

11 October 2013

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.

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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And This Was Called Care? The Walter Reed Story

In 2007, the scandalous treatment of wounded soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center shocked the nation. Today, after major reforms, what's changed for America's injured soldiers?



Advice about Sleep Deficiency in Midlife

More than 200 people sent questions about sleep to Orfeu Marcella Buxton, a neuroscientist who studies chronic sleep deficiency in the workplace and home and how it contributes to disorders like obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

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U.S. MILITARY

Army expanding \$50M controversial mental health program despite research

9 October - The Army is expanding a \$50-million-per-year program created in 2009 to help soldiers withstand mental illnesses such as post-traumatic stress disorder despite research

**MILVAX Webinar:
Measles, Mumps,
Rubella (MMR)
Vaccination Updates
2013.**

MILVAX/VHCN will host a webinar on 16 October 2013 at 1200 EST.

Register using your ImzU account. If you do not have an account, you will be able to create one at time of registration.

This session can count toward the required 8 hours of annual immunization training.



**Classified Version of
the Weekly Update**

An Army Public Health Weekly Update is available with articles classified up to the **SECRET** level from the USAPHC SIPRNet site: <http://phc.army.smil.mil> Look under Hot Topics & Current Issues.

To access this version, you will need a **SECRET** clearance and a SIPRNet account.

by its own scientists showing it does nothing to reduce PTSD. Study authors said the training created small, indirect benefits but did not affect PTSD rates... About 900,000 soldiers receive instruction each year in the program, originally called Comprehensive Soldier Fitness or CSF. It is being expanded this year under the name Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness and will cost \$75 million annually by 2019. It teaches soldiers and family members coping strategies such as keeping a positive or optimistic outlook on life or cultivating strong social relationships. Army leaders say it gives soldiers the tools to become emotionally resilient. [Stars and Stripes](#)

Army explores predicting suicides as way to prevent them

7 October - ...The Army, which recorded an average of six suicides per week last year, now stands at the edge of a science-driven answer as radical as it is uncomplicated: predicting which soldiers are likely to kill themselves so they can be stopped before it's too late. This form of health assessment is unlike anything in the civilian world and one that the Army is meeting with a combination of enthusiasm and caution... NIMH epidemiologist Michael Schoenbaum, a lead scientist in the effort, says he and others on the team applied a complex set of risk factors — such as psychiatric illness, deployment history or drug or alcohol abuse — to a computer assessment of soldiers, producing a rating that's a "flag for whom do you target for special care." [USA Today](#)

Depression and suicidality during the postpartum period after first time deliveries, active component service women and dependent spouses

September 2013 - ...In this study of women who gave birth for the first time between 1 January 2007 and 31 December 2011, 5,267 (9.9% of all who delivered) active component service women and 10,301 (8.2%) dependent spouses received incident [postpartum depression (PPD)] diagnoses during the one year postpartum period; 213 (0.4%) service women and 221 (0.2%) dependent spouses were diagnosed with incident suicidality. After adjusting for the effects of other covariates, service women with PPD had 42.2 times the odds of being diagnosed with suicidality in the postpartum period compared to service women without PPD; dependent spouses with PPD had 14.5 times the odds compared to those without PPD. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

VA furloughs 7,000 employees, closes regional offices

8 October - Veterans regional offices are closed and nobody is answering phones Tuesday as the government shutdown forces furloughs of 7,000 employees of the Veterans Benefits Administration. "All public access to VBA regional offices and facilities will be suspended," said Victoria Dillon, Veterans Affairs Department spokeswoman. Walk-ins and phone calls to regional offices are common to get status reports on benefits and to seek help. Voluntary officers from veterans organizations who help file claims are located in many regional offices, so access to them could be restricted. While phones won't be answered at regional offices, most toll-free numbers where veterans can get help with benefits remain open. One

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exception is the GI Bill call center, which is closed and won't reopen until the VA receives money... Another shoe could drop soon as VA officials warn that a government shutdown ending in the last two weeks of October could result in delays in Nov. 1 benefits payments, including disability compensation, GI Bill living stipends and dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors. [USA Today](#)

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GLOBAL

A way of life is ending. Thank goodness.

