

13 September 2013

# Army Public Health Weekly Update

The Army Public Health Update is a collection of articles taken verbatim from public sources to offer awareness of current health issues and the media coverage given to them. The articles do not necessarily represent US Army Medical Department opinions, views, policy, or guidance, and should not be construed or interpreted as being endorsed by the US Army Medical Department.

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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## First Lady Urges Vets Struggling With Suicide To Seek Help

First lady Michelle Obama joins Dr. Jill Biden to urge military service members, veterans and their families to make use of mental health resources when they need help.

The two are co-founders of "Joining Forces," an initiative that provides private-sector jobs and education opportunities for veterans and expands community health care for veterans with invisible wounds.



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- Peru: Anthrax, farmer

## Protecting Children at Highest Risk for Influenza Complications

Webinar: Children with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk for influenza-associated complications. Using antiviral therapies early and aggressively in these vulnerable children can lessen the impact of influenza infection.

Subject matter experts from CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics will discuss strategies that health care providers can use in partnership with parents to improve influenza prevention and control in children at highest risk.

Date: **Tuesday, September 24, 2013**

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

Dial In Number:  
**888-233-9077**

Passcode: **3873879**



## U.S. MILITARY

### Army scientists find ways to make body armor lighter

11 September - Army scientists say they have pioneered a way to make body armor for soldiers that would be 10 percent lighter, but just as strong. "This is parasitic weight, this is weight that's on them constantly and sapping their energy in extreme environments, but in the instant it's needed, it needs to work," said Shawn Walsh, who leads the project at the Army Research Laboratory at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. ARL falls under Army Research, Development and Engineering Command. Walsh said the armor soldiers wear now, made from ceramics and plastics that are some of the lightest and strongest materials commercially available, is "the best in the world and the best the Army can give them."

[Army Times](#)

### Fort Belvoir opens first of nine brain injury centers

11 September - Since Sept. 11, 2001, more than 2.5 million U.S. troops have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, and hundreds of thousands of service members have been diagnosed with traumatic brain injuries. Today those service members and thousands of others who have yet to receive a diagnosis have new hope, as the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund joined with military leaders to officially dedicate the new \$11 million "Intrepid Spirit" NICoE (National Intrepid Center of Excellence) Satellite Center. The center will provide crucial treatment of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) in returning service members here. "The NICoE System is an essential element of the Military Health System's holistic approach to the recovery and transition of wounded, ill and injured service members," said Dr. Jonathan Woodson, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs and Director, TRICARE Management Activity. [MHS](#)

### Months of deployment cause increased risk of military divorce



5 September - It isn't the 'better or worse' that breaks up a military marriage. It is the deployment—especially for younger couples in the post-9/11 generation. This week researchers at the RAND

Corporation released a new study that shows the accumulated months of deployment significantly increase the probability of military divorce. So I called two of the authors of the study, Sebastian Negrusa and James Hosek, to discuss what this research means for military families. They told me that most important finding of the study is that for the first time the researchers can prove what so many military couples have suspected for years. "More months of deployment cause divorce," said Hosek. [Spouse Buzz](#)

### 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.

## Septicemia diagnosed during hospitalizations, active component service members, U.S. Armed Forces, 2000-2012

August 2013 - During the period 2000 through 2012, the records of 3,360 hospitalized active component service members contained a diagnosis of septicemia. Most of these cases were identified via diagnoses recorded in the first and second diagnostic positions and the numbers and rates of such cases increased dramatically during the period. Rates were higher among women than men and in the oldest and youngest age groups. The most frequent co-occurring diagnoses were pneumonia and infections of the skin and subcutaneous tissue. For the majority of cases of septicemia, no specific etiologic agent was indicated by ICD-9 codes in the record. The most commonly specified agents were *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Escherichia coli*, and *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. Most service members were returned to duty after discharge. The overall mortality associated with hospitalized septicemia cases was 4 percent, but was 5.1 percent for septicemia attributed to gram negative bacteria. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

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### GLOBAL

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## Eight new Saudi cases push global MERS total to 130



11 September - Saudi Arabia's health ministry today and yesterday announced eight new Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) cases, all of which involved contact with previously confirmed cases, including four possible healthcare exposures. The

