

12 June 2015

Army Public Health Weekly Update

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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Contents

U.S. MILITARY

- Beyond games, Oculus virtual reality headset finds medical uses
- New Tricare policy gives free breast pumps
- Sleep may hold key to PTSD
- Study may help Department of Veteran's Affairs find patients with high risk of suicide
- Suicide rate of female military veterans is called 'staggering'
- Tdap vaccination coverage during pregnancy, active component service women, 2006–2014
- US military sends live anthrax samples to Britain

GLOBAL

- Combating dengue with infectious disease forecasting
- Final salvos against polio
- Former brain-eating Papua tribe offers clues on deadly diseases
- Global diabetes rates are rising as obesity spreads
- MIDDLE EAST RESPIRATORY SYNDROME
- China: Hong Kong issues 'red alert' against South Korea travel due to MERS
- MERS is not SARS, but control was poor: Seoul ID docs
- MERS virus's ability to jump from animals to humans puzzles scientists
- South Korea reports four new cases of MERS, total 1261
- WHO team urges South Korea to reopen schools as more close in MERS crisis
- WHO: To avoid MERS, don't drink camel urine

INFLUENZA

- CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report
- Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update
- Study: H3N2 viruses evolve quickly, move around the globe more
- Worst U.S. bird flu outbreak in history expands to Michigan

VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

- FDA: Low percentage of pets harbor *Salmonella*
- Maggi vs Delhi Belly: India's food safety conundrum
- Report: States are reporting, solving fewer foodborne outbreaks

Updated Information and Guidelines for Evaluation of Patients for Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) Infection

Healthcare providers and public health officials should maintain awareness of the need to consider MERS-CoV infection in ill persons who have recently traveled from countries in or near the Arabian Peninsula or in the Republic of Korea.

People who meet the updated criteria for patients under investigation should be evaluated for MERS-CoV infection in addition to other common respiratory pathogens and reported immediately to state and local health departments:



WELLNESS

- Can too much sleep make you fat?
- Could single doses be the future of HPV vaccination?
- Even low-level air pollution may cause harm
- Heartburn drugs linked to heart attacks
- Meta-analysis: Cognitive behavioral therapy improves chronic insomnia
- Nuts 'protect against early death'
- Surprising approach to STDs allows prescription drugs for sexual partners
- The downside of treadmill desks

USAFRICOM

- Ebola progress stalls in Guinea and Sierra Leone
- Liberia: Ebola stigma keeps many from work
- Schistosomiasis infects nearly one-fifth of sub-Saharan Africans

USCENTCOM

- UAE and Saudi Arabia report one new MERS case each

USEUCOM

- Casual sex apps threaten to fuel HIV in anti-gay European nations: health experts

USNORTHCOM

- U.S.: Americans may be wasting more food than they think
- U.S.: *Borrelia miyamotoi* disease: An emerging tick-borne illness in the northeastern U.S.
- U.S.: California lawmakers pass vaccine bill amid emotional debate
- U.S.: CDC highlights "disturbing" trends in antimicrobial resistance in the U.S.
- U.S.: Court upholds Texas limits on abortions
- U.S.: EPA to regulate emissions by US airlines
- U.S.: Extensively drug-resistant TB diagnosed in traveler, officials seek contacts
- U.S.: Fracking associated with smaller babies
- U.S.: Increase in reported adverse health effects related to synthetic cannabinoid use — United States, January–May 2015
- U.S.: Government report says fracking is safe
- U.S.: Rotavirus vaccine - gastritis admissions down
- U.S.: Some hospitals marking up prices more than 1,000 percent
- U.S.: Violence from weapons affects one in four kids

USPACOM

- Malaysia dengue fever case count tops 50,000

USSOUTHCOM

- Brazil: Travelers' health - Zika in Brazil
 - Cases of chikungunya in the Americas top 1.5 million
 - Peru: Patient characteristics associated with tuberculosis treatment default
-

Army Vector-borne Disease Report

Operation United Assistance Update

To date, five cases of non-falciparum malaria have been diagnosed in personnel after their return from OUA deployment in Liberia.

These few cases, none of which occurred during deployment, demonstrate success in achieving high levels of adherence to prevention measures during deployment.

Tick-borne Diseases

Of 110 Ixodes ticks tested by the Human Tick Test Program, 37% (n=41) were positive for the Lyme disease pathogen *Borrelia burgdorferi*.

5/110 (4.5%) ticks tested positive for *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*, the causative agent of anaplasmosis.

