have died in weather-related incidents: 12 in South Carolina and two in North Carolina. In South Carolina, seven people drowned and four died in traffic accidents, the state's

department of public safety said. North Carolina reported two deaths from traffic accidents. [CNN](#)

U.S.: Study - Fracking industry wells associated with premature birth

8 October - Expectant mothers who live near active natural gas wells operated by the fracking industry in Pennsylvania are at an increased risk of giving birth prematurely and for having high-risk pregnancies, new Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health research suggests. ... The researchers found that living in the most active quartile of drilling and production activity was associated with a 40 percent increase in the likelihood of a woman giving birth before 37 weeks of gestation (considered pre-term) and a 30 percent increase in the chance that an obstetrician had labeled their pregnancy "high-risk," a designation that can include factors such as elevated blood pressure or excessive weight gain during pregnancy. When looking at all of the pregnancies in the study, 11 percent of babies were born preterm, with the majority (79 percent) born between 32 and 36 weeks. [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News](#)

U.S.: Study profiles US threat from drug-resistant bacteria

6 October - In the clearest picture yet of the burden of carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CRE) in the United States—an important cause of healthcare-associated infections—a group from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) yesterday reported low overall incidence but regional variation, with most cases linked to earlier hospitalization and discharge to long-term care. In 2013, the CDC sounded an alarm about CRE, thought to be more dangerous than methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). CRE are resistant to nearly all antibiotics, have high mortality rates in invasive infections, and can spread their resistance genes to other bacteria in the body. Echoing the CDC's 2013 warning, the researchers who published the latest surveillance findings say the low levels suggest the time is now to take action. [CIDRAP](#)

U.S.: The fight for clean water in Flint, Michigan

8 October - Officials declared a public health emergency this month for Flint, Michigan, advising residents not to use the city's tap water without filtering after studies showed elevated lead levels in the water — and in children's blood. ... At a press conference on Thursday morning, Michigan governor Rick Snyder announced that after meeting with a technical advisory council, he was in full support of Flint returning to the Great Lakes Water Authority. ... In April 2014, economically battered Flint switched its water source from Lake Huron to the less-expensive Flint River. Researchers at Virginia Tech say the new water is more corrosive and is leaching lead from pipes into the drinking water. After the switch, the number of children with elevated lead levels rose to 4 percent in 2015, from 2.1 percent in 2013, according to a study by a pediatrician at Hurley Medical Center in Flint. [Al Jazeera](#)

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Asia: Health problems widening from Asian rainforest fires

6 October - Officials in Thailand are warning that smoke from Indonesia's massive rainforest fires is affecting public health in four southern provinces. For weeks, haze from Indonesia's land clearing has prompted health alerts in that country, as well as in Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore. Poor air quality has led to cancellations of classes, sporting events and other activities. Indonesian farmers and developers routinely burn rainforest to clear land at this time of year, but a large rise in palm oil production is blamed for the massive fires and the resulting haze. NASA forecasts this year's fires will become the region's worst on record.

[VOA](#)

Asia: Need a kidney? Inside the world's biggest organ market



8 October - The illicit kidney trade in South Asia has exploded as brokers use social media to find donors. ... According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), South Asia is now the leading transplant tourism hub globally, with India among the top kidney exporters. Each year more than 2,000 Indians sell their kidneys,

with many of them going to foreigners. ... However, in recent years, Sri Lanka's capital Colombo has become the new nerve centre of this network, where most transplant operations are carried out. In recent years, Sri Lanka has attracted kidney buyers from as far afield as Israel and the United States. ... According to the brokers, donors who already possess passports are paid roughly 400,000 rupees (\$6,000), part of which is paid two days before the operation. Others whose passports are arranged by the brokers receive up to 300,000 rupees (\$4,500). [Al Jazeera](#)

China: Report - Smoking will kill one in three young men in China

8 October - One in three young Chinese men will die from the effects of tobacco, researchers say. A study published in *The Lancet*, a medical journal, said, "About two-thirds of young Chinese men become cigarette smokers, and most start before they are 20. Unless they stop, about half of them will eventually be killed by their habit." ... "The annual number of deaths in China that are caused by tobacco will rise from about 1 million in 2010 to 2 million in 2030 and 3 million in 2050, unless there is widespread cessation," the researchers wrote. ... Richard Peto, a professor at the University of Oxford and a co-author of the recent paper, said price increases on cigarettes may be one way to reduce smoking rates. [VOA](#)

India: Panic dips, but 5 dengue deaths reported last week

9 October - The panic over dengue has gone down but cases are still being reported. On Thursday, the corporations said they have confirmed 1,832 cases over the past week and five deaths. This takes the total number of cases of the mosquito-borne disease this season to 9,438. The number of people who died due to dengue has gone up to 30, which is the highest since 1996 when the disease had claimed more than 400 lives. South Corporation has reported maximum (2,246) cases followed by North (2,164) and East (1,228). [The Times of India](#)

