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Army Public Health Weekly Update

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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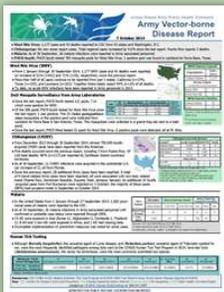
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Army Vector-borne Disease Report

This season's final issue Army Vector-borne Disease Report is now available. Influenza reporting will begin in the next weeks.



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Classified Version of the Weekly Update

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<http://phc.army.smil.mil>

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U.S. MILITARY

Diagnoses of eating disorders among active component service members, U.S. Armed Forces, 2004–2013

September 2014 - During the years 2004–2013, a total of 3,527 service members received incident diagnoses of one of the eating disorders: anorexia nervosa (AN), bulimia nervosa (BN), or “eating disorder, not otherwise specified.” The overall incidence rate was 2.5 cases per 10,000 person-years. Of the case-defining diagnoses, BN and AN accounted for the most and least incident cases, respectively. Incidence rates were more than 20 times higher in women than men. Higher rates were found among the younger age groups; white, non-Hispanics; and Marines compared to their respective counterparts. Incidence rates and prevalence of these disorders in service members were lower than estimates from studies of civilian populations and other studies of military populations. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

Up in smoke?

7 October - Congress and the Defense Department are mulling over a potential ban on selling tobacco products — cigarettes, cigars and chewing tobacco — on military bases and ships in an effort to curb high smoking rates, but critics argue the move would be unfair to service members who already are making significant sacrifices... Hagel’s review is expected to be completed in November, according to defense officials — at the same time as the House and Senate will be reconciling their defense authorization bills... The looming fight could spark one of the biggest changes in years for tobacco and the military and has prompted both anti-smoking advocates and the tobacco industry to focus their lobbying efforts on the defense bills. [Politico](#)

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GLOBAL

A newly-minted 'genius' hopes to stop pollution from soot and smoke

1 October – ...[Scientists] believe black carbon is second only to carbon dioxide as a contributor to climate change. “Like most other particles, it floats through the atmosphere, it interacts with clouds, and because it’s black it absorbs sunlight,” says Tami Bond, an environmental engineer and a professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. “That radiation turns into heat that then heats the atmosphere.” While many may associate soot with industrialized nations, black carbon is a global problem, Bond says. And now she’s

received a prestigious MacArthur Award — often called the "genius grant" — to track and quantify soot's sources, among other things. [PRI](#)

Aids: Origin of pandemic 'was 1920s Kinshasa'

2 October - The origin of the Aids pandemic has been traced to the 1920s in the city of Kinshasa, in what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo, scientists say. An international team of scientists say a "perfect storm" of population growth, sex and railways allowed HIV to spread... They used archived samples of HIV's genetic code to trace its source, with evidence pointing to 1920s Kinshasa. Their report says a roaring sex trade, rapid population growth and unsterilised needles used in health clinics probably spread the virus. Meanwhile Belgium-backed railways had one million people flowing through the city each year, taking the virus to neighbouring regions. [BBC News](#)

Case-series study: Severe illness common with MERS

9 October - Experience gained at one Saudi Arabia institution on the clinical aspects and outcomes of 70 MERS-CoV patients found that severe illness was common, particularly in those with concomitant infections and/or low albumin levels, as were fatalities, with age 65 or over the only independent risk factor for death... The records of 70 consecutive lab-confirmed MERS-CoV (Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus) cases seen at tertiary care center Prince Sultan Military Medical City in Riyadh from Oct 1, 2012, through May 31, 2014, were examined retrospectively. Median age was 62 years, males accounted for 65.7% of the cases, and just over half (55.7%) acquired their illness in the healthcare setting. Hospital admission was required in 64 cases (91.4%). Fever, dyspnea, and cough were the most common symptoms, occurring in 43 (61.4%), 42 (60%), and 38 (54.3%) case-patients, respectively. Pneumonia developed in 63 (90%), and 49 (70%) were treated in the intensive care unit (ICU). [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

Scientists find lung cancer can lie hidden for 20 years

9 October - Lung cancer can lie dormant for more than 20 years before turning deadly, helping explain why a disease that kills more than 1.5 million a year worldwide is so persistent and difficult to treat, scientists said on Thursday. Two papers detailing the evolution of lung cancer reveal how after an initial disease-causing genetic fault -- often due to smoking -- tumor cells quietly develop numerous new mutations, making different parts of the same tumor genetically unique. By the time patients are sick enough to be diagnosed with cancer, their tumors will have developed down multiple evolutionary pathways, making it extremely hard for any one targeted medicine to have an effect. The findings show the pressing need to detect lung cancer before it has shape-shifted into multiple malignant clones. [Reuters](#)

Small spills at gas stations could cause significant public health risks over time

