

12 December 2014

# Army Public Health Weekly Update

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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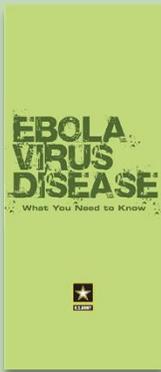
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## U.S. MILITARY

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### Evaluation of extragenital screening for gonorrhea and Chlamydia in HIV-infected active duty Air Force members

November 2014 - This study evaluated the hypothesis that detection of *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* (GC) and *Chlamydia trachomatis* (CT) infections among HIV-infected active duty members of the U.S. Air Force would increase after expanding screening to include extragenital infections. Before and after the start of extragenital screening, urethral screening was positive for GC/CT in 2.9% and 1.9% of HIV-infected service members. Much higher proportions of rectal (11.1%) and pharyngeal (21.9%) specimens were found to be positive for GC or CT after starting extragenital screening. Only 5.9% of the extragenital positive specimens were associated with positive urethra specimens. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

### Here's what the U.S. military's sexual assault problem looks like

8 December - The military's sexual assault problem is not gone, and its own reports show conflicting numbers on the prevalence of incidents. The Pentagon released a report on sexual assault in the military promoting the fact that, in an anonymous survey, it saw a 25% drop in the past year in the numbers of service members experiencing unwanted sexual contact. The decrease is significant — with 19,000 saying that had experience unwanted sexual contact in comparison to 26,000 in 2012. ... The survey data suggests the amount of active duty women who experienced unwanted sexual contact declined from 6.1% in 2012 to 4.3% in 2014. The rate remained about the same for men, moving from 1.2% in 2013 to 0.9% in 2014. But there was still an increase in reports of sexual assault made. In 2014, 5,983 incidents of sexual assault were reported, up 66% from 2012, when 3,604 were reported. This increase, Hagel said, is good news. "Two years ago, we estimated about one in 10 sexual assaults were being reported," he said. "Today, it's one in four." [Wall St. Cheat Sheet](#)

### Male military sex assault victims slow to complain

8 December - ... According to an anonymous survey released last week by the Pentagon, nearly 1 percent of males in the U.S. military said they had experienced unwanted sexual contact, compared to 4.3 percent of women. That equates to about 10,500 men and 8,500 women. Yet only 14 percent of assaults reported last year involved male victims. ... In May, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel ordered the military services to increase their efforts to encourage men to report assaults. The services already had started putting together training materials aimed at male victims. Videos included scenarios of troops drinking and discussions about when to intervene and what to do if a perpetrator is of higher rank. [AP](#)

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### West Africa Snake Poster

A new poster with facts about snakes found in the Ebola-stricken countries of West Africa and the measures to take if bitten is now available in print from the [Health Information Products eCatalog](#).



## GLOBAL

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### BPA in canned beverages linked to increases in blood pressure

9 December - Exposure to bisphenol A (BPA) through consumption of canned beverages is associated with increases in systolic blood pressure, according to a randomized crossover trial in *Hypertension*. BPA is a chemical found in many plastic bottles, food containers, and the linings of cans. Sixty older adults (mostly women) had three study visits, during which they consumed two servings of soy milk provided one of three ways: in two glass bottles (least amount of BPA exposure), two cans (most BPA), or one glass bottle and one can. The sequence of serving containers was randomized. Urinary BPA concentrations were significantly higher 2 hours after participants drank from two cans versus two glass bottles. Furthermore, systolic BP was roughly 4.5 mm Hg higher after two cans versus two glass bottles. [NEJM Journal Watch](#)

### Global invasive bacterial vaccine-preventable diseases surveillance – 2008–2014

12 December - ... As of July 2014, 130 sites in 57 countries reported 2013 data to WHO, including 63 sites in 38 Gavi-eligible countries selected for targeted support in 2014 and 2015. Among 38 countries with a site receiving targeted support and reporting 2013 data, nine (24%) have not yet introduced [pre-pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV)]. During 2009–2013, 94,871 hospitalized children were enrolled in surveillance in targeted sites. During 2013, a total of 574 children had one of the three potentially vaccine-preventable pathogens detected. Among 511 children with meningitis, 69% were infected with *S. pneumoniae*, 17% *H. influenzae*, and 14% *N. meningitidis*; among 63 children with pneumonia or sepsis, 83% had *S. pneumoniae* and 17% *H. influenzae*. Areas of ongoing work to improve [invasive bacterial vaccine-preventable diseases (IB-VPD)] surveillance include 1) uniformly instituting "zero reporting" to differentiate zero cases detected from lack of reporting, 2) moving all sites from aggregate to case-based reporting, 3) focusing on improved quality assurance in laboratory testing and reporting, 4) piloting a web-based data management system, 5) improving laboratory methods, and 6) collecting serotype/serogroup data to determine what proportions of *S. pneumoniae*, *N. meningitidis*, and *H. influenzae* detected by surveillance are vaccine-preventable. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

### Malaria deaths halved since 2000

10 December - Malaria deaths have dropped dramatically since 2000 as more people are treated and use more bed nets, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has said. However, the UN health agency warned on Tuesday that the Malaria treatment process in West Africa risks being reversed by an unprecedented epidemic of Ebola. On malaria, the WHO said that

#### What we know (and don't know) about Ebola

The highly virulent Ebola virus has seen a few major outbreaks since it first appeared in 1976 -- with the worst epidemic occurring in 2014. How does the virus spread, and what exactly does it do to the body? Alex Gendler details what Ebola is and why it's so hard to study.



