

13 June 2014

Army Public Health Weekly Update

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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Science Needs for Microbial Forensics: Developing an Initial International Science Roadmap

Microbial forensics is a scientific discipline dedicated to analyzing evidence from a bioterrorism act, biocrime, or inadvertent microorganism or toxin release for attribution purposes.

This emerging discipline seeks to offer investigators the tools and techniques to support efforts to identify the source of a biological threat agent and attribute a bioterror act to a particular person or group. Microbial forensics is still in the early stages of development and faces substantial scientific challenges to continue to build capacity.



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**CDC COCA Call
Healthy Swimming:
Prevent and Treat
Infections Caused
by Brain-Eating
Amebas and
Chlorine-Tolerant
Parasites**

Date: Thursday, June 19,
2014; 2-3 PM (EDT)

Call Number:

888-233-9077 (US callers)

1-773-799-3915 (International
callers)

Passcode: 4972213

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The Dogs of War

Out in front of America's
troops, combat canines
and their handlers lead the
way onto the most
dangerous battlefields on
Earth.



U.S. MILITARY

Audit reveals vast scale of VA waitlist issues

9 June - More than 57,000 veterans are waiting too long for care at the VA. That's the conclusion of a new internal audit released today. It also found that dozens of hospitals have been falsifying data about how long veterans wait for an appointment. A scandal over wait times forced the resignation of VA Secretary Eric Shinseki. And today, the department concluded that its goal to see patients within 14 days is impossible to meet and will be scrapped... [T]he VA's the country's largest health care system. They see something like 85 million outpatient visits each year. So that number, 57,000, is about 1 percent of the number they are scheduled at any given time. Now that's no comfort to those 57,000 veterans who were waiting for care, but this scandal's really more about the VA lying about how quickly they were seeing patients... This audit covered 731 VA facilities, and in three quarters of them, this was going on... [The VA is] allocating \$300 million to get immediate care to these vets who've been waiting. That could be overtime for VA staff, but also vouchers for private care if they need it. They said that getting these veterans care - the ones who've been waiting - is their top priority. [NPR](#)

Killing a patient to save his life

9 June - ...Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center have begun a clinical trial that pushes the boundaries of conventional surgery — and, some say, medical ethics. By inducing hypothermia and slowing metabolism in dying patients, doctors hope to buy valuable time in which to mend the victims' wounds. But scientists have never tried anything like this in humans, and the unconscious patients will not be able to consent to the procedure... [T]herapeutic hypothermia has never been tried in patients when the injury has already occurred, and until now doctors have never tried to replace a patient's blood entirely with cold salt water. In their trial, funded by the Department of Defense, doctors at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center will be performing the procedure only on patients who arrive at the E.R. with "catastrophic penetrating trauma" and who have lost so much blood that they have gone into cardiac arrest. [New York Times](#)

Major depressive disorder has affected nearly half of female OIF/OEF veterans

June 2014 - ... [Researchers] analyzed data from 1,700 veterans who had served during the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The data was originally collected as part of the Mid-Atlantic Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center multi-site registry. The participants included 346 women and 1,354 men. The researchers found nearly half of the women (46.5%) and slightly more than one-third of men (36.3%) experienced major depressive disorder during their lifetimes (MDD-L). The proportion of women and men who had ever been diagnosed with major depression in this group was significantly higher than in other studies, perhaps because it did not draw exclusively from patients in a primary care

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<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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setting. In the National Comorbidity Survey Replication, 18% of all American adults ages 18 to 64 had experienced major depressive disorder — 22.1% of women and 14.4% of men met the criteria for diagnosis. [U.S. Medicine](#)

Obama lawyers seek end to Lejeune toxic water case

11 June- Obama administration attorneys have asked a federal appeals court to dismiss a lawsuit blaming contaminated tap water at a U.S. Marine Corps base in North Carolina for birth defects, childhood cancers and other illnesses. The Department of Justice filed a request to the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta on Monday. Earlier that day, the Supreme Court ruled in another case that a group of North Carolina homeowners could not sue a nearby electroplating business they blamed for contaminating their land because state law bars any lawsuit brought more than 10 years after the contamination occurred. Government lawyers said the high-court ruling should end the Camp Lejeune lawsuit and "judgment should be entered for the United States." ...John Korzen, a Wake Forest University law professor representing Marine Corps families, countered the government's argument with a filing in which he said court action was necessary because judges had not decided when the pollution at Camp Lejeune ended, marking the start of the 10-year deadline. [JDNews.com](#)

