

12 October 2012

# Army Public Health Weekly Update

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U.S. Army Public Health Command



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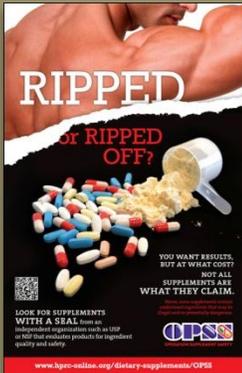
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## Operation Supplement Safety

**OPSS** is a joint initiative between the Human Performance Resource Center and the DoD to educate service members and retirees, their family members, leaders, healthcare providers, and DoD civilians about dietary supplements and how to choose supplements wisely.

New **OPSS campaign products** are now available in the **Health Information Products eCatalog**.



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### U.S. MILITARY

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## 6 promising advances to save soldiers' brains

4 October - ...Here are six promising TBI-related technologies they might consider, under development by U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command (USAMRMC).

## Multistate Meningitis Outbreak Investigation

CDC is aware that New England Compounding Center (NECC) has voluntarily expanded its recall to include all products currently in circulation that were compounded at and distributed from its facility in Framingham, Massachusetts.

CDC's guidance to patients has not changed as a result of this voluntary recall. Patients who feel ill and are concerned about whether they received a medication from NECC at one of the affected facilities should contact their physicians.

Clinicians should actively contact patients who have received medicines associated with three lots of preservative-free methylprednisolone acetate (80mg/ml) recalled on September 26. The potentially contaminated injections were given starting May 21, 2012.



[Click to view case count map.](#)

**Head gear in a pill?...**A fighter could swallow such a pill before the risk of head trauma even crops up. The drug would protect the neurological tissue in the event of a blow to the head...

**A cocktail for safety...** The goal of USAMRMC's Neuroprotective Drug Combination Therapy Strategy Program is to identify possible drug combinations that work together to improve TBI treatment and results...

**Rapid bio-marker testing** A blood tester for the field could instantly ID neurological trauma.

**Automated eye exams – via binoculars...**An easy to use Automated Binocular Vision Tester that will spare warfighters the visit to the optometrist -- and ensures they are checked.

**A blast exposure-meter...** A "blast dosimeter"... will objectively measure whether serious or even life-threatening exposure has occurred.

**BrainScope...** A smartphone-like device that records brain electrical activity without emitting radiation. It then uses advanced algorithms to quantify and characterize electrical activity in the brain. It is intended to assist in making vital triage decisions and help identify concussions. [Fox News](#)

## Health care encounters for injuries associated with a gun mechanism or component, U.S. Armed Forces

September 2012 - ...During January 2010 through July 2012, 400 active component U.S. service members were treated for injuries during 419 medical encounters for which the code E928.7 was recorded. Approximately 6 percent of such encounters (n=26) were hospitalizations. Most encounters involved members of the Army (60.1%), and the Army and Marine Corps had much higher overall rates of injuries than the other service branches. The annual average number of encounters per month increased 49 percent from 2010 (10.7/month) to 2011 (15.9/month) but declined slightly during the first seven months of 2012 (14.3/month). The vast majority (91%) of medical encounters for injuries due to gun mechanisms were reported by military medical facilities in the United States; 7 percent of encounters occurred in Europe; Japan and Korea accounted for <2 percent each. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

## New criteria prompt resubmission of PTSD claims

10 October - Retirees who have been denied claims related to post-traumatic stress disorder are being encouraged to submit their claims again because the Army is using new, and more refined, criteria to assess those claims... [Army Times Prime](#)

## Soldiers' mental health: an emergency



Anyone who believes that our country's methods are adequate for helping veterans re-adapt to society as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan wind down need look no further than at the following data: In the year 2012, 211 members of the United States Armed

## Future Uses of the Department of Defense Joint Pathology Center Biorepository

In 2005, the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommended that the AFIP be closed, and its biorepository was transferred to the newly created Joint Pathology Center. During the transition, the Department of Defense asked the IOM to provide advice on operating the biorepository, managing its collection, and determining appropriate future use of specimens for consultation, education, and research.

In this report, the IOM proposes a series of protocols, standards, safeguards, and guidelines that could help to ensure that this national treasure continues to be available to researchers in the years to come, while protecting the privacy of the people who provided the materials and maintaining the security of their personal information.