## EMS and Ebola: Field Experience with Transporting Patients

**Date:** Monday, December 15, 2014

**Time:** 2:00 - 3:00 pm (ET)

**Dial In Number:**

888-972-6898 (U.S. Callers);  
630-395-0194  
(International Callers)

**Passcode:** 5076538

Healthcare systems across the United States are actively preparing to treat patients with Ebola. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) play an important role in the identification, assessment, and transportation of suspected or confirmed patients with Ebola.

As designated treatment facilities, Emory University Hospital and the University of Nebraska Medical Center have received patients with confirmed Ebola. During this COCA Call, clinicians will learn about the field experiences of EMS personnel in the two jurisdictions and discuss unique planning considerations for EMS.

[More information](#)



progress against the mosquito-borne infection remains fragile and West African countries suffering from Ebola are particularly at risk of seeing a resurgence of malaria. In its annual report on the malaria, the WHO said the death rate from the illness fell by 47 percent worldwide between 2000 and 2013 and by 54 percent in Africa, where about 90 percent of all malaria deaths occur. In an analysis of malaria's impact across sub-Saharan Africa, it also found that despite a 43 percent increase in population, fewer people in the region are infected every year. [Al Jazeera](#)

## Marijuana and PTSD

8 December - Marijuana use appeared to have aggravated post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms in military veterans, while adolescents with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) said they frequently used cannabis to reduce symptoms, researchers reported here. ... The researchers assigned the [2,276] veterans into one of four marijuana use classifications:

- Never users: people who had never consumed
  - Stoppers: people who consumed prior to admission, but not at all after discharge
  - Continuing users: people who consumed before admission and after discharge
  - Starters: people who did not use prior to admission, but started after discharge
- ... Results showed that never users and stoppers had lower levels of PTSD symptoms compared with continuing users and starters at the 4-month follow-up visit (P<0.0001). ... Of all the groups, starters had the highest levels of violent behavior at follow-up (P<0.0001). ... "[What] we did find is that marijuana was not associated with improvement, and initiating marijuana use was associated with worsening of symptoms in a number of measures including severity of PTSD. [MedPage Today](#)

## Superbugs to kill 'more than cancer' by 2050

10 December - Drug resistant infections will kill an extra 10 million people a year worldwide - more than currently die from cancer - by 2050 unless action is taken, a study says. They are currently implicated in 700,000 deaths each year. The analysis, presented by the economist Jim O'Neill, said the costs would spiral to \$100tn (£63tn). ... The reduction in population and the impact on ill-health would reduce world economic output by between 2% and 3.5%. The analysis was based on scenarios modelled by researchers Rand Europe and auditors KPMG. They found that drug resistant E. coli, malaria and tuberculosis (TB) would have the biggest impact. [BBC News](#)

## Unicef calls 2014 one of worst years for children

8 December - The year 2014 has been one of the worst on record for the world's children, the United Nations said on Monday in a report that chronicled a litany of war, violence, atrocities and disease, mostly in the Middle East and Africa. Up to 15 million children are directly entangled in violent conflicts in the Central African Republic, Iraq, the Palestinian territories, South Sudan, Syria and Ukraine, said the report by the United Nations Children's Fund, or Unicef. Globally, the report said, an estimated 230 million children live in countries and areas torn by armed conflicts. [New York Times](#)

**HIV Care  
Continuum: Keeping  
the Spotlight on  
Screening,  
Prevention, and  
Treatment**

**Date:** Thursday, December 18, 2014

**Time:** 2:00 - 3:00 pm (ET)

**Dial In Number:**  
800-621-8495 (U.S. Callers);  
517-308-9286  
(International Callers)

**Passcode:** 1941601

Viral suppression is the goal of HIV medical care. Yet, in 2011, only 40% of people living with HIV received HIV medical care and only 30% achieved viral suppression.

Many persons living with HIV are not in medical care or are undiagnosed. When patients with HIV are in medical care, they are more likely to be prescribed antiretroviral medications, achieve viral suppression, and have a normal lifespan.

During this COCA Webinar, clinicians will learn about current strategies to engage patients in HIV testing, counseling and medical care.

[More information](#)



## Violence as a public health problem: *A Most Violent Year*

9 December - ... Dr. Slutkin, in New York City for the premiere of *A Most Violent Year*, remarks that ending urban violence requires: identifying the sources (people and locations) of its transmission; using community workers (locals, natives if you will, who know their neighbors and their culture) to interrupt the transmission of violence; and changing the culture, the norms of a community -- replacing "prisons with parks." *Cure Violence*, is now working in 25 cities (over 50 communities), including Chicago, Baltimore, seven New York cities (including NYC, Albany, Syracuse, Buffalo), as well as in Puerto Rico, Mexico, Honduras, Jamaica, and South Africa. Reductions in violence of over 30 percent in year one of a program, and up to 70 percent in time, have been replicated 20 times and independently validated again and again. Dr. Slutkin likes to say the health approach to violence is "not a metaphor" -- that the treatment works, proving ipso facto, that indeed violence is a contagious process. [Huffington Post](#)

## Workplace risks in real time

Fall 2014 - ... Accurately measuring and assessing such diverse workplace risks is a profound challenge. Recently, however, Kirsten Koehler, PhD, an assistant professor of Environmental Health Sciences, has been developing a new workplace hazard monitoring system that will change all that. "Right now, hygienists sample pollutants a couple times a year, take a few measurements at random and that has to suffice," Koehler says. They miss the great variability in pollutants throughout the year as well as risks to individual workers. To remedy this, Koehler and her collaborators are developing a low-cost, real-time system of environmental sensors. The system will provide 1,000 to 10,000 times more exposure measurements than conventional sampling. Koehler's plans, however, go far beyond that. By including radio frequency identification (RFID) sensors in workers' ID badges, she hopes to track exactly which workers are exposed to risks. [Johns Hopkins Public Health](#)

## EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE

### As Ebola rages, poor planning thwarts efforts

6 December - ... Aid officials in Sierra Leone say poor coordination among aid groups, government mismanagement and some glaring inefficiencies are costing countless lives. ... Ambulances, for example, are being used to ferry blood samples, sometimes just one test tube at a time, while many patients die at home after waiting days for an ambulance to come. Half of the patients in some front-line Ebola clinics do not even have Ebola, but their test results take so long that they end up lingering for days, taking beds from people whose lives hang in the balance and greatly increasing their own chances of catching the virus in such close quarters. [New York Times](#)

## Classified Version of the Weekly Update

An Army Public Health Weekly Update is available with articles classified up to the **SECRET** level from the USAPHC SIPRNet site:

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

Look under Hot Topics & Current Issues.

