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Army Public Health Weekly Update

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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Protect Your Hearing Poster

A new poster depicting four types of earplugs to protect your hearing is available in the **Health Information Products eCatalog**.



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OPSS Score Card

A card that addresses things to consider when buying a dietary supplement is available in the [Health Information Products eCatalog](#).



U.S. MILITARY

Douglas Robb to head new Defense Health Agency

2 May - Air Force Maj. Gen. Douglas Robb, former Joint Chiefs staff surgeon, has been appointed to lead the Defense Health Agency that will start operating Oct. 1, Marine Corps Times reported Wednesday. Patricia Kime writes the new agency will manage health care services such as the Tricare program, pharmacy services, medical education and training, logistics, acquisitions and research and development... The agency will run under the assistant secretary of defense for health affairs and will also receive orders from the chairman of the Joint Chiefs chairman as a combat support agency, according to the report. [ExecutiveGov](#)

E-records project taken from DoD health office

3 May - After five years and an estimated \$1 billion spent trying to build a single integrated electronic health record (iEHR) system with the Department of Veterans Affairs, defense health officials have been taken off the project, sources confirm. Wielding the hook was Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel who signaled disappointment with his management team to a House panel this month, saying he halted a solicitation for bids from commercial electronic record designers because "I didn't think we knew what the hell we were doing." A congressional source confirmed that DoD oversight for developing an interoperable electronic health records is now under Frank Kendall, undersecretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics. The shift was first reported Monday by the news website [NextGov](#). [Military.com](#)

Head of U.S. Air Force's anti-sexual assault unit arrested for sexual battery

7 May - The officer in charge of a program to curb sexual assault in the U.S. Air Force was arrested over the weekend for allegedly grabbing a woman by the breasts and buttocks in a parking lot not far from the Pentagon, officials said on Monday. Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey Krusinski, 41, was arrested on Sunday and charged with sexual battery after the alleged incident in the Crystal City area of suburban Arlington, Virginia, officials said. Krusinski, the head of the Air Force's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, was removed from his job pending an investigation on Monday. [Reuters](#)

Hospitalizations among members of the active component, U.S. Armed Forces, 2012

April 2013 - ...In 2012, for every 15 active component service members, there was one hospitalization for any cause; for every 19 members, there was one hospitalization for a condition not related to pregnancy and delivery. Hospitalization rates for all causes among five percent of hospitalizations had longer durations: injury and poisoning – 18 days; neoplasms – 26 days; mental disorders – 36 days; and "other" or V-coded hospitalizations (primarily orthopedic aftercare and rehabilitation following a previous

Classified Version of the Weekly Update

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illness or injury) – 49 days... The crude hospitalization rate for mental disorders in the Army (28.1 per 1,000 p-yrs) was more than double that in the other Services. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

Motor vehicle crashes: A little-known risk to returning veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan



5 May - For men and women who have fought in the country's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, death behind the wheel is becoming another lethal aftereffect of combat. After they leave military service, veterans of the two wars have a 75 percent higher rate of fatal motor vehicle

accidents than do civilians. Troops still in uniform have a higher risk of crashing their cars in the months immediately after returning from deployment than in the months immediately before. People who have had multiple tours in combat zones are at highest risk for traffic accidents. [Washington Post](#)

On guard against traumatic brain injuries

6 May - They tend to be older, more experienced, and more likely to have families, but deployed members of the National Guard share something in common with their active-duty brothers and sisters -- the likelihood of suffering from traumatic brain injuries... What's missing is a reference data set specific to the National Guard so that its members may be compared to their peers. [Dr. Kristin Heaton, a neuropsychologist] and other USARIEM researchers aim to correct that by collecting data from a total of 3,000 Guard members from eight states, three different age groups, males and females, in combat support and combat arms units. [Army.mil](#)

Wounded Soldiers share journeys to inspire Boston bombing victims

6 May - Wounded Soldiers recovering at Brooke Army Medical Center have a message they'd like to pass on to the Boston bombing victims: "You're not alone." They can relate to the devastating aftermath of an explosion and the emotional and physical pain of lost limbs. And they know firsthand the courage and strength required to heal after blast injuries like those at the Boston Marathon. [Army.mil](#)