28 September - ...For thousands of generations, a vast majority of humans have lived brief, illiterate lives marked by disease, disability and the loss of children. As recently as 1980, a slight majority of people in the developing world lived in extreme poverty, defined as surviving on less than \$1.25 in today's money. Yet in a time of depressing news worldwide, about dysfunction and crisis from Syria to our own Congress, here's one area of spectacular progress. The share of people in the developing world who live in extreme poverty has been reduced from 1 in 2 in 1980 to 1 in 5 today, according to the World Bank. Now the aim is to reduce that to almost zero by 2030. [New York Times](#)

A DEET-like mosquito spray that smells like jasmine or grapes?

2 October - ... A team at the University of California, Riverside, appears to have finally figured out how bugs detect the insect repellent known as DEET. And the team used its discovery to identify several chemical compounds that promise to be safer and cheaper than DEET... Though effective, DEET is too expensive for many people in developing countries, says Anandasankar Ray, who led the study. Also, he says, consumers have to be careful how they use the repellent. It can dissolve plastics, including nylon... [Another] researcher in Ray's lab figured out how to use the new information about DEET detection in insects to screen a half-million chemical compounds. The screening process turned up fewer than 200 compounds likely to repel insects. From this group, Ray and his team picked three that are already approved by the Food and Drug Administration as food additives. "One of them is present in plum," he says. "The other is present in orange and jasmine oil. Some of them are present in grapes."... The compounds are cheap, safe enough to eat and don't dissolve plastic the way DEET does." [NPR](#)

Delaying aging may have a bigger payoff than fighting disease

7 October – [I]n the laboratory scientists have managed to extend the lives of laboratory animals. And they have a better understanding of the mechanisms of biological aging. That's good news if you're a lab rat, but at present there are no treatments that delay aging in people. The study published today in *Health Affairs* offers statistical evidence that

delaying aging in people would extend life expectancy even more than would a decline in cancer or heart disease... If the process of aging could be delayed, all of the diseases associated with aging, whether cancer or stroke or Alzheimer's, would occur later in life than they do now. The idea is that people would not only live longer, they'd be healthier for longer. Even so, successful treatments to delay aging might only add two years of life, according to the *Health Affairs* study. [NPR](#)

Fecal transplant, now in pill form

4 October - Gel caps containing concentrated fecal microbes stopped recurrent *Clostridium difficile* infection and were well-tolerated by recipients, researchers reported here. Among patients with more than three episodes of recurrent *C. difficile* infection who could not tolerate jejunal catheter or suffered anal incontinence, a single dose of an oral suspension of fecal microbes delivered through several dozen 0.47 mL gel capsules resolved all but one of the recurrent infections with no instances of vomiting after capsule ingestion. [MedPage Today](#)

First malaria vaccine moves a step closer to approval



8 October - A malaria vaccine studied in more than 15,000 African children has been found to reduce the number of cases of disease by 27 to 46 percent. That's only modest efficacy compared to most accepted vaccines. But this would be the first anti-malarial immunization on the market, and its developers emphasize that it still prevents a lot of cases. Its main sponsor, GlaxoSmithKline, says it's good enough to justify seeking regulatory approval in 2014. [NPR](#)

Japanese encephalitis vaccine from China endorsed by WHO

A Japanese encephalitis vaccine manufactured in China has been prequalified by the World Health Organization (WHO), which should make it easier to protect children in developing countries, the agency announced today. This is the first time a Chinese vaccine has reached this status and opens the way for United Nations procuring agencies to source the vaccine. The newly available vaccine is given in just one dose, it can be used in infants, and it is less expensive than other Japanese encephalitis vaccines, the WHO said. [CIDRAP News Scan](#)

Study: Gowns, gloves in ICU don't cut MRSA, VRE

7 October - Wearing gowns and gloves in all patient rooms in intensive care units (ICUs) didn't lead to a significant drop in two key antibiotic-resistant threats, but the practice didn't seem to have any negative effects on patient care, according to a new study. Though the trial, which covered ICUs in 20 US hospitals in 15 states, didn't reduce the rates of acquiring methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) or vancomycin-resistant *Enterococcus* (VRE), researchers did see a slightly lower risk when they looked at MRSA by itself. [CIDRAP](#)