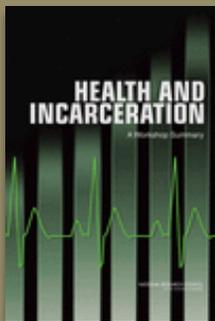
patients are all younger or middle-aged adults from Riyadh and Medina, and most have mild infections or are asymptomatic, the Saudi Ministry of Health (MOH) said. The new detections lift the unofficial global total to 130 cases, of which 57 have been fatal. [CIDRAP](#)

## Frieden trumpets public health's worth

11 September - Public health is more needed now and has a greater potential than ever, despite suggestions that it's become "passé," according to CDC Director Thomas Frieden, MD, MPH. Public health awareness and prevention efforts can help clinical medicine as healthcare access is expanded, Frieden explained at a National Press Club luncheon Tuesday. Meanwhile, increased globalization is forcing public health officials to be more on their toes than ever as most seafood, fruits and vegetables, and medications come from outside the U.S. In addition, "a virus anywhere is just a plane ride away," Frieden said, calling the current state of affairs a "perfect storm of vulnerability." Frieden, who has served as director of the CDC since 2009, spoke for nearly an hour on a range of topics related to the importance and future of public health in America. He addressed the notion that public health and its prevention efforts may be unnecessary or supplanted by clinical medicine.

## Health and Incarceration: A Workshop Summary

Over the past four decades, the rate of incarceration in the United States has skyrocketed to unprecedented heights, both historically and in comparison to that of other developed nations. At far higher rates than the general population, those in or entering U.S. jails and prisons are prone to many health problems. This is a problem not just for them, but also for the communities from which they come and to which, in nearly all cases, they will return.



Public health officials work nonstop to identify emerging infectious diseases and limit the spread of those that already exist. "There may be a misconception that infectious diseases are over in the industrialized world -- in fact, infectious diseases continue to be and will always be with us," Frieden said. "Microbes are part of our lives, and if we don't come to balance with them effectively, we will continue to suffer from preventable illnesses." The CDC identifies one new infectious disease a year and launches a new investigation on a possible new infectious disease nearly every day, he said. [MedPage Today](#)

## Global Fund seeks \$15 billion to control three big killers

12 September - The world's biggest funder of the fight against AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria said on Thursday it needs \$15 billion over the next three years to begin bringing "the three big global pandemics" under control. In a report released ahead of a pledging conference later this year, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria said timely investments could avert \$47 billion in extra treatment costs and save millions of lives, but warned that acting too late would mean missing important opportunities. "The cost of inaction is far greater than the cost of action, from both a moral and an economic perspective," Joanne Carter, head of the RESULTS Educational Fund in the United States and a former Global Fund board member, told reporters. [Reuters](#)

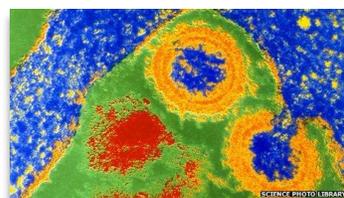
## Rapid blood test reveals growing resistance to malaria

10 September - Scientists have developed a simple, rapid blood test to determine the malaria parasite's resistance to artemisinin, currently the most effective drug available to treat the mosquito-borne infection. Unfortunately, the drug is becoming less effective. But researchers are hoping the test will eventually help patients with drug-resistant malaria. More than 200 million people are infected with malaria each year, with a death toll as high as 1.2 million. Most of the infections occur in sub-Saharan Africa. [VOA](#)

## Treatment for Middle East coronavirus works in monkey tests

8 September - A mysterious disease in the Middle East has triggered international alarms for two big reasons. The virus is often deadly: It has killed almost half of the 114 people known to have caught it. And there's no clear treatment for it. Now scientists might have made some progress toward fixing that second problem. A combination of two drugs commonly used for other viral infections reduced the symptoms of the Middle East respiratory syndrome, or MERS, in monkeys, virologists report Sunday in the journal *Nature Medicine*. [NPR](#)