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GLOBAL

Antibiotics may relieve chronic lower back pain cases

7 May - As many as four in 10 cases of chronic lower back pain are probably caused by bacteria, and treatment with antibiotics may cure them, a [study](#) showed. As many as 80

percent of the participants with persistent back pain following a herniated disc and swelling in the spine reported an improvement after taking antibiotics three times daily for 100 days, Danish scientists wrote in research published by the [European Spine Journal](#). "In people who received the placebo, nothing happened," Hanne B. Albert, an associate professor at the University of Southern Denmark who led the research, said today at a press conference in London. "People on the antibiotics attained highly clinically significant improvement." [Bloomberg](#)

Austerity seriously affecting health in Europe, North America



3 May - Austerity is having a serious effect on health in both Europe and North America - that's according to a team of researchers at U.S. and European universities. Rates of suicide, depression and infectious diseases are up, and even malaria, eradicated from most Western countries decades ago, has staged a comeback in Greece. Experts from leading U.S. and European universities compiled data for the World Health Organization's annual report on "health policy responses to the financial crises in Europe and the U.S." The report won't be released until September, but the researchers, alarmed at how much budget cuts have affected Greece, have begun speaking out. [VOA](#)

Doctors to older, heavy smokers: Get CT screening for lung cancer

7 May - Stepping into the debate over who should be screened for lung cancer, a leading medical specialty group issued new guidelines on Tuesday recommending that doctors offer annual low-dose CT (computed tomography) scanning to people whose age and smoking history puts them at significant risk of lung cancer. That means current smokers aged 55 to 74 with more than 30 pack-years of smoking, or former smokers with that profile who have quit within the last 15 years, said the American College of Chest Physicians. That was the population in whom the largest-ever lung-cancer-screening study, the National Lung Screening Test, found CT screening cuts deaths from lung cancer. [Reuters](#)

New test distinguishes physical from emotional pain in brain for first time

6 May - New research suggests physical pain may have a distinct brain "signature" that distinguishes it from emotional hurt. In the brain, the pain from broken leg and the anguish of a broken heart share much of same circuitry. But the latest evidence points to distinct ways that the brain processes each type of pain and could lead to a greater understanding of how to detect and treat them... [T]he researchers developed a program to predict whether people in the second experiment were experiencing [physical] pain. The model accurately determined whether they had been subjected to pain or to just

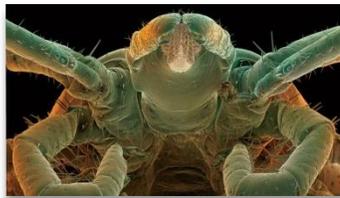
warmth 93% of the time... The third study, however, provided the most revelatory information about how physical and emotional pain may differ. In that experiment, 40 people who had recently been dropped by their romantic partners underwent the same type of physical pain testing while their brains were scanned. They were also scanned while viewing either an image of a close friend or a picture of the person whom they still loved, but had lost. What Wager wanted to know, he says, is "Does this physical pain pattern [detector] get fooled into thinking that [social rejection] is physical pain? The answer we get is, no, not at all. [Time](#)

Report: 3 million newborns die within first month

7 May - The humanitarian organization Save the Children has released its annual [State of the World's Mothers](#) report. It says despite much progress being made in reducing maternal and child deaths, every year, three million babies die within the first month of life. Many just live a few hours. Save the Children President and CEO Carolyn Miles said there's a widespread and mistaken belief that little can be done to save newborn lives in developing countries. As a result, many babies die. "This year's report we really focused in on newborns. And we found that a baby's birthday is actually the most dangerous day of their life. More than one million babies are dying the actual day that they're born."