Senate approves bill increasing veterans' health care access

11 June - The Senate has approved a bill making it easier for veterans who've endured long wait times for VA medical care to receive treatment from local doctors instead. The measure closely resembles a bill approved Tuesday in the House. Lawmakers say they are optimistic a compromise version can soon be sent to President Barack Obama for his signature. The Senate bill, approved 93-3, would authorize about \$35 billion over three years to pay for the outside care, hire hundreds of doctors and nurses and lease 26 new health facilities in 17 states and Puerto Rico. The Veterans Affairs Department released an audit this week showing that more than 57,000 veterans have had to wait at least three months for initial appointments. Some vets who asked for appointments never got them. [Huffington Post](#)

The geographic distribution of incident Lyme disease among active component service members stationed in the continental United States, 2004–2013

May 2014 - ...The highest rates of diagnoses of incident Lyme disease among active component service members in the United States were found in the Northeast. The highest rate (860 cases per 100,000 person-years [p-yrs]) was found among Coast Guard personnel stationed in Suffolk County, the easternmost county of Long Island, NY. Other high rates were found at the Naval Submarine Base New London, CT (206 cases per 100,000 p-yrs), the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY (155 cases per 100,000 p-yrs), two areas with military facilities in Newport, RI (151 and 140 cases per 100,000 p-yrs), and Fort Monmouth,

NJ (100 cases per 100,000 p-yrs). There were also clusters of high rates found in the Baltimore, MD–Washington, DC, region and Norfolk, VA, area. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#) (page 13)

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GLOBAL

From genes to fangs: Snake venom recipes remain mysterious



10 June - ...Doctors would love to have a universal antivenom that would let them treat any snakebite, regardless of the species. But research that involved milking six species of deadly snakes suggests that coming up with a universal antidote could be a lot harder than expected, says Casewell, the lead author on a [paper](#) out Monday in Proceedings of the *National Academy of Sciences*.

That's because each snake's venom is a mixture of toxic proteins, and not all venoms are made the same way. Snakes create venom in a gland much the same way that humans create spit in salivary glands. It has been thought that genetic differences are behind the wide variety of poisonous concoctions that snakes are capable of making. "But what we found was that many of the snakes that we studied actually had very similar genetics in terms of the genes that actually make toxins," Casewell says. "And what was causing variation in venom is differences in how these genes are transcribed from the genome to be expressed in the venom gland. And then also how those transcribed molecules are translated into the proteins." [NPR](#)

Global treaty to protect forced labor victims adopted

11 June - The adoption by the International Labour Organization (ILO) on June 11, 2014, of a landmark new treaty will advance the fight to prevent forced labor, and to protect and compensate the estimated 21 million victims worldwide, Human Rights Watch said today. Governments, trade unions, and employers' organizations that make up the ILO overwhelmingly voted to adopt the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, which updates a widely-ratified, but outdated, 1930 treaty in order to better address contemporary abuses, including against migrants and in the private sector. Forced labor victims include those who have been trafficked or are in slavery-like conditions including in agriculture, domestic work, manufacturing, and the sex industry. Many victims work long hours in hazardous conditions for little or no pay, face psychological, physical, or sexual violence, and do not have the freedom to leave because of confinement, debt bondage, threats of retaliation, or other conditions. [Relief Web](#)

Health care can be key to a better life for former inmates

12 June - A San Francisco law now permits the sheriff's department to enroll inmates in health insurance policies under the Affordable Care Act — policies designed to cover medical care after a prisoner's release. Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi believes that making sure people have health coverage when they leave jail will help keep them from committing another crime and coming back... Pretty soon, all the jail's inmates will be registered for insurance — whether they request it or not. Most new arrivals will be enrolled in post-jail health plans at booking. [NPR](#)

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

11 June - On 26 May 2014, the National IHR Focal Point of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** reported to WHO the first 2 laboratory confirmed cases of infection with Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV). The 2 patients are sisters and residents of Kerman Province... Globally, 683 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV including 204 related deaths have officially been reported to WHO. [WHO](#)