DRSi Surveillance

Since the beginning of this calendar year, 21 cases of Lyme disease have been reported in Army beneficiaries compared to 32 cases during the same time period in 2014.



U.S. MILITARY

Beyond games, Oculus virtual reality headset finds medical uses

10 June - To help treat soldiers with post-traumatic stress disorder, Jennifer Patterson turned to a gadget typically associated with video games: the virtual reality headset from Oculus, a company Facebook Inc bought for \$2 billion last year. Patterson, an engineering student at the University of Pittsburgh, studied a software used on the prototype of the head-mounted display that creates virtual settings, such as a Middle Eastern-themed city or desert road, that soldiers would otherwise avoid, as a way to help them recover from their PTSD. ... Virtual reality is not new to medicine or therapy, but its affordability is. Doctors and researchers often shell out \$30,000 to more than \$300,000 for medical headsets and simulators while the Oculus is available to developers for \$350 to \$400. [Reuters](#)

New Tricare policy gives free breast pumps

5 June - Troops and military family members are newly able to receive any manual, electric or hospital grade breast pump for free provided they have a prescription under a new coverage policy issued by Tricare Friday. The pumps may be purchased at any store, according to the new policy. If the beneficiary buys it using their prescription from a pharmacy or other medical service equipment provider, there is no out of pocket cost. If it is purchased at any other kind of retailer, the buyer can submit a reimbursement request to Tricare with their receipt and copy of their prescription. [Military.com](#)

Sleep may hold key to PTSD

8 June - Sleeplessness on the battlefield may lay the groundwork for PTSD. Human volunteers who learned that a certain visual signal leads to an electric shock were more likely to respond fearfully to the signal days later when they were sleep-deprived, compared with controls allowed to sleep normally, a researcher said here. The finding suggests that "treating sleep [problems] might enhance treatment of PTSD" or post-traumatic stress disorder, said [Laura Straus](#), a doctoral candidate at the University of California San Diego who led the prospective, parallel group study. It showed that retention of what is called the extinction of fear -- a normal process in which after exposure to some trauma, people "unlearn" the association with circumstances that accompanied the initial event when the same circumstances later occur with no trauma -- was impaired in sleep-deprived individuals. [MedPage Today](#)

Study may help Department of Veteran's Affairs find patients with high risk of suicide

11 June - ... Using Veterans Health Administration (VHA) health system electronic medical record data, Veterans Affairs (VA) and National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) scientists

are receiving precautionary treatment. [Telegraph](#)

[top of page...](#)

GLOBAL

Combating dengue with infectious disease forecasting

5 June - ... U.S. federal agencies have joined together and are seeking scientists to design infectious disease forecasting models to improve efforts to predict dengue epidemics and potentially improve public health outcomes. To support this effort, the Department of Commerce, Department of Defense and Department of Health and Human Services are providing those interested free access to previously unavailable historical dengue surveillance data from Puerto Rico and Peru that they can use to develop infectious disease forecasting models. ... [Participants] will have nearly four months to develop and test the capabilities of their models through September 2, 2015, when final submissions are due for review by an evaluation team lead by representatives of the Department of Health and Human Services. [Infection Control Today](#)

Final salvos against polio

8 June - ... Everyone in [the documentary] "Every Last Child" is fighting a holy war — the vaccinators against the virus, the Taliban against the vaccinators, the police against the Taliban. Above them, outside the frame, is a dark tornado of greater forces: radical Islam versus those it considers Crusaders, the Central Intelligence Agency's actions versus those of the World Health Organization, Western science versus Eastern faith. Every time it touches down in the slums of Karachi and Peshawar, it leaves behind new victims: dead vaccinators and paralyzed children. If polio has disappeared from Africa — and on Aug. 11, it will be a full year since a case has been found on that continent — then the Pakistan-Afghanistan strain will be the world's last. [New York Times](#)

Former brain-eating Papua tribe offers clues on deadly diseases

10 June - Research involving a former brain-eating tribe from Papua New Guinea is helping scientists better understand mad cow disease and other so-called prion conditions and may also offer insights into Parkinson's and dementia. People of the Fore tribe, studied by scientists from Britain and Papua New Guinea, have developed genetic resistance to a mad cow-like disease called kuru, which was spread mostly by the now abandoned ritual of eating relatives' brains at funerals. Experts say the cannibalistic practice led to a major epidemic of kuru prion disease among the Fore people, which at its height in the late 1950s caused the death of up to 2 percent of the population each year. In findings published in the scientific journal *Nature*, the researchers said they had identified the specific prion

What You Need to Know About MERS

Frequently asked questions and answers for the 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.