## Vaccine 'clears HIV-like virus' in monkeys



11 September - A vaccine for the monkey equivalent of HIV appears to eradicate the virus, a study suggests. Research published in the journal *Nature* has shown that vaccinated monkeys can clear Simian Immunodeficiency Virus (SIV) infection from their bodies. It was effective in

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nine of the 16 monkeys that were inoculated. The US scientists say they now want to use a similar approach to test a vaccine for HIV in humans. Prof Louis Picker, from the Vaccine and Gene Therapy Institute at Oregon Health and Science University, said: "It's always tough to claim eradication - there could always be a cell which we didn't analyse that has the virus in it. But for the most part, with very stringent criteria... there was no virus left in the body of these monkeys." [BBC News](#)

## World's happiest nations are...

9 September - Those looking for greater happiness and satisfaction in life should head to northern Europe, but steer clear of Egypt and countries worst hit by the eurozone crisis, according to the 2013 World Happiness Report released Monday by Columbia University's Earth Institute. Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Sweden are the world's happiest countries, according to the survey of 156 countries. Rwanda, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Benin and Togo -- all nations in Sub-Saharan Africa -- are the least satisfied with their lives, the report said. The United States came in at number 17 in the world in terms of overall happiness, but it still lags behind Canada (6), Australia (10), Israel (11) the United Arab Emirates (14) and Mexico (16), according to the Earth Institute. [CNN](#)

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## INFLUENZA

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### CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

- Pneumonia and Influenza: During week 35, 5.6% of all deaths reported through the 122-Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to P&I. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 6.1% for week 35.
- Novel Influenza A Viruses: One additional infection with influenza A (H3N2) variant (H3N2v) virus was reported to CDC during week 35 from Michigan. A total of 18 H3N2v cases have been reported this summer (Illinois [1], Indiana [14], Michigan [2], and Ohio [1]). So far during 2013, one person has been hospitalized as a result of H3N2v illness; no deaths have occurred. At this time no ongoing human-to-human transmission has been identified and all 18 cases have reported close contact with swine in the week prior to illness onset. [FluView](#)

### DoD Global Laboratory-Based Influenza Surveillance Program

- During Weeks 31 - 35, 52 specimens were received from 22 locations. Results were finalized for 40 specimens from 19 locations. There were three specimens positive for enterovirus.

- To date this influenza season, 3,924 specimens have completed testing from 86 locations, of which 1,080 were positive for influenza A (958 A(H3N2), 112 A(H1N1)pdm09, five co-infections, and five A/not subtyped).
- To date this influenza season, 378 specimens were positive for influenza B. Of these, there were 136 B/Yamagata, 38 B/Victoria, and two B & enterovirus co-infections. The lineage is pending or unknown for 202 specimens.
- There have been 275 other respiratory viruses isolated (70 adenovirus, 91 RSV, 98 parainfluenza, and 16 enterovirus) cumulatively this season. [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

## Google.org: Flu Trends

12 September - Estimates of flu activity based on certain Internet search queries indicate that the level of flu activity in the northern hemisphere ranges from minimal to low and in the southern hemisphere ranges from minimal to high (New Zealand). [Google.org Flu Trends](#)

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

For the week ending 7 September 2013:

- Vaccination against types 4 and 7 adenovirus was instituted at all basic training centers by mid-November 2011 (week 45). FRI rates and the proportion of FRI cases positive for adenovirus have decreased markedly since vaccine was reintroduced. Sporadic adenovirus cases at basic training centers in 2013. FRI rates remain low in general.

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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## U.S. FDA: Low levels of arsenic in rice



6 September - The levels of arsenic found in rice aren't high enough to be a short-term concern to consumers, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said Friday. The agency, however, did advise people to vary the grains they eat. In addition to rice, grains such as barley, oats and wheat should be part of one's diet. This advice includes infants and children, the agency said.

Arsenic occurs naturally in the environment, but can also result from contamination by people. Arsenic is found in water, air, soil and foods, the FDA said. The FDA has been testing levels of arsenic in foods for more than 20 years, but stepped up its surveillance in

recent years. The findings released Friday included testing of 1,100 new samples of rice, and products containing rice, in addition to 200 samples first tested in 2012. Although the levels of arsenic varied widely depending on the product, the FDA found that, in total, the amount of arsenic was too low to cause any "immediate or short-term adverse health effects." The agency added, however, that it's looking into any long-term health risks.