7 October - A new study suggests that drops of fuel spilled at gas stations — which occur

frequently with fill-ups — could cumulatively be causing long-term environmental damage to soil and groundwater in residential areas in close proximity to the stations... Over the lifespan of a gas station, Hilpert says, concrete pads underneath the pumps can accumulate significant amounts of gasoline, which can eventually penetrate the concrete and escape into underlying soil and groundwater, potentially impacting the health of those who use wells as a water source. Conservatively, the researchers estimate, roughly 1,500 liters of gasoline are spilled at a typical gas station each decade. "Even if only a small percentage reaches the ground, this could be problematic because gasoline contains harmful chemicals including benzene, a known human carcinogen," Hilpert says... "The environmental and public health impacts of chronic gasoline spills are poorly understood," says Breysse. "Chronic gasoline spills could well become significant public health issues since the gas station industry is currently trending away from small-scale service stations that typically dispense around 100,000 gallons per month to high-volume retailers that dispense more than 10 times this amount." [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News](#)

Study finds MRSA colonization common in athletes

9 October - Another IDWeek study showed that college athletes in contact sports are more likely to carry methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) than non-athletes. Researchers at Vanderbilt University followed 377 varsity athletes over 2 years, including 224 who played contact sports and 153 in non-contact. They found that colonization with MRSA ranged from 8% to 31% in the contact-sports athletes and 0 to 23% in the non-contact athletes. That compares with 5% to 10% colonization in the general population. The researchers also found that the contact athletes acquired MRSA sooner and were colonized longer, the release said. [CIDRAP Drug Resistance Scan](#) (second item)

EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE

Airline cleanup crews walk off job in New York over Ebola concerns

9 October - About 200 airline cabin cleaners walked off the job at New York's LaGuardia Airport on Thursday to protest what they say is a lack of sufficient protection from exposure to Ebola for workers whose jobs include cleaning up vomit and bathrooms. Picket lines were set up overnight by non-unionized Air Serv cleaners outside Terminal D at LaGuardia for a one-day strike prompted by fears about the deadly virus, forcing airline crews to clean the planes themselves. "We have to deal with vomit. We get insufficient materials to work, like gloves that break," Air Serv cabin cleaner Antonia Alvarado said in a statement released by Service Employees International Union, the largest service workers union in the United States. [Reuters](#)

Assessment of Ebola virus disease, health care infrastructure, and preparedness — Four counties, Southeastern Liberia, August 2014

7 October - ...Over 9 days, August 6–14, 2014, Ebola case burden, health care infrastructure, and emergency preparedness were assessed... in four [remote] counties in southeastern Liberia: Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, River Gee, and Maryland... At the time of the evaluation, no cases of Ebola infection had been reported from any of the four counties. Each county has one referral hospital (100–150 beds) with outlying health centers and 17–24 clinics. Before the epidemic, six physicians served all four counties (range = one to three per county). At the time of the evaluation, only three physicians remained; the others had left Liberia because of the epidemic. In two of four hospitals assessed, nursing staff members were not coming to work or had abandoned facilities; in another hospital, health care providers had not been paid for 3 months but were still providing basic care. Frequently, nursing students, nursing aides, and community health care volunteers were providing basic medical care and responding to obstetric and surgical emergencies... [There] have been improvements in the level of Ebola preparedness... Still, obstacles to preventing spread of Ebola remain, and personal protective equipment, sufficient personnel for effective contact tracing and case management, efficient patient transport, and regional diagnostic laboratory capabilities are urgently needed. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

Dallas Ebola patient dies at Texas hospital

8 October - The first Ebola patient diagnosed in the United States has died in a Dallas, Texas hospital. Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital says that Thomas Eric Duncan died Wednesday morning, 10 days after he entered the facility. Duncan had come to Dallas from his native Liberia, the epicenter of the West African Ebola outbreak... Duncan had arrived in the U.S. by air on September 20. He did not exhibit signs of Ebola until several days later, and was initially sent home from the Dallas hospital with antibiotics when he first went there on September 25. [VOA](#)

Ebola: second Texas man assessed

8 October - A new patient is being assessed for Ebola in the Dallas hospital where the first U.S. patient died early this morning. But the hospital -- Texas Health Presbyterian -- said in a statement: "right now, there are more questions than answers about this case." The new report came just hours after Thomas Earl Duncan, a 42-year-old from Liberia, died in the hospital from Ebola. The hospital said the new patient, reportedly a Dallas County sheriff's deputy, is being assessed in the emergency room, but separately from other patients... News reports said Monnig was in Duncan's apartment a week ago with Dallas officials to get a quarantine order signed covering family members. Duncan was already in hospital at the time, and no one else there had Ebola symptoms. [MedPage Today](#)