Links

[A-Z Index](#)

[About USAPHC](#)

[Army Public Health and Health Information Weekly Update Archives](#)

[Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

[Medical Threat Briefings \(AKO\)](#)

[Request USAPHC Services](#)

[USAPHC Resource Materials](#)

[USAPHC Homepage](#)

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resistance gene -- and found that it also protects against all other forms of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD). [Reuters](#)

Global diabetes rates are rising as obesity spreads

8 June - The global diabetes rate has risen by nearly half over the past two decades, according to a new study, as obesity and the health problems it spawns have taken hold across the developing world. The prevalence of diabetes has been rising in rich countries for several decades, largely driven by increases in the rate of obesity. More recently, poorer countries have begun to follow the trend, with major increases in countries like China, Mexico and India. The study, published Monday in the British medical journal *The Lancet*, reported a 45 percent rise in the prevalence of diabetes worldwide from 1990 to 2013. Nearly all the rise was in Type 2, which is usually related to obesity and is the most common form of the disease. [New York Times](#)

MIDDLE EAST RESPIRATORY SYNDROME

China: Hong Kong issues 'red alert' against South Korea travel due to MERS

9 June - Hong Kong issued a "red alert" advisory on Tuesday against non-essential travel to South Korea, where eight new cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) were reported, bringing the total to 95 with seven fatalities. ... A red alert, the second-highest outbound travel advisory on a three-point scale, is defined as a "significant threat" according to the Hong Kong government, and means people should "adjust travel plans" and "avoid non-essential travel." [MSN News](#)

MERS is not SARS, but control was poor: Seoul ID docs

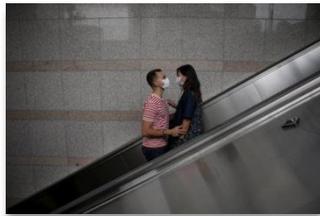
9 June - As South Korea's health ministry announced eight new cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) today, bringing the total diagnosed to 95, infectious disease specialists here took pains to distinguish it from another recent outbreak that struck the region. "The picture is rather different from SARS," Sung-Han Kim, MD, of Asan Medical Center's department of infectious diseases told reporters. ... All of the new cases of MERS in South Korea have been nosocomial, Kim said, consistent with the literature on the virus, in which just 3% of cases spread outside of hospitals. While the virus has an R0 (r nought, or how many cases are generated by a particular case, on average) as high as 6.7 in health care settings, its R0 in the community is 0.7 or less, compared with the 2-3 seen in SARS. Some 20% of SARS cases were acquired outside of the hospital. [MedPage Today](#)

MERS virus's ability to jump from animals to humans puzzles scientists

9 June - ... In the Middle East ... the (MERS) virus continues to jump from camels to humans leading to hospital outbreaks. Heymann, who in 2003 led the global effort to contain severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS, says that authorities in the Middle East should do more to investigate how people catch the virus from camels. Such studies would involve investigating the recent activities of infected people, finding out, for instance, whether they had had contact with animal carcasses or bodily fluids, had consumed fluids such as camel milk or urine, or had been near bat colonies. ... Another outstanding mystery is why human cases have not been detected in African countries with large camel populations: Somalia has 7 million camels, and Kenya 3 million, dwarfing Saudi Arabia's population of 260,000.

[Scientific American](#)

South Korea reports four new cases of MERS, total 126



11 June - South Korea's Health Ministry reported on Friday four new cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) bringing the total to 126, the world's largest outbreak outside Saudi Arabia. Ten people who tested positive for the MERS virus have died although all had serious pre-existing ailments. [Reuters](#)

WHO team urges South Korea to reopen schools as more close in MERS crisis

10 June - A joint South Korean-World Health Organization mission studying an outbreak of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) recommended on Wednesday that schools be reopened, as they were unlikely to spread the disease, just as school boards recommended more be shut. ... The outbreak, the largest outside Saudi Arabia, has fueled public anxiety and hit spending, with thousands in quarantine and the number of schools closing rising to 2,474, including 22 universities. Many people on the streets are wearing face masks, public transport is being disinfected and attendance at movie theaters and baseball games has tumbled. But the joint mission, which began its work on Tuesday, urged the government to consider reopening schools. "Schools have not been linked to transmission of (the virus) in the Republic of Korea or elsewhere," the mission said. [Reuters](#)