[Medline Plus](#)

## U.S.: Investigation of an outbreak of cyclosporiasis

10 September - As of September 6, 2013 (5pm EDT), a total of 646 ill persons with *Cyclospora* infection have been reported from 24 states. Since the last update on September 4, 5 additional ill people were reported. Ill persons range in age from less than one year to 92 years, with a median age of 52 years. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of ill persons are female. Among 575 ill persons for whom information is available, 44 (8%) have reported being hospitalized. No deaths have been reported. [CDC](#)

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### WELLNESS

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## Abusive prescribing of controlled substances — A pharmacy view

12 September - ...Under the Controlled Substances Act, pharmacists must evaluate patients to ensure the appropriateness of any controlled-substance prescription. In addition, state boards of pharmacy regulate the distribution of opioid analgesics and other controlled substances through the discretion of pharmacists. Yet in the majority of cases of potential abuse, pharmacists face a patient who has a legal prescription from a licensed physician, and they have access to very little other background information... Chain pharmacies, however, have the advantage of aggregated information on all prescriptions filled at the chain. At CVS, we recently instituted a program of analysis and actions to limit inappropriate prescribing. Our program was intended to identify and take action against physicians and other prescribers who exhibited extreme patterns of use of "high-risk drugs" relative to other prescribers. We aimed to minimize the potential for falsely identifying legitimate prescribers (false positives), accepting that doing so might result in a failure to identify some suspicious prescribers. [New England Journal of Medicine](#)

## Commercial baby foods fall short for nutrition, study

10 September - Commercial baby foods don't meet infants' dietary needs when they are weaning, according to a new study. That's because commercial foods are predominately sweet foods that provide little extra nutritional benefit over breast or formula milk, the researchers said. They also said commercial baby foods are marketed for use in infants beginning at the age of 4 months, an age when they should still be breast-fed only. "The

most commonly used commercial foods considered in this study supply no more energy than breast or formula milk and yet they are promoted at an age when they will replace the breast or formula milk, which is all that babies under six months really need," explained a team led by Dr. Charlotte Wright, of the University of Glasgow in Scotland. [Medline Plus](#)

## How exercise can help us eat less



11 September - Strenuous exercise seems to dull the urge to eat afterward better than gentler workouts, several new studies show, adding to a growing body of science suggesting that intense exercise may have unique benefits. [New York Times](#)

## Mammograms for younger women may prevent breast cancer deaths

9 September - Most breast cancer deaths happen to younger women who did not get regular mammogram screenings, new research shows. The findings are a departure from screening guidelines that urge routine mammograms only in older women. "The biological nature of breast cancer in young women is more aggressive, while breast cancer in older women tends to be more indolent. This suggests that less frequent screening in older women, but more frequent screening in younger women, may be more biologically based, practical, and cost effective," study author Dr. Blake Cady, professor of Surgery at Harvard Medical School in Boston, said in a press release. [CBS](#)

## Myths surround breakfast and weight

10 September - Americans have long been told that routinely eating breakfast is a simple habit that helps prevent weight gain. Skipping breakfast, the thinking goes, increases hunger throughout the day, making people overeat and seek out snacks to compensate for missing that first – and some would say most important – meal of the day. "Eating a healthy breakfast is a good way to start the day," according to the Web site of the United States surgeon general, "and may be important in achieving and maintaining a healthy weight." But new research shows that despite the conventional weight-loss wisdom, the idea that eating breakfast helps you lose weight stems largely from misconstrued studies. [New York Times](#)

## NIH funds six grants to build next generation dental composite

5 September - The National Institutes of Health announced today it will award \$2.8 million this year for six research projects to pursue a longer-lasting dental composite, the white, currently resin-based fillings that are a mainstay of dentistry... In the U. S., dentists currently place more than 122 million dental composites per year. But they fail on average in less than eight years and must be replaced, often with another dental composite. [NIH](#)