Ebola: Spanish doctor says protective suit 'too short' as nurse health worsens

9 October - The health of a Spanish nurse with Ebola worsened on Thursday as one of the doctors who initially treated her at a local hospital said the protective suit he wore while attending her was ineffective. Dr Juan Manuel Parra... gave a damning account of the failure in biosecurity surrounding the case, before voluntarily isolating himself over fears that he has been infected. In an open letter to Madrid health authorities the doctor criticised the conditions in which he attended Mrs Romero after she was transferred to her local hospital by ambulance in the early hours of Monday. He wrote that doctors and nurses who treated Mrs Romero initially wore just impermeable gowns and double surgical gloves, a hat and a face mask. He cared for the 44-year-old nurse between 8am when he began his shift until after midnight when she was finally transferred to a specialist isolation unit at the Carlos III during which time he had to put on and remove the protective clothing as many as 13 times. As Mrs Romero's condition deteriorated and she developed vomiting, diarrhea and a chesty cough Dr Parra advised his superiors of the situation and called for "immediate action", a request that was made at around 11 am. Dr Parra claims that he was only given the highest level protection suit at 5pm – and that it was ill-fitting. "At all times the sleeves were too short," he wrote. [Telegraph](#)

European leaders scramble to upgrade response to Ebola crisis

8 October - ...European leaders are scrambling to coordinate and ramp up their response to the lethal disease... For many months, the struggle against Ebola was a largely African and European effort. Doctors Without Borders, which was founded in France, set up a series of treatment centers. Its doctors and nurses stayed put while those of some other groups, like Samaritan's Purse of the United States, pulled out after staff members became infected. Doctors Without Borders, financed by the European Union and donors, now has nearly 300 international workers and 2,900 local employees in West Africa, according to Christof Godderis, a spokesman for the group's Belgian branch, which has been at the forefront of the anti-Ebola campaign. Yet the sight of American troops building clinics and unloading supplies has been a jolt to Europe's longstanding belief that humanitarian assistance is a more effective tool for dealing with the problems of the world than military might. Together with its 28 member states, the European Union boasts of providing more than half of the global total of humanitarian assistance... Abandoning customary French suspicion of the American military, [Michèle Rivasi, a center-left French legislator] said that Washington was "not sending soldiers but people who can build hospitals, and that is a good thing." Europe, she added, needed to step up its response. [New York Times](#)

Liberia's president seeks new powers to fight Ebola

8 October - Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has asked the national legislature to give her more emergency powers in yet another effort to prevent the further spread of the

Ebola virus. Liberia is already under a state of emergency and curfew... Sirleaf asked for powers to amend seven different articles under the constitution, including freedom of movement, speech, religion, confiscation of private property, and elections. Acarous Gray, a member of the House of Representatives from the opposition Congress for Democratic Change, said he intends to vote "no" to the president's request because he doesn't want to return Liberia to the days of military dictatorship. [VOA](#)

Mobile technology key to containing Ebola in West Africa

9 October - ...Contact tracing is one way in which to dramatically improve the speed and efficiency and the response to Ebola. "What it means when you cut days and even weeks off the time required to do that contact tracing, is that there are people who, with a paper system and all those delays, would get Ebola, or who would not be identified or treated. Essentially you could reach those people faster," emphasized [infectious disease expert Dr. Joel Selanikio.] ... He said mobile phones allow health care workers to call people and alert people through text messaging of lab results, for example. In addition mobile phones allow people living in hard to reach areas or villages to submit information via texting to health care workers about their symptoms. "...In the cities 100 percent of the population has a mobile phone. In the countryside it's probably, 40 or 50 percent has a mobile phone. But everyone has access to one," Selanikio highlighted. [VOA](#)

Potential Ebola vaccines studied by DoD agencies

6 October - Agencies within the Defense Department are hard at work on a potential Ebola vaccine, with safety testing on humans expected to begin as early as next week. The Pentagon recently received approval from the Food and Drug Administration to start testing the vaccine, VSVΔG-ZEBOV or BPSC1001, for health risks and side effects on people. It already has been tested for safety as well as performance against the deadly disease in animals, a defense official said Friday. VSVΔG-ZEBOV was developed by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, DTRA, and Newlink Genetics Corp. [Military Times](#)

Some US troops battling Ebola in Africa to have direct contact with potential patients

7 October - A handful of highly trained American troops will have direct contact with potential Ebola patients in west Africa, the head of the US Africa command said during a Pentagon briefing on the military's response to the Ebola outbreak. US service members will not treat patients who have been diagnosed with Ebola, and the majority of the deployed troops will have no direct contact with the ill. However, a small contingent of soldiers will be involved with testing the blood of people who display symptoms associated with Ebola. They will help run testing labs to distinguish those stricken with Ebola from those suffering from flu or malaria, General David Rodriguez, commander of US Africa Command (Africom), said during the press briefing on Tuesday. [Guardian](#)