Minehunting with radar and rats

7 June – ...Humanitarian demining, as post-conflict mine clearance is known, is carried out by the army, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and commercial companies. It usually involves deminers, dressed in moderately blast-resistant clothing (the heavy, full-body armour used by bomb squads is considered by many to be too restrictive), checking the ground with metal detectors and carefully prodding to find buried objects. When the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, known as the Ottawa treaty, came into force on March 1st 1999, landmines were killing or maiming more than 9,000 people a year. By 2012 casualties were down to some 3,620, roughly three quarters of them civilians, according to Landmine Monitor, the research arm of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. Improved detection methods have helped, and there has been a big decrease in mines being planted—more than 130 countries are signatories to the Ottawa treaty (America is not, but follows its precepts). Even so, the Pentagon reckons that at least 45m landmines remain in the ground worldwide. [Economist](#)

Suicide rate in U.S. and Europe climbed during great recession



11 June - ...The recession also may have taken a toll on public health in at least one particularly dramatic way, researchers suggest in a study published online Wednesday. Suicide rates in Europe and North America rose significantly during these years of financial turmoil, the scientists say. And, interestingly, some countries seemed to fare better than others. Before the

recession, the suicide rate in Europe was falling. But it rose by 6.5 percent in 2009 and remained at that level through 2011. And in the United States, where the suicide rate had an upward curve even before the recession, the rate rose more sharply during the recession years. Ultimately, according to the report, which appears in the British Journal of Psychiatry, North America and Europe together experienced roughly 10,000 more suicides during the severe downturn than the trend from earlier years predicted. [NPR](#)

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INFLUENZA

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 22, ending May 31, 2014, 6.1% of all deaths reported through the 122-Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to Pneumonia and Influenza (P&I). This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 6.7% for week 22. [FluView](#)

CSL studies shed light on 2010 flu vaccine seizures

11 June - A 4-year investigation by Australian flu vaccine maker CSL into what triggered febrile seizures in some young children who received its 2010 trivalent vaccine Fluvax found that the strains included that season in the vaccine overstimulated the immune system of some young children. CSL manufactured its flu vaccine that year using its standard method, according to information it release in two separate studies, which also concluded that increasing the level of splitting agent in the vaccine might reduce the seizure risk. [CIDRAP](#)

DoD Global Laboratory-Based Influenza Surveillance Program

During surveillance weeks 19-22 (4-31 May), 99 specimens were collected and received from 30 locations. Results were finalized for 83 specimens from 27 locations. There were six specimens positive for influenza B. [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For week 22 ending 31 May 2014:

- Influenza: No cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza among US military basic trainees.
- *C. pneumoniae* found in recent FRI and pneumonia cases at Ft. Leonard Wood
- FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates were at or below expected values. [NHRC Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)

PANDEMIC AND AVIAN INFLUENZA

Human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus – update

10 June - On 4 June 2014, the National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFPC) of China notified WHO of 4 additional laboratory-confirmed cases of human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus... The overall risk assessment has not changed. [WHO](#)

Was it ‘crazy’ for this scientist to re-create a bird flu virus that killed 50 million people?

12 June - ...The unknowns of [the 1918 influenza] virus and others have divided the scientific community. Some researchers think fatal strains should be re-created for analysis. Others think such an endeavor couldn't be more dangerous... At the center of the international debate is a thin, intense-looking man named Yoshihiro Kawaoka, a researcher at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, who studies influenza virus and Ebola. On Wednesday, he and an international team of scientists published a study in *Cell Host & Microbe* that said they created a life-threatening virus that is only 3 percent different from the 1918 Spanish flu, which likely killed more people than the Black Death...