## Protein linked to sudden cardiac death



8 September - People with low levels of a certain protein are at greatest risk for sudden cardiac death that occurs in the morning, a new study contends. The researchers suggested that their findings could lead to new treatments to reduce people's risk for this condition, in which the heart suddenly stops beating due to electrical instability. The findings were to be presented Sunday at the American Chemical Society's annual meeting in Indianapolis. "Sudden cardiac death due to this electrical instability causes an estimated 325,000 deaths annually in the United States alone," Dr. Mukesh Jain, of Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, said in a chemical society news release. "That includes the three out of four heart disease deaths in people aged 35 to 44." [Medline Plus](#)

## Use of family planning and related medical services among women aged 15–44 in the United States

5 September – In 2006–2010, 43 million women aged 15–44 received a family planning or related medical service in the previous 12 months. A pap test and a pelvic exam were the most common services received by women in the previous year, followed by receipt of a method of birth control. About 18% of women received a family planning or related medical service from a clinic in the past 12 months and one-half of these women received it from a Title X-funded clinic. In contrast, 53% of women received a family planning or related medical service in the past 12 months from a private doctor. Use of Title X-funded clinics was more common among women in cohabiting unions, black and Hispanic women, those who lived in nonmetropolitan areas, those below the poverty level, and those without health insurance. [CDC](#)

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### USAFRICOM

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## Chad: Meningitis vaccine cuts cases by 94 percent



12 September - A meningitis vaccine that has recently been rolled out in several African countries has reduced the incidence of the disease by 94 per cent in Chad after just a single dose per person, in what scientists say is a startling success for the new vaccine, called MenAfriVac. And the presence of the bacteria responsible for the disease in people's throats - carriage prevalence - dropped by 98 per cent, according to the study published in *The Lancet* today. The research, based on an analysis of data from 1.8 million vaccinations in Chad, revealed that there were no cases of serogroup A meningococcal meningitis, the most

dangerous strain of the disease, following vaccination. "This is one of the most dramatic outcomes from a public health intervention that I have seen," said lead author Brian Greenwood in a press release (12 September). [All Africa](#)

## Horn of Africa polio outbreak thwarts global eradication effort

9 September - The global community came tantalizingly close earlier this year to ridding the world of polio. But then in May, the eradication effort took a powerful blow. The virus turned up again in the Horn of Africa, first in Somalia. The Banadir region of Somalia, which includes a Mogadishu refugee camp, is thought to be the so-called "engine" of the Horn of Africa polio outbreak. In June, three-year-old Mohamed Naasir became ill. His mother, Khadija Abdullahi Adam, said soon after one leg became permanently disabled. "My son was fine, but he started having a high fever which lasted for almost four days," she explained. "I gave him medicine, but there was no change. The following morning he said to me 'Mom, I can't stand up.'" The virus has spread at a rapid pace, triggering massive vaccination efforts. [VOA](#)

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### USCENTCOM

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## Afghanistan: Audit faults U.S. health spending in Afghanistan

5 September - An independent audit released Thursday accused the U.S. Agency for International Development of "reckless disregard toward the management of U.S. taxpayer dollars," prompting an angry rebuttal from the agency leading American reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. The special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction said the agency funded a \$236-million health program without verifying the Afghan government's cost estimate and provided the money directly to the Afghan Health Ministry despite its weak financial management capabilities. Agency officials rejected the audit's findings. In a letter, the agency's Afghanistan mission director, William Hammink, said U.S. officials did verify the costs before launching the program and defended measures the agency had taken to reduce the risk that funds would be wasted or misspent. [Los Angeles Times](#)

## Lebanon: At refugee camp, nothing makes sense

9 September - ... Over the past two years, 720,000 registered refugees have made the dangerous crossing from Syria into Lebanon. According to aid organizations on the ground, at least that many more have also come across illegally. In a country of 4 million people, roughly one in four is now a refugee. Lebanon is buckling under the weight of these refugees, leading to abysmal conditions. In the largest camp in Bekaa Valley, there is no fixed water supply or sanitation. There are streams of putrid waste snaking their way

through the camps. And there is not enough food... In a place like this, you can quickly distinguish the children who are being breast-fed from those who are not. While the breast-fed children are getting carbohydrates, fats and proteins, they are not getting enough calories overall. It is tough, after all, when the mother has not had anything to eat for days herself. The child's hair looks dull, the skin looks thin and the body looks emaciated. It is called marasmus, and it shouldn't typically happen to a breast-fed baby... The older children who are able to obtain any sort of calories are not getting enough proteins in their diet. They eat primarily just grains. Their small bodies look bloated and they often have swelling in their tiny feet. It also has a name: kwashiorkor. [CNN](#)