Japan: Fukushima study links children's cancer to nuclear accident

8 October - A new analysis of data from Fukushima suggests children exposed to the March 2011 nuclear accident may be developing thyroid cancer at an elevated rate. But independent experts say that the study, published in the journal *Epidemiology*, has numerous shortcomings and does not prove a link between the accident and cancer. The work, led by Toshihide Tsuda of Okayama University, is based on a large public health survey that was set up in Japan's Fukushima prefecture following the accident. As part of the survey, children who were living near the plant at the time of the accident have been offered regular thyroid screenings. ... In the past year or so, the Fukushima Health Survey of more than 150,000 children has turned up 25 "suspicious or malignant cases" of thyroid cancer. ... The increase in cancer is "unlikely to be caused by a screening surge," the paper says. It says thyroid cancer rates are highly elevated throughout Fukushima. ... Geraldine Thomas, a professor at Imperial College who has studied thyroid cancer from Chernobyl, says the analysis incorrectly compares the screening in Fukushima to clinical cases of thyroid cancer in which patients are already sick. [NPR](#)

Philippines: 3 more linked to Saudi tested for MERS

6 October - The Department of Health (DOH) on Monday said three more persons who had close contact with a suspected MERS-infected Saudi national who died last week had been admitted to the hospital for showing symptoms of the virus. The three had been screened for the MERS virus but the results of the laboratory tests had yet to be released. ... "A total of 101 contacts have been traced. Fifteen are symptomatic but only five are being closely monitored," said Garin. These were the people, out of 93 contacts originally traced, who had been in contact with the 63-year-old Saudi national before he died while visiting the Philippines on Sept. 29. The tourist from Jeddah arrived in Manila for a three-week vacation on Sept. 17 and got sick on Sept. 26, developing a cough, high fever and chills. On Sept. 28, he was brought to a private hospital by hotel staff and medical personnel. He died the next day. But the DOH could not yet officially declare him to be the country's first MERS death due to the lack of tests that would confirm MERS infection. [AsiaOne](#)

Southeast Asia's hazardous haze

7 October - The forest fires blanketing Southeast Asia in choking haze are on track to become among the worst on record, NASA has warned. A prolonged dry season is hampering efforts to curb a crisis that has persisted for nearly two decades. Malaysia, Singapore and large expanses of Indonesia have suffered for weeks from acrid smoke billowing from fires on plantations and peatlands that are being illegally cleared by burning. The haze has had a devastating impact on people's health in Indonesia, and more than 140,000 people have reported respiratory infections in smog-choked areas. [Al Jazeera](#)

Study links dengue epidemics to high temperatures in Southeast Asia

6 October - High temperatures are the driving factor behind massive dengue outbreaks in Southeast Asia, researchers have found. Though the infection waxes and wanes among many variables like human movement, rainfall, mosquito vector abundance and host immunity, heat emerged as the standout factor in large dengue epidemics. ... To get a handle on dengue, an international team of researchers looked at 18 years of data, including more than 3.5 million reported dengue cases across Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan. ... "The most important scientific finding is the temperature really seems to drive these large dengue epidemics," said ... the lead author of the report. ... He explained that dengue predictably rises and falls with the rainy season in ordinary years, but large epidemics erupt when there are periods of prolonged high temperatures. The links were particularly strong during El Niño phases of global climate, where tropical Pacific waters warm up, altering weather patterns around the world. [E&E News](#)

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USSOUTHCOM

Caribbean hospitals getting help for hurricanes

5 October - Because hospitals on Caribbean islands are often damaged by hurricanes and earthquakes just when they are needed by scores of newly injured patients, the Pan American Health Organization and the British government have begun a "Smart Hospitals" program that retrofits vulnerable hospitals. The intent is to make them safer, more self-sustaining and more energy-efficient. Work on two hospitals, one in St. Vincent and one in St. Kitts and Nevis, was finished last year, for \$1.4 million. A second phase, targeting at least a dozen more ... began in June. ... After the first two were refurbished, the number of patients using them rose by 40 percent, said the health organization, which added that nearly seven of 10 hospitals in the Caribbean and Latin America were in places prone to hurricanes, earthquakes or flooding. [New York Times](#)

Dominican Republic reports increase in dengue deaths

6 October - Authorities in the Dominican Republic say there has been a 78 percent increase in the number of dengue-related deaths compared with last year. The Health Ministry said Tuesday that 73 people have died and that more than 6,200 dengue cases have been reported across the Caribbean country. Health Minister Altagracia Guzman said the increase in deaths is likely a result of wrong diagnoses and inadequate treatment. [Yahoo! News](#)

PAHO reports almost 4,500 new chikungunya cases

5 October - The chikungunya outbreak in the Caribbean and the Americas grew by 4,472 cases, to 1,739,354 overall cases, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) said in an update late last week. ... The outbreak total includes 592,585 cases in 2015, PAHO said in an Oct 2 update. The number of outbreak-related deaths stayed the same, at 62 for the year. Most of the new cases were reported by Brazil, which hadn't reported in 4 weeks. The country has 2,791 new cases, bringing its total to 11,562 cases for the year. Colombia, which had consistently reported the most cases for months, had 1,630 new cases last week, bringing its 2015 total to 335,134. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

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