U.N. sued in U.S. court over Haiti's cholera epidemic

9 October - Human rights lawyers filed a class-action lawsuit against the United Nations on Wednesday to seek compensation for Haitian victims of a cholera epidemic they blame on U.N. peacekeepers. The decision to file the suit in New York comes after the United Nations said earlier this year that it would not pay hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation claimed by cholera victims in impoverished Haiti. The cholera epidemic there has killed more than 8,300 people and sickened more than 650,000 since October 2010. [Reuters](#)

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INFLUENZA

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

8 October - Due to the lapse in government funding, regular updates to the CDC Influenza web site, including the weekly FluView report and updates to guidance for clinicians, will not be possible. CDC will not be routinely analyzing surveillance data nor testing laboratory specimens submitted as part of routine surveillance. [FluView](#)

DoD Global Laboratory-Based Influenza Surveillance Program

- During Weeks 36 - 39, 80 specimens were received from 32 locations. Results were finalized for 51 specimens from 25 locations. There was one specimen positive for A(H1N1)pdm09, two enterovirus, and one parainfluenza.
- Testing has been completed on 3,984 specimens from 86 locations, of which 1,081 were positive for influenza A (958 A(H3N2), 113 A(H1N1)pdm09, five co-infections, and five A/not subtyped) cumulatively during the 2012-2013 influenza year.
- During the 2012-2013 influenza year, 378 specimens were positive for influenza B. Of these, there were 136 B/Yamagata, 38 B/Victoria, and two B & enterovirus co-infections. The lineage is pending or unknown for 202 specimens.
- There have been 290 other respiratory viruses isolated (72 adenovirus, 91 RSV, 99 parainfluenza, and 28 enterovirus) cumulatively during the 2012-2013 influenza year.

[USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

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

For weeks 37-38/2013:

- All nineteen countries providing clinical data reported low-intensity influenza activity.
- Seven countries tested 110 sentinel specimens, none of which was positive for influenza virus.

- Since week 21/2013, six hospitalised confirmed influenza cases have been reported by two countries. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

Google.org: Flu Trends

9 October – Estimates of flu activity based on certain Internet search queries indicate that the level of flu activity in the northern hemisphere ranges from minimal to moderate (Russia) and in the southern hemisphere ranges from minimal to moderate (New Zealand).

[Google.org Flu Trends](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For the week ending 5 October 2013:

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

Indonesia confirms H5N1 death

7 October - Indonesia's Ministry of Health has confirmed the country's second H5N1 case this year, in a 28-year-old man from Bekasi. The man died from the disease, according to a machine-translated health ministry statement today on FluTrackers, the Web-based infectious disease message board. The health ministry statement is dated Oct 3... Indonesia has now had 194 H5N1 cases, including 162 deaths, since 2005, the Ministry of Health said.

[CIDRAP News Scan](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

F.D.A. bans three arsenic drugs used in poultry and pig feeds

1 October - In resolving a longstanding dispute, the Food and Drug Administration has announced that it will rescind approval for three of the four arsenic drugs that had been used in animal feeds at the request of the companies that market them. [New York Times](#)

New salmonella outbreak in chicken resists antibiotics

8 October - A salmonella outbreak linked to raw chicken from California involves several antibiotic-resistant strains of the disease and has put at least 42% of the victims in the hospital, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Tuesday. "That's a high percentage," said CDC spokeswoman Barbara Reynolds. "You would expect about 20% hospitalizations with salmonella Heidelberg." There have been no deaths linked to the outbreak. Thirteen percent of those sickened have salmonella septicemia, a serious, life-threatening whole-body inflammation, said Caroline Smith DeWaal, food safety director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest in Washington. [USA Today](#)

Risk to food safety seen in furloughs

9 October - The government shutdown is endangering what America eats, food safety experts said this week, as all inspections of domestic food except meat and poultry have halted and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recalled furloughed workers to handle a salmonella outbreak that sickened hundreds of people in 18 states. Offices are dark across the federal agencies charged with making sure that the fruit, vegetables, dairy products and a vast array of other domestically produced food are safe to consume.