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

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## CDC probes Ebola in Sierra Leone health workers, response gaps

9 December - An analysis of health workers infected with Ebola found their incidence rate was more than 100-fold higher than in the general population, along with deep infection control gaps, including lack of protocols, training, and supplies, researchers from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and their West African partners reported today. ... Today's review covers health worker infections reported in Sierra Leone from late May through the end of October. Of 3,854 lab-confirmed Ebola infections in the country during that period, 199 (5.2%) were in health workers. Infections peaked in August, though several cases were still being reported in October. [CIDRAP](#)

## CDC response to 2014 Ebola in the United States and West Africa

**NEW:** [21-Day Investigation of Ebola Patient's Direct Contacts in Guinea](#)

**Updated:** [Case Counts](#)

**Updated:** [Interim Guidance: EMS Systems & 9-1-1 PSAPs](#)

## Ebola fighters named Time Person of the Year



11 December - *Time* magazine has named its "Person of the Year 2014" the healthcare workers treating the Ebola epidemic, which has killed more than 6,300 people worldwide. The magazine announced on Wednesday that it had chosen to honour doctors, nurses and others fighting the spread of the virus through "tireless acts of courage and mercy". Editor Nancy Gibbs praised "the people in the field, the special forces of Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières [MSF], the Christian medical-relief workers of Samaritan's Purse and many others from all over the world who fought side by side with local doctors and nurses, ambulance drivers and burial teams." [Al Jazeera](#)

## Ebola transit units boost response; outbreak total hits 17,800

8 December - Doctors without Borders (MSF) continues to tailor its response to the evolving Ebola situation in Liberia, opening a small isolation unit in Monrovia to help one of the city's major hospitals reopen and setting up another in a remote community where the burial of a patient from the capital sparked an outbreak. Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO) said today that the number of people infected by Ebola in the hardest hit countries has grown to 17,800, with the number of deaths rising to 6,331. With today's report, Sierra

Leone appears to have pulled ahead of Liberia as the country with the most cases. ... MSF said in a Dec 5 statement that it set up its new 10-bed Ebola transit unit in Monrovia near Redemption Hospital, near the crowded slum community of New Kru Town. It said the facility was closed for regular service in August, a blow to the community, because it is the only hospital in the area that offers free medical care. The group said the transit facility will enable suspected Ebola patients who come to the hospital's reopened outpatient department to be quickly isolated, diagnosed, and referred to an Ebola treatment center, which provides the hospital with some breathing room to reopen safely to treat other conditions. [CIDRAP](#)

## **Ebola vaccine trial 'interrupted' due to joint pains**

11 December - The clinical trial of an Ebola vaccine in Switzerland has been interrupted after some patients complained of joint pains in their hands and feet. The trial was stopped one week early in all 59 volunteers "as a measure of precaution", the University of Geneva Hospital said. The vaccine being tested is one developed by NewLink, and recently bought by Merck. There is currently no vaccine licensed for use to protect against Ebola. Two vaccines are currently being tested in humans in a number of countries. ... The hospital said human safety trials would resume on 5 January in up to 15 volunteers after checks had taken place to ensure the joint pain symptoms were "benign and temporary". [BBC News](#)

## **In Ebola outbreak, bad data adds another problem**

8 December - As health officials struggle to contain the world's biggest-ever Ebola outbreak, their efforts are being complicated by another problem: bad data. Having accurate numbers about an outbreak is essential not only to provide a realistic picture of the epidemic, but to determine effective control strategies. Dr. Bruce Aylward, who is leading the World Health Organization's Ebola response, said it's crucial to track every single Ebola patient in West Africa to stop the outbreak and that serious gaps remain in their data. ... Aylward said not knowing exactly how many Ebola patients there are in hotspots like western Sierra Leone means health officials might miss potential contacts who could unknowingly cause a surge of cases. Compared to other epidemics like malaria, which is more seasonal and can fade away without huge control efforts, ending the Ebola outbreak will require extraordinary attention to detail. [ABC News](#)

## **Liberian president's ban on rallies is seen as political**

7 December - Anger has been building for days over a decree by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia that bans all political rallies in Monrovia, the capital, which she said had been meant to prevent the further spread of Ebola. ... Some health officials were shaken by the physical contact they witnessed during the recent rally. ... The C.D.C. provided input on voting site guidelines last month, according to Jana L. Telfer, a communication officer for the agency in Liberia. The C.D.C. suggested that participants with fevers and other signs of Ebola be excluded from election activities and questioned how personnel would enforce a three-foot separation standard for voter lines. "Let's keep our fingers crossed that we don't see a bump in cases in Monrovia and wonder if it was related to this mass gathering," said Dr. Jordan W. Tappero. [New York Times](#)

