

14 June 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.

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TG 358: Army Guide to Weight Management

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U.S. MILITARY

Military doctors urged to refuse force-feeding at Guantanamo

12 June - U.S. military doctors should refuse orders to force-feed hunger strikers at the Guantanamo detention camp because it violates their ethical obligations, two doctors and a medical ethics professor wrote in the New England Journal of Medicine on Wednesday. "Force-feeding a competent person is not the practice of medicine; it is aggravated assault," the trio said in an article posted on the website of the respected medical journal. [Reuters](#)

Tuberculosis trends in the U.S. Armed Forces, active component, 1998-2012

May 2013 - During the period from 1998 to 2012, there were 128 cases of confirmed TB disease. Most of the cases (93.0%) were pulmonary TB; nine (7.0%) of the reported cases were extrapulmonary TB. No service members diagnosed with TB were co-infected with HIV. In both the U.S. general and military populations, rates declined from 1998 to 2011; the decreasing trends in both populations were statistically significant. However, rates were consistently lower in the U.S. military than civilian population. During the surveillance period overall, the age-adjusted rate among U.S. military members was approximately one-fifth the rate among their civilian counterparts. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

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GLOBAL

AIDS drugs halve HIV risk for intravenous drug users in study

12 June - A daily dose of powerful anti-HIV medicine helped cut the risk of infection with the AIDS virus by 49 percent in intravenous drug users in a Bangkok study that showed for the first time such a preventive step can work in this high-risk population. "This is a significant step forward for HIV prevention," said Dr. Jonathan Mermin, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which helped conduct the clinical trial along with the Thailand Ministry of Health. The study, published on Wednesday in the journal Lancet, looked at the treatment approach known as pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, in which HIV treatments are given to uninfected people who are at high-risk for HIV infection. [Reuters](#)

Air pollution can trigger heart arrhythmias: study

13 June - For people with existing heart problems, exposure to high levels of air pollution can trigger the irregular heartbeats that may lead to a stroke or heart attack, according to a new study. Past research has linked air pollution to ventricular fibrillation, electrical confusion in the lower chambers of the heart which can cause sudden death. The new study also finds an association with atrial fibrillation (AF), erratic quivering in the heart's upper chambers and the most common type of irregular heartbeat. [Reuters](#)

Big multiple sclerosis breakthrough

4 June - A phase 1 clinical trial for the first treatment to reset the immune system of multiple sclerosis (MS) patients showed the therapy was safe and dramatically reduced patients' immune systems' reactivity to myelin by 50 to 75 percent, according to new Northwestern Medicine research. [Northwestern University](#)

MERS coronavirus has potential to cause pandemic: WHO

10 June - The World Health Organization on Monday urged health workers around the world to be on the alert for symptoms of the deadly Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS), which has the potential to circle the globe and cause a pandemic. The United Nations agency, which issued new, long-awaited guidance to countries on influenza pandemics, said the world was also in the same "alert phase" for two human strains of bird flu - H5N1, which emerged a decade ago, and H7N9, first detected in China in March.

[Reuters](#)

New discovery may protect against broad spectrum of diseases

6 June - Kenneth Keiler, an associate professor of biochemistry and molecular biology at Penn State, recently led a team to a discovery that targets and prevents bacteria from replicating in the body, thus preventing disease. The team isolated a process called "trans-translation," which is the process by which bacteria replicates itself. The team found a way to block the bacterium's synthesis machinery using RNA, halting the replication process of the bacteria. This approach could lead to new treatment methods for anthrax, tuberculosis, shigellosis and other bacterial diseases. [BioPrep Watch](#)

Scan predicts whether therapy or meds will best lift depression

12 June - Pre-treatment scans of brain activity predicted whether depressed patients would best achieve remission with an antidepressant medication or psychotherapy... Currently, determining whether a particular patient with depression would best respond to psychotherapy or medication is based on trial and error... [Researchers] compared brain circuit activity of patients who achieved remission following treatment with those who did

not improve. Activity in one specific brain area emerged as a pivotal predictor of outcomes from two standard forms of depression treatment: cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) or escitalopram, a serotonin specific reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) antidepressant. If a patient's pre-treatment resting brain activity was low in the front part of an area called the insula, on the right side of the brain, it signaled a significantly higher likelihood of remission with CBT and a poor response to escitalopram. Conversely, hyperactivity in the insula predicted remission with escitalopram and a poor response to CBT. [NIH](#)