[New York Times](#)

Universities monitor pig virus with U.S. government shut down

7 October - As the federal government shutdown stretches into its second week, veterinary labs at U.S. universities are stepping into a data gap to collect information and publish updates about an outbreak of a swine virus deadly to young pigs, according to the American Association of Swine Veterinarians. The University of Minnesota's diagnostic lab staff last week contacted four other university labs that have been testing samples for Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus, or PEDv... University of Minnesota researchers said they plan to continue collecting the information from Iowa State University, Kansas State University and South Dakota State University until the government shutdown ends and APHIS staff return to work. [Reuters](#)

Veterinarians say health law's device tax is unfair to pets

8 October - Dr. Douglas Aspros says the federal health law is increasing his costs to buy medical equipment, which he has no choice but to pass onto his patients — most whom are uninsured... [Aspros](#), you see, treats dogs, cats, birds, hamsters, parrots and other small animals at his veterinary center in Pound Ridge, N.Y. The law's 2.3 percent medical device tax, which took effect this year, was meant to have device manufacturers and their buyers contribute to the cost of expanding health coverage because they would benefit from having more business from insured patients. But some devices used on humans are also used for animals, including ultrasound machines, laboratory and X-ray equipment... Aspros said devices that aren't labeled specifically for veterinary use are subject to the 2.3 percent tax. "That may sound trivial but if a device costs \$30,000 to \$40,000, it is not a trivial expense," he said. [NPR](#)

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WELLNESS

Acute hepatitis and liver failure following the use of a dietary supplement intended for weight loss or muscle building



8 October - On September 9, 2013, the Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) was notified of seven patients with severe acute hepatitis and sudden liver failure of unknown cause. The patients were previously healthy and sought medical care from May through September 2013. Clinicians reported that the seven patients had all used OxyELITE Pro, a dietary supplement marketed for weight loss and muscle gain, prior to illness onset. The investigation is ongoing and the data presented are preliminary. Thus far, clinicians have reported 45 patients to the Hawaii DOH in response to a public health alert. Of those, 29 patients, including the original seven, were confirmed to have acute hepatitis after using a nutritional supplement for weight loss or muscle building. The median age of the 29 patients is 33 years; 14 (48%) are male. [CDC](#)

Aircraft noise linked to higher risk of heart disease and stroke

9 October - Exposure to high levels of aircraft noise near busy international airports has been linked to a higher risk of heart disease and strokes in two separate studies from Britain and the United States. Researchers in London studied data on noise and hospital admissions around London Heathrow airport while a separate team analyzed data for more than 6 million Americans living near 89 U.S. airports in 2009. Both studies, published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ) on Wednesday, found that people living with the highest levels of aircraft noise had increased risks of stroke, coronary heart disease and other cardiovascular diseases. [Reuters](#)

Drug 'Molly' is taking a party toll in the United States



28 September - ...Molly is the street name for a drug that is pushed as the pure powder form of a banned substance known as MDMA, the main chemical in ecstasy. In the last five years, Molly has made its way into popular culture... The drug's dangers became more clear after a rash of overdoses and four deaths this summer, including two at a huge annual electronic music festival in New York City... Over the last few years, drugs sold under that name have "flooded" the market, said Rusty Payne, a spokesman with the Drug Enforcement Administration... Like ecstasy, Molly is said to give a lengthy, euphoric high with slight hallucinogenic properties. In reality, however, the promised pure MDMA experience "doesn't exist," said Payne. Most of the

Molly is one of several synthetic designer drugs that have been flooding the U.S. and European marketplace from chemical labs primarily based in China, Payne said. [Reuters](#)

Easing doctor burnout with mindfulness

26 September - ... [R]esearchers found that patients were more satisfied and more open with the more mindful clinicians. They also discovered that more mindful clinicians tended to be more upbeat during patient interactions, more focused on the conversation and more likely to make attempts to strengthen the relationship or ferret out details of the patient's feelings. The less mindful clinicians, on the other hand, more frequently missed opportunities to be empathic and, in the most extreme cases, failed to pay attention at all, responding, for example, to a patient's description of waking up in the middle of the night crying in pain with a question about a flu shot. Significantly, the most mindful doctors remained efficient. They accomplished just as much medically for their patients as their least mindful colleagues, despite all the extra conversation with patients about experiences and relationships. [New York Times](#)