## Nearly 2,000 travelers screened for Ebola

9 December - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported Tuesday that airport workers in the United States screened 1,993 travelers arriving from the West African countries most affected by the Ebola virus in the month after enhanced screening began on Oct. 11. Just 4 percent of the total, or 86 people, were flagged for further evaluation. Seven had symptoms and received medical attention, but none were found to have Ebola. [New York Times](#)

## When the next shoe drops — Ebola crisis communication lessons from October

9 December - In contrast to the Ebola crisis in West Africa, which started in late 2013 and will last well into 2015 or longer, the US "Ebola crisis" was encapsulated in a single month, October 2014. But there may well be US Ebola cases to come, brought here by travelers or returning volunteers. And other emerging infectious diseases will surely reach the United States in the months and years ahead. So now is a propitious time to harvest some crisis communication lessons from the brief US Ebola "crisis." We're putting "crisis" in quotation marks because there was never an Ebola public health crisis in the United States, nor was there a significant threat of one. But there was a crisis of confidence, a period of several weeks during which many Americans came to see the official response to domestic Ebola as insufficiently cautious, competent, and candid—and therefore felt compelled to implement or demand additional responses of their own devising. ... The strength of the US Ebola adjustment reaction, however, was exacerbated by a number of official crisis communication errors. [CIDRAP](#)

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## **INFLUENZA**

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### Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary

For Week 48:

- NORTHCOM: In service members influenza activity was low. The number of cases in dependents continues to steadily increase with a higher proportion of A/H3N2 starting to circulate.
- EUCOM: Influenza activity was low and there was an increase in ILI and P&I.
- PACOM: Influenza activity was low and ILI and P&I decreased.
- CENTCOM: ILI and P&I activity decreased but remained above baseline.

- SOUTHCOM: Among local nationals, flu activity is low. The WHO reports that most ILI is being caused by RSV. [AFHSC DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary](#)

## CDC's flu warning raises questions about vaccine match

5 December - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) warned yesterday that the profile of influenza viruses currently circulating, with A/H3N2 predominant, suggests a risk for a rough ride this winter, especially since about half of the H3N2 viruses don't match up with the corresponding strain in this year's vaccine. CDC Director Tom Frieden, MD, MPH, observed that seasons dominated by H3N2 viruses are generally worse than other seasons, and warned that the mismatch between the vaccine and circulating strains may portend lower vaccine effectiveness (VE) than usual. Consequently, he emphasized that antiviral medications are an important second line of defense, especially for patients at risk for flu complications. [CIDRAP](#)

## CDC says severe flu season possible

5 December - The CDC warned this week that a severe flu season is possible due to the fact that most of the circulating virus is the H3N2 strain of influenza A, which is generally associated with a worse flu year. In addition, only about half of the flu samples seen by the CDC were matched to the vaccine. [MedPage Today](#)

## CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 48 (November 23-29, 2014), influenza activity increased in the United States.

- Viral Surveillance: Of 13,398 specimens tested and reported by U.S. World Health Organization (WHO) and National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS) collaborating laboratories during week 48, 2,274 (17.0%) 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: No influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported. [FluView](#)

## Does flu vaccine reduce kids' ED visits?

8 December - [A] study in the January issue of *Pediatrics* was unable to find a correlation between influenza vaccination rates for children under 5 years old and a decline in children hospitalized for influenza-related illness. Significant increases in emergency department (ED) visits ( $P < 0.05$ ) and decreases in hospitalizations ( $P < 0.05$ ) over time were not clearly related to vaccination trends, researchers wrote. "We know the vaccine is 50% to 70% effective in preventing medical care visits for kids, but there's a lot of variability from year to year in which a strain circulates, so it's hard to really link trends in illness to vaccine uptake at this point," said study author Marie R. Griffin, MD, MPH, of Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tenn. [MedPage Today](#)

## Flu News Europe

Week 48/2014

- In week 48/2014, influenza activity remained low across the WHO European Region.
- Fourteen countries reported sporadic influenza activity and six reported increasing trends in consultations for influenza-like illness (ILI) and/or acute respiratory infection (ARI).
- Of the 889 specimens tested from sentinel ILI and ARI sources from 31 countries, 29 (3%) from 12 countries tested positive for influenza virus. At present, most circulating viruses are A(H3N2) and influenza B.
- The number of hospitalized laboratory-confirmed influenza cases increased from the previous week, with two countries reporting a total of 13 cases for week 48/2014. All were admitted to intensive care units.

Season

- Although sporadic influenza virus detections were reported in an increasing number of countries, there is no indication that the influenza season has started in the Region, which is normal for this time of year.
- No indications of increased mortality have been reported through the European monitoring of excess mortality for public health action project (EuroMOMO). [Flu News Europe](#)

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

For the week ending 6 December 2014:

- Influenza: Two cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza (A/H3) among US military basic trainees.
- Genetic drift of H3N2 influenza may result in reduced vaccine effectiveness and a more severe 2014-15 flu season
- FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates were moderately elevated and Fort Benning. [NHRC Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)

## USAPHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report

For the week ending 29 November 2014 (Week 48):

- The percentage of positive influenza A specimens in military and civilian populations has significantly increased over the last two weeks, primarily in SRMC MTFs.
- ILI Activity: Army incident ILI outpatient visits in week 48 were 6% lower than for the

same week last year.