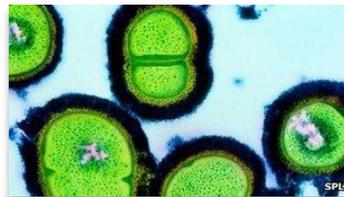
Forces took their own lives. At least 53 of them committed suicide in July and August. That is more than the total number of battlefield deaths in those months. This is a crisis that has gone largely unaddressed in this political cycle, and it's unacceptable. The numbers are a devastating wake-up call to a healthcare emergency that demands leadership and a new approach. Military brass, medical experts and elected officials are well aware of one cause of this epidemic: severe mental illnesses caused by Post-Traumatic Stress, often stemming from the unseen wound of this war, Traumatic Brain Injuries. [New York Daily News](#)

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## GLOBAL

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### Fears over risk of air transmission of superbugs



10 October - The extent to which hospital superbugs are being transmitted via the air needs to be investigated, experts say. It comes after a Leeds University study has added to a growing body of evidence about the ability of bacteria to float on air currents. Researchers carried out lab

tests on a bacteria associated with MRSA and found it could travel up to 3.5m (11ft). And they said the findings could have implications for the design and organization of hospitals. The news is not surprising - it is already well established that bacteria can be transmitted this way - but the focus on MRSA bacteria has prompted calls for further work to establish how significant this could be in the fight against hospital infections. [BBC News](#)

### GSK and Aeras to test TB vaccine in Africa, India

10 October - GlaxoSmithKline and the non-profit biotech group Aeras are to assess an experimental tuberculosis vaccine in "proof of concept" tests in Africa and India, marking a step forward in the hunt for new ways to prevent the killer disease. The partners plan to launch a mid-stage Phase IIb clinical study in Kenya, South Africa and India next year, following successful initial tests with the GSK product, Aeras said on Wednesday.

[Reuters](#)

### Many millions suffer from depression



9 October - Wednesday (October 10th) is World Mental Health Day. The World Health Organization is using the occasion to call for an end to stigma against those who suffer from depression and other mental disorders. Dr. Shekhar Saxena said more than 350 million people around

the world suffer from depression. "When we say depression, we are talking about the mental disorder, which is very specific and is much beyond the usual feelings of sadness that everybody gets once in a while." [VOA](#)

## Permethrin-Treated Army Combat Uniforms

To better protect Soldiers from biting insects, the Army will begin fielding Army Combat Uniforms (ACUs) that have been factory treated with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) -approved insect repellent /insecticide permethrin.

Permethrin has been used to treat uniforms since 1991, but this new process will provide better protection for Soldiers. Factory treatment with permethrin has been available in civilian clothes for some time, and was adopted by the Marine Corps in 2007. And it has been used in the Iraq and Afghanistan operations since 2010. **STAND-TO!**

## Novel coronavirus infection – WHO update

10 October - No new cases of infection with the novel coronavirus have been reported since 22 September 2012. So far, after careful follow-up of close contacts of the two confirmed cases, and a heightened state of global surveillance, there is no evidence of human-to-human transmission of the virus. The governments of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Kingdom, are continuing their work to gain a better understanding of the disease and the likely source of infection. WHO is supporting the national authorities in their ongoing investigation, and has deployed experts to Saudi Arabia and Qatar as part of an international team. These and future epidemiological and scientific studies will lead to a better understanding of the novel coronavirus. WHO continues to work with the ministries of health and other international partners to coordinate actions for timely detection, rapid diagnosis and case management of infection caused by the novel coronavirus, should the need arise. [WHO](#)

## One in eight of world population going hungry, U.N.



9 October - One out of every eight people in the world is chronically undernourished, the United Nations' food agencies said on Tuesday, and aid groups warned that rising food prices could reverse gains in the fight against hunger. In a report on food insecurity, the UN agencies said 868 million people were hungry in 2010-2012, or about 12.5 percent of the world's population, down more sharply than previously estimated from about 1 billion, or 18.6 percent in 1990-92. The new figures, based on a revised calculation method and more up-to-date data, are lower than the last estimates for recent years that pegged the number of hungry people at 925 million in 2010 and 1.02 billion in 2009. [Reuters](#)