The stated objective was to “assess the risk of [the] emergence of a pandemic influenza virus” similar to what took out 50 million of us in 1918... Still, countervailing studies posit the risk of such work is far greater than any potential benefit. “Risk evaluations surrounding biomedical research have not kept pace with scientific innovations in methodology and application,” Marc Lipsitch wrote earlier this year in *Plos Medicine*. Even by “conservative estimates,” he said, if 10 labs similar to Kawaoka’s performed high-risk experiments in the next 10 years, it “would run nearly a 20 percent risk of resulting in at least one laboratory-acquired infection, which, in turn, may initiate a chain of transmission.” [Washington Post](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Bacteria found in squid raises concern about spread of antibiotic resistance, study finds

11 June - Researchers in Canada have discovered an antibiotic-resistant bacteria for the first time in a food product — raw squid — widening the potential exposure for consumers, according to [a report published Wednesday](#) by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Most antibiotic-resistant bacteria have, until now, been in health-care settings and spread by infected patients, as occurred in the “superbug” outbreak at the National

Institutes of Health clinical center in 2011 that killed seven people. The discovery of such a microbe in food means “the risk of exposure in the public goes beyond people with travel histories and beyond people who have been previously hospitalized,” said Joseph Rubin, assistant professor of veterinary microbiology at the University of Saskatchewan.

[Washington Post](#)

Wanted: Good home for Marine Corps working dogs



10 June - Think you could provide a good home to a retiring Marine Corps IED detection dog? You might get the chance to adopt one if you send in an application, said Bill Childress, head of the Marine Corps Military Working Dog program. But you may have to get in line. While some 100 dogs will be moved to new situations as the Marine Corps ends its IDD

capability, Childress said they’re giving top priority to Defense Department programs, then law enforcement agencies and police departments that need working dogs. Former handlers also receive preference, and can ask to adopt the dog they worked with by referencing the animal’s name and the identification number tattooed on its ear.

[Marine Corps Times](#)

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WELLNESS

Australia’s graphic cigarette pack warnings appear to work



11 June - Australia’s landmark cigarette legislation banning logos and putting dire health warnings and graphic images of sick or dying smokers on packs seems to be working, data shows, even as tobacco companies argue business is better than ever. The country’s Bureau of Statistics says household consumption of tobacco fell 4.9 percent during the year that

ended in March and clipped a small but still noteworthy 0.1 percentage point from Australia’s gross domestic product in the first quarter of this year. Consumption of cigarettes and tobacco dropped 7.6 percent in the first quarter, Commonwealth Bank economists said in a research note. [New York Times](#)

Early exposure to bacteria protects children from asthma and allergies

6 June - Babies who are exposed to both bacteria and allergens in the first year of life are less likely to develop asthma and allergies, a study finds. It's the latest wrinkle in the hygiene hypothesis — the notion that exposure to bacteria trains the infant immune system to attack bad bugs and ignore harmless things like pollen and cat dander. But what's interesting about this study is that it gets specific; not just any old germs or allergens will do. Inner-city children who were exposed to cockroach, mouse and cat allergens in the first year of life had less wheezing at age 3. And children exposed to a wider variety of bacteria, especially those in the *Bacteriodes* and *Firmicutes* groups, were less likely to develop allergies or asthma. Children exposed to both did best of all. [NPR](#)

Exercise boosts gut microbiome diversity

9 June - Being physically fit appears to boost the diversity of gut bugs, researchers found. In a case-control study, Irish athletes had a far wider range of intestinal microbes than did matched controls who weren't athletes, Fergus Shanahan, MD, of the University College Cork in Ireland, and colleagues reported online in *Gut*... There's been much attention surrounding gut microbiota and its relationship with obesity and metabolism, but few have looked specifically at the effects of exercise on these gut microbes. [MedPage Today](#)

Sleep's memory role discovered

5 June - The mechanism by which a good night's sleep improves learning and memory has been discovered by scientists. The team in China and the US used advanced microscopy to witness new connections between brain cells - synapses - forming during sleep. Their study, published in the journal *Science*, showed even intense training could not make up for lost sleep. Experts said it was an elegant and significant study, which uncovered the mechanisms of memory. It is well known that sleep plays an important role in memory and learning. But what actually happens inside the brain has been a source of considerable debate... Their study showed that sleeping mice formed significantly more new connections between neurons - they were learning more. [BBC News](#)

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Sierra Leone declares Ebola emergency in district

12 June - The Sierra Leone government announced a state of emergency in the Kailahun district from the outbreak of the Ebola virus which has claimed 17 lives in this West African nation, banning public gatherings and closing schools. According to government figures released Thursday, there are 46 confirmed cases and another 122 suspected ones in the district near the border with Liberia... Vehicles entering and leaving the district will also be screened at checkpoints, added the statement. [Washington Post](#)