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

7 September - WHO has been informed of four (4) additional laboratory-confirmed cases of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) infection in Saudi Arabia...Globally, from September 2012 to date, WHO has been informed of a total of 114 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV, including 54 deaths. [WHO](#)

## Saudi Arabia: Officials report 8 new Saudi MERS-CoV cases, 3 fatal

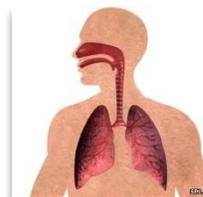
9 September - Eight new infections of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV), including three fatal cases, were reported in the past 2 days, raising the unofficial global total to 122. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's (KSA's) Ministry of Health (MOH) confirmed four MERS cases on Sep 7 and four yesterday, providing few details, as has been its custom. The World Health Organization (WHO), meanwhile, confirmed four Saudi cases that were reported in the media on Sep 6. Of the 12 case-patients, at least 7 had contact with a confirmed MERS patient or worked in a hospital with another confirmed case-patient. [CIDRAP](#)

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### USEUCOM

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## Europe: Lung diseases cause one in 10 deaths across Europe



5 September - Lung conditions are the cause of one in 10 of all deaths in Europe and smoking is a major factor, says a report from the European Respiratory Society. It says deaths from lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) will rise over the next 20 years because of past smoking rates. But a British lung charity says lung disease kills one in four in the UK. Yet it does not receive priority when it comes to prevention, treatment or research funding, it says. The data, presented in a publication

called the [European Lung White Book](#), uses the latest data from the World Health Organization and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control to analyse trends in lung disease. [BBC News](#)

## First joint meeting of three European tuberculosis networks

12 September - On 29 May 2013 three European tuberculosis (TB) networks met for the first time to discuss TB prevention, control and care in the World Health Organization (WHO) European Region including the European Union (EU). This meeting, which took place in The Hague, the Netherlands, provided a unique opportunity to discuss progress with the implementation of the Berlin Declaration on TB [1], the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) Framework Action Plan to fight tuberculosis in the EU [2,3], and the Consolidated Action Plan to prevent and combat multidrug- and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (M/XDR-TB) in the WHO European Region [4]. Surveillance focal points, laboratory experts, and National TB Programme Managers (NTPs) exchanged lessons learned and discussed next steps to reach the targets defined in the plans. [Eurosurveillance](#)

## Netherlands dealing with measles outbreak

10 September - A measles outbreak in the Netherlands has sickened nearly 1,300 people since May, a report shows. Of the 1,266 cases, 82, or 6.5 percent, required the patient to be hospitalized, Forbes magazine reported Tuesday. Nearly all of the patients, 96.5 percent, had not been vaccinated and another 3.2 percent had only received partial vaccinations, the magazine said. Netherlands officials expect the outbreak, which they say began mostly among 4- to 12-year-olds in what was described as an orthodox Protestant school, to persist for some time, the magazine said. [UPI](#)

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**USNORTHCOM**

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## U.S.: 3 deaths may be tied to synthetic marijuana in Colorado

7 September - Three people in Colorado may have died after smoking synthetic marijuana, state health officials fear. The Colorado Department of Public Health has launched an investigation into an outbreak of illnesses at hospitals that may be tied to the dangerous substance. "Initial reports show approximately 75 people who reported smoking a form of synthetic marijuana may have been seen at hospitals in the Denver metro area and Colorado Springs beginning in late August," said Dr. Tista Ghosh, interim chief medical officer for the state, in a written statement. "Several individuals were in intensive care and three deaths are being investigated as possibly associated." [CNN](#)