## Trader turned neuroscientist explores risky highs

10 October - When John Coates was on a winning streak during his days as a trader at Deutsche Bank and Goldman Sachs, the narcotic-like "high" he experienced was so powerful he was determined to find out more. So after 13 years on trading floors on Wall Street he moved to the neuroscience labs of Rockefeller University in New York and of Britain's Cambridge University... What he's come up with, after several years reading up on animal studies and some interesting experiments with spit, is that risk taking is driven by a "winner effect" - a hormonal mechanism in which each competitive victory leads to more wins... "You become euphoric, delusional, you have less need for sleep, you have racing thoughts, an expanded appetite for risk, and less stringent requirements in the risk and reward trade-off," said Coates. "Basically, you become a rogue trader." Since publishing some initial scientific studies exploring these traits in traders, Coates says he has been contacted by researchers analyzing politicians, soldiers, and even sports people who believe his work can shed light on theirs. [Reuters](#)

## 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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## Typhoid vaccine failure warning

8 October - More than 700,000 people recently immunised against typhoid may not have full protection because of a dud vaccine that has now been recalled, say experts. Manufacturer Sanofi Pasteur MSD has recalled 88% of its stock - 16 batches - of Typhim Vi vaccine because tests found some samples were too weak. Anyone immunised with the vaccine since January 2011 could be affected. Officials stress that the vaccine was safe and posed no health threat. But it could mean as many as 729,606 people who potentially received the affected vaccine are not fully immunised against typhoid, according to the body that regulates drugs in the UK, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). Experts say people should not get revaccinated but should take precautions against typhoid when abroad. [BBC News](#)

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## INFLUENZA

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### CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During the week ending September 29, 6.3% of all deaths reported through the 122-Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to pneumonia and influenza. This percentage was at the epidemic threshold of 6.8% for week 26. From July 12 through October 4, 2012, a total of 306 infections with influenza A (H3N2) variant (H3N2v) viruses have been reported from ten states. No new cases been reported since last week's update. [FluView](#)

### Debate heats up about contentious bird flu research



9 October - What was supposed to be a 60-day moratorium on certain experiments involving lab-altered bird flu has now lasted more than eight months. And there's no clear end in sight. Researchers still disagree on how to best manage the risks posed by mutant forms of highly pathogenic H5N1 bird flu. The altered viruses are contagious between ferrets, which are the lab stand-in for humans. The fear is that these germs could potentially cause a deadly flu pandemic in people if they ever escaped the lab. The journal *mBio* has [now published](#) six commentaries from key players in the debate. [NPR](#)

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

During week 39 ( 24–30 September 2012):

- Low influenza activity and absence of geographic spread (the lowest categories) reported by all reporting countries.

- No influenza virus was detected in sentinel samples from 17 countries reporting virological data.

- As in previous weeks, no hospitalized severe influenza cases were reported.

Although the 2012–2013 influenza season is approaching, there is no evidence as yet that transmission has started in Europe. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

## Google.org: Flu Trends

10 October - Estimates of flu activity based on flu-related Internet search queries indicate that the level of flu activity in the northern hemisphere ranges from minimal to moderate with the highest level in Russia. The level of flu activity in the southern hemisphere ranges from minimal to low. [Google.org Flu Trends](#)

## More evidence flu shot is safe for the egg-allergic



9 October - With flu season approaching, a new study offers more reassurance that kids with egg allergies can be safely vaccinated against the virus. "I think parents of children with egg allergy should be reassured about the safety of the influenza vaccine for their child, and understand that the

benefits are likely to outweigh any risks," Dr. Lynda Schneider, director of the allergy program at Boston Children's Hospital, told Reuters Health by email. Because the flu vaccine is grown in chicken eggs, there have traditionally been concerns about the safety of flu shots for people with egg allergies, most of whom are young children. But today's vaccine has only tiny traces of egg protein, and studies have been showing that kids with egg allergies can be vaccinated without any serious reaction. [Reuters](#)

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

For the week ending 6 October 2012:

Influenza: There was a cluster of influenza A/H1N1(09) cases at MCRD Parris Island in mid-September

Adenovirus: Type 14 adenovirus is present at MCRD Parris Island.

FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates were at or below expected values. [NHRC Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)

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## VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

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### Canada, U.S.: FSIS nearly triples beef covered by E. coli warning

4 October - The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently nearly tripled the amount of Canadian beef covered by an earlier public health warning about possible Escherichia coli O157:H7 contamination, according to an Oct 5 update from the agency's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). The amount of beef recalled by Canada-based XL Foods has expanded several times since early September when the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) launched its probe of the tainted beef. The recall now covers all raw meat produced on Aug 24, 27, 28, 29, and Sep 5. The FSIS said it previously reported that US firms received about 890,000 pounds of recalled boneless beef trim from XL Foods, but after conducting recall effectiveness checks, it estimates that US companies received 1.1 million pounds of trim and 1.4 million points of primal and subprimal cuts from the Canadian company.