U.N. Liberia medic catches Ebola; Sierra Leone burial teams end strike

8 October - A medical official with the U.N. Mission in Liberia has tested positive for the Ebola virus and is receiving treatment, the United Nations said on Wednesday. Separately, burial teams in neighboring Sierra Leone said they had ended a strike over unpaid bonuses that had left highly infectious bodies piling up, increasing the threat that the virus would spread further. .. The unidentified medic infected in Liberia is the second member of the U.N. mission, known as UNMIL, to contract Ebola. The first died on Sept. 25. [Reuters](#)

U.S. DOT set to issue new waste management guidelines for Ebola

3 October - The U.S. Department of Transportation is expected to release new guidelines later on Friday that will allow hospitals in Texas to safely dispose of Ebola-infected medical wastes, a DOT official said. The official said the DOT has issued a special waste management permit that will allow the Dallas hospital caring for the U.S. Ebola patient to transport and dispose of medical waste generated in the care of the patient... The DOT official said the agency will issue other permits to other states should the need arise. [Reuters](#)

U.S. to begin limited airport screening for Ebola

8 October - Airline passengers arriving at five U.S. airports that receive most travelers from West Africa will face screening for Ebola symptoms as soon as this weekend, federal officials said. JFK International Airport in New York City will be the first to implement the screening, beginning Saturday, according to a joint statement from the CDC and the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection (CBP) division. Washington-Dulles, Chicago-O'Hare, Atlanta-Hartsfield, and Newark airports will commence screening some time next week. "After passport review, travelers from Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone will be escorted by CBP to an area of the airport set aside for screening," the statement said. Trained staff will then "observe them for signs of illness, ask them a series of health and exposure questions and provide health information for Ebola and reminders to monitor themselves for symptoms." Medical personnel will also conduct temperature checks on all such passengers with noncontact thermometers, the agencies said. Travelers with signs of potential Ebola illness will then be taken to a quarantine station for further evaluation. Those with no red flags will be given health information on self-monitoring and asked to perform daily temperature checks on themselves and to provide contact information. In the past year, JFK has received almost half of all travelers from the hot-zone nations of Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea, the agencies said. Collectively, the five airports have handled about 94% of passengers from these countries. [MedPage Today](#)

U.S. troops' Ebola mission may last a year



7 October - Thousands of U.S. troops may be living in tent cities in Liberia and supporting the fight against Ebola for “about a year” or until the deadly outbreak appears to be under control, the top military commander in Africa said Oct. 7... About 350 U.S. troops are now in West Africa and total deployments may reach 4,000 during the next several

weeks. The size and scope of the mission has expanded from initial estimates in September, when officials said it would last about six months and require about 3,000 troops. Pentagon officials emphasize that troops will not provide medical care or have direct contact with Ebola patients... [Army Gen. David Rodriguez, the chief of U.S. Africa Command] said protocols for ensuring U.S. personnel do not contract the potentially deadly disease will include wearing gloves and masks but not complete full-body protective suits. They will wash their hands and feet multiple times a day. And military health care team members will be taking their temperatures and asking them a series of questions every day to identify any troops who may show symptoms linked to Ebola, he said... While troops will not have direct contact with Ebola patients for now, that could change as the mission evolves... If any service members contract the virus, they will be transported on an aircraft outfitted with a quarantine facility and returned to the U.S. for treatment at a top hospital, Rodriguez said.

[Military Times](#)

WHO, CDC dissect Ebola transmission risk

6 October - In the wake of suggestions from some experts that the Ebola virus could evolve into an airborne pathogen, the World Health Organization (WHO) took pains to explain today that the virus is known to spread only through contact with bodily fluids—mainly blood, feces, and vomit. The agency also said that the virus has been detected in breast milk, urine, and semen, and that even saliva and tears may pose some risk. Meanwhile, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in updated guidance for infection control in hospitals, said the virus can persist on environmental surfaces for a few days. But with daily cleaning and disinfection in a US hospital environment, it would be unlikely to survive longer than a day, the agency said. [CIDRAP](#)

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INFLUENZA

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 39, 5.7% of all deaths reported through the 122-Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to pneumonia and influenza. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 6.0% for week 39. [FluView](#)

DoD Global Laboratory-Based Influenza Surveillance Program

During 31 August - 27 September, results were finalized for 111 specimens from 33 locations. There were six specimens positive for influenza (one A/not subtyped and five A(H3N2)). [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For week 40 (through 4 October 2014):

- Influenza: No new cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza among US military basic trainees.
- FRI surveillance at eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated elevated FRI rates at Lackland AFB. [NHRC Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)

WHO Influenza Update

6 October 2014 - Globally, the southern hemisphere influenza season seems to be coming to an end, with still high activity in Oceania. Elsewhere influenza activity remained low, except for some tropical countries in the Americas.

