

14 March 2014

Army Public Health Weekly Update

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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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NOTICE

There will be no Army Public Health Weekly Update next week. Publication will resume on 28 March.

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Comment on last week article

One of our alert readers sent a link to a [critique](#) of the science behind an article in last week's update, "[Eating too much meat and eggs is 'just as bad as smoking.'](#)" Here's the gist of it: 1) the original study had some serious methodological flaws and 2) the author has an equity interest in L-Nutra, a Vegan Based Nutrition System which is an unidentified conflict of interest.

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- U.S., Oklahoma: Forecasters run social media 'tornado drill'
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- U.S.: Sex trade in eight cities worth nearly \$1 billion, study says

USPACOM

- Fiji: 11 people confirmed dead, 10,000 infected in Fiji dengue fever outbreak
- French Polynesia: Report details GBS complication in likely Zika virus case
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- Brazil: 2014 FIFA World Cup - CDC warns about travelers diarrhea, dengue fever, schistosomiasis and STDs
- Brazil starts HPV vaccination program

It's Sleep Awareness Week™.

Do you really know how important sleep is to your performance? This [HPRC - Human Performance Resource Center infographic](#) explains it all.



U.S. MILITARY

Human T-lymphotropic virus infections in active component Service Members, U.S. Armed Forces, 2000–2008

February 2014 - Emergency whole blood transfusions may increase the risk of transmitting bloodborne pathogens, including human T-lymphotropic viruses (HTLVs). U.S. military personnel with any medical encounter for HTLV infection during 2000–2008 were identified from surveillance data... [T]he incidence of diagnoses of HTLV infection