[CIDRAP](#)

### Germany: Frozen strawberries suspected in big gastroenteritis outbreak

4 October - German health officials suspect that a single batch of frozen strawberries is the source of a gastroenteritis outbreak in Germany that has sickened more than 11,000 children at schools and daycare centers, according to an Oct 6 Associated Press (AP) story. Officials from the Robert Koch Institute, the country's national disease control agency, said on Oct 5 that epidemiologic studies show a strong connection between consuming foods prepared with the strawberries and illnesses involving vomiting and diarrhea. Authorities added that they have more evidence that norovirus is the cause, though they haven't completely ruled out other pathogens, the AP reported. A spokesman for the German agriculture ministry said the strawberries came from outside the European Union. [CIDRAP](#)

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## WELLNESS

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### 2C-I or 'Smiles': The new killer drug every parent should know about

20 September - ... 2C-I--known by its eerie street name "Smiles"--has become a serious problem in the Grand Forks area, according to local police. [Overdoses](#) of the drug have also been reported in Indiana and Minnesota. But if the internet is any indication, Smiles is on the rise all over the country. "At the moment I am completely and fully submerged, if you can't tell by my eyes, in a psychedelic world known as 2C-I," one young man with a scruffy chin

beard and dilated pupils effuses on a video posted in October of 2011. He's one of dozens of users providing YouTube "reports" of their experiences on the synthetic drug. Smile's effects have been called a combination of MDMA and LSD, only far more potent. Users have reported a speedy charge along with intense visual and aural hallucinations that can last anywhere from hours to days. [Shine from Yahoo](#)

## Are we throwing away 'expired' medications too soon?



8 October - Have you ever reached into your medicine cabinet and pulled out a bottle with a faded label, only to discover that the aspirin or prescription drugs inside were past their date? Did you play it safe and toss the bottle into the trash? If so, you might have been overly cautious. A new laboratory analysis of eight prescription drugs that expired between 28 and 40 years ago has found that most have remained just as potent as they were on the day they were made. Overall, the eight drugs included 14 different active ingredients, including aspirin, codeine and hydrocodone. In 86% of cases, the study found, the amount of active ingredient present in the drugs was at least 90% of the amount indicated on the label. That falls within the range deemed acceptable by the Food and Drug Administration. The agency allows "reasonable variation" in the strength of any given batch of prescription drugs, generally requiring that drugs contain between 90% and 110% of the stated active ingredient. [CNN](#)

## Are you likely to respond to exercise?

10 October - Research [has confirmed](#) that people's physiological responses to exercise vary wildly. Now a new genetic test promises to tell you whether you are likely to benefit aerobically from exercise. The science behind the test is promising, but is this information any of us really needs to know? The new test, which is being sold by a British company called [XRGenomics](#), is available to anyone through the company's Web site and involves rubbing inside your cheek with a supplied swab and returning the tissue sample to the company. Results are then available within a few weeks. It is based on a body of research led by James Timmons, a professor of systems biology at Loughborough University in England, and colleagues at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Louisiana and other institutions. [New York Times](#)

## Breast Cancer Awareness Month: Study looks at how confidence and exercise plays a role



9 October - As [Breast Cancer Awareness Month](#) is underway, a new study sheds light on a unique issue for older breast cancer survivors - staying motivated to exercise. According to scientists from Oregon State University, more than 40 percent of older breast cancer survivors don't get enough exercise after leaving their treatment program. Since regular exercise can reduce the risk of the disease's recurrence, experts say it is crucial for women to get moving after treatment. [New York Daily News](#)

## 'Like this page' to prevent sexually transmitted infections

9 October– Sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention messages delivered by Facebook can be effective in promoting condom use among young adults in the short term, a new study has found. Few students and young adults receive comprehensive sexuality education or guidance on HIV and other STI risks. Social media may provide a viable alternative to promote safe sex using online networks of friends, the study published in the November issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* reports. [EurekAlert](#)