## U.S.: 5 percent of U.S. children, teens classified as 'severely obese'

9 September - About 5 percent of U.S. children and teens are "severely obese" — a newly defined class of risk, according to an American Heart Association scientific statement published online in the journal *Circulation*. "Severe obesity in young people has grave health consequences," said Aaron Kelly, Ph.D., lead author of the statement and a researcher at the University of Minnesota Medical School in Minneapolis. "It's a much more serious childhood disease than obesity." While **childhood obesity** rates are starting to level off, severe obesity has increased, Kelly said. [American Heart Association](#)

## U.S.: Anti-smoking ads tied to 1.6 million quit attempts

9 September - A 2012 national TV ad campaign that featured real people living with diseases and injuries caused by smoking was tied to 1.6 million smokers making quit attempts and over 100,000 kicking the habit, according to new research from U.S. health officials. The campaign, known as "Tips From Former Smokers," ran between March and June across the nation and reached about four of every five smokers. In addition to TV ads, the campaign featured radio, billboard and digital ads, including Spanish versions. "This is probably the biggest campaign that has been done in the world. It wasn't the longest... but sending it to over 40 million smokers in a country of over 250 million (adults) is fairly unprecedented," Dr. Tim McAfee, the study's lead author and director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Office on Smoking and Health in Atlanta, said. [Reuters](#)

## U.S.: At least 3 dead in Colorado flooding; Boulder 'overwhelmed with water'



12 September - Four days of rain have turned parts of Colorado into a flash-flood zone as rising waters have brought death, destruction and mudslides, forcing evacuations and shuttering schools. At least three deaths have been confirmed, officials said Thursday, as search-and-rescue teams were trying to reach stranded residents and motorists in Boulder and nearby mountain communities and heavy rains continued... Halpin said officials are seeing flooding in areas that are not even close to water. Many major roads in and out of Boulder were closed or impassable, and officials were asking people to stay in their homes. Schools throughout the area were closed, including the main campus of the University of Colorado. [Los Angeles Times](#)

## U.S.: Big measles outbreaks worry federal health officials



12 September - Federal health officials are worried about an unusually high number of measles cases occurring in the United States this year. There have been at least eight outbreaks so far this year involving 159 cases, the federal [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) reported today in its [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#). About 60 people get measles in the United States each year on average, the CDC says. Since measles stopped circulating in this country in 2000, the highest number of cases occurred in 2008, when 140 Americans got measles, and 2011, when 220 cases were reported. The CDC is worried because measles is highly contagious and can be life-threatening. So far no one has died from the measles this year, but 17 people were hospitalized, according to the CDC. "The increase in measles cases in the United States in 2013 serves as a reminder that imported measles cases can result in large outbreaks, particularly if introduced into areas with pockets of unvaccinated persons," researchers wrote. [NPR](#)

## U.S. cancer-care delivery is 'in crisis': report

10 September - Cancer treatment has grown so complex, many U.S. doctors can't keep up with new information and are offering incorrect treatment, failing to explain options and leaving patients to coordinate their own care, according to a report released on Tuesday by the Institute of Medicine, part of the National Academy of Sciences. [Reuters](#)

## U.S.: *C. diff* rates doubled in decade

12 September - The rate of *Clostridium difficile* infections in U.S. hospitals nearly doubled in the decade between 2001 and 2010, a researcher said here, although mortality from the disease was variable. A study based on hospital discharge data showed the rate of *C. difficile* infection in 2001 was 4.5 per 1,000 hospital admissions in 2001... but rose to 8.2 per 1,000 admissions in 2010. Over the 10 years, the peak death rate from *C. difficile* infection was 8.7% in 2003 while the lowest rate was 5.6% in 2009. [MedPage Today](#)

## U.S.: FDA beefs up pain-drug warnings in face of abuse epidemic

10 September - The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has proposed stronger safety language on labels of long-acting and extended-release opioids in response to an epidemic of overdoses and deaths from the widely used pain medicines. The labels need to highlight dangers of abuse and possible death, as well as risks to newborns of mothers taking the medicines, the agency said on Tuesday. [Reuters](#)

## U.S.: For Native Americans, mental health budget cuts hit hard

12 September - Native American tribes gave up millions of acres to the federal government in the 19th century in exchange for promises of funded health care, education and housing. But time and again, those funds have been cut. The recent across-the-board federal budget cuts, known as the sequestration, are no exception. They came with a 5 percent reduction in funding for mental health services, including suicide prevention. That's especially troubling for Native Americans, whose suicide rate is four times the national average. Because of the reduction, the Oglala Sioux Tribe in Pine Ridge, S.D., will not be able to hire two additional mental health service providers, says Cathy Abramson, chairwoman of the National Indian Health Board. And that could have devastating effects.