Income inequality linked to depression

9 October - American women face a greater risk of depression in states where personal income levels vary widely, according to a new study covering 50 U.S. states. Huge income gaps in a community can make people feel impoverished, even when they are not poor by economic standards - and blaming themselves for their "failure" may add to depression risk, researchers said. The effect was stronger for women than for men, they report in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*... They found that women living in states with the broadest income ranges, like New York and the District of Columbia, are nearly twice as likely to experience depression compared to those in more equal states such as Utah and Alaska. [Reuters](#)

It's time to rediscover the IUD, women's health advocates say

6 October - IUDs are highly effective forms of contraception, but fear of side effects, lack of training for doctors and costs can keep women away. Health organizations and private companies are trying to change that by breaking down misconceptions and broadening access. The contraceptives are inserted into the uterus and can prevent pregnancy for years. And they're reversible. Shortly after they're taken out, a woman can become pregnant. IUDs are more than 99 percent effective. The World Health Organization reports they are "the most widely used reversible contraceptive method globally." But few women in the U.S. use them; the percentage is only in the single digits, in part because IUDs have a checkered past. [NPR](#)

Nearly one in 10 U.S. youth admits to sexual violence

7 October - Almost one in 10 U.S. teens and young adults admits to having coerced or forced someone into sexual behavior, according to a new study. Nine percent of youth reported committing some sort of sexual violence, researchers found. That included kissing

or touching someone while knowing the person didn't want them to or forcing someone to have sex... Most youths who said they had committed sexual violence first did so at age 16. Boys were more likely than girls to perpetrate sexual violence at age 15. By the time they were 18 and 19, however, males and females were equally likely to commit sexual violence.

[Reuters](#)

Parents not vaccinating kids contributed to whooping cough outbreaks

30 September - California's worst episode of whooping cough, or pertussis, in 2010, likely spread among unvaccinated children to infect 9,210 youngsters. At first, the outbreak was blamed on waning immunity to the whooping cough vaccine, but new research published in the journal *Pediatrics* reports that the high number of children who were intentionally unvaccinated also contributed to the rapid spread of the infection... there are hints that measles cases may also be rising due to parental vaccine refusals. While national childhood immunization rates are good overall, at around 90%, Nina Shapiro, a professor at the David Geffen School of Medicine at University of California Los Angeles, crystallized the worry over unvaccinated kids in an op-ed in the *Los Angeles Times* : Private schools vary widely, but some have rates of less than 20%. [Time](#)

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USAFRICOM

Cameroon: Yellow fever

8 October - The Ministry of Health of Cameroon carried out a yellow fever mass vaccination campaign with a reported 94% coverage of the targeted population of 663 900 in 13 health districts considered to be at high risk of yellow fever. The vaccination campaign was carried out between 27 August to 1 September 2013 in the Littoral Region, following laboratory-confirmation of two cases with yellow fever in the area in April 2013. The index case was a 43-year-old woman from Ndom Health district who became ill on 15 March 2013. [WHO](#)

Horn of Africa: Wild poliovirus

1 October - Three suspected cases of wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) from South Sudan are currently being investigated. All three patients are girls, two of whom are approximately two-years-old and one is eight-years-old. All had previously been immunized with oral polio vaccine (OPV)... They developed paralysis between 15-24 August 2013... The Horn of Africa is currently experiencing an outbreak of WPV1, with 174 cases in Somalia, 14 cases in Kenya and three cases in Ethiopia. Because of the routes of poliovirus spread in previous Horn of Africa outbreaks, South Sudan had been considered at high risk of re-infection. [WHO](#)

Sudan: Increase of malaria and typhoid cases in West Darfur

7 October - ... The medical director of El Geneina hospital, Fathelrahman Abdelrazig, acknowledged the spread of malaria in the localities of El Geneina and Beida in West Darfur. He, however, strongly denied that malaria and typhoid have reached an epidemic phase. The high number of malaria cases in the localities is to be attributed to the many stagnant pools of water resulting from the recent heavy rainy season, he explained. Abdelrazig acknowledged the high costs of treatment, which he attributed to the high exchange rate of the dollar. He added that "traders in medicines" also have increased their prices. [allAfrica](#)