## Mercury exposure in womb linked to ADHD symptoms

8 October - Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) appears to be on the rise in the United States, and in the search for explanations researchers have begun to scrutinize fetal exposure to a wide range of toxins, including lead, tobacco, pesticides, and chemicals such as PCBs. Mercury, a metal that affects the nervous system, is among the latest suspects to be investigated. And in a [new study](#), researchers report that children who are exposed to higher levels of mercury in the womb are more likely to exhibit attention problems, hyperactivity, and other ADHD symptoms when they're 8 years old. The study included roughly 600 mothers and children from New Bedford, Massachusetts. The researchers measured prenatal mercury exposure by analyzing samples of the mothers' hair shortly after birth, and found that a child's risk of ADHD symptoms increased by 40% to 70% past a certain exposure threshold (1 microgram per gram). The association was seen primarily in boys, which wasn't unexpected, since previous research has shown that boys seem to respond differently than girls to chemicals that disrupt the endocrine system. [CNN](#)

## New vending machines will display soda calorie counts

10 October - Posting calorie counts on vending machines is an idea I like much better than New York City's [ban on large-sized sodas](#) to help curb the overconsumption of sugary beverages. Starting in 2013, major soda and sugary beverage producers like Coca-Cola, PepsiCo and Dr. Pepper Snapple Group will display the calorie counts of each beverage on the vending machine so consumers are aware of the number of calories in each container, according to Time magazine. This is an effort to get consumers to choose lower-calorie beverages and perhaps make a dent in the obesity epidemic. [MNN](#)

## Redefining medicine with apps and iPads



8 October - ... The history of medicine is defined by advances born of bioscience. But never before has it been driven to this degree by digital technology. The proliferation of gadgets, apps and Web-based information has given clinicians — especially young ones like Dr. Rajkomar, who is 28 — a black bag of new tools: new ways to diagnose symptoms and treat patients, to obtain and share information, to think about what it means to be both a doctor and a patient. And it has created something of a generational divide. Older doctors admire, even envy, their young colleagues' ease with new technology. But they worry that the human connections that lie at the core of medical practice are at risk of being lost. [New York Times](#)

## Walking for heart health? Speed it up, study suggests

8 October - Fast walking and jogging every day can cut your risk of heart disease and stroke by as much as 50 percent, but an hour's walk every day does not make a difference, according to a new Danish study. The researchers said their findings suggest that exercise intensity rather than duration is what matters in protecting against metabolic syndrome, which refers to a combination of factors -- such as high blood pressure, elevated blood sugar levels, abnormal blood fat levels and abdominal obesity -- that increase the risk of heart disease, diabetes and stroke. The study was published Oct. 8 in the online journal *BMJ Open*. [Medline Plus](#)

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### USAFRICOM

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## Africa: Gavi partners help protect 50 million young people from seasonal meningitis

4 October - Efforts to eliminate meningitis in 26 at-risk countries will take a major step forward over the next three months as 50 million people receive crucial vaccinations in seven African countries. Thanks to concerted efforts by members of the GAVI Alliance including the Serum Institute of India, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, and the Meningitis Vaccine Project, the seven countries will be able to launch large-scale campaigns to ensure babies, children and young adults receive the meningitis A vaccine by the end of December. "Meningitis takes a terrible toll on the people living in vulnerable parts of Africa every year. It is a painful disease which can kill quickly and often leaves victims with disabilities that will blight their lives," said Dr Seth Berkley, CEO of the GAVI Alliance. "GAVI support for meningitis vaccination campaigns across Africa is protecting the lives of millions of young people at risk from the illness." [All Africa](#)

## Africa: Study - HIV, food insecurity closely linked



5 October - A new study says Africa suffers from a co-epidemic of HIV/AIDS and food insecurity. Researchers say treatment and better nutrition go hand-in-hand in controlling the epidemic. Dr. Sheri Weiser said when people fall ill due to HIV, accessing food becomes "progressively more difficult." "Food insecurity and HIV are interacting like a vicious cycle to worsen the severity as well as enhancing vulnerability to the other condition," she said. [VOA](#)

## Democratic Republic of Congo: Ebola outbreak, WHO update

8 October - As of 7 October 2012, 49 cases (31 laboratory confirmed, 18 probable) with Ebola haemorrhagic fever (EHF) have been reported in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Of these, 24 have been fatal (10 confirmed, 14 probable). The cases reported are from Isiro and Viadana health zones in Haut-Uélé district in Province Orientale. The Ministry of Health (MoH) continues to work with partners, under the National Task Force to identify all possible chains of transmission of the illness and ensure that appropriate measures are taken to interrupt transmission and stop the outbreak. The task force includes Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF); the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC); US Agency for International Development (USAID); US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and WHO. [WHO](#)