[VOA](#)

The rise of the tick



30 April - With incisor-like claws that can tunnel beneath your skin in seconds, ticks are rapidly becoming the world's scariest purveyors of deadly pathogens. Carl Zimmer walks into the woods to find out why these tiny beasts are skyrocketing in number –

and outsmarting scientists with every bite. [Outside Magazine](#)

Women altering menstruation cycles in large numbers, UO study shows

9 May - A surprisingly large number of women 18 or older choose to delay or skip monthly menstruation by deviating from the instructions of birth-control pills and other hormonal contraceptives, a team of University of Oregon researchers and others found in a study of female students at the university. Most women who alter bleeding cycles do so for convenience rather than to avoid menstrual symptoms, and many learn about the option from nonmedical sources. [EurekAlert](#)

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INFLUENZA

Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center: DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary

2 May - AFHSC is monitoring the current status of the H7N9 influenza outbreak in China. More information will be presented as it becomes available.

ILI and Pneumonia and Influenza (P&I) incidence rates continued to trend downward for all regions. This season, there have been 306 reportable medical event (RME) influenza cases among service members (82.7% were vaccinated); an additional 328 cases were reported among other beneficiaries.

Across the overseas DoD laboratory surveillance network, influenza activity was at low levels.

As of 26 March 2013, vaccine coverage in the active component of the U.S. Armed Forces is 97%. These rates are final. [AFHSC DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary](#)

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 17 (April 21-27, 2013), influenza activity decreased in the United States.

- **Viral Surveillance:** Of 2,746 specimens tested and reported by collaborating laboratories, 177 (6.5%) were positive for influenza.
- **Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality:** The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was below the epidemic threshold.
- **Influenza-Associated Pediatric Deaths:** Seven pediatric deaths were reported.
- **Geographic Spread of Influenza:** Puerto Rico and 3 states reported regional influenza activity. [FluView](#)

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview

For weeks 17 and 18/2013, all twenty-five participating countries reported low-intensity transmission; decreasing or stable trends were reported by almost all reporting countries.

- The proportion of influenza-positive sentinel specimens (8%) has continued to decrease since the peak observed in week 5/2013 (61%).
- Since week 40/2012, 47% of sentinel surveillance specimens testing positive for influenza virus have been type A and 53% type B. Of the influenza A viruses subtyped, the proportion of A(H1)pdm09 viruses was 62%.
- Of the 3 273 hospitalised laboratory-confirmed influenza cases reported since week 40/2012, 1 988 (61%) cases were related to influenza type A and 1 285 (39%) to type B. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

Google.org: Flu Trends

9 May – Estimates of flu activity based on certain Internet search queries indicate that the level of flu activity ranges from minimal to low throughout the world. [Google.org Flu Trends](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For week 18 through 4 May 2013:

- Influenza: One case of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza (B) among US military basic trainees.
- Adenovirus: Sporadic adenovirus cases at basic training centers in 2013.
- FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates were at or below expected values. [NHRC Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)

PANDEMIC AND AVIAN INFLUENZA

Another death in China raises H7N9 fatalities to 32

8 May – Another patient in China has died from an H7N9 influenza infection, raising the number of fatal illnesses to 32, though no new cases were reported today, holding the overall case total to 131. [CIDRAP](#)

Human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus – update

7 May - The National Health and Family Planning Commission, China notified WHO of an additional two laboratory-confirmed cases of human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus. The first patient is a 69-year-old man from Fujian province who became ill on 29 April 2013 and the second patient is a 9-year-old boy, also from Fujian province, who became ill on 26 April 2013... To date, a total of 130 laboratory-confirmed cases of human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus including 31 deaths have been reported to WHO. [WHO](#)

To fight pandemics, reward research

4 May - That frightening word “pandemic” is back in the news. A strain of [avian influenza](#) has infected people in [China](#), with a death toll of more than 25 as of late last week. The outbreak raises renewed questions about how to prepare for possible risks, should the strain become more easily communicable or should other deadly variations arise. Our

current health care policies are not optimal for dealing with pandemics. The central problem is that these policies neglect what economists call “public goods”: items and services that benefit many people and can’t easily be withheld from those who don’t pay for them directly. [New York Times](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

China: Food poison deaths doubles in first quarter

7 May - Eighteen people died of food poisoning in China in the first quarter of this year, up 50 per cent year on year as the world's most populous country grappled with a wave of new cases of food adulteration, creating crisis of confidence among public over food chains. From January to March, 755 people suffered food poisoning in 24 cases reported nationwide, an increase of 72.4 per cent and 41.2 per cent, respectively, from the same period last year, state-run Xinhua news agency quoted the National Health and Family Planning Commission as saying. [Zee News](#)