WHO: To avoid MERS, don't drink camel urine

8 June - ... While the exact transmission mechanisms remain unclear, it is thought that [Middle East Respiratory Syndrome] has its origins in bats and that camels may serve as a transmission point to humans. And in parts of the Middle East, drinking camel urine is not as uncommon as one might think. In parts of the Arabian Peninsula, the liquid is consumed for its allegedly palliative properties. The Prophet Mohammed is said to have informed his

followers to drink camel urine to cure them of disease. ... Health researchers have also warned that Saudi camel traders may be another possible point of transmission for MERS. By drinking raw camel milk, they warn, the traders may be unwittingly transferring the disease from their herds to the human population. [Foreign Policy](#)

[top of page...](#)

INFLUENZA

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

For 2014-2015 Influenza Season Week 21 ending May 30, 2015:

- During week 21, 6.3% of all deaths reported through the 122-Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to Pneumonia and Influenza. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 6.5% for week 21.
 - Nationwide during week 21, 1.2% of patient visits reported through the U.S. Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) were due to influenza-like illness (ILI). This percentage is below the national baseline of 2.0%.

[FluView](#)

Flu News Europe

This site is currently being blocked at the Army NETCOM level. We hope to get access again shortly.

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For the week ending 12 January 2014:

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

Study: H3N2 viruses evolve quickly, move around the globe more

8 June - Compared with H3N2 influenza—which dominated the flu landscape this past season in the Northern Hemisphere and is often associated with more severe disease—H1N1 and B viruses do not show the same degree of global movement but persist for longer periods locally, according to a mapping study today in *Nature*. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

Worst U.S. bird flu outbreak in history expands to Michigan

8 June - Michigan on Monday said Canadian geese in the state tested positive for a lethal strain of bird flu, bringing the worst outbreak of the disease in U.S. history to a 21st state. Three young geese collected in Sterling Heights, Michigan, about 20 miles (30 km) north of Detroit, were infected with the highly pathogenic H5N2 flu strain, according to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. The state is now focusing on preventing the spread of the disease to poultry, Director Keith Creagh said. Nationwide, more than 46 million chickens and turkeys have been killed by the disease or culled to prevent its spread. Most are in Iowa, the top U.S. egg-producing state, and Minnesota, the nation's top turkey-producing state. [Reuters](#)

[top of page...](#)

VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

FDA: Low percentage of pets harbor *Salmonella*

10 June - About 3% of pet dogs and cats might harbor *Salmonella*, many without showing symptoms, preliminary results of a US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) study show. The FDA's Veterinary Laboratory Investigation and Response Network (Vet-LIRN), as part of a study it plans to publish by the end of next year, sampled 2,965 pet dogs and cats and found "fewer than 100" tested positive for *Salmonella*. That means, at most, 3.3% tested positive. ... Also, the study showed that the dogs that tested positive for *Salmonella* were more likely to have eaten raw pet food, which has a higher risk of containing foodborne pathogens. [CIDRAP Food Outbreak Scan](#) (first item)

Maggi vs Delhi Belly: India's food safety conundrum

8 June - ... In a country where most water sources are too dangerous to drink from, the air in most cities is full of toxins and the soil in some parts is laced with mercury, arsenic and a host of other dangerous chemicals, highly-processed and vacuum-packed food sometimes serves as a consumer safety blanket. For decades Nestle India's Maggi noodles have offered millions of Indians what they thought was a dependable alternative. They were affordable, easy to make and considered a relatively safe option. Now consumers are worried they have assumed wrong with some samples of Maggi noodles testing positive for dangerous levels of lead. Nestle says its own tests have found no elevated levels of lead and that it is still confident the noodles are safe. [Al Jazeera](#)

Report: States are reporting, solving fewer foodborne outbreaks

9 June - States have reported and solved fewer foodborne disease outbreaks in recent years than they did earlier, according to an analysis by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) that covered the decade from 2003 through 2012. From 2009 to 2012, the average number of foodborne outbreaks that states reported to the CDC dropped by about a third compared with the 6 preceding years, the CSPI, a food and nutrition watchdog group, said. ... In addition, the share of outbreaks in which the contaminated food and the contaminant were identified decreased from 41% in 2003 to 29% in 2012, the group said. [CIDRAP Foodborne Disease Scan](#) (second item)

[top of page...](#)

WELLNESS

Can too much sleep make you fat?