## Sierra Leone: Cholera, WHO update

8 October - The Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MOHS) continues to work closely with partners at the national and international levels to step up response to the ongoing cholera outbreak. Twelve of the 13 districts in Sierra Leone have been affected since the beginning of the year. In the last 2 months, remarkable progress has been made in controlling the outbreak. A steady decline in daily reported cases continues to be observed. As of the 2 October 2012 the national cumulative number for all twelve districts is 20 736 cases, including 280 deaths (case fatality rate or CFR=1.35%). The cumulative CFR declined from an average of 3.2% in July 2012 to below 0.5% in September 2012. Two (2) deaths have been reported in the last 8 days (since 23 September 2012). The western area of the country where the capital city of Freetown is located has been the most affected location with more than 50% of total cases. [WHO](#)

## Zimbabwe HIV activists push for government accountability

10 October - AIDS activists in Zimbabwe are demanding the government account for millions of dollars it is raising through an AIDS-related tax. The activists defied police orders and marched to a government agency they accuse of corruption. Hundreds of activists dressed in T-shirts with the words "HIV Positive" marched to the Harare offices of Zimbabwe's National AIDS Council, a government body managing the three-percent AIDS levy collected from all workers. An HIV-positive man in his 40s, Douglas Muzanenhamo, said he joined the march to protest a lack of anti-retroviral drugs, crucial for prolonging the life of HIV carriers. [VOA](#)

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## Afghanistan and Pakistan: Progress toward Poliomyelitis eradication, January 2011–August 2012

5 October - In 1988, the World Health Assembly resolved to eradicate polio, which led to the establishment of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI). In 2012, however, the transmission of indigenous wild poliovirus (WPV) continued uninterrupted in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nigeria (1,2), leading the World Health Assembly to declare completion of polio eradication a programmatic emergency for global public health (3). This report updates previous reports (1,4,5) and describes polio eradication activities and progress in Afghanistan and Pakistan during January 2011–August 2012, as of September 9, 2012.

[Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

## Egypt: Mumps

9 October - An outbreak of the viral infection, mumps, has spread through schools nationwide in Egypt, according to an Egypt Independent report on Mon 8 Oct 2012. The number of cases reported as of Monday [8 Oct 2012] is 583; this is up from 157 cases reported just one week earlier. Despite the surge in mumps cases, a spokesman for the Education Ministry said that no schools have been closed due to the outbreak. According to the report, Giza Governorate has so far reported the most number of cases, with 240. Minya has reported 95, Beni Suef 48, and Fayoum 38, with Cairo reporting only 12. Last week, Health Ministry undersecretary Amr Qandil projected rising numbers of mumps cases this winter season, but assured it would not be a public health emergency. [ProMED-mail](#)

## Iraq's endless humanitarian crisis

9 October - ...The ranks of Iraqi professionals are attenuated also by targeted assassinations. More than two thousand doctors and nurses and over four hundred Iraqi academics were murdered between 2003 and 2012. Thousands more have fled due to death threats and retaliatory acts of revenge, often carried out because of their actual or alleged ties to the former Baath regime. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, more than half of the thirty-four thousand doctors registered in Iraq in 1990 had left the country by 2008. Because of the rise in assassinations of Iraqi journalists, the country slid from the 130th to the 152nd among the nations categorized in the 2011–2012 World Press Freedom Index. [The National Interest](#)

## Pakistan introduces Glaxo pneumonia vaccine

9 October – [Pakistan](#) has become the first country in South Asia to introduce a vaccine against the deadly pneumococcal disease in children, with GlaxoSmithKline's Synflorix selected for the programme. Worldwide more than 1.3 million children under the age of five are killed each year by pneumonia and in Pakistan it accounts for almost 20 percent of child deaths, according to the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI). The move comes at a time when healthcare experts are still struggling to get polio vaccination accepted in parts of Pakistan, one of the few countries where it is still endemic. [Reuters](#)

## Pakistan, Karachi: Brain-eating amoeba kills 10



9 October - A rare brain-eating amoeba is responsible for at least 10 deaths in the Pakistani city of Karachi in recent months, health officials believe. The source of the parasite is not yet known, but it is thought victims may have been exposed to it when using water to rinse their nasal passages. The amoeba, *Naegleria Fowleri*, lives in warm water and kills its victims by destroying brain tissue. Officials are now increasing the amount of chlorine in the public water supply. The deaths are in various locations across Karachi, Pakistan's biggest city. [BBC News](#)