China's meat market infested by rats



3 May - Chinese consumers are reeling following the latest scandal to rock the country's food supply - a crime ring that passed off meat from rats as lamb. Chinese police say they have arrested 63 people who allegedly ran the rat meat scam out of Shanghai and

the coastal city of Wuxi. The arrests are part of a larger crackdown on fake or tainted meat that has resulted in the arrests of more than 900 people since the end of January. Authorities have also confiscated more than 20,000 tons of meat product made from rats and other small mammals, as well as meat tainted with additives and chemicals.

[VOA](#)

Horsemeat scandal prompts plan for EU fraud crackdown

6 May - The European Commission proposed more unannounced inspections of food companies and tougher fines for labeling fraud on Monday, after the discovery earlier this year that millions of Europeans ate horsemeat labeled as beef. If approved by EU governments and lawmakers, the new rules would force member states to impose fines equal to the financial gains from proven cases of food fraud, officials said. Unidentified criminal gangs blamed for Europe's horsemeat scandal are believed to have made huge profits by substituting millions of tons of cheap horsemeat for more expensive beef in products including meatballs and lasagna. [Reuters](#)

Northern Greece: Re-emergence of animal rabies and subsequent human exposure, October 2012 – March 2013

2 May - Greece has been rabies-free since 1987 with no human cases since 1970. During 2012 to 2013, rabies has re-emerged in wild and domestic animals in northern Greece. By end March 2013, rabies was diagnosed in 17 animals including 14 red foxes, two shepherd dogs and one cat; 104 subsequent human exposures required post-exposure prophylaxis according to the World Health Organization criteria. Human exposures occurred within 50 km radius of a confirmed rabies case in a wild or domestic animal, and most frequently stray dogs were involved. [Eurosurveillance](#)

U.S.: Raw milk Campylobacter outbreak on Kenai Peninsula sickened 31



7 May - At least 31 residents of Alaska's Kenai Peninsula were sickened early this year in a Campylobacter outbreak linked to raw milk, according to a [report](#) from state health officials. While this outbreak, which lasted from early January to mid-February, appears to be over, the farm whose raw milk caused the outbreak could still be serving contaminated product, according to the document, published by the Alaska Section of Epidemiology (SOE) last week. [Food Safety News](#)

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WELLNESS

Guns at home pose a risk for suicidal teens

6 May - Almost 20 percent of suicidal teenagers have guns in their home, according to a new study. That's a worry, researchers says, because having access to firearms makes it much more likely that a person who attempts suicide will complete it. "Half of all completed suicides in teenagers involved a firearm," says Stephen Teach, associate chief of emergency medicine at Children's National Medical Center in Washington, D.C. "Suicidal thinking and access to firearms can be a very volatile mix." [NPR](#)

Misdiagnosis is more common than drug errors or wrong-site surgery

6 May - ...Diagnoses that are missed, incorrect or delayed are believed to affect 10 to 20 percent of cases, far exceeding drug errors and surgery on the wrong patient or body

part, both of which have received considerably more attention. Recent studies underscore the extent and potential impact of such errors. A 2009 report funded by the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality found that 28 percent of 583 diagnostic mistakes reported anonymously by doctors were life-threatening or had resulted in death or permanent disability. A meta-analysis published last year in the journal *BMJ Quality & Safety* found that fatal diagnostic errors in U.S. intensive care units appear to equal the 40,500 deaths that result each year from breast cancer. [Washington Post](#)

Nutritional quality at fast-food restaurants still needs improvement

7 May - More than 25 percent of American adults chow down on fast food two or more times each week. Known for menu items containing high amounts of fat, sugar, and salt, fast-food restaurants have contributed to America's poor diets and increased risk of diet-related chronic diseases, like heart disease and diabetes. A new study funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Healthy Eating Research program and published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* presents results from a 14-year study indicating that fast food restaurant menus have only modestly increased nutritious offerings, and much improvement is still needed. [EurekAlert!](#)