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USCENTCOM

Pakistan: Deadly bomb targets Peshawar polio campaign

7 October - Two people, one a police officer, have been killed by a bomb which went off near anti-polio campaigners in Pakistan, say police. The blast struck a van near a hospital in Budh Bher suburb of the north-western city of Peshawar. A death toll of six was given earlier but later corrected by police. Pakistan is one of only three countries where polio remains endemic, due in part to militant resistance to polio mass vaccination campaigns. Militants have attacked and killed health workers and banned immunisation teams from some areas, forcing hundreds of thousands of children to miss vaccinations. The other person killed in Monday's attack was a member of a local "peace committee", who opposed the Taliban, and was riding in a van as part of the anti-polio campaign, said police officials. At least 12 people are reported to have been injured. [BBC News](#)

Pakistan: Swat Valley hit by dengue

8 October - More than 1,000 people a day are seeking dengue fever tests in Swat District in Pakistan's Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province (KP). At least 22 have died and holiday leave has been cancelled for district medical staff. The outbreak began in Swat in mid-August and has spread to neighbouring districts. Health officials say nearly 8,000 people have tested positive for the virus and that the death toll could be much higher than 22, as most people appear not to be seeking medical treatment. [IRIN](#)

Saudi Arabia: Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) – update

4 October - WHO has been informed of an additional six laboratory-confirmed cases of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) infection in Saudi Arabia. The six new patients are from Riyadh region with ages from 14 to 79 years old, of which three are women and three men. The dates of onset of the patients range from 15 to 26 September

2013. One patient has mild symptoms while the others are hospitalized. Three patients are contacts of previously confirmed cases with MERS-CoV, two are reported to have had no exposure to animals or a confirmed case, and there is no information on exposure of one patient. Globally, from September 2012 to date, WHO has been informed of a total of 136 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV, including 58 deaths. [WHO](#)

Saudi Arabia: Preparing for MERS virus ahead of Hajj pilgrimage



7 October - Public health officials in the Gulf states are playing down fears about an outbreak of the deadly MERS coronavirus among pilgrims travelling to the Hajj in Saudi Arabia this month, though doctors are advising the elderly, people with existing health conditions, pregnant women and young children to stay away... Most cases and deaths have been in Saudi Arabia, where two million Muslims are expected to converge in mid-October for the annual Hajj pilgrimage to the holy cities of Mecca and Madinah... Saudi Arabia's Health Minister Abdullah Al Rabia says his country is ready for an outbreak, but stressed that he was confident there would be no problem, given there were no recorded cases during either July's Umrah pilgrimage or last year's Hajj. [IRIN](#)

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USEUCOM

Israel attacks Council of Europe move to restrict male circumcision

4 October - Israel on Friday accused a leading European human rights body of fostering hatred and racism in calling for the circumcision of boys on religious grounds to be monitored more closely. The 47-nation Council of Europe adopted a non-binding resolution this week that urged a public debate on "non-medically justified operations and interventions" on children. The report highlighted female genital mutilation but also referred to ritual male circumcision and other practices. Israel said the Council should immediately rescind the resolution, which only a third of the 318-member body voted on and 78 supported. [Reuters](#)

MEPs tighten anti-tobacco laws aimed at young smokers

8 October - Euro MPs have voted to tighten tobacco regulations aimed at putting young people off smoking, but some measures do not go as far as originally planned. They rejected a European Commission proposal to treat electronic cigarettes as medicinal products - a move that would have restricted sales. They backed a ban on cigarette flavourings - but with a five-year delay in the case of menthol. Slim cigarettes will not be

banned. EU ministers must now consider the plans. Among other measures, [Members of the European Parliament (MEPs)] voted on Tuesday to put health warnings on 65% of each cigarette pack, as opposed to the proposed 75%... The current requirement for health warnings is for 30% minimum coverage on one side and 40% on the other. Packs of 10 cigarettes, considered popular among younger smokers, will also be banned. [BBC News](#)