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### USEUCOM

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## England offering free HIV treatment for visitors



9 October - We're just catching up with our U.K. reading list, so we're a bit late with this one. But it's worth noting that as of Oct. 1, England's National Health Service is providing treatment for HIV free of charge to visitors from overseas. [NHS guidelines](#) cover short-term visitors as well as people living in England "without lawful permission." This latter group is seen as "presenting most risk in terms of having untreated HIV infection since they risk transmitting HIV to an uninfected person." New information that [we've been reporting](#) all year shows the spread of HIV can be radically reduced by giving everyone with HIV treatment. But if you're HIV-positive and in need of help paying for your drugs, think twice before you click on over to Travelocity and become undocumented in England. Section 4.6 of the guidance states, "There are no provisions under the Immigration Rules for a person to travel to the UK in order to access the NHS." [NPR](#)

## Gaza: British journal warns of 'urgent' Palestinian health crisis

8 October - Palestinian refugees and those living in the West Bank and Gaza are facing an urgent health emergency, according to the British public health journal, the Lancet. The Lancet has published 32 reports highlighting a range of health concerns for Palestinian refugees living across the Middle East and Palestinian territories. The journal says Palestinian refugees are dealing with a "hidden crisis" of high levels of chronic and acute illnesses. [VOA](#)

## Portugal: Two dengue cases appear locally acquired

9 October - Two people in Madeira, a Portuguese resort island in the Atlantic, have dengue virus infections that appear to be locally acquired, which would be the first such cases in Europe since 2010, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) announced today. The Public Health Authority of Portugal reported the two cases on Oct 3, saying the patients had no recent history of travel abroad, the ECDC said. Investigations are ongoing to determine whether the cases are indeed indigenous. Also, some additional cases have been reported by the news media and are under investigation, the ECDC reported. "This is the first known occurrence of locally transmitted dengue infection in Madeira, and consequently a new geographical area reporting autochthonous cases in the EU," the agency said. "There have been no reports of confirmed autochthonous dengue infections in the rest of Europe since the 2010 cases in France and Croatia." [CIDRAP](#)

## The U.K. public health response to an imported laboratory confirmed case of a novel coronavirus, September 2012

4 October - On 22 September 2012, a novel coronavirus, very closely related to that from a fatal case in Saudi Arabia three months previously, was detected in a previously well adult transferred to intensive care in London from Qatar with severe respiratory illness. Strict respiratory isolation was instituted. Ten days after last exposure, none of 64 close contacts had developed severe disease, with 13 of 64 reporting mild respiratory symptoms. The novel coronavirus was not detected in 10 of 10 symptomatic contacts tested.

[Eurosurveillance](#)

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**USNORTHCOM**

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## Puerto Rico declares dengue epidemic

9 October - Puerto Rico's health department has declared a dengue epidemic. Health Secretary Lorenzo Gonzalez says at least six people have died, including two children younger than 10. A total of 4,816 cases have been reported, including 21 cases of the potentially fatal hemorrhagic dengue. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says 342 new cases were reported in one week last month, twice the number of cases during the same period last year. [AP](#)

## U.S.: Calls for oversight grow as meningitis scare widens

10 October - Pressure mounted for greater regulation of a little known corner of the pharmaceuticals industry in response to a meningitis scare that widened to 11 states on Wednesday with the first case confirmed in Idaho. Since the September 25 recall of three

lots of a steroid produced by a Massachusetts company, 138 people have contracted meningitis and 12 have died, according to the latest tally from the Centers of Disease Control and Idaho on Wednesday. The Idaho case was the first discovered in the western United States. The hardest hit state is Tennessee with 44 people sickened with the rare disease. [Reuters](#)

## U.S. deaths reach record high as population grows, ages

10 October - U.S. deaths surpassed 2.5 million for the first time last year, reflecting the nation's growing and aging population. The increase of about 45,000 more deaths than in 2010 was not surprising. The annual number of deaths has been generally rising for decades as the population has swelled. "If you have an older population, of course you have more deaths," said Qian Cai, a University of Virginia demographer who studies population trends. "That doesn't mean the population is less healthy or less vital." Before last year, the largest number of deaths was 2.47 million in 2008. The number of deaths can jump up or down from year to year, depending on whether there was a bad flu season or other factors. [ABC News](#)