Somalia: WHO alarmed by measles outbreaks

10 June - A surge of measles cases in Somalia has put thousands of children, many of them malnourished, at risk for disability or death unless they are vaccinated soon, the World Health Organization's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (WHO EMRO) said today. The agency said 1,350 measles cases were reported in March and April—four times the number in the same period last year—and another 1,000 cases were identified in May... "We have a very high number of malnourished Somali children," Sikander Khan, UNICEF's Somalia representative, said in the WHO statement. "Malnourished children here are more susceptible to disease and are more likely to die or suffer life-long disability such as blindness, deafness, or brain damage as a result of contracting measles." [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

South Sudan: 1,500 cholera cases reported

10 June - The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has confirmed a total of 1,459 cholera cases, including 31 deaths, in South Sudan by Saturday. "The outbreak is spreading to Yei and Kajo Keji in Central Equatoria State," Xinhua quoted UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric as saying at a daily briefing Monday. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that seven cases have been confirmed in the Juba Protection of Civilians areas as of Sunday, with additional suspected cases under investigation. Since the outbreak of cholera in the capital Juba in mid-May, the reported cholera caseload has doubled every day, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) said. [ZeeNews](#)

West Africa : Ebola virus disease – update

10 June – **Guinea:** On 5 June 2014, a new district, Kouroussa, reported 1 new case and 1 death. This brings to date a total of 7 new cases nationwide (4 confirmed, 3 suspected), including 6 new cases and 6 new deaths reported from Conakry (2 new cases and 1 death), Gueckedou (1 new case and 1 death), Macenta (1 new case and 1 death), and Telimele (2 new cases and 2 deaths) during this period. Cumulatively the total number of cases and deaths attributable to EVD in Guinea is 351 (210 laboratory-confirmed, 83 probable, and 58 suspected) including 226 deaths by 5 June 2014.

Liberia: No new cases have been reported from Liberia, however 11 contacts (5 health-care workers and 6 community relatives) are currently being followed-up.

Sierra Leone: As of 18:00 on 6 June 2014, 8 new cases (2 confirmed and 6 suspected) and 1 new death were reported from Kailahun (3 cases and 1 death), Kenema (1 case and 0 deaths), Bo (1 case and 0 deaths), Port Loko (1 case and 0 deaths), and Freetown (2 cases and 0 deaths). This brings the total number of EVD clinical cases to 89 (33 confirmed, 3 probable, and 53 suspected) including 7 deaths. All 33 confirmed cases and 7 deaths were reported from Kailahun district. .. Community resistance is hindering the identification and follow-up of contacts. [WHO](#)

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USCENTCOM

Eastern Mediterranean Region: Progress toward measles elimination, 2008–2012

13 June - ...Although significant progress was made toward measles elimination in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) during 1997–2007, the measles elimination goal was not reached by the target date of 2010, and the date was revised to 2015... From 2008 to 2012, large outbreaks occurred in countries with a high incidence of measles, and reported annual measles cases in EMR increased from 12,186 to 36,456. To achieve measles elimination in EMR, efforts are needed to increase 2-dose vaccination coverage, especially in countries with high incidence of measles and in conflict-affected countries, and to implement innovative strategies to reach populations at high risk in areas with poor access to vaccination services or with civil strife. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

Iraq: Aid agencies scramble to support Iraq displaced

12 June - 12 June 2014 (IRIN) - Cash-strapped aid agencies are scrambling to respond to an escalating humanitarian crisis after Islamist militants seized control of Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, forcing an estimated half a million people to flee towards the semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan in the space of days. This surge by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) - a jihadist grouping also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) because it is active across the border in Syria - comes after a bloody six months in Iraq where car bombs, suicide attacks and shootings have claimed more than 5,000 lives, prompting some to fear civil war might return. Clashes between ISIL/ISIS, government security forces and other armed groups in Iraq's restive Anbar province have displaced more than 440,000 people. [IRIN](#)