9 June - People who altered their normal sleep patterns in order to get up early for school or work may have upset their natural circadian rhythms, which seemed to have an impact on their eating habits, researchers reported here. Study participants with a shortened phase angle associated with dim light melatonin onset -- that is, they went to sleep before the normal time of melatonin release -- ingested an average of 369 calories more compared with others with a longer phase angle ($P=0.027$), said Kelly Baron, PhD, MPH. ... They also found that participants with short phase angle ate more carbohydrates ($P=0.013$) and ate meals more frequently ($P=0.02$). [MedPage Today](#)

Could single doses be the future of HPV vaccination?

10 June - One or two doses of the bivalent human papillomavirus vaccine appear as efficacious as the standard three-dose schedule in preventing cervical HPV type 16/18 infections, according to a post hoc analysis of data from two randomized trials. ... Four-year follow-up of the two studies combined showed that one-time detection of incident HPV 16/18 infection was reduced just as much after one or two doses as after three doses of the vaccine. Protection against persistent HPV infection at 6 and 12 months — a secondary outcome more closely tied to cervical cancer risk — was also similar across the dose schedules. Cross-protection against similar HPV types was not as strong with fewer than three doses, however. [NEJM Journal Watch](#)

Even low-level air pollution may cause harm

5 June - Even low levels of air pollution may not be safe, a new study suggests. The Environmental Protection Agency rates air pollution based on concentrations of particles

smaller than 2.5 microns, or PM2.5. It generally regards as safe an annual average of 12 micrograms per cubic meter of air, or 35 micrograms per cubic meter over a one-day period. Researchers studied all Medicare recipients in New England, using satellite data to rate short- and long-term exposure. They tracked daily air pollution from 2003 to 2008. ... Generally, E.P.A. standards were met. But each 10 microgram per cubic meter increase in PM2.5 was associated with a 2.14 percent increase in death rate over a two-day period, and a 7.52 percent increase over a year. [New York Times](#)

Heartburn drugs linked to heart attacks

10 June - The widely used drugs known as proton pump inhibitors, or P.P.I.'s — gastric reflux preventives like Prilosec and Prevacid — may increase the risk for heart attack, according to analysis of data involving almost three million people. ... There was no association of heart attack with another class of drugs used to treat gastric reflux, H2 blockers like Zantac, Tagamet and Pepcid. ... A significant limitation of the study, in PLOS One, is that P.P.I. usage may be a marker of a sicker patient population, more subject to heart disease in any case. [New York Times](#)

Meta-analysis: Cognitive behavioral therapy improves chronic insomnia

9 June - Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is associated with clinically relevant improvements in patients with chronic insomnia, according to a meta-analysis in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. Researchers reviewed 20 trials of nearly 1200 patients who were randomized to either control groups (e.g., sham therapy, waiting list, no treatment, information) or to a treatment group that included at least three aspects of CBT for insomnia (cognitive therapy, stimulus control, sleep restriction, sleep hygiene, and relaxation). After treatment, CBT was associated with a 19-minute reduction in sleep onset latency, compared with control groups. CBT was also associated with shorter time awake after sleep onset and 10% greater sleep efficiency. [NEJM Journal Watch](#)

Nuts 'protect against early death'

11 June - Eating half a handful of nuts every day could substantially lower the risk of early death, a Dutch study suggests. Previous studies had already indicated a link with cardiovascular health, but this is the first to look at specific nuts and diseases. Maastricht University researchers found a 23% lower chance of death during the 10-year study in people eating at least 10g (0.3oz) of nuts or peanuts a day. There was no benefit for peanut butter, which is high in salt and trans fats. [BBC News](#)

Surprising approach to STDs allows prescription drugs for sexual partners

11 June - ... An innovative approach to treating sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) ... allows patients to snag certain medications for an unlimited number of recent sexual

partners. The strategy aims to keep the spread of such diseases in check. Under this system the patient visit would typically proceed as usual with one twist: After the patient is diagnosed by a medical professional and given a prescription to fill at the pharmacy, the clinician would also write prescriptions for each sexual partner the infected patient may have been involved with in the past 60 days or so. Depending on the state, the patient can give the clinician those partners' names or simply get prescriptions written anonymously.

[Scientific American](#)

The downside of treadmill desks



10 June - The drumbeat of scientific evidence about the health benefits of sitting less and moving more during the day continues to intensify. ... But as attractive as the desks are for health reasons, they must be integrated into a work setting so it seems sensible that they should be tested for their effects on productivity. But surprisingly little research

had examined whether treadmill desks affect someone's ability to get work done. ... The results, when the researchers compared the treadmill walkers with the people sitting at their desks, substantially favored sitting. The people who had walked during the testing performed worse on almost all aspects of thinking, including the ability to concentrate and remember, compared with those who had been seated. And they were much worse at typing, being substantially slower and more error prone than the sitting group.