Parents who suck on their infants' pacifiers may protect their children against developing allergy

7 May - Swedish researchers at the Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg, Sweden, report that a simple habit may give significant protection against allergy development, namely, the parental sucking on the baby's pacifier. Allergies are very common in industrialized countries. It has been suggested that exposure to harmless bacteria during infancy may be protective against the development of allergy. However, it has been difficult to pinpoint which bacteria a baby should be exposed to, and at what time and by which route this exposure should ideally occur. [EurekAlert!](#)

Silk and cellulose biologically effective for use in stem cell cartilage repair

7 May - Over 20 million people in Europe suffer from osteoarthritis which can lead to extensive damage to the knee and hip cartilage. Stem cells offer a promising way forward but a key challenge has been to design a 'smart material' that is biologically effective for cartilage tissue regeneration. Now researchers have identified a blend of naturally occurring fibres such as cellulose and silk that makes progress towards affordable and effective cell-based therapy for cartilage repair a step closer. [EurekAlert!](#)

Sleep problems tied to prostate cancer risk

8 May - Men who have difficulty falling asleep at night or staying asleep may be at increased risk for prostate cancer, researchers found. A prospective study of Icelandic

men showed a 70% increased risk for prostate cancer among those who had problems falling asleep (HR 1.7, 95% CI 1.0 to 2.9) and a two-fold increased risk for those who had difficulty staying asleep (HR 2.1, 95% CI 1.2 to 3.7), according to Lara Sigurdardóttir, MD, of the University of Iceland in Reykjavik, and colleagues. [MedPage Today](#)

Sun's blood pressure benefits 'may outdo cancer risks'

7 May - The health benefits of exposing skin to sunlight may far outweigh the risk of developing skin cancer, according to scientists. Edinburgh University research suggests sunlight helps reduce blood pressure, cutting heart attack and stroke risks and even prolonging life. UV rays were found to release a compound that lowers blood pressure. Researchers said more studies would be carried out to determine if it is time to reconsider advice on skin exposure... Production of the pressure-reducing compound, nitric oxide, is separate from the body's manufacture of vitamin D, which rises after exposure to sunshine. Researchers said that until now vitamin D production had been considered the sole benefit of the sun to human health. [BBC News](#)

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USAFRICOM

Nigeria: Tuberculosis

6 May - The Adamawa State records 3382 new cases of tuberculosis. The project manager of tuberculosis (TB) in the state Adamawa, Stephen John, said Friday [3 May 2013] about 250 children were infected with TB between January and March. Responding to questions from the News Agency of Nigeria in Yola, the project manager said that 3382 cases were detected with 50 were children under 6 years. [ProMED-mail](#)

South Sudan: Ministry of Health plans massive meningitis vaccination campaign

3 May - The National Ministry of Health has announced it will carry out a massive meningitis vaccination campaign after an outbreak of meningitis in Upper Nile state capital Malakal claimed two lives and left dozens hospitalized. The outbreak of the deadly bacterial disease confirmed on April 30 by the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization is said to have started from Malakal County with the first suspected cases reported on the April 15. [AllAfrica](#)

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Saudi Arabia: Novel coronavirus infection - WHO update

9 May - The Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia has informed WHO of an additional two laboratory confirmed cases of infection with the novel coronavirus (nCoV). The first patient is a 48-year-old man with multiple coexisting medical conditions who became ill on 29 April 2013. He is in stable condition. The second patient is a 58-year-old man with existing medical condition who became ill on 6 April 2013. He fully recovered and was discharged from the hospital on 3 May 2013. The two patients are from the same cluster reported since the beginning of May 2013, which is linked to an outbreak in a health care facility... From September 2012 to date, WHO has been informed of a global total of 33 laboratory confirmed cases of human infection with nCoV, including 18 deaths. [WHO](#)

World Bank agreed grant of 100mn USD to Afghanistan for expansion of health services