Saudi MERS response hobbled by institutional failings



12 June - When Saudi Arabia announced last week it had found 113 more cases of the deadly Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), it didn't just force a rethink of the threat the virus poses, it exposed institutional failings. Saudi health sources and international virologists said poor communication and a lack of accountability in government departments, inadequate state oversight and a failure to learn from past mistakes have all hindered Saudi Arabia's battle against the SARS-like virus... Some top Saudi health officials say they accept that delays in reporting MERS cases were caused by poor communication between hospitals, laboratories and government departments, but they stress things have improved significantly since the appointment of the new minister in late April. [Reuters](#)

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USEUCOM

EU's top court may define obesity as a disability

12 June - The EU's top court is considering a test case which could oblige employers to treat obesity as a disability. Denmark has asked the European Court of Justice to rule on the case of a male childminder who says he was sacked for being too fat. Karsten Kaltoft weighs about 160kg (25 stone; 350 pounds). He told the BBC that "bad habits" had made him fat but that his size was "no problem" at work. The court's final ruling will be binding across the EU. It is seen as especially significant because of rising obesity levels in Europe and elsewhere, including the US. A survey in England in 2012 found that more than half of adults were obese or overweight. [BBC News](#)

Ireland: More than 3,500 women from Ireland had UK abortion

12 June - Over 3,500 women from the Republic of Ireland travelled to Britain for abortions last year, according to official figures released by the British Department of Health this morning. In all, there were 5,469 abortions to women resident outside England and Wales, compared with 5,850 in 2012 – 67 per cent of them came from the Republic, while 15 per cent were from Northern Ireland. The Irish numbers are "a modern indictment of the State's treatment of women with unplanned or unwanted pregnancies", the Irish Family Planning Association declared this morning. The numbers reported from the Republic are an under-estimation of the real figures, since some women will not provide their home addresses in Ireland to clinics. [Irish Times](#)

Republic of Ireland leads EU on plain packaging of cigarettes

11 June - Cabinet approval for draft laws to compel tobacco companies to use plain packaging on all the products they sell in the Republic represents a significant public health initiative and reaffirms this country's reputation as a global leader in tobacco control. When enacted, the new law would ban the use of any logos on cigarette packs. Graphic warnings would be mandatory on all packaging, and terms such as "low tar" would be forbidden. As the first EU member state to introduce plain packaging legislation, stern opposition to the law from the global tobacco industry can be expected. [Irish Times](#)

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USNORTHCOM

U.S.: Breathalyzer selfies paint a picture of drinking

11 June - The first data from breathalyzer selfies - measurements of blood-alcohol content by a new smartphone app - show that users drank the most on the weekend of the summer solstice, the longest day of the year. San Francisco-based breathalyzer manufacturer BACtrack reported on Wednesday that the highest average blood-alcohol content (BAC) from April 2013 to April 2014 was registered on Saturday, June 22, at 0.115 percent. The legal definition for drunk driving is 0.08 percent... BACtrack Mobile data confirmed that one of the most booze-fueled holiday was New Year's Eve (an average of 0.095), followed by Superbowl Sunday (0.087) and Valentine's Day (0.081). The average BAC on Mother's Day (0.069) exceeded that on St. Patrick's (0.057). [Reuters](#)

U.S.: CDC report says 29 million Americans have diabetes

10 June - The number of American adults with diabetes has soared to 29 million with another 86 million at high risk of getting the chronic disease, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said on Tuesday. The CDC report, based on data from 2012, illustrated a continued worrisome rise in diabetes, which can cause serious health complications including heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, blindness, amputation of toes, feet or legs, and premature death. If the current trends continue, federal health officials predicted that one in five Americans could have diabetes by 2025 - and one in three by 2050. The CDC said more than 12 percent of U.S adults had diabetes as of 2012. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: In Oregon, end of life orders help people avoid the ICU



9 June - Do you know how or where you want to die? At home? In a hospital? What measures do you want doctors to take to prolong your life? In Oregon and more than a dozen other states, adults who are old and frail have been answering these questions and doctors write them up as orders. Those doctor-backed instructions help protect people from unwanted medical intervention, a study finds. In Oregon these instructions are called Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment, or POLST. The orders are few, simple and to the point. You can request or refuse CPR or intensive care. You can ask for comfort measures only, limited additional interventions or full treatment. That last includes being taken to the ICU. [NPR](#)