[New York Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

USAFRICOM

Ebola progress stalls in Guinea and Sierra Leone

10 June - Progress against Ebola in the two countries still battling the disease has stalled, with cases popping up in a wide swath of Guinea and from unidentified transmission chains, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported today in its weekly epidemiologic report on the outbreak. As Liberia passed the 1-month mark of being free of Ebola, neighboring countries last week reported 31 more lab-confirmed cases, up from 25 the week before. The WHO said cases last week were at their highest level since late March. The latest cases lift the overall number of confirmed, probable, and suspected cases to 27,237, including 11,158 deaths, the WHO said. [CIDRAP](#)

Liberia: Ebola stigma keeps many from work

11 June - Burial teams undertook some of the most hazardous work in Liberia's fight against Ebola. With the West African nation now getting relief from the virus, these men and

women say societal stigma is keeping them from getting jobs. At the height of Liberia's Ebola virus outbreak, Emmanuel Johnson left his potato farm and undertook the grim and dangerous job of burying the victims of the virus. ...The World Health Organization declared the outbreak in Liberia over last month. But that has not been good news for Johnson. Though he was never infected, he said the stigma associated with his old job, burying the dead, keeps him from getting work. [VOA](#)

Schistosomiasis infects nearly one-fifth of sub-Saharan Africans

10 June - Using statistical models linked to geographic data, researchers estimate that 163 million people, almost a fifth of the population, in sub-Saharan Africa were infected with schistosomiasis in 2012. ... Their analysis suggests that 163 million people in the large region were infected, amounting to 18.5% of the population in 2012. At 52.8%, Mozambique had the highest prevalence among school-aged children. Countries with risk below 10% included Burundi, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, and Rwanda. [Medscape](#)

[top of page...](#)

USCENTCOM

UAE and Saudi Arabia report one new MERS case each

10 June - As MERS continues to spread in South Korea, two more cases have been reported in the Middle East, one in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and one in Saudi Arabia. ... The illness raises the UAE's MERS count to 75 cases, of which 5 have been reported this year, according to a list maintained by FluTrackers, an infectious disease message board. The country is third in cases, behind Saudi Arabia and South Korea. In Saudi Arabia, the new case involves a 60-year-old Saudi woman in Hofuf, which has accounted for most of the country's cases in May and June. ... The MOH also reported the death of a MERS patient in Jeddah whose illness was reported earlier. He was a 55-year-old foreigner who was not a healthcare worker. Saudi Arabia's MERS tally now stands at 1,029 cases with 452 deaths and 568 recoveries. Eight patients are still in treatment, and one is in home isolation. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

[top of page...](#)

USEUCOM

Casual sex apps threaten to fuel HIV in anti-gay European nations: health experts

10 June – A growing use of casual sex apps in European countries where discrimination against homosexuality is rife, threatens to fuel a rising number of HIV cases in the region, health researchers said on Wednesday. Gay and bisexual men in countries with high levels of homophobia used to have fewer sexual partners than those in other countries but that is changing with new technologies like mobile phone apps, according to a study in the journal AIDS. But at the same time gay and bisexual men in these countries are less likely to use HIV services because of fear of discrimination and violence upon disclosure of their sexuality. As a result, they know little about HIV and are less likely to use condoms or be diagnosed with the virus, putting them at greater risk, the study said. [Reuters](#)

[top of page...](#)

USNORTHCOM

U.S.: Americans may be wasting more food than they think

11 June - Most Americans are aware that food waste is a problem, are concerned about it, and say they work to reduce their own waste, but nearly three quarters believe that they waste less food than the national average, new research suggests. The findings ... are significant given that 31 to 40 percent of the American food supply goes to waste, primarily in homes, stores and restaurants. The top foods wasted, by weight, are fruits and vegetables, due in part to their perishability and bulk. Food waste costs Americans \$161.6 billion annually. [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News](#)

U.S.: *Borrelia miyamotoi* disease: An emerging tick-borne illness in the northeastern U.S.