8 May - The World Bank on 7 May 2013 announced that it will provide grant of 100 million US dollar to Afghanistan for expansion of the basic health and essential hospital services in the country. The World Bank and Afghan Government released a press statement on the agreement reached and signed between the two to this effect at Kabul... Afghanistan will use the grant for expansion of the scope and quality of the basic health and essential hospital services across the nation, which includes 22 rural and urban areas of its 34 provinces. It will also strengthen the National Health System by developing the capacity of the Public Health Ministry. [Jagran Josh](#)

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France: Novel coronavirus infection - update

8 May - The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in France has informed WHO of one confirmed case with infection of the novel coronavirus (NCoV). The patient had an underlying medical condition, including an immunocompromised state. The patient became ill on 23 April 2013 and later developed respiratory symptoms. Laboratory confirmation with nCoV was confirmed on 7 May 2013 by Institut Pasteur... The patient is currently hospitalized. Preliminary investigation reveals that the patient had a history of travel to Dubai, United Arab Emirates. [WHO](#)

Spain: Abuse awareness poster is 'only fully visible to children'



6 May - A poster that can only be fully seen when looked at from a child's point of view has been used in an anti-child abuse campaign. Spanish organisation the Anar Foundation used lenticular printing - a technique which means those looking at different angles see a different image. On the poster, a "secret" message showing a child helpline would show up when seen from a child's height. The foundation said it helped children gain confidence to call the number. [BBC News](#)

United Kingdom: Quarter of adults walk just an hour a week, survey finds



6 May - A poll for the walking charity the Ramblers suggests 25% of adults walk for no more than one hour each week. The YouGov survey, which polled 2,000 adults across Britain about walking habits, found another 43% reported walking for less than two hours a week. Government guidelines suggest people should do 150 minutes of "moderate" physical activity each week. The survey asked people about the total amount of walking they did, including trips to school, work or the shops. [BBC](#)

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USNORTHCOM

U.S.: 17-year cicadas to swarm from Georgia to New York

5 May - Colossal numbers of cicadas, unhurriedly growing underground since 1996, are about to emerge along much of the U.S. East Coast to begin passionately singing and mating as their remarkable life cycle restarts. This year heralds the springtime emergence of billions of so-called 17-year periodical cicadas, with their distinctive black bodies, buggy red eyes, and orange-veined wings, along a roughly 900-mile stretch from northern Georgia to upstate New York. [VOA](#)

U.S.: California braces for out-of-control wildfires

3 May - The lack of precipitation over the past two winters has California and federal officials concerned about the impact wildfires could have in the summer months.

California has already recorded 845 wildfires this year, a 60 percent increase compared with the average for the previous five years. [Homeland Security Newswire](#)

U.S., California: Toxic pesticides burn up in wildfire, health warning issued

5 May - Locals in the western US state of California have been warned against inhaling the fumes from a massive wildfire especially since the blaze has burnt a considerable amount of highly toxic pesticides. On May 3, firefighters announced that a fire had gutted a store of highly poisonous pesticides at a farm near the campus of California State University Channel Islands. The conflagration sent a black cloud into the air, prompting air quality and health warnings. Officials urged the local residents to avoid inhaling the smoke from the fire even if there were no flames nearby. Medical experts say inhaling the smoke can burn internal organs, and harm the respiratory system, making it difficult to breathe. [Press TV](#)

U.S.: How state and local governments can address the obesity epidemic

9 May - With simple and innovative measures, public agencies at state and local levels can play a significant role in promoting healthier eating habits—steps that could make a difference in curbing the nation's obesity epidemic. One effective option, according to researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, is requiring restaurants to include calorie counts on menus, along with the physical activity equivalents required to burn off a meal. The researchers, who examined studies on calorie labeling and regulatory options available to local governments, offer several recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of menu labeling. The suggestions are especially applicable to chain restaurants with fewer than 20 locations, a category that represents more than half of the restaurants in the U.S. [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News](#)

U.S.: Health concerns top list of retirement worries, study

6 May - Health problems and the cost of healthcare are the biggest concerns for those entering retirement, according to a study released on Monday from Bank of America Corp's Merrill Lynch. The findings, part of a larger study focused on how people are feeling about and preparing for retirement, were based on a survey of more than 6,300 individuals aged 45 and older across the United States. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: Looser guidelines issued on prostate screening