## U.S.: Geographic differences in HIV infection among Hispanics or Latinos - 46 states and Puerto Rico, 2010

12 October - In the United States, Hispanics or Latinos are disproportionately affected by infection with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). In 2010, new diagnoses of HIV infection among Hispanics or Latinos occurred at an annual rate that was 2.8 times that of non-Hispanic whites (20.4 versus 7.3 per 100,000 persons) (1). To further assess HIV infection among Hispanics or Latinos in the United States, CDC analyzed the geographic distribution of new diagnoses in 2010 in 46 states and Puerto Rico and the characteristics of those diagnosed. The results of this analysis determined that a lower percentage of infections were attributed to male-to-male sexual contact in Puerto Rico than in the 46 states (36.1% versus 66.5%) and a higher percentage were attributed to heterosexual contact (40.7% versus 22.0%) or injection-drug use (IDU) (20.4% versus 8.6%). [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

## U.S.: HIV deaths declining for most, but not all, Americans

8 October - HIV death rates in the United States declined for most groups of people between 1993 and 2007, according to a large new study. Researchers analyzed data on more than 91,000 HIV-related deaths that occurred among people aged 25 to 64 in 26 states. They looked for trends in deaths by sex, race and ethnicity, and education level, which was used to estimate socioeconomic status. There were significant declines in deaths related to HIV -- the virus that causes AIDS -- for all groups except poor, black women. Declines were greater for people with higher levels of education and for whites, said Edgar Simard, of the American Cancer Society, and colleagues. [Medline Plus](#)

## U.S.: Strokes in young people 'rising', study finds



10 October - Strokes are becoming more common at a younger age, with about one in five victims now below the age of 55, research in the American Academy of Neurology Journal suggests. The study followed 1.3 million people in a US region and found 19% of those experiencing a stroke in 2005 were in this age group, up from 13% in 1993. This is despite a trend of overall falling rates of the condition. The Stroke Association said the findings were alarming. Report author Dr Brett Kissela said: "The reasons for this trend could be a rise in risk factors such as diabetes, obesity and high cholesterol." [BBC News](#)

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### USPACOM

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## India: Dengue grips Bangalore, eight people dead, 700 cases reported

9 October - Eight people have died in Bangalore due to dengue and the number of people affected has doubled since July 2012. Bangalore is in the grip of the dengue fever. But what is especially alarming now is the rate at which it is spreading across the city. In October, 700 cases have been confirmed, up from the 373 in July. [IBN Live](#)

## Papua New Guinea: Chikungunya

10 October - More than 600 people have been infected by a new disease called chikungunya. Chikungunya is a mosquito-borne viral disease that was first discovered in parts of Africa, Asia, and Europe. The disease was also detected in New Caledonia and just recently, in Vanimo's urban area, in the West Sepik Province. The disease was first reported in June this year [2012]. Between June and September, more clinic presentations were discovered with symptoms similar to those of malaria. "There is no need to panic as no deaths have been reported yet. Deaths due to chikungunya [virus] infection are usually rare," secretary for health Pasco Kase stated in a media release yesterday [9 Oct 2012]. Early this month, the Institute of Medical Research (IMR) confirmed that 14 out of 52 samples sent for testing were positive for chikungunya. Further investigations into the outbreak are currently undertaken by the National Department of Health (NDOH) and the IMR. The World Health Organization (WHO) is providing technical assistance. Since June to this month, a total of 633 patients suspected of having symptoms of chikungunya have been reported from Vanimo hospital. The outbreak is localised to the town vicinity and its satellite communities. [ProMED-mail](#)

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## Haiti, Dominican Republic aim to oust cholera by 2022

9 October - The governments of Haiti and the Dominican Republic are working on a plan to eliminate cholera from their shared island of Hispaniola by 2022, the Associated Press (AP) reported yesterday. Dominican Deputy Minister of Public Health Rafael Schiffino said the plan will include substantial spending on clean water and sanitation. A bilateral meeting to work on the plan started yesterday in the Dominican Republic. Since cholera surfaced in Haiti in October 2010, it has struck about 560,000 people and killed about 7,300, according to previous reports. The Dominican Republic has had 22,000 cases and 350 deaths since then, the AP story said. The disease was probably introduced in Haiti by United Nations peacekeepers. [CIDRAP](#)

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