8 June - Although an earlier serosurvey suggested that infection with *Borrelia miyamotoi* may be relatively common in the northeastern states, only a few cases have been identified in this country since 2013, when it was first reported. Now, in a case series, researchers describe the clinical spectrum and laboratory findings for this disease. [NEJM Journal Watch](#)

U.S.: California lawmakers pass vaccine bill amid emotional debate

10 June - California lawmakers on Tuesday approved a hotly contested bill that would impose one of the strictest vaccination laws in the country, after five hours of highly emotional testimony that brought hundreds of opponents to the Capitol. SB277 is intended to boost vaccination rates after a measles outbreak at Disneyland that sickened more than 100 in the U.S. and Mexico. It has prompted the most contentious legislative debate of the year with thousands of opponents taking to social media and legislative hearings to protest the legislation. [NBC Bay Area](#)

U.S.: CDC highlights "disturbing" trends in antimicrobial resistance in the U.S.

10 June - *Salmonella* Typhi, which causes typhoid fever, is increasingly becoming resistant to quinolones, according to a CDC report released Tuesday. The following are some of the trends in antimicrobial resistance in the U.S.:

- The proportion of *Salmonella* Typhi resistant to quinolones rose from 53% in 2008–2012 to 67% in 2013. The bacteria are becoming increasingly resistant to ciprofloxacin.
- Multidrug resistance of a common *Salmonella* serotype (type 1 4,[5],12:i:-) more than doubled from 18% in 2011 to 46% in 2013. Resistant illness has been tied to exposure to animals and consumption of beef or pork.
- The prevalence of *Shigella* resistant to ciprofloxacin doubled in 2013, and resistance to azithromycin and nalidixic acid seems to be increasing. [NEJM Journal Watch](#)

U.S.: Court upholds Texas limits on abortions

9 June - A federal appellate court upheld some of the toughest provisions of a Texas abortion law on Tuesday, putting about half of the state's remaining abortion clinics at risk of permanently shutting their doors and leaving the nation's second-most populous state with fewer than a dozen clinics across its more than 267,000 square miles. There were 41 when the law was passed. Abortion providers and women's rights groups vowed a quick appeal to the United States Supreme Court, setting the stage for what could be the most far-reaching ruling in years on when legislative restrictions pose an "undue burden" on the constitutional right to an abortion. [New York Times](#)

U.S.: EPA to regulate emissions by US airliners

10 June - The Obama administration proposed Wednesday to regulate aircraft emissions in much the same way as power plants, saying they are a threat to human health because they contain pollutants that help cause global warming. Using its authority under The Clean Air Act, the Environmental Protection Agency finding of endangerment to human health clears the way for possible U.S. adoption of international emissions standards. [VOA](#)

U.S.: Extensively drug-resistant TB diagnosed in traveler, officials seek contacts

10 June - A case of extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB) in a woman who flew from India to Chicago in April — and then traveled within the U.S. — has prompted a search for potential contacts. After arriving in Chicago, the woman traveled to Missouri and Tennessee, the New York Times reports. She later returned to Chicago and went to the hospital, where she was diagnosed with XDR-TB — roughly 7 weeks after first entering the U.S. She was taken to a National Institutes of Health hospital in Maryland on Friday, where she is being treated in isolation. CDC spokesperson Tom Skinner offered reassurance in an interview with Reuters: "This is a very serious illness, but it's difficult to transmit," he said. "You have to have prolonged close contact with someone with active tuberculosis to get it."

[NEJM Journal Watch](#)

U.S.: Fracking associated with smaller babies

8 June - A new study has found an association between hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, and smaller babies. The scientists used data on 15,451 live births in southwest Pennsylvania from 2007 to 2010. They categorized the mothers by how close they lived to gas wells and the concentration of wells in the area. Babies born in the highest exposure areas were not at higher risk of being born prematurely, but they were 34 percent more likely to be small for gestational age than those born in areas of least exposure. The analysis, published in PLOS One, was observational and did not prove causality. [New York Times](#)

U.S.: Increase in reported adverse health effects related to synthetic cannabinoid use — United States, January–May 2015

12 June - On April 6, 2015, CDC received notification of an increase in telephone calls to U.S. poison centers related to synthetic cannabinoid use. ... [The] National Poison Data System, ... reported that adverse health effects or concerns about possible adverse health effects related to synthetic cannabinoid use increased 330% from 349 in January 2015 to 1,501 in April 2015. Synthetic cannabinoids ... are sold under a variety of names (e.g., synthetic marijuana, spice, K2, black mamba, and crazy clown) and can be sold in retail outlets as herbal products. Law enforcement agencies have regulated a number of these substances; however, manufacturers of synthetic cannabinoids frequently change the formulation to avoid detection and regulation. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