United Kingdom: Living wage tied to better mental health in London

9 October – When employers set a higher minimum wage based on realistic living expenses, employees have better mental health, according to a new study. Although there are employed people living in poverty all over the world, "the very high cost of living in the city and the fact that minimum wages are set nationally makes the problem particularly acute in London," coauthor Jane Wills of the School of Geography at Queen Mary University of London, said. The "London Living Wage" campaign, launched in 2001, is a social movement lobbying for higher pay based on high living expenses. Over the past decade, more than 100 employers agreed to abide by the living wage... Researchers interviewed 173 workers for London Living Wage employers and 127 people who worked for other employers... Ranked on a special scale of mental wellbeing, where the average adult scores a 51, half of the workers with LLW employers scored above average, compared to 34 percent of the other workers. [Reuters](#)

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USNORTHCOM

U.S.: Disease outbreaks prompt recall of furloughed workers

9 October - Three government agencies responsible for ensuring food and drug safety and curbing disease have recalled furloughed workers to investigate outbreaks. The Atlanta-based U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention brought back 10 of roughly 9,000 furloughed employees Tuesday to monitor food-borne disease outbreaks, including a cluster of salmonella cases tied to tainted chicken... The same outbreak prompted the U.S. Department of Agriculture to recall one furloughed public affairs worker to put out a health alert Monday... The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, meanwhile, has "called a couple of technical experts back in to help" investigate an outbreak of nonviral hepatitis in Hawaii linked to the dietary supplement OxyElite Pro, an agency spokesman told ABC News. [ABC News](#)

U.S. House passes bill to regulate drug compounding

28 September - The U.S. House of Representatives on Saturday passed legislation that would give the Food and Drug Administration more authority to regulate companies that compound sterile drugs and ship them across state lines. The bill, called the Drug Quality

and Security Act, now goes to the Senate for a vote. House and Senate committees agreed on the legislation on Wednesday. Introduced after a deadly outbreak of fungal meningitis killed more than 50 people last year, the act would also create a national set of standards to track pharmaceuticals through the distribution chain to help thwart the introduction of fake medication into the drug supply. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: State-wide gun ownership tied to suicide deaths

27 September - Twice as many Americans commit suicide in states where most households have a gun than in states with low rates of gun ownership, according to a new study. Several studies have linked gun ownership to the risk of suicide by firearm... But some critics question whether people living in states where lots of residents own guns are inherently more suicidal than those who live in places where ownership is less common. To address that critique, [researchers] gathered state-by-state data on gun ownership, suicide attempts and suicide deaths from a variety of sources... They compared the 16 states with the highest gun ownership rates to the six states with the lowest rates... There were about 7,300 firearm suicides in the states with the most guns - including Alabama, Montana and West Virginia... That compared to 1,700 suicides by gun in the low ownership states, such as Hawaii, Massachusetts and New York. The number of non-gun suicides in the two sets of states was similar, at about 4,200 and 4,300, respectively... The study confirms that people with guns at home are no more likely to attempt to kill themselves - but they are more likely to succeed because they are more likely to use a gun. [Reuters](#)

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USPACOM

Cambodia: Dengue fever kills 45 kids in 9 months, down 71 pct

10 October - Forty-five Cambodian children have died from dengue fever in the first nine months of the year, down 71 percent compared with the 157 deaths over the same period last year, a health official said Thursday. About 15,193 dengue fever cases were reported during the January-September period this year, down 59 percent from the 36,958 cases over the same period last year, Dr. Char Meng Chuor, director of the National Center for Parasitology, Entomology and Malaria Control, said in a news release. "Around 67 percent of the patients are children aged between 5 and 14," he said. He attributed the decline in infections and death toll to the ministry's efforts in educating people about the dangers of the disease and urging them to sleep under mosquito nets all the time. [Xinhua](#)

India: New encephalitis outbreak in India's Uttar Pradesh

8 October - Fifteen children have died in the past few days in a fresh outbreak of viral encephalitis in India's Uttar Pradesh state, taking this year's toll to 358. The disease usually

occurs during the monsoon season in Gorakhpur and adjoining areas and children are the worst affected. More than 200 patients are still being treated at government hospitals. At least 6,500 children have died of encephalitis in the region since the first case was detected in 1978. Gorakhpur and adjoining districts which border Nepal in the foothills of the Himalayas are low-lying and prone to floods, providing a breeding ground for mosquitoes which commonly transmit the virus. [BBC News](#)