Six out of ten people on Earth still lack access to flush toilets, adequate sanitation

4 June – ...[S]ix out of every ten people on Earth still do not have access to flush toilets or other adequate sanitation — measures that protect the user and the surrounding community from harmful health effects — according to a new study. The latest episode in the American Chemical Society's (ACS) *Global Challenges/Chemistry Solutions* podcast series describes research concluding that the number of people without access to flush toilets or other adequate sanitation is almost double the previous estimate. [Homeland Security News Wire](#)

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INFLUENZA

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 22, 5.9% of all deaths reported through the 122-Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to P&I. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 6.8% for week 22. [FluView](#)

DoD Global Laboratory-Based Influenza Surveillance Program

- During Week 22, 16 specimens were received from 10 locations. Among those received, four specimens had testing completed from three locations. There were no viruses detected.
- To date this influenza season, 3,776 specimens have completed testing from 81 locations, of which 1,074 were positive for influenza A (954 A(H3N2), 110 A(H1N1)pdm09, five co-infections, and five A/not subtyped).
- To date this influenza season, 368 specimens were positive for influenza B. Of these, there were 71 B/Yamagata, 19 B/Victoria, and two B & enterovirus co-infections. The lineage is pending or unknown for 276 specimens.

- There have been 261 other respiratory viruses isolated (65 adenovirus, 91 RSV, 93 parainfluenza, 10 enterovirus, and two rhinovirus/enterovirus) cumulatively this season. [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

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

For weeks 21 and 22/2013, all participating countries reported low-intensity transmission and almost all reported stable trends. Six countries tested 19 sentinel specimens, two of which were positive for influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus. In addition, 45 non-sentinel source specimens were found to be positive for influenza virus, 19 of which (42%) were type A and 26 (58%) type B. No laboratory-confirmed severe influenza cases have been reported since week 21/2013. During the first influenza inter-season weeks of 2012–2013, influenza activity was low in Europe. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

FDA approves Sanofi's four-strain flu shot

10 June - The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved Sanofi Pasteur's Fluzone Quadrivalent (four-strain) injectable flu vaccine, the company announced today. In March 2012 the FDA approved MedImmune's nasal-spray quadrivalent live-attenuated influenza vaccine, and in December the agency made GlaxoSmithKline's (GSK's) Fluarix Quadrivalent the first injectable four-strain flu vaccine approved for use in the United States. Sanofi's product becomes the second approved four-strain flu shot. Quadrivalent flu vaccines are designed to protect against both influenza B strains that can circulate in any given year. [CIDRAP](#)

Google.org: Flu Trends

13 June – Estimates of flu activity based on certain Internet search queries indicate moderate levels of flu activity in Chile, Argentina, and South Africa. [Google.org Flu Trends](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For the week ending 8 June 2013:

- Influenza: No new cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza among U.S. military basic trainees.
- FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates are at or below expected values. [NHRC Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)

PANDEMIC AND AVIAN INFLUENZA

Federal officials weigh H7N9 vaccine options

11 June – Intensive federal deliberations are under way on whether to stockpile a vaccine against the H7N9 flu virus that emerged this spring in China, similar to the government's response to the H5N1 avian flu threat, health officials said today. In the meantime, vaccine companies are getting ready to produce enough vaccine for clinical trials, which are slated to begin in August, according to an update presented before the National Vaccine Advisory Committee (NVAC), an outside group that assists the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The meeting was broadcast live on the Web. Robin Robinson, PhD, director of the HHS' Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) told the group that over the past 4 years federal health officials have used an assessment tool to weigh the risks of novel flu viruses and consider any steps to take with vaccine and other preparedness activities. [CIDRAP](#)

WHO proposes new pandemic flu alert levels

10 June – The World Health Organization (WHO) today proposed a new pandemic alert system, one that's designed to focus more on disease risk than geographic spread and to streamline communications to the public. At a media briefing in Geneva today, David Harper, CBE, special adviser to the WHO's assistant director-general for health, security, and environment, said the interim guidance reflects lessons learned during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic, according to an Agence France-Presse (AFP) report. A few months into the 2009 H1N1 pandemic the WHO faced tough questions from countries about its pandemic alert phases. During the 2009 World Health Assembly (WHA) some countries urged the WHO to go slow on declaring a full-scale pandemic, and they argued that pandemic phases should reflect the severity of the disease as well as its geographic spread. The pandemic plans of some member states had response actions, such as the purchase of pandemic vaccine, that were triggered by the WHO's pandemic phase declarations. [CIDRAP](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