- Influenza cases: No hospitalized influenza cases were reported to USAPHC through DRSi in week 48. To date, one hospitalized influenza case has been reported in an unvaccinated retiree.
- Viral specimens: During week 48, 231 of 765 (30%) laboratory specimens tested positive for respiratory pathogens; 171 of 640 (26.7%) specimens tested for influenza A were positive. SRMC reported the most influenza A-positive specimens (86.5%), followed by NRMC and WRMC (5.8%), and ERM (1.2%). RSV accounted for 16.5% of positive specimens. [USAPHC U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report](#)

## AVIAN INFLUENZA

### H5N2 confirmed at 3 more British Columbia poultry farms

10 December - Canadian officials yesterday confirmed H5N2 avian flu in the three most recent poultry outbreaks in British Columbia's Fraser Valley, bringing to five the number of farms in the area infected with that strain, according to a report filed by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). The farms, first identified as harboring H5 avian flu on Dec 4 and Dec 6, include two chicken farms and a turkey farm. [CIDRAP Avian Flu Scan](#) (first item)

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## VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

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### Deadly morbillivirus outbreak reaches the Keys

10 December - For almost two years, scientists had been cautiously relieved that a deadly viral outbreak blamed for the deaths of scores of Atlantic bottlenose dolphins up and down the East Coast had not reached the Keys. That tepid calm ended this week. A necropsy performed on an Atlantic bottlenose dolphin that died on Nov. 7 after washing up sick on the Bahia Honda State Park beach earlier that day returned positive Tuesday for morbillivirus -- a measles-like disease that is highly contagious among sea mammals. According to federal fisheries scientists, this means the outbreak area of the virus, which has killed 1,569 dolphins from New York to Central Florida since July 2013, now includes the Atlantic side of the Keys. And the entire Gulf of Mexico and Florida Bay side of Florida is now considered a "surveillance area" for the outbreak, said Laura Engleby, a biologist and chief of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's southeast marine mammal branch. [Miami Herald](#)

## Outbreaks from unpasteurized milk rise dramatically

10 December - The number of disease outbreaks linked to the drinking of unpasteurized milk has risen at an alarming rate, quadrupling from the period 1993-2006 to 2007-12, as more states allow the legal sale of raw milk, according to a study today in *Emerging Infectious Diseases*. Researchers from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) analyzed foodborne outbreaks from 2007 to 2012 and found that in 81 of them the food vehicle was unpasteurized (raw) milk. The outbreaks occurred across 26 states and affected 979 people, 73 of whom needed hospitalization. In more than half the outbreaks, at least one child younger than 5 was sickened. ... Campylobacter was the cause in 62 (81%) of the outbreaks, followed by Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli, implicated in 13 (17%). Salmonella Typhimurium and Coxiella burnetii each caused a small number of outbreaks. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

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### WELLNESS

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## F.D.A. Approves new version of cervical cancer vaccine

10 December - The drug maker Merck received approval on Wednesday for an updated version of its Gardasil vaccine, which protects against the virus that causes most cases of cervical cancer. The Food and Drug Administration approved Gardasil 9, which protects against nine strains of the virus called HPV, or human papillomavirus, up from four strains covered by the original vaccine approved in 2006. The F.D.A. said the updated Gardasil had the potential to prevent roughly 90 percent of cervical, vulvar, vaginal and anal cancers. It is approved for use in males and females — ages 9 to 26 for females, and 9 to 15 in males. [New York Times](#)

## From potatoes to salty fries in school: Congress tweaks food rules

10 December - The gargantuan budget bill that lawmakers on Capitol Hill are expected to vote on Thursday does more than dole out federal dollars to keep the government running. It also tweaks federal nutrition rules. For starters, the bill — aka, the 2015 Omnibus Appropriations Bill — includes a provision that will give school food directors more flexibility when it comes to adopting 100 percent whole grain items, such as pasta and biscuits, in school breakfast and lunch meals. And when it comes to salty french fries or pizza, schools may get more time to dial back the sodium content, thanks to a provision that could postpone a mandate on sodium reduction that's scheduled to take effect in 2017. Lawmakers say further reductions on salt should be predicated on the latest scientific evidence. [NPR](#)

## Got a minute? Let's work out

10 December - ... [Researchers] recruited a group of 14 sedentary and overweight but otherwise healthy men and women. ... Then they asked the volunteers to complete a truly time-efficient, interval-training program using computerized stationary bicycles. Each session consisted of three 20-second "all-out" intervals, during which riders pushed the pedals absolutely as hard as they could manage, followed by two minutes of slow, easy pedaling. The riders also warmed up for two minutes and cooled down for three, for a grand total of 10 minutes of total exercise time, with one minute of that being the intense interval training. The volunteers completed three of these sessions per week, leading to 30 minutes of weekly exercise, for six weeks. ... The men and women increased their endurance capacity by an average of 12 percent, a significant improvement. They also, as a group, had healthier blood pressures and higher levels within their muscles of certain biochemical substances that increase the number and activity of mitochondria. ... Interestingly, the male volunteers also had significantly improved their blood-sugar control, but the female volunteers had not. [New York Times](#)

## Hookah hazards

Fall 2014 - Hookah bars in the U.S. attract legions of hipsters leisurely puffing flavored tobacco through waterpipes. Many believe the cooled smoke is safer than cigarette smoke. A recent Bloomberg School study says they could be dead wrong. "Our study found that hookahs actually create higher levels of carbon monoxide and similar levels of airborne nicotine as compared to those present in cigarette-smoke-filled bars," says environmental health expert Patrick Breyse, PhD, MHS. Sampling indoor air at seven Baltimore-area hookah bars in 2011 and 2012, Breyse and his team say second-hand hookah smoke put patrons and employees at great risk. "It is possible to smoke the equivalent of a pack of cigarettes in a few hours at a hookah bar. And charcoal used in the pipes exacerbates the carbon monoxide problem," Breyse says, adding that patrons and employees should be educated about the risks. [Johns Hopkins Public Health](#)

## Infant dies from Legionnaires' contracted during water birth

10 December - An infant less than 4 weeks old died from legionellosis-related complications following a water birth in Texas, according to an *Emerging Infectious Disease* article today. The infant was born in January in a home pool and hospitalized with sepsis and respiratory failure 6 days after birth. The child was diagnosed as having *Legionella pneumophila* and died 19 days after being hospitalized, the report said. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (fourth item)