India seeks to regulate its booming 'rent-a-womb' industry

30 September - ...India's booming surrogacy industry... sees thousands of infertile couples, many from overseas, hiring the wombs of local women to carry their embryos through to birth. But a debate over whether the unregulated industry exploits poor women prompted authorities to draft a law that could make it tougher for foreigners seeking babies made in India. "There is a need to regulate the sector," said Dr. Sudhir Ajja of Surrogacy India, a Mumbai-based fertility bank that has produced 295 surrogate babies - 90 percent for overseas clients and 40 percent for same-sex couples - since it opened in 2007. "But if the new law tightens rules as suggested by the ministry of home affairs, which disallows surrogacy for same-sex couples and single parents, then it will clearly impact the industry and put off clients coming from overseas." [Reuters](#)

Japan: Latest leak at Fukushima plant contaminates six workers

9 October - Six workers at Japan's crippled Fukushima nuclear plant were exposed to a leak of highly radioactive water on Wednesday, the latest in a string of mishaps the country's nuclear watchdog has attributed to carelessness, saying they could have been avoided... In the latest incident, a worker mistakenly detached a pipe connected to a treatment system to remove salt from the hundreds of tonnes of water Tepco pumps over the melted fuel in wrecked reactors at Fukushima to keep them cool. "It is serious in that it was another problem caused by carelessness, but I do not believe it is a seriously troubling dosage," Shunichi Tanaka, chairman of Japan's Nuclear Regulation Authority, said on Wednesday... Tanaka urged Tepco to improve its handling of contaminated water, but stopped short of saying if it faced any penalties. [Scientific American](#)

South Korea: Pesticide ban cuts South Korea's high suicide rate - a bit

30 September - ...[I]n South Korea, which has had the highest suicide rate in the developed world for nine straight years, often drinking pesticide [is] their way out. But... a ban on fatal pesticides is credited with cutting the number of suicides by 11 percent last year, the first drop in six years. The government restricted production of Gramoxone, a herbicide linked to suicides, in 2011 and outlawed its sale and storage last year. "The number of suicides by poisoning including Gramoxone fell by 477, which accounts for about 27 percent of the total decrease in the number of people committing suicide," Lee Jae-won, an official at Statistics Korea, said last week after the government released the latest figures... The 2012

figures may offer a glimmer of hope, but the latest comparisons by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development showed South Korea was by far the most suicidal society, followed by Hungary, Russia and Japan. [Reuters](#)

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USSOUTHCOM

Brazil tribe plagued by one of the highest suicide rates in the world

10 October - The discovery of an indigenous girl's body hanging from a tree in Bororó de Dourados was as grim as it was familiar for Brazil's Guarani-Kaiowá tribe, which has one of the highest suicide rates in the world, according to a new report. Ahead of World Mental Health Day on Thursday, figures from Survival International suggest that the Guarani-Kaiowá are 34 times more likely to kill themselves than Brazil's national average. This has prompted warnings that a "silent genocide" is under way. The community of 31,000 people, mostly based in the south-western state of Mato Grosso do Sul, is plagued by alcoholism, depression, poverty and violence after losing its ancestral lands to ranchers and biofuel farmers. The problem is decades-old, but Survival says the rate has increased in recent years. Since the start of the century, one suicide has been reported on average almost every week. [Guardian](#)

Peru's largest Amazon indigenous group shares land with drug traffickers and army



10 October - Peru's Ashaninka Indians have some new company on their land as they now have to share the world's top coca-growing valley with drug traffickers, rebels, illegal loggers and an increased military presence. The Ashaninka are the largest indigenous group in Peru's sparsely populated Amazon region but they account for less than 1 percent of the South American country's 30 million people. Their world has rarely been peaceful. During Peru's 1980-2000 internal conflict, Shining Path rebels overran their lands and slaughtered them wholesale. Hundreds have kept firearms that the government supplied them to defend themselves... The government is now boosting its military footprint in the valley of the Apurimac and Ene rivers where the Ashaninka mostly reside in a bid to fight Shining Path remnants and the drug traffickers they protect. It is building 11 new military bases in the region this year. [Fox News Latino](#)

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