97 sickened in Hepatitis A outbreak linked to frozen berries



13 June - At least 99 people in 8 states are now known to have been sickened in the ongoing hepatitis A outbreak tied to a frozen organic berry mix. That number is up from the 87 illnesses reported Monday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC now reports that 38 people have been hospitalized as a result of their infections. Illnesses have occurred in Arizona,

California Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Washington. Patients report falling ill between March 16 and June 1, 2013. The virus has been traced back to a frozen berry mix distributed by Townsend Farms of Fairview, Oregon and sold at Costco and Harris Teeter stores. [Food Safety News](#)

Commissaries to sell Japanese produce again, 2 years after nuke disaster

7 June - Shoppers at base commissaries can look forward to fresher food at lower prices after officials decided it's once again safe to stock produce aisle with foods from the parts of Japan that were affected by the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster. The release of radiation from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, following a massive earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011, prompted the U.S. Department of Defense to cut deliveries of foods ranging from baked goods and eggs to fresh fruit, vegetables and processed items from 26 producers in northern Japan... [T]he last remaining bans — on food from the Kanto, Tohoku and Chubu regions — ended Thursday. [Stars and Stripes](#)

Faster method to identify Salmonella strains

4 June - ...A new approach may be able to reduce by more than half the time it takes health officials to identify Salmonella strains, according to researchers in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences. The finding may significantly speed up the response to many outbreaks of foodborne illness, allowing epidemiological investigators to identify the exact strains of Salmonella that make people sick and to find more quickly — and eliminate — the source of the disease. [Homeland Security News Wire](#)

Fukushima-derived radioactivity in seafood poses minimal health risks

5 June - Researchers find that the likely doses of radioactivity ingested by humans consuming fish contaminated by radioactive radiation escaping from the debilitated Fukushima reactors fish, are comparable to, or less than, the radiological dosages associated with other commonly consumed foods, many medical treatments, air travel, and other background sources. [Homeland Security New Wire](#)

Scientists say new study shows pig health hurt by GMO feed



11 June - Pigs fed a diet of only genetically modified grain showed markedly higher stomach inflammation than pigs who dined on conventional feed, according to a new study by a team of Australian scientists and U.S. researchers. The study adds to an intensifying public debate over the impact of genetically modified crops, which are widely used by U.S. and Latin American farmers and in many other countries around the world... Researchers said there were no differences seen between pigs fed the GM and non-GM diets for feed intake, weight gain, mortality, and routine blood biochemistry measurements. [Reuters](#)

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WELLNESS

Few wash hands properly, study finds

11 June - Did you wash your hands properly after you used the toilet? Probably not, a new study suggests. Researchers discreetly watched 3,749 people, 60 percent of them women, after they used public toilets in a Michigan college town. Overall, 10.3 percent did not wash their hands at all, and 22.8 percent used no soap. The remainder did use soap, but only 5.3 percent washed for longer than 15 seconds, soap or no soap. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, proper washing means rubbing vigorously with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Men did worse than women — almost 15 percent of them did not wash at all, compared with 7.1 percent of women. [New York Times](#)

How accurate are fitness trackers?



12 June - ...[A]t-home users can choose from a variety of devices, sold under such brand names as Fitbit and Nike+ FuelBand... For his experiment, Dr. Meckes gathered 16 adult volunteers and fitted each with three different monitors, two worn on the hip and one around the arm. The volunteers also donned portable masks that measure oxygen consumption, the gold standard in determining energy output... All three of the devices accurately measured energy expenditure when the volunteers walked briskly, Dr. Meckes and his colleagues found; their estimates closely matched those of the oxygen-consumption monitor. But the devices were far less reliable in tracking the energy costs of light-intensity activities like standing or cleaning, often misinterpreting them as physical immobility. Only the calorie cost of typing was overestimated, and only by the armband monitor, which considered the arm movements involved to be far more dynamic than they actually are. [New York Times](#)