U.S.: Lab-linked *Salmonella* strain sickens 41

6 June - The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced yesterday that 41 people in 13 states have been sickened since November by a *Salmonella* Typhimurium strain used in labs for teaching or quality control. Public health officials have used PulseNet, the national subtyping network, to identify illnesses that have the same genetic fingerprint. The commercially available *Salmonella* strain is used in several college and clinical labs associated with sick patients. Illness onsets range from Nov 1 through May 3. Ages range from younger than 1 to 87 years. The CDC said 62% of the patients were 21 years or younger. Of 28 patients with available information, 10 were hospitalized. No deaths have been reported. Interviews with patients about their exposures found that 18 of 21 were enrolled in a biology or microbiology course and that 15 were students and 3 were employees. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

U.S.: OpenFDA app unlocks troves of data

9 June - The idea behind the app version of OpenFDA Search was to make adverse event reports easily accessible to both providers and patients, making it one of the first apps to harness FDA data and reports. Created by Social Health Insights, the app allows a user to enter search criteria, including a range of dates when the adverse drug event was reported, patient age, country, manufacturer, medication brand name, reaction, pharmacologic class, drug indication and product NDC, or pick and choose from that list, then hit a 'show me the data' button. Doing so queries more than 3.6 million adverse event reports, according to the app. Searching on a specific brand -- say, Tylenol -- returns 468 reports. In one of those, an 83-year old female patient reported "renal failure acute," so adding the word "renal" to the query narrows the list down to 18 reports. For a patient or doctor who knows the specific drug and the reaction it might have caused (and it would follow that they also know the indication the drug is meant to treat), with just those three pieces of information OpenFDA Search makes it easy to determine whether anyone else has had a similar experience.

[Healthcare IT News](#)

U.S.: Rate of smokeless tobacco use in U.S. unchanged: CDC

11 June - While the portion of U.S. working adults smoking tobacco shrank appreciably between 2005 and 2010, the use of smokeless tobacco remained steady, according to a new study. In 2005, 2.7 percent of working adults represented in the annual National Health Interview Survey used smokeless tobacco and in 2010, it was 3 percent. That's still about 10 times higher than national public health policy goals, researchers said. "These findings highlight opportunities for reducing the health and economic burdens of tobacco use among U.S. workers, especially those in certain industries (e.g., mining) and occupations (e.g., construction and extraction) where use of smokeless tobacco is especially common," the report's authors write. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: Report profiles first fatal Heartland virus case

11 June – A recently published case report on the nation's first death from Heartland virus, in an 80-year-old man who had been reported as Tennessee's first case, sheds light on the clinical profile and hints that older people who have underlying complications may be more vulnerable to complications from the disease... Genetic analysis of the virus showed enough divergence from Missouri strains to suggest that the virus has been circulating in Tennessee ticks for some time. The findings expand the geographic range of the disease—which is believed to spread through lone star ticks—beyond Missouri where the first cases were detected. In late May Oklahoma health officials reported the state's first case, which also proved fatal, raising the number of infections so far to 10, 2 of them fatal. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

U.S.: State lawmakers tackle public health issues

10 June - Four years into implementing the Affordable Care Act, state politicians turned their attention to other pressing health care issues such as preventing drug overdose deaths, limiting e-cigarettes and making medical marijuana more available. States also grappled with the question of who should receive a costly and highly effective cure for hepatitis C. A few states also launched programs aimed at controlling two of the costliest chronic conditions – asthma and diabetes. And throughout the first half of the year, states still debated the highest-profile questions about the ACA: whether to expand Medicaid and how to improve their insurance exchanges. [Stateline](#)

U.S.: Study finds rotavirus vaccine cut healthcare visits, costs

10 June - The introduction of the rotavirus vaccine has dramatically cut healthcare use and costs since its introduction in 2007, according to a study published yesterday in *Pediatrics*. The research, by a team from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), expands on an initial study in 2008 that found a drop in hospitalizations. Their review also

includes a second rotavirus vaccine that was incorporated into federal recommendations in 2008. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