3 May - In a major shift, the American Urological Association has pulled back its strong support of [prostate cancer](#) screening, saying that the testing should be considered primarily by men aged 55 to 69. The association had staunchly defended the benefits of screening men with the prostate test, even after a government advisory committee, the

United States Preventive Services Task Force, said in 2011 that healthy men should not be screened because far more men would be harmed by unnecessary prostate cancer treatments than would be saved from death. But in **new guidelines** issued Friday, the urology association says that routine screening is no longer recommended for men 40 to 54 years old who are at average risk of getting prostate cancer. Screening is also not recommended for men 70 and older. **New York Times**

U.S.: Louisiana residents among least physically fit, says CDC survey



6 May - There's more confirmation that Louisiana residents are among the least physically fit in the United States. A **new report** by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that just three states have a lower percentage of adults who meet both the aerobic and muscle strengthening

components of the government's physical activity recommendations. Just 15.5 percent of Louisiana residents meet the recommendations, compared to 20.6 percent of adults surveyed across all 50 states and Washington D.C. The only states with lower rates than Louisiana were West Virginia and Tennessee, both with 12.7 percent of adults meeting recommended physical fitness levels, and Alabama, with 15 percent. **NOLA.com**

U.S.: Medicare reveals hospital charge information

8 May - The Obama administration made public on Wednesday previously unpublished hospital charges for the 100 most common inpatient treatments in 2011, saying a similar release of physician data is on the horizon. The **massive data file** reveals wide variation in charges for these 100 services listed in hospitals' "chargemasters" -- industry jargon for what hospitals charge. The data set represents added transparency the administration hopes will influence consumer behavior. **MedPage Today**

U.S.: Prevention and control of influenza with vaccines: Interim recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), 2013

10 May - ...Influenza vaccines that are currently licensed and expected to be available for the 2013–14 season and their approved age indications are summarized in a table available at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/acip/2013-interim-recommendations.htm#table1>... The table lists four newly licensed influenza vaccines that are expected to be available during the 2013–14 influenza season. These vaccines are acceptable alternatives to other licensed products listed in the table, to the extent that their specific indications allow. **Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report**

U.S.: Self-reported increased confusion or memory loss and associated functional difficulties among adults aged ≥60 years — 21 states, 2011

10 May - Declines in cognitive function vary among persons and can include changes in attention, memory, learning, executive function, and language capabilities that negatively affect quality of life, personal relationships, and the capacity for making informed decisions about health care and other matters. Memory problems typically are one of the first warning signs of cognitive decline, and mild cognitive impairment might be present when memory problems are greater than normal for a person's age but not as severe as problems experienced with Alzheimer's disease... CDC analyzed data from 21 states that administered an optional module in the 2011 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey. The results indicated that 12.7% of respondents reported increased confusion or memory loss in the preceding 12 months. Among those reporting increased confusion or memory loss, 35.2% reported experiencing functional difficulties. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

U.S.: Testis cancer rates continue to rise

7 May - The incidence of testicular cancer continued its puzzling rise through the end of the last decade, according to a study reported here. Caucasian men continued to lead the rise with an incidence of 8.6 cases per 100,000 in 2009. However, Hispanic males had the biggest increase, from 4.9/100,000 in 2003 to 6.3/100,000 by the end of the decade. Rates among black men and Asian/Pacific Islanders also increased, but remained substantially lower compared with men in the other two racial/ethnic groups. [MedPage Today](#)

U.S.: Young athletes not reporting concussions

6 May - Many young athletes think it is okay to play with a concussion, even though they know it puts them at risk of serious harm, according to a new U.S. study. The research was conducted by a team from Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and is set to be presented Monday, May 6, at the Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) annual meeting in Washington, DC. A total of 120 high school football players in the Cincinnati area were involved in the investigation. Twenty-five percent of the participants had experienced a concussion and over 50% admitted that they would keep playing with symptoms of a concussion. [Medical News Today](#)

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Bangladesh: Calamity planning - Bangladesh role-plays quake response