How hospital workers solve patient-safety problems on their own

11 June - Dr. Michael Gardam... couldn't find a way to persuade his fellow health-care workers to wash their hands before touching patients... Rather than using the traditional approach of educating people about the need to wash their hands, he engaged his co-workers with talk of "positive deviance" and urged them to come up with their own solutions for infection control. Handwashing rates climbed to 87 per cent from a low of 30 per cent. Gardam's team then used the same method to tackle other chronic problems that compromised patient safety, such as in-hospital falls and bedsores. Now, other hospitals – including some in the United States – are turning to Gardam for advice. [Globe and Mail](#)

Short walks “could cut diabetes risk in older people”

12 June - A 15-minute walk after each meal could prevent older people developing type-2 diabetes, a study has found. The post-meal walks control blood sugar as well as one long

walk, research by George Washington University suggested. Elevated blood sugar after meals could increase the risk of type-2 diabetes, so resting after eating "is the worst thing you can do," the study said. Diabetes UK said there were "small differences" between exercise routines - but any activity was beneficial. The US study was the first to test short bouts of exercise in the "risky period" following meals, when blood sugar can rise rapidly, lead author Loretta DiPietro said. [BBC News](#)

Study shows pill prevents H.I.V. among drug addicts

12 June - Drug-injecting addicts who took a daily antiretroviral pill were half as likely to become infected with H.I.V. as those who did not, a major new study has found, providing the final piece of evidence that such treatments can prevent AIDS in every group at risk. Earlier clinical trials showed that the therapy can sharply reduce the risk of H.I.V. transmission from mother to child, and in gay and bisexual men and heterosexuals. [New York Times](#)

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USAFRICOM

Ghana: Rabies outbreak kills two in Brong Ahafo

12 June - Two people died from a rabies outbreak in the Asunafo North and Asunafo South Districts in the Brong Ahafo Region between February and April this year. Dr Kenneth Gbeddy, Brong Ahafo Regional Director of Veterinary Service in an interview with the Ghana News Agency in Sunyani on Wednesday said the two, a man and a woman were the victims, but did not disclose their districts. He said veterinary officers were undertaking vaccination exercises to bring the situation under control, adding that, last year, two people also died from rabies in the Tano North District and Tano South District of the Region. [Ghana Business News](#)

Kenya: Ministry fights dengue fever

10 June - Ministry of Health and Kenya Red Cross Mombasa officials led a Dengue fever sensitisation programme in Shimanzi Railways estate Makande, Mombasa at the weekend. The region is prone to mosquito infestation due to its proximity to the Kibarani dumping site, a bushy environment and the Indian Ocean. Red Cross officials in charge of the programme, Gregory Okal, said they cleared the bushes and sprayed insecticide in the houses in the estate. Speaking to the Star during the activity, Okal said Mombasa has 115 confirmed cases of Dengue fever and 356 results awaited from a comprehensive laboratory test in Nairobi. "As the Red cross we have taken this early preventive measure because Dengue is still rampant in Mombasa despite the assurance from experts that it has been contained," he said. [allAfrica](#)

Tanzania: Caution as all mosquitoes now spread elephantiasis

12 June - As Dar es Salaam and Mwanza regions prepare for the start of a mass drug administering campaign against bilharzia and lymphatic filariasis (elephantiasis), health experts have cautioned the public to be more vigilant now that it has been found that all mosquitoes spread elephantiasis. Speaking during a sensitisation workshop for news editors and journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday, the National Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) Coordinator, Dr Upendo Mwingira, said in the past, only the culex mosquito was known to spread elephantiasis. Recent studies, however, have shown that even anopheles mosquitoes can, which in the local context means that a huge chunk of the country's population is now vulnerable to elephantiasis. [allAfrica](#)

Uganda: Uganda running out of ARVs, HIV test kits

12 June - Uganda has run out of most antiretroviral drugs (ARVs), HIV testing kits, drugs to treat opportunistic infections and several crucial diagnostic tools for HIV care, according to a recent Ministry of Health stock status report. The [report](#), posted by the ministry on 27 May, listed the status of medical supplies as of 1 May. It reported that central stocks of a number of first- and second-line ARVs, paediatric ARV formulations and HIV test kits were either out or below the minimum stock levels in country's three government warehouses.