## Poor semen quality in young men may predict future health issues, study says



11 December - Young men with fertility issues may face other health problems later in life, research published Wednesday in the journal *Fertility and Sterility* suggests. Vascular, heart and skin disease, as well as hypertension, are among the ailments linked to poor semen quality in the Stanford University study, which analyzed nearly

9,400 men, ages 30 to 50, who visited a fertility clinic. ... Among the study participants, with a median age of 38, 44 percent attended the fertility clinic between 1994 and 2011 for a health problem unrelated to fertility. After studying these men's medical records, researchers observed that hypertensive disease, peripheral vascular, cerebrovascular disease and nonischemic heart disease displayed higher rates of semen abnormalities. For example, 56 percent of men without hypertensive disease had normal semen quality, but only 45 percent of men with hypertension had normal semen quality. Poor semen quality was also linked to higher rates of skin disease—the association that Behr found most surprising. [Fox News](#)

## Primary care doctors report prescribing fewer opioids for pain

8 December - Nine in 10 primary care physicians say that prescription drug abuse is a moderate or big problem in their communities and nearly half say they are less likely to prescribe opioids to treat pain compared to a year ago, new Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health research suggests. Primary care doctors also appear to recognize many risks of prescription opioid use, including addiction and death by overdose, according to the findings reported in the Dec. 8 issue of *JAMA Internal Medicine*. [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News](#)

## Quitting tobacco a boon for inpatient psych patients

8 December - A tobacco treatment program in a psychiatric ward for inpatients with comorbid mental health and substance abuse disorders led to lower rates of alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis use, researchers reported here. Compared with patients in the usual care group, patients in the tobacco cessation group were twice as likely to stay off tobacco 1-year later (22% versus 11%) and have lower rates of drinking (22% versus 58%) and cannabis use (18% versus 42%), reported Smita Das, MD, PhD, MPH, of Stanford University School of Medicine in Stanford, Calif., and colleagues. [MedPage Today](#)

## Scientists make 'feel full' chemical

10 December - Scientists have created a chemical that can be added to food to make people feel full. Initial tests showed it helped people to eat less and slow weight gain. It

harnessed the power of a proprionate, which naturally makes us feel full when it is produced by breaking down fibre in the gut. ... In initial tests, 20 volunteers were either given inulin on its own or the new ingredient, known as IPE, and then allowed to eat as much as they liked from a buffet. Those who had been given IPE ate about 14% less food. In the next part of the study, 49 overweight volunteers were either given IPE or inulin in powder form and asked to add 10g (about a spoonful) to their food every day. After 24 weeks, six of the 24 volunteers given inulin had gained more than 3% of their body weight while only one of the 25 given IPE had done so. [BBC News](#)

## Special K, a hallucinogen, raises hopes and concerns as a treatment for depression

9 December - It is either the most exciting new treatment for depression in years or it is a hallucinogenic club drug that is wrongly being dispensed to desperate patients in a growing number of clinics around the country. It is called ketamine — or Special K, in street parlance. While it has been used as an anesthetic for decades, small studies at prestigious medical centers like Yale, Mount Sinai and the National Institute of Mental Health suggest it can relieve depression in many people who are not helped by widely used conventional antidepressants like Prozac or Lexapro. And the depression seems to melt away within hours, rather than the weeks typically required for a conventional antidepressant. But some psychiatrists say the drug has not been studied enough to be ready for use outside of clinical trials, and they are alarmed that clinics are springing up to offer ketamine treatments, charging hundreds of dollars for sessions that must be repeated many times. [New York Times](#)

## U.S. FDA prices "lost pleasure" of junk food into calorie count rule

8 December - U.S. health regulators estimate that consumers will suffer up to \$5.27 billion in "lost pleasure" over 20 years when calorie counts on restaurant menus discourage people from ordering french fries, brownies and other high-calorie favorites. The lost-pleasure analysis, which is criticized by some leading economists and public health groups, was tucked into new regulations published last month by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration which require chain restaurants, grocery store chains selling prepared food, large vending machine operators, movie theaters and amusement parks to display calorie counts. Public health advocates alerted Reuters to the inclusion of the analysis, which they say makes such regulations more vulnerable to challenges by industry because it narrows the gap between the government's projections of a regulation's benefits and costs. [Reuters](#)

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## USAFRICOM

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### Ghana: Cholera outbreak - 3 dead, 94 more infected



6 December - The Goaso Government Hospital in the Brong Ahafo region has recorded 94 cholera cases with three deaths in two months despite reports of the drastic reduction in the rate of infection of the past few months. Speaking to Citi News, the Medical Superintendent of the Hospital, Dr Fosuhene said

"definitely what we heard in the news is true. We've had an outbreak here and it is unprecedented in the Asunafo North." Cholera has claimed over 100 lives with more than 10,000 cases recorded across the country since its outbreak this year. The Asunafo North Municipal Environmental Health Officer attributed the situation to open defecation in the Municipality. [Citifmonline](#)

### South Africa: Alert - Measles sweeps across SA

8 December - South Africa has recorded a surge in measles cases, with the Northern Cape Province topping the list, warned the National Institute for Communicable Diseases. "Over the past two months, there has been an increase in laboratory-confirmed (IgM positive) measles cases." The five provinces affected are Gauteng, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape and Western Cape. Sporadic laboratory-confirmed measles cases have also been noted in the Eastern Cape and Free State. "No laboratory-confirmed measles cases have been reported from Limpopo and Northwest provinces during 2014 to date." [Health24](#)