- In Europe and North America, influenza activity remained at inter-seasonal levels.
- In tropical countries of the Americas, influenza B co-circulated with respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).
- In Africa and western Asia, influenza activity was low.
- In eastern Asia, influenza activity in most countries remained low or decreased following influenza A(H3N2) activity in August and September
- In the southern hemisphere, influenza activity decreased in most countries. In the temperate zone of South America, influenza-like illness (ILI) decreased and was still mainly associated with RSV. Influenza A(H3N2) virus was the most detected influenza virus. In Australia and New Caledonia, the influenza season continued with high activity associated with A(H1N1)pdm09 and A(H3N2) viruses. ILI activity increased in several of the Pacific Islands. [WHO](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

New estimates put price of US foodborne disease at \$15.6 billion per year

9 October - Costs associated with foodborne illnesses in the United States total more than \$15.6 billion annually, according to a data product released Oct 7 by the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Economic Research Service containing updated estimates. The pathogen associated with the greatest cost is *Salmonella*, accounting for \$3.7 billion each year. Next in order are *Toxoplasma gondii* at \$3.3 billion and *Listeria* at \$2.8 billion... A story today in Food Safety News (FSN) says the data help inform food safety policy discussions and provide a foundation for economic analysis of food safety policy. The FSN story also points out that economic costs are only part of the story, with costs to industry and to tax payers also considerable. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

We don't know a lot about dogs and Ebola — but we should

8 October - Spanish health authorities seem as if they have no heart. They euthanized Excalibur, a dog that could have caught Ebola from his owner, the Spanish nurse who was diagnosed with the virus this week... We know Ebola is transmitted through blood and body fluids, and people with Ebola are only infectious when symptomatic. But that's based on human data. We don't really know what the role of dogs is in Ebola transmission. Yet dogs are mammalian species and we know viruses – and Ebola — can infect multiple mammalian species... We heard that during the quarantine in West Point [Liberia], dogs were eating the bodies of the deceased. If we have these situations where bodies are lying in the streets of Africa, it's important to know the virus's role in different animal species help design control strategies and understand the real scope of the disease. [NPR](#)

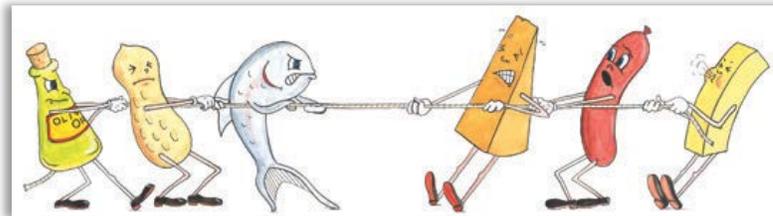
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WELLNESS

Giving doctors guidance on drugs to prevent H.I.V.

6 October - The medical school at the University of California, San Francisco, has opened a free telephone consulting service for doctors who are not H.I.V. specialists and want help prescribing the right AIDS drugs for preventing infection in healthy patients. The service, known as PrEPline for pre-exposure prophylaxis line, was announced last week. In pre-exposure prophylaxis, patients at high risk for H.I.V., such as gay men who frequently have unprotected sex with strangers, ward off infection by taking Truvada, a pill containing two antiretroviral drugs... The new hotline is aimed at American doctors, but if PrEP is rolled out around the world, it could be a model for other countries. [New York Times](#)

Is butter really back? Clarifying the facts on fat



Fall 2014 - In March 2014, an article appeared in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* that sent the food-obsessed

public into gastronomic raptures... [The] article reported a seemingly stunning result: eating less saturated fat, the dietary demon that makes buttery croissants so irresistible, doesn't actually lower a person's risk for heart disease... The *Annals* article, and the subsequent news coverage, set off a national conversation about dietary fat. Indeed, there is debate within the scientific community itself over how important it is to focus on certain types of dietary fat... But there are also broad areas of continuing agreement around what constitutes a "healthy diet." The consensus: We all need to shift our collective nutritional thinking toward an emphasis on food-based, rather than nutrient-based, recommendations. The fact is, not all fats are bad, and concentrating too much on eliminating "fat" from our diets has, in many cases, led us to replace even healthy fats with sugars and other simple carbohydrate foods that may actually be worse for our health. [Harvard Gazette](#)

Large chain restaurants appear to be voluntarily reducing calories in their menu items

8 October - New research from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health finds that large chain restaurants, whose core menu offerings are generally high in calories, fat and sodium, introduced newer food and beverage options that, on average, contain 60 fewer calories than their traditional menu selections in 2012 and 2013. Researchers say this could herald a trend in calorie reduction in anticipation of expected new federal government rules requiring large chain restaurants – including most fast-food places – to post calorie counts on their menus. The appearance of menu items containing 12 percent fewer calories could have a significant impact on the nation's obesity epidemic, they say.