[NPR](#)

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## USPACOM

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## Almost a quarter of men 'admit to rape in parts of Asia'



9 September - Almost a quarter of men surveyed in a UN report looking at violence against women in parts of Asia have admitted to committing at least one rape. Rape was particularly common within relationships. However, one in 10 men admitted raping a woman who was not their

partner. Ten thousand men from six countries took part in the survey. It is the first multi-country study to examine how widespread violence against women is and the reasons behind it. Of those who admitted rape, just under half said they had done so more than once. The prevalence of rape varied between countries. [BBC News](#)

## China to cut coal use, shut polluters, in bid to clear the air

12 September - China unveiled comprehensive new measures to tackle air pollution on Thursday, with plans to slash coal consumption and close polluting mills, factories and smelters, but experts said implementing the bold targets would be a major challenge. China has been under heavy pressure to address the causes of air pollution after thick, hazardous smog engulfed much of the industrial north, including the capital, Beijing, in January. It has also been anxious to head off potential sources of unrest as an increasingly affluent urban population turns against a growth-at-all-costs economic model that has spoiled much of China's air, water and soil. [Scientific American](#)

## India: Huge tobacco use in India seen killing 1.5 million a year

12 September - Tobacco inflicts huge damage on the health of India's people and could be clocking up a death toll of 1.5 million a year by 2020 if more users are not persuaded to kick the habit, an international report said on Thursday. Despite having signed up to a global treaty on **tobacco** control and having numerous anti-tobacco and smoke-free laws, India is failing to implement them effectively, leaving its people vulnerable to addiction and ill health, according to the report by the International Tobacco Control Project (ITCP).

[Reuters](#)

## India: Now, get dengue test results on your mobile

12 September - ...If you opt for testing at Kolkata Municipal Corporation's (KMC) path labs, health department officials would send the report to your mobile number. "Today (Wednesday), we launched an SMS service at our Haji dispensary under which the dengue test report will be sent to your mobile number on the same day you undergo the test..." Atin Ghosh, member, mayor-in-council (health), told reporters on Wednesday. Besides sending the test report to the patient, messages alerting officials of the KMC, including the mayor, MMiC, chief municipal health officer (CMHO), will also be sent for immediate action.

[Hindustan Times](#)

## North Korea's Yongbyon reactor 'nearing operation'

12 September - Steam has been seen rising from North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear facility, suggesting that the reactor has been restarted, a US institute says. The colour and volume of the steam indicated that the reactor was in or nearing operation, the institute said. Pyongyang vowed to restart facilities at its main Yongbyon nuclear complex in April, amid high regional tensions. The reactor can produce plutonium, which North Korea could use to make nuclear weapons. [BBC News](#)

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## Peru: Anthrax, farmer

8 September - A farmer raising livestock in Huaraz, Ancash (north-central Peru, a main agricultural center) is in serious condition after an outbreak of anthrax. This is the 2nd case reported in the area and was confirmed by the Head of Epidemiology, Regional Health Authority, Jaime Salazar. This case involves a rancher (livestock breeder) in Huaraz who is in critical condition at the Hospital Guard Victor Ramos, said the authorities. The 60-year-old man presented himself a few days ago with a wound on his right leg that gradually began to spread to other parts of the body; he also had a high fever. Currently, he has been

admitted to an isolation room and is being attended to by medical staff who have undergone biosecurity measures [These people do not understand that anthrax is not infectious; the staff looking after this patient are in no danger. - Mods.SB/MHJ]. The doctor, Ricardo Natividad, in charge of Epidemiology at Huaraz, said that an investigation is underway as to the mode of transmission, but it is likely to have been by contact with infected animals. [ProMED-mail](#)

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