7 May –As Bangladesh armed forces retrieve bodies from the country's worst ever industrial disaster, a garment factory collapse killing over 700, contingency planning is taking place for something worse - a long-predicted earthquake striking the mega-capital of Dhaka. "We can't have people just showing up with a shovel," said Pete DeFelice, a disaster response exercise designer for the US Pacific Command (US armed forces stationed in Hawaii to promote regional security and disaster response in the Asia-Pacific), which is co-hosting a planning workshop from 5-14 May with the Bangladesh Armed Forces. [IRIN](#)

China: Courts to get tough on food safety crimes



3 May - The Supreme People's Court (SPC) Friday vowed to severely punish crimes related to food safety by unveiling more specific criteria in handing out sentences, after the country saw a significant increase in such cases over the past three years. Sun Jungong, spokesperson of

the SPC, told a press conference on Friday that from 2010 to 2012 courts across the country had concluded trials of 1,533 food safety-related cases, convicting 2,088 people. According to Sun, the country's food safety situation is still "very grave," given that the number of criminal cases related to food safety has seen a significant rise over the past three years. [Global Times](#)

India: Yellow fever risk

6 May - This is certainly not a shot in the arm for those travelling to African countries. Non-availability of yellow fever vaccine is turning out to be a major hindrance to them with the vaccine going out of stock in the state. For travelling to an African country, it is mandatory to submit a yellow certificate along with visa papers at the immigration and emigration counters. The yellow certificate is issued to tourists by authorised port health organisations and select private hospitals after the person has been vaccinated at least 2 weeks before the travel. "I was to travel on 6-17 May [2013] to the African region. My work requires me to travel to Dhaka and then go back to Ethiopia. So taking that vaccine is a must. But due to its non-availability, I am not able to travel," said a business consultant for the World Bank. He said this had affected the travel plans and jobs of several people who have to visit these countries. [ProMED-mail](#)

Nepal: Behaviour change needed to combat malnutrition in Nepal

1 May - More work is needed to improve nutritional behaviour in Nepal, where nearly half of children under five are chronically malnourished, experts say. "Food is more than nutrients and knowledge - it is culture, practice, and what you have been told about your life since you were born," Ramesh Adhikari, a paediatrics professor at Kathmandu Medical College, told IRIN. Across the country, childhood malnutrition, which results in stunting (low height-for-age, also known as chronic malnutrition) and other long-term health effects, occurs not because of food insecurity or lack of access to nutritious food, but because of behaviour in households which is preventing nutrients from getting to children, they say. [IRIN](#)

New Zealand: Push to teach pupils about suicide

9 May - In New Zealand, the Government has this month released a major new review of evidence to guide suicide prevention activities in schools. It found programmes run through schools can be effective in recognising and supporting young people at risk of suicide, but that care must be taken to identify and manage any unintended negative consequences... A Herald campaign on bullying last year began with Chief Coroner Judge Neil MacLean backing proposals to target cyber-bullying because of concerns it was helping to fuel New Zealand's high youth suicide rate. Inciting someone to commit suicide will be punishable with up to three years in jail under the new laws. [New Zealand Herald](#)

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Argentina: Hantavirus

6 May - The San Lucas Medical Center in Gualeguaychu [Entre Rios province] confirmed a hantavirus [infection] case in the city. [The case] concerns a 35 year old man who is a gatherer of firewood and has been working in the elimination of rats [rodents]. The patient had been admitted with a clinical picture of pneumonia and the samples sent to Malbran Hospital confirmed the case [as a hantavirus infection]. In respect [to this case], physician Javier Geuna stated that the man's health has been progressing favorably, and he is off of the respirator... This person was working in an area where there had been a large number of rodents, in a firewood storage area, and in the elimination of rats.

[ProMED-mail](#)

Brazil in talks to hire 6,000 Cuban doctors

6 May - Brazil has begun negotiations to hire at least 6,000 Cuban doctors to work in rural areas, Brazilian Foreign Minister Antonio Patriota says. Both countries are consulting the Pan American Health Organization to allow Cuban doctors to practise in Brazil. Most Brazilian doctors are concentrated in the country's bigger cities, leaving remote areas badly covered. Cuba has already sent tens of thousands of doctors to work in Venezuela, which in turn provides Havana with cheap oil. [BBC News](#)

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