U.S.: Government report says fracking is safe

5 June - One of its most controversial announcements in years, the US government's environmental regulator announced on Thursday that fracking is no cause for alarm. Hydraulic fracturing or "fracking" as it is commonly referred to is an oil extraction process from shale rock. It's generally considered to be faster and more efficient than more

traditional oil drilling. ... Environmentalists, however, argue the process contaminates local water supplies with chlorine, methane and other chemicals. But in a new report, the US government's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) says they are not concerned. "We did not find evidence that these mechanisms have led to widespread, systemic impacts on drinking water resources in the United States," their assessment concluded. [Al Jazeera](#)

U.S.: Rotavirus vaccine - gastritis admissions down

9 June - Since the introduction of the rotavirus vaccine, rotavirus hospitalizations for young children have dropped significantly from mean pre-vaccine levels, according to state inpatient databases comprising data from nearly three-quarters of U.S. children. Following the routine rotavirus vaccination of U.S. children in 2006, the annual hospitalization rate for both rotavirus and acute gastroenteritis in children under 5 years of age declined significantly every year from 2008 to 2012, reported Eyal Leshem, MD, of the Centers for Disease Control, and colleagues. [MedPage Today](#)

U.S.: Some hospitals marking up prices more than 1,000 percent

8 June - The 50 hospitals in the United States with the highest markup of prices over their actual costs are charging out-of-network patients and the uninsured, as well as auto and workers' compensation insurers, more than 10 times the costs allowed by Medicare, new research suggests. It's a markup of more than 1,000 percent for the same medical services. The findings ... show that the combination of a lack of regulation of hospital charges in the United States and no market competition is leading to price-gouging that trickles down to nearly all consumers, whether they have health insurance or not, and plays a role in the rise of overall health spending. [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News](#)

U.S.: Violence from weapons affects one in four kids

8 June - More than one-quarter of all children nationwide have been exposed to violence involving a weapon, according to the results of a telephone-based survey. Over 17.5 million children (26.5% of the sample) ages 2 to 17 have either been victimized by weapons, such as a knife, gun, stick, or rock, or witnessed victimization with a weapon, reported Kimberly J. Mitchell, PhD, of the University of New Hampshire, and colleagues. Of those surveyed, 2 million children (12.5%) experienced direct victimization, while 13.1% reported indirect victimization. [MedPage Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

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Malaysia dengue fever case count tops 50,000

10 June - The number of cases of the mosquito borne viral illness, dengue fever, has topped the 50,000 mark as Malaysian health officials put the tally at 50,152 as of June 9. Of this total, 138 fatalities have been confirmed as of May 23. Selangor state has reported 58 percent of all cases (29,055) while seven other states including Kuala Lumpur have seen greater than 1000 cases. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

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Brazil: Travelers' health - Zika in Brazil

9 June - On May 14, 2015, the Ministry of Health in Brazil confirmed 16 locally transmitted cases of Zika. Local transmission means that mosquitoes in Brazil have been infected with Zika and are spreading it to people. Cases have been reported in the states of Bahia and Rio Grande do Norte . CDC recommends that travelers to Brazil protect themselves from mosquito bites. [CDC](#)

Cases of chikungunya in the Americas top 1.5 million

8 June - A spike in reported chikungunya cases pushed the outbreak total in the Americas past the 1.5-million-case mark, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) said on Jun 5 in its weekly update. The region had 37,358 new chikungunya cases, bringing the outbreak total to 1,501,273. The numbers again include a big jump in Colombia, which has been the outbreak hot spot for weeks, although many nations have not reported for a month or more. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

Peru: Patient characteristics associated with tuberculosis treatment default

5 June - Although tuberculosis (TB) is usually curable with antibiotics, poor adherence to medication can lead to increased transmission, drug resistance, and death. Prior research has shown several factors to be associated with poor adherence, but this problem remains a substantial barrier to global TB control. We studied patients in a high-incidence district of Lima, Peru to identify factors associated with premature termination of treatment. ... Of the 1233 patients studied, 127 (10%) defaulted from treatment. Patients who defaulted were more likely to have used illegal drugs (OR = 4.78, 95% CI: 3.05-7.49), have multidrug-

resistant TB (OR = 3.04, 95% CI: 1.58-5.85), not have been tested for HIV (OR = 2.30, 95% CI: 1.50-3.54), drink alcohol at least weekly (OR = 2.22, 95% CI: 1.40-3.52), be underweight (OR = 2.08, 95% CI: 1.21-3.56), or not have completed secondary education (OR = 1.55, 95% CI: 1.03-2.33). [PLOS](#)

[top of page...](#)

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