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

New genetic variants associated with coffee drinking

7 October - A new, large-scale study has identified six new genetic variants associated with habitual coffee drinking. The genome-wide meta-analysis, led by Harvard School of Public Health and Brigham and Women's Hospital researchers, helps explain why a given amount of coffee or caffeine has different effects on different people and provides a genetic basis for future research exploring the links between coffee and health. [Harvard School of Public Health News](#)

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Ghana: Ghana cholera outbreak affects thousands, prompts CDC travel advisory

5 October - A cholera outbreak in Ghana, which has affected thousands of people to date, has caused the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to issue an advisory for travelers to the West African country. According to UNICEF, more than 15,400 cases and 126 deaths from cholera have been reported in Ghana as of September 8, 2014. Many cases have been in the Greater Accra region, including in the districts of Accra Metro and La-Dadekotopon. CDC recommends that travelers to Ghana protect themselves from cholera by following food and water precautions. [Outbreak News Today](#)

South Africa: Better antenatal care could save hundreds in South Africa: report

9 October - Timely access to considerate antenatal care could prevent the deaths of hundreds of women and girls in South Africa during and after pregnancy, a report released on Thursday showed. Amnesty International found that the majority of maternal deaths in the country were avoidable, and said the main problems were late and infrequent antenatal care and the fact that nearly one third of pregnant women are living with HIV. Delays in going to clinics until the later stages of pregnancy could have grave consequences for pregnant women and girls, especially those with HIV, the human rights group said. [Reuters](#)

Uganda: Outbreak of Ebola-like Marburg fever kills man in Uganda

5 October - A man has died in Uganda's capital after an outbreak of Marburg, a highly infectious hemorrhagic fever similar to Ebola, authorities said on Sunday, adding that a total of 80 people who came into contact with him were quarantined... The health ministry said in a statement that the 30-year old radiographer died on Sept. 28 while working at a hospital in Kampala. He had started feeling unwell about 10 days earlier, and his condition kept deteriorating. He complained of headache, abdominal pain, vomiting blood and diarrhea... Doctors said his brother, one of the people he came into contact with, has developed similar symptoms and has been quarantined in a group of 80 others, 60 of whom are health workers. [Reuters](#)

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Iraq: Heavy toll in Iraq's “forgotten” Anbar

6 October - Nine months of shelling, airstrikes and street battles have taken a heavy toll on Iraq's “forgotten” province of Anbar, the first to be overrun by militants from the group now calling itself the Islamic State (IS). The cities of Ramadi and Fallujah have been reduced to bombed-out wrecks: hospitals, homes, schools and mosques have been destroyed; bridges blown up; and bullet-pocked residential streets deserted, residents and aid workers told IRIN. The UN estimates that as many as 500,000 Anbaris have been displaced from their homes since fighting began between IS and Iraqi security forces in late December. More than two-thirds of those families are displaced within the governorate and, due to security issues, receiving little to no humanitarian support. Last week, IS advanced into the city of Heet, which is hosting close to 100,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs). [IRIN](#)

Iraq: Islamic State jihadists are using water as a weapon in Iraq

7 October - The Islamic State militants who have rampaged across northern Iraq are increasingly using water as a weapon, cutting off supplies to villages resisting their rule and pressing to expand their control over the country's water infrastructure. The threat from the jihadists is so critical that U.S. forces are bombing the militants close to both the Mosul and Haditha dams — Iraq's largest — on a near-daily basis... Controlling the dams is important because of their role in irrigating the country's vast wheat fields and providing Iraqis with electricity. More ominously, the Islamic State has used its control over water facilities — including as many as four dams along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers — to displace communities or deprive them of crucial water supplies. [Washington Post](#)

Pakistan: Polio becomes ‘public health emergency’ in Pakistan as number of cases soars



7 October - As world health officials struggle to respond to the Ebola epidemic, Pakistan has passed a grim milestone in its efforts to combat another major global health crisis: the fight against polio. Over the weekend, Pakistan logged its 200th new polio case of 2014, the nation's highest transmission rate in more than a dozen years. The spread has alarmed Pakistani and international health experts and is prompting fresh doubt about the country's ability to combat this or future disease outbreaks. By Tuesday, the number of new polio cases in Pakistan stood at 202, and officials are bracing for potentially dozens of other cases by year's end. Pakistan now accounts for 80 percent of global cases and is one of only three countries at risk of exporting the disease outside its borders, according to the World Health Organization. [Washington Post](#)

Saudi Arabia reports two more MERS cases

7 October - Saudi Arabia reported two more MERS-CoV cases today, one of them fatal, extending a string of cases that began in late August after an early-summer hiatus in the virus's spread. The Saudi Ministry of Health (MOH) reported a fatal case in a 51-year-old Saudi man in Hofuf who was not a healthcare worker. It said he had a preexisting illness and had been exposed to camels. The other case involves a 77-year-old Saudi man in Taif, Mecca province, who has a preexisting disease and is in a hospital intensive care unit. He is not a health worker and was not exposed to animals, the MOH said. His case is the eighth MERS-CoV (Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus) illness reported in Taif since Sep 12... The new cases raise Saudi Arabia's MERS tally to 759 cases, including 323 deaths.

[CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

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USEUCOM

Swedish woman world's first to give birth after womb transplant

4 October - A Swedish woman has become the world's first to give birth after having a womb transplant, opening up the possibility for thousands of infertile women to have babies, the doctor in charge of the research project said on Saturday. The unnamed Swede in her mid-30s delivered a healthy baby boy by caesarean section in early September, around two years after receiving a uterus donated by an unrelated, 61-year-old. She was one of seven women who successfully underwent a womb transplant from a live donor – in most cases the recipient's mother - and subsequently had in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment. "There are some more pregnant," Mats Brannstrom, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at University of Gothenburg told Reuters. "They are more than 28 weeks pregnant." [Reuters](#)

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USNORTHCOM

Canada: Major train derailment and fire near Wadena, Saskatchewan

7 October - A major train derailment has occurred near Wadena, Sask., prompting authorities to keep people well back from smouldering railcars and smoke that may be

toxic. The CN Rail derailment happened at 10:40 a.m. CST Tuesday about 20 kilometres west of the town of 1,300, which is about 230 kilometres east of Saskatoon. There were no reported injuries. CN said two employees were on the train at the time of the derailment and both are safe... A spokesman for CN said the train was hauling 100 cars, 26 of which derailed. Six of them contained hazardous materials, including four that had either hydrochloric acid or caustic soda. The other two had petroleum distillates, CN said. [CBC News](#)

U.S.: Acute neurologic illness of unknown etiology in children — Colorado, August–September 2014

10 October - On September 12, 2014, CDC was notified by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment of a cluster of nine children evaluated at Children's Hospital Colorado with acute neurologic illness characterized by extremity weakness, cranial nerve dysfunction (e.g., diplopia, facial droop, dysphagia, or dysarthria), or both. Neurologic illness onsets occurred during August 8–September 15, 2014. The median age of the children was 8 years (range = 1–18 years). Other than neck, back, or extremity pain in some patients, all had normal sensation... [Cerebrospinal fluid] CSF testing for enteroviruses, including enterovirus D68 (EV-D68), enterovirus 71, and poliovirus, by reverse transcription–polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) was negative in all patients. Other CSF tests for infectious causes were unrevealing. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

U.S.: Cluster of NDM-producing *E. coli* infections connected to GI endoscopes

8 October - A cluster of New Delhi metallo-beta-lactamase (NDM)–producing *Escherichia coli* infections in an Illinois hospital in 2013 has been tied to contaminated gastrointestinal endoscopes, a *JAMA* study details. A total of 39 patients with NDM-producing *E. coli* were eventually identified. Thirty-five of these had recently undergone a procedure with a duodenoscope at the hospital. Cultures from a duodenoscope revealed the presence of NDM-producing *E. coli* nearly 2 months after it was last used. The hospital did not appear to deviate from proper reprocessing procedures for this endoscope. The hospital subsequently switched from automated high-level disinfection to gas sterilization with ethylene oxide, and no additional cases have been identified since. [NEJM Journal Watch](#)

U.S.: Drugs cause most fatal allergic reactions, study finds

6 October - The most common cause of fatal allergic reactions in the United States are medicines, especially antibiotics and radiocontrast agents used in imaging studies, a new analysis found. Using data from the National Center for Health Statistics, researchers found 2,458 cases of fatal anaphylaxis from 1999 through 2010. Almost 60 percent of the deaths, or 1,446, were caused by reactions to drugs, and in cases where the specific drug was known, half were caused by antibiotics. The rate of drug-induced fatal reactions almost

doubled over the period. Insect stings caused 15.2 percent of the fatalities and food 6.7 percent. [New York Times](#)

U.S.: EV-D68 cases show signs of slowing

9 October – The growth in the number of enterovirus D68 (EV-D68) cases showed a possible sign of slowing today, with just 14 more confirmed, while Oregon joined the list of affected states, leaving only four states with no cases... The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported today that 678 cases have now been confirmed, 14 more than yesterday. That's the smallest change this week, after increases of 36 cases yesterday and 34 on Oct 7. The CDC has been working through a backlog of respiratory samples from around the country and notes that changes in the daily numbers don't necessarily reflect changes in real time... Five patients infected with the virus have died. The CDC has said the virus's role in the deaths is unclear, but New Jersey officials reported earlier this week that EV-D68 caused the death of a 4-year-old boy. [CIDRAP](#)

U.S.: Life expectancy continues to tick upward

8 October - We are living longer than ever before. In the United States, life expectancy has gone up once more and death rates have fallen. The latest numbers from the Centers for



Disease Control and Prevention come from information found in death certificates from the year 2012. And the study finds that for a child born that year, life expectancy is 78 years and 9.5 months - that's a record... [The] causes of death that have contributed most to the increase in life expectancy are the major causes of death, including heart disease, cancer chronic lower respiratory diseases, stroke.