[IRIN](#)

Zimbabwe: Zim children facing increasing levels of malnutrition and stunting

11 June - The UN World Food Programme (WFP) has warned that Zimbabwe's children, a third of whom have already been left stunted as a result of malnutrition, are still at serious and increasing levels of risk. In a report issued earlier this year on the state of food security in Zimbabwe, the WFP highlights how malnutrition is an ongoing problem. The report quotes figures released late last year by the Zimbabwe National Security Agency and Inner City Fund International. According to the latest Demographic and Health Survey of 2012, one in every three Zimbabwean children is stunted as a result of malnutrition. The WFP says the prevalence of stunting among Zimbabwe's children, caused by lack of proper nutrition, has continued to rise since 2009. [allAfrica](#)

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USCENTCOM

Pakistan: Measles deaths, 8 June 2013

8 June - Measles claimed the lives of two more babies in Punjab during the last 24 hours. Of them one died at Children's Hospital in Lahore and the other in Allied Hospital, Faisalabad, a health department spokesman said. He said a total of 201 new measles cases were reported all over the province during the last 24 hours, including 40 in Lahore alone. [ReliefWeb](#)

Saudis report three more MERS-CoV cases, one fatal

12 June – Saudi Arabia, epicenter of MERS-CoV (Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus) outbreaks, reported three more cases today, one of them fatal, while media reports said French authorities ruled out two suspected cases. Meanwhile, a Canadian expert who recently traveled to Saudi Arabia to help investigate the cases there said more international collaboration will be needed to figure out the source of the virus, according to a Canadian Press report. [CIDRAP](#)

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USEUCOM

Ireland: First Irish leprosy case reported in Republic of Ireland

10 June - The first recorded case of leprosy in modern times was reported to the health authorities in the Irish Republic earlier this year, it has emerged. The patient is a Brazilian who has been living in Ireland for several years. He had suffered a recurrence of his leprosy having first contracted it in Brazil, 10 years ago. Dr Connor Gallagher said it was a case that "one might have expected to encounter in the Middle Ages - not in a busy surgery in County Meath". The GP registrar who examined the man said he suffered from tuberculous leprosy or sarcoidosis. "The risk of contagion in new cases is small. However global eradication in recent years has proven difficult," he wrote in a medical magazine. [BBC](#)

Spanish austerity cuts put lives at risk, study finds

13 June - Austerity cuts in Spain could lead to the effective dismantling of large parts of its healthcare system and significantly damage the health of the population, according to a study published on Thursday. Researchers who analyzed the situation warned that if nothing was done to reverse the trend, Spain risked spiraling health problems and could see increases in infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and the virus that causes AIDS... The study published in the British medical Journal (BMJ) found that Spain's national budget cuts of almost 14 percent and regional budget cuts of up to 10 percent in health and social services in 2012 have coincided with increased demands for care, particularly from the elderly, disabled and mentally ill. The researchers also noted increases in depression, alcohol-related disorders and suicides in Spain since the financial crisis hit and unemployment increased. [Reuters](#)

U.K.: Britain to regulate e-cigarettes as medicine from 2016

12 June - Britain is to regulate electronic cigarettes as non-prescription medicines from 2016 in an attempt to improve quality, though the country's drugs watchdog said they would still be sold in convenience stores. Healthcare authorities around the world are

grappling with how to deal with the battery-driven devices, which allow users to inhale nicotine-laced vapor and are increasingly popular as an apparently less harmful alternative to smoking. [Reuters](#)

U.K.: Public Health England to launch largest cancer database

12 June - The world's largest database of cancer patients is being set up in England in an attempt to revolutionise care, Public Health England has announced. It will collate all the available data on each of the 350,000 new tumours detected in the country each year. The aim is to use the register to help usher in an era of "personalised medicine" that will see treatments matched to the exact type of cancer a patient has. Experts said it was "great news". [BBC](#)

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USNORTHCOM

U.S.: Chicago tactics put major dent in killing trend

11 June - A year after this city drew new attention for soaring gun violence and gang bloodshed, creating a political test for Mayor Rahm Emanuel in President Obama's hometown, Chicago has witnessed a drop in shootings and crime. Killings this year have dipped to a level not seen since the early 1960s... In recent months, as many as 400 officers a day, working overtime, have been dispatched to just 20 small zones deemed the city's most dangerous. The police say they are tamping down retaliatory shootings between gang factions by using a comprehensive analysis of the city's tens of thousands of suspected gang members, the turf they claim and their rivalries. The police are also focusing on more than 400 people they have identified as having associations that make them the most likely to be involved in a murder, as a victim or an offender. [New York Times](#)