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## USCENTCOM

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### Egypt: Health Ministry - 1,356 cases infected with measles, 8 deaths so far

9 December - Egypt has recorded eight deaths from measles so far this year, with 1,356 infections, marking a slight increase from the annual rate of infection of between 700 and 1,500 cases, head of Health Ministry's preventive medicine sector Amr Qandil said on Saturday. ... Perhaps the most concerning of the outbreak is that all eight deaths occurred in Siwa, said Mohamed Abu Suleiman, deputy Health Minister in Matrouh, in addition to infection of other 200 patients. [Egypt Independent](#)

## Iran: Methamphetamine use soars in Iran as lifestyles speed up

8 December - Women in headscarves and men in tatty clothes puff on a glass pipe as smoke swirls around their faces. The pictures published by Iranian media and blogs in recent months are a sign of a new drug epidemic: shishe, or methamphetamine. Shishe means "glass" in Farsi, a reference to the appearance of the drug in some of its purest forms. In less than a decade, methamphetamine use has skyrocketed in Iran to the point where now about 345,000 Iranians are considered addicts, according to official statistics. Seizures of methamphetamine soared 128 percent between 2008 and 2012, topping all other countries in the region, according to figures compiled by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Last year alone, the government of Iran confiscated 3.6 tonnes of shishe. ... Shishe addicts in Iran are mostly urban, middle class and young, experts say. Notably, there are a large number of women who abuse shishe, too. [Reuters](#)

## Pakistan's most recent demographic and health survey reveals slow progress

10 December - ... Pakistan's most recent Demographic and Health Survey ... results are a disappointment for Pakistan's public health professionals and women's health advocates and warn of increasingly difficult conditions for rural service delivery. To some health program analysts, the results reflect the low priority given to public health and family planning for decades by Pakistan's central government. Pakistan's maternal and child health indicators have improved only marginally since the last survey. Notably, the health sector has failed to keep pace with progress in either Bangladesh or Nepal, both of which lagged behind Pakistan in most public health indicators in the early 1990s. Similarly, as the decline in fertility has slowed in Pakistan (now at 3.8 children per woman), fertility rates in Bangladesh (2.3) and Nepal (2.6) have continued their declines. [News Security Beat](#)

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

2 December - Between 3 and 19 November 2014, the National IHR Focal Point for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) notified WHO of 18 additional cases of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) infection, including 4 deaths. ... The National IHR Focal Point for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia also notified WHO of the death of 3 previously reported MERS-CoV cases. Globally, the WHO has been notified of 927 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV, including at least 338 related deaths. [WHO](#)

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## USEUCOM

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### Slovenia: Measles outbreak linked to international dog show

8 December - The investigation into an outbreak of measles in the south central European country has shown a probable link to an international dog show held in Vrtojba, Nova Gorica on 8 and 9 November 2014, according to a report by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) Friday. The National Institute of Public Health in Slovenia (NIJH) has reported on 15 measles cases, 11 confirmed and 4 probable, as of Dec. 2. The 15 patients had a history of visiting the dog show, which attracted 670 exhibitors from 27 countries in Vrtojba, on Slovenia's eastern border with Italy. The ECDC says Slovenia has interrupted endemic measles transmission and measles vaccination uptake is high. The risk of extensive spread from this outbreak is considered low, and the risk that it would result in the re-establishment of endemic measles transmission in the country is considered very low. [Outbreak News Today](#)

### United Kingdom: Air pollution 'causing deadly public health crisis'

7 December - New schools, care homes and hospitals should be built far away from major roads because of the dangers of air pollution, a report by MPs says. The Environmental Audit Committee argues air pollution is a "public health crisis" causing nearly as many deaths as smoking. It also suggested a scrappage scheme for diesel cars to cut emissions. The government said it was "investing heavily" in clean air, but campaigners said it was ignoring the issue. There are an estimated 29,000 deaths annually in the UK from air pollution. [BBC News](#)

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## USNORTHCOM

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### U.S.: CDC identifies 3 more polio-like cases in kids

9 December - The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has verified three more reports of an unexplained polio-like illness in children, raising the total to 93 cases in 33 states over the past few months, according to a Dec 4 update. The illness, which is labeled acute flaccid myelitis (AFM), involves sudden onset of limb weakness with inflammation in the spinal cord. The CDC said it was working to confirm two more reports of possible cases. ... The agency said last week that it seemed increasingly likely that AFM cases were related to EV-D68, although conclusive evidence was lacking. The virus had been found in nasal and stool samples of AFM patients but not in the nervous system. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

## U.S. earns 7.4 out of 10 on health emergency preparedness

10 December - The U.S. scored a 7.4 out of 10 on the 2014 National Health Security Preparedness Index, a measure of how prepared the country is for health-related emergencies, such as disease epidemics, natural disasters, terrorism, and foodborne illness outbreaks. The index is prepared by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, in partnership with the CDC and others. States' overall scores did not vary widely, ranging from 6.5 to 8.2. The weakest areas overall were in environmental and occupational health, healthcare delivery, and community planning and engagement. [NEJM Journal Watch](#)

## U.S.: Nearly half of U.S. kids exposed to traumatic social or family experiences during childhood

8 December - Nearly half of all children in the United States are exposed to at least one social or family experience that can lead to traumatic stress and impact their healthy development – be it having their parents divorce, a parent die or living with someone who abuses alcohol or drugs – increasing the risk of negative long-term health consequences or of falling behind in school, suggests new research led by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The study reports on new data showing the magnitude of these adverse experiences in the child population in the U.S., while also suggesting that training parents, providers and communities to help children with trauma cope and build even basic aspects of resilience may soften the blows and lead to later success, despite the obstacles. [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News](#)