We've been seeing this trend for a few decades now, so the increase in life expectancy is mainly attributed to the decline in these major causes of death. [NPR](#)

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USPACOM

China: 6 die in dengue virus outbreak in southern China

7 October - The dengue virus has killed six people and infected more than 23,000 in southern China's worst outbreak of the mosquito-transmitted disease in about two decades, officials said Tuesday. Authorities in worst-affected Guangdong province attribute the severity of this year's outbreak to exceptionally hot and wet weather, plus increasing travel by residents to regions where dengue is endemic, especially Southeast Asia. The Guangdong health agency said on its website that 19,631 of the 23,146 cases reported as of Monday were in the provincial capital of Guangzhou, a sprawling city in China's

manufacturing heartland near the border with Hong Kong. It said more than 1,000 new infections were being registered in Guangdong every day, with other provinces reporting a few dozen cases. [Fox News](#)

India: New study finds nearly 6 million more dengue cases in India than official annual tally

8 October — The annual number of dengue fever cases in India is 282 times higher than officially reported, and the disease inflicts an economic burden on the country of at least US\$1.11 billion each year in medical and other expenses, according to a new study published online today in the *American Journal of Tropical Medicine & Hygiene*. The study... is the first to use systematic empirical data to estimate both the disease burden and the direct and indirect costs of dengue in India. Until now, the reported data indicated that there was an annual average of 20,000 laboratory confirmed cases. But the new estimated results were striking. "We found that India had nearly 6 million annual clinically diagnosed dengue cases between 2006 and 2012—almost 300 times greater than the number of cases that had been officially reported," said Donald Shepard, PhD, lead author of the study. [EurekaAlert!](#)

Japan: Super typhoon Vongfong threatens Japan

9 October - The most powerful storm on the planet so far this year, Super Typhoon Vongfong, is churning in the Pacific and is forecast to strike mainland Japan before Monday. Weather forecasters are keeping a close watch on the storm since Super Typhoon Haiyan devastated the Philippines last year, killing 6,000 people. Satellite images of Vongfong have revealed a perfectly formed eye, 40 kilometers in size, surrounded by a giant swirling disc of cloud, northeast of the Philippines... The typhoon will bear down on Okinawa on Saturday -- where it is predicted to dump up to 48 centimeters of rain -- before continuing north toward the southern and central islands of mainland Japan. [VOA](#)

Japan: Typhoon Phanfone lashes Tokyo with heavy rains, 100 mph winds

6 October - A powerful typhoon... slammed central Japan on Monday, forcing the cancelation of more than 600 flights. Phanfone had earlier been downgraded from a super-typhoon to a Category One shadow of its former self but Japan's 18th typhoon of the season still packed a punch. Wind gusts of up to 100 mph and at least a foot and a half of rainfall meant that dozens of schools were closed as Phanfone barreled its way through the capital of 13 million people... Four U.S. airmen were swept out to sea Sunday while posing for photos in front of heavy, breaking waves off Okinawa. One crawled to safety, one died and two others were missing, presumed dead. [NBC News](#)

Thailand hits party scene to combat rising HIV among gay men

5 October - Bare-chested male models strutted through the glitzy ballroom in Bangkok to the beat of house music while dozens of young gay men waited anxiously, working up the nerve to have a blood test. The mostly female health team taking samples seemed incongruous next to the shirtless models circling the party, but the health workers' presence at the TestBKK event, Thailand's first mass HIV testing for gays, was sending a powerful message. Over the past decade, HIV has spread rapidly among gay men, transgender people and male sex workers in Bangkok to reach epidemic levels, fueled partly by greater use of illicit party drugs that make people less cautious about sex, experts said. Once touted as an HIV success story, Thailand is now faced with infection rates in its gay population comparable to those in Africa's AIDS hot spots. [Reuters](#)

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USSOUTHCOM

Panama, Argentina: Hantavirus update

7 October – **Panama** - A patient from the Tonosi district [Los Santos province], who had been hospitalized for the past 15 days in the intensive care unit of the Joaquin Pablo Francos Sayas Hospital in Las Tablas, died last night [6 Oct 2014] of hantavirus cardiopulmonary syndrome [HPS]... This is the 2nd death from [a] hantavirus [infection] registered in the province so far in 2014, both from Tonosi district... So far this year [2014], [the Ministry of Health] has reported 58 cases of this disease in Los Santos province, of whom 2 died. Of these 58 registered cases, 27 had HPS and 31 hantavirus fever. **Argentina** - The Chivilcoy Municipal Hospital issued a statement concerning the death of a 15-year-old young girl from [a] hantavirus [infection]. [ProMED-mail](#)

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