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USPACOM

Australia: When the battle comes home

6 June - ...We have unique problems with connecting veterans back into society here. We have a situation where because not many Australians have served in the military and because not many families know someone who served in the military they don't understand what it means to be a modern soldier...Australia's special forces often do seven, eight, nine rotations to different warzones in a decade. By the time you go to your sixth deployment you start to go into an alternate reality. Coming home to Australia is a short sojourn between deployments so your world is very, very different. That constant transition in and out of warzones is a very difficult thing to encounter. It's a very new phenomenon. In wars of old, people were gone for years and they came back. Now, soldiers are in a warzone one day and then they are out of it. 24 hours later they're in a warzone, their life is being threatened and then the next second they're back on a base, on the phone to their partner, talking about how to pay bills. It's complex and confusing. [Al Jazeera](#)

Climb stairs, cut calories: Southeast Asia fights flab



9 June – ...[Many] Southeast Asian countries are rolling out measures so people can make healthy choices before obesity turns into the full-blown epidemic seen in many Western countries. Obesity is a priority for the government, said Zee Yoong Kang, chief executive of Singapore's Health Promotion Board. "There's some intuition that once obesity gets above a certain share of a population, it becomes more of a norm and then businesses and infrastructure accommodate the greater appetite, sucking in more people into that lifestyle," Zee said. While Southeast Asia still enjoys one of the world's lowest obesity rates, it is seeing a rapid growth in the condition. Rising incomes, sedentary lifestyles and fattier, Western fast food are exacerbating the situation for a region that has for decades focused on under- rather than over-nutrition. The obesity rate in Singapore climbed to about 13-14 percent in 2010 from 8.6 percent in 2004. In Malaysia, one of two adults is either overweight or obese, while the prevalence of obesity in Thailand has almost doubled between 1991 and 2009. [Reuters](#)

Vietnam's counterfeit condom crisis

9 June - A new report warning that nearly half of the commercially-available condoms in Vietnam are of poor quality has health officials worried the country's tenuous gains in safer

sex habits could be at risk... Vietnam has made substantial gains in making condoms available to the public in recent years. They are free in clinics, or sell for as little as two US cents at kiosks, cafes, massage parlours and hotels. The most recent data show that new HIV cases decreased rapidly between 2007 and 2009 and held steady at about 14,000 reports per year in 2010 and 2011, and adolescent fertility rates decreased from 31 births for every 1,000 youths under the age of nineteen in 2009 to 29 in 2013 - considerably lower than neighbouring Laos (65) and Thailand (41). [IRIN](#)

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USSOUTHCOM

Chikungunya rises in Caribbean as US notes imported cases

9 June - The pace of chikungunya cases in some Caribbean outbreak hot spots continues and topped 135,000 last week, as US officials today announced three new imported cases. Last week the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) reported that most of the new cases were from the Latin regions of the Caribbean, with Guadeloupe, Martinique, and the French part of St. Martin all reporting new suspected and confirmed cases. The number of chikungunya cases has risen to 135,427 suspected or confirmed cases, which is 28,003 higher than the 107,424 cases reported the previous week, according to a Jun 6 PAHO report. The number of deaths from the disease held steady at 14. Almost two thirds of the new cases involve suspected infections from the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The number of illnesses in the Dominican Republic climbed by 14,337, to 52,976 last week, while the number in neighboring Haiti climbed by 5,490, to 11,802. [CIDRAP](#)

Guatemala/U.S.: More than 700 assessed for rabies exposure after Guatemalan national dies in Corpus Christi hospital last year

8 June - More than 700 people had to be assessed for rabies exposure after a Guatemalan national apprehended by the U.S. Border Patrol died at a Corpus Christi hospital last year in the first reported case of a federal detainee diagnosed with rabies. "This is a very rare scenario," said Ryan Wallace, rabies expert for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The unusual case led to a multinational investigation spanning five countries to track down hundreds of people who may have been exposed to Federico Mendez-Hernandez, 28, as public health investigators worked to determine how many needed to be vaccinated... Yet, although Mendez-Hernandez was exposed to hundreds as he traveled through four federal detention centers and two hospitals, only two dozen people required vaccinations, according to the CDC... In the aftermath of the case, the CDC made one

recommendation, that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement stop providing water from a central cooler with plastic cups passed around among detainees. The immigration agency instead installed water fountains, Wallace said. [The Monitor](#)

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