U.S. drops bid to block sales of morning-after pill

10 June - The US administration says it will no longer seek to block over-the-counter sales of emergency contraception to women and girls of all ages. This means that anyone will soon be able to buy the Plan B morning-after pill without a prescription. The justice department had fought against a federal judge's order seeking to lift current age and sales limits. The move is seen as a breakthrough in the 12-year battle to make emergency contraception universally available. Under current laws, only girls aged 15 and older can purchase the morning-after pill without a prescription. However in April, US district judge Edward Korman ruled that the drug should be made available over-the-counter and without age restrictions. ...US government lawyers had appealed against Judge Korman's ruling, arguing that he had exceeded his authority. But the justice department has now confirmed that the FDA will drop its appeal and prepare a plan to comply with the ruling. [BBC News](#)

U.S.: Multistate investigation of suspected infections following steroid injections

10 June - CDC is aware of reports of suspected infections among persons who received either 80mg/mL or 40mg/mL of preservative-free methylprednisolone acetate (MPA) produced by the Main Street Family Pharmacy in Newbern, Tennessee. As of June 10th, CDC is reporting 25 cases from four states - Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, and North Carolina. The majority of these persons developed skin and soft tissue infections of unclear etiology following intramuscular injection of this product. All products labeled as sterile have been voluntarily recalled by the pharmacy. On June 6, FDA reported detection of microbial contamination, including bacterial and fungal, in unopened vials of preservative-free MPA. Samples are being sent to CDC for further characterization. These findings emphasize the importance for providers to continue to ensure that all recalled products are no longer in use and returned promptly. [CDC](#)

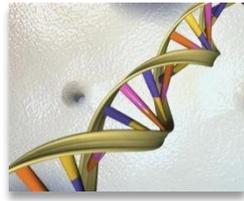
U.S.: Program cuts use of antibiotics in kids

11 June - An educational intervention combined with regular feedback to pediatricians reduced inappropriate prescribing of antibiotics for children treated for respiratory infections in an outpatient setting, a randomized trial showed. Within the first year, the percentage of broad-spectrum antibiotics prescribed for any indication fell by an absolute 12.5% in the intervention group compared with a drop of 5.8% in the usual-practice group, a significant difference ($P=0.01$), according to Jeffrey Gerber, MD, PhD, of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and colleagues. That difference was largely driven by less use of antibiotics for pneumonia. [MedPage Today](#)

U.S.: Nationwide shortage of doxycycline: resources for providers and recommendations for patient care

12 June - The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) originally reported a shortage of some forms of doxycycline (doxycycline hyclate) and unavailability of tetracycline on January 18, 2013, caused by increased demand and manufacturing issues. FDA continues to report shortage from some, but not all, manufacturers of some dosages and forms of doxycycline hyclate and doxycycline monohydrate. FDA does not currently report a shortage of intravenous doxycycline hyclate or the oral suspension doxycycline calcium commonly used in pediatric patients... This notice provides advice on alternatives to doxycycline when available, as well as situations where there is no recommended alternative to doxycycline. [CDC](#)

U.S.: Supreme Court OKs patenting of human DNA if synthetic



13 June - In a first of its kind ruling on human genes, a unanimous U.S. Supreme Court on Thursday decided that synthetically produced genetic material can be patented but naturally occurring DNA extracted from the human body cannot... The contentious, uniquely 21st century question before the court was whether any human genes can ever be patented - meaning the holders have exclusive rights to their intellectual property for a defined period. [Reuters](#)

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USPACOM

Asia's low fertility trap opens opportunities in IVF market

13 June - A looming crisis in Asia as women delay giving birth, leading to low fertility rates that have dire implications for economic growth, is opening huge opportunities for the fast-growing in-vitro fertilization (IVF) industry... Several countries such as Singapore, Japan and South Korea have fertility rates of less than 1.5 births per woman, a level experts consider very low. In contrast, the United States has a fertility rate of around 2.01 and Australia 1.9. [Reuters](#)

India's poorest women coerced into sterilization

11 June - ... When it comes to family planning, women are on the front lines in India, which has carried out about 37 percent of the world's female sterilizations. Government-imposed quotas and financial incentives for doctors mean 4.6 million women were sterilized last year, many for cash payments and many in the unsanitary and rudimentary conditions that greeted Devi. Vasectomies, by contrast, accounted for just 4 percent of all sterilizations... [A.K. Das, the surgeon at the clinic,] who spent three minutes on each operation, ran out of anesthetic with more than 10 patients to go, forcing him to use a weaker sedative. He said he's paid an extra \$2 per patient by the government for continuing to operate under these circumstances. In between each operation an assistant washed the scalpel in a tray filled with warm water. [Bloomberg](#)