## U.S.: Report examines U.S.'s addiction to opioid painkillers

10 December - Fewer patients are filling prescriptions for opioid painkillers — but those who are filling them are filling more prescriptions with more days of medication per prescription — according to a report by Express Scripts, a pharmacy benefits company. The company examined pharmacy claims for 6.8 million Americans who filled at least one opioid prescription for pain from 2009 to 2013. Among the report's other findings:

- Of patients taking dangerous drug mixtures, nearly a third had prescriptions for both an opiate and a benzodiazepine. Some 8% were taking the "Houston Cocktail," a mixture of an opioid, a muscle relaxant, and a benzodiazepine.
- Among small U.S. cities (<28,000 residents) with the highest opioid prescribing rates, between 12% and 18% of the populations had filled opioid prescriptions. The national average is closer to 4%.
- Roughly half of people who took opiates for more than 30 days kept using them for at least 3 years. [NEJM Journal Watch](#)

## U.S.: The 10 healthiest and 10 least-healthy states in 2014



10 December - In some ways, Americans today are healthier than they were in 1990, when the United Health Foundation first published America's Health Rankings, an annual state-by-state assessment of our nation's health. cardiovascular and cancer deaths are down, and the smoking rate has decreased 36%. Plus,

life expectancy is at an all-time high—78.7 years. "But although we're living longer, we're also living sicker, with preventable illness at an alarming level," says Reed Tuckson, MD, external senior medical advisor to United Health Foundation. The number-one reason: Obesity. "Since 1990, the obesity rate went from 11.6% to 29.4%, a 153% increase," Dr. Tuckson says. In the last year alone, it rose 7%. Physical inactivity is also at a new high: 23.5% of Americans do not exercise at all. [ABC News](#)

## U.S.: Worst California storm in years takes aim at Los Angeles, San Diego

12 December - The worst storm to hit California in years was due to leave Los Angeles and San Diego wind-whipped and drenched on Friday. A weather system known as the "Pineapple Express" hammered the north and center of the state with hurricane force winds and up to 10 inches of rain on Thursday. The storm triggered flight cancellations and left hundreds of thousands of people in the dark. At least two deaths were also reported in Oregon. There were multiple accidents on flooded roads, and several trees crunched cars. Interstate 5, California's critical north-south thruway, was closed by flooding in the northern town of Weed. In Marin County, heavy rains washed out a portion of state Route 1. [ABC News](#)

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### USPACOM

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## China plans hike in cigarette taxes, prices to deter smokers

10 December - China is considering raising cigarette prices and taxes, a health official said on Wednesday, as the world's largest tobacco consumer fights to stub out a pervasive habit. Smoking is a major health crisis for China, where more than 300 million smokers have made cigarettes part of the social fabric, and millions more are exposed to secondhand smoke.

[Reuters](#)

## India: In modernizing India, suicide is on the rise among young

10 December - ... Cultural issues, discrimination, parental pressure and competition for highly paid jobs are combining to create a suicide epidemic among young Indians. Compounding the problem is a system that barely recognizes mental health issues. India has the world's highest suicide rate among 15 to 29 year olds, ahead of next-placed North Korea, according to a September report by the World Health Organization. For the first time, suicide is the leading cause of death among young Indian women, overtaking deaths during childbirth, the WHO says. In most parts of the world suicides tend to occur among the most disadvantaged groups, but in India they are happening among better educated young adults living in the most prosperous regions. In south India, where literacy rates and incomes are highest in the country, suicide rates are 10 times higher than in northern states, according to a study published in The Lancet medical journal in 2012. [Reuters](#)

## Philippines typhoon downgraded, but death toll rises to at least 22



8 December - Typhoon Hagupit weakened into a tropical storm Monday as it continued its slow march across the Philippines, leaving at least 22 people dead in its wake, according to the Red Cross. The storm was packing maximum sustained winds of 53 mph with gusts of 62 mph when it reached the resort town of San

Juan on the main island of Luzon, about 60 miles south of the capital, Manila. By late Monday, it had weakened further, but government officials warned that it could still trigger dangerous storm surges, flash floods and landslides. ... More than 1 million people were evacuated across the archipelago in an effort to avoid a repeat of the massive casualties inflicted by Haiyan, which left more than 7,300 people dead or missing. [Los Angeles Times](#)

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**USSOUTHCOM**

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## Between two lives



Fall 2014 - Carrying only memories of their families and hope for a better life, Central American migrant children stare down the unknown. Riding a freight train in Oaxaca, Mexico, in 2011, these Guatemalan children are part of a surge of unaccompanied minors migrating to the U.S. Since 2011, the number of Central American children crossing the border has doubled every year—

to 90,000 in fiscal year 2014. Whether the children are deported or win asylum, the arrival of so many unprotected children constitutes “a humanitarian crisis,” says Courtland Robinson, PhD '04, associate director of the Bloomberg School’s Center for Refugee and Disaster Response. [Johns Hopkins Public Health](#)

## Caribbean chikungunya outbreak nears 1 million cases

8 December - The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) reported 63,782 new chikungunya cases in the Caribbean and Americas on Dec 5, bringing the outbreak total to 996,884. The total includes 975,678 suspected and 18,892 confirmed locally acquired cases and 2,314 imported cases. Colombia reported 3 deaths and the US Virgin Islands reported 1, bringing the fatality total to 154. Hot spots in South and Central America were responsible for many of the new cases. Venezuela reported 20,917 new cases since Nov 21, bringing its outbreak total to 28,387. Case numbers in Colombia continue to rise, with the country reporting 17,129 new cases, bringing its total to 39,527. El Salvador reported 12,154 new cases, for a national total of 135,383. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

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