Japan: Nationwide rubella epidemic — Japan, 2013

14 June - The primary purpose of rubella vaccination is to prevent congenital rubella virus infection, including CRS [congenital rubella syndrome]. In WPR [Western Pacific Region], the Immunization Technical Advisory Group endorsed a regional accelerated rubella control and

CRS prevention goal to decrease rubella incidence to <10 cases per million population and CRS incidence to <10 cases per million live births each year by 2015. In 2012, Japan reported 18.7 rubella cases per million population, a rate higher than the WPR annual incidence target. As of May 2013 (4 months into the year), the number of reported rubella cases is already double the total number of cases in 2012. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

Marshall Islands: Drought situation report

11 June - A state of 'drought' disaster remains in effect in the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). The state of 'drought disaster proclaimed by the RMI President was reissued on 7 June and will remain in effect for an additional 30 days. Drought conditions on the affected islands and atolls remain unchanged. Humanitarian needs for the 6,384 people living on the affected islands and atolls are urgent. The most pressing humanitarian needs are for access to safe water and the growing need for food. The drought conditions have depleted water tanks and made groundwater unsuitable for human consumption due to high salinity. In addition, the drought has damaged or destroyed local food crops. ...There have been no significant outbreaks of diarrhoea, influenza-like illness and conjunctivitis reported since 1 May. However, on some atolls and islands there have been an increased number of cases of influenza-like illness reported in Lae, Likiep and Namu and of diarrhoea in Mejit. [ReliefWeb/OCHA](#)

Singapore: Dengue outbreak worsens

11 June - As weekly dengue-fever infections surge to a record, Singaporean health officials are stepping up efforts to beat back a tropical-disease outbreak that could become the city-state's worst ever. More than 9,400 people here have been infected by the mosquito-borne dengue virus so far this year, resulting in two deaths, according to the National Environment Agency. Weekly counts surged to an all-time high of 820 cases in the week that ended June 8, topping the previous record of 713 cases in 2005. Officials believe the severity of the current epidemic will surpass that of Singapore's worst dengue outbreak that year, when authorities logged 14,006 confirmed cases. The number of deaths in 2005 ended at 27, a higher proportion than the current outbreak. [Wall Street Journal](#)

Thailand: Record dengue season predicted

12 June - With more than 40 deaths and almost 40,000 cases of dengue fever reported in Thailand so far this year, health experts are warning this could be the largest-ever epidemic. "About 25 years ago we had a dengue outbreak of around 170,000 cases," Pornthep Siriwanarangsun, the director of Thailand's Department of Disease Control, told IRIN. "This year, we expect 150,000 to 200,000 cases." Up to 200 people could die in a worst-case scenario, he said. Even if dengue cases surpass the 1987 record, the death toll that year of more than 1,000 is unlikely to be exceeded owing to improved health care and preventive measures. [IRIN](#)

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Haiti: UN warns 1.5 million people face severe hunger following weather shocks

11 June – The United Nations food relief agency said it remained extremely concerned by the plight of 1.5 million people in Haiti who need food assistance, following extreme weather conditions and poor harvests. In addition to the 1.5 million people facing food insecurity, a further 6.7 million people in Haiti are struggling to meet their own food needs on a regular basis. Before the hurricane season, which runs from June to November, the World Food Programme (WFP) had pre-positioned emergency supplies to cover the needs of 300,000 people for two days with ready-to-use food and for four weeks with staple food rations. The agency also had established agreements with 15 partners and had begun emergency distribution to 200,000 beneficiaries through schools in the worst-affected communities. [ReliefWeb](#)

South America sees respiratory infection rise

12 June - Several South American countries are reporting high levels of acute respiratory infection levels, with increasing trends in most countries, but within expected levels for this time of year, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) reported today in its weekly update. So far respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) predominates in most countries, though the 2009 H1N1 flu virus is dominant in Brazil. RSV and seasonal flu viruses, mainly H1N1, are cocirculating in some countries, including Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Venezuela. Locations seeing RSV cocirculation with H3N2 include Bolivia (La Paz), Ecuador, and Peru. The World Health Organization (WHO) said in its most recent flu update that flu activity is starting to increase in South America and South Africa, but levels are still low in Oceania. [CIDRAP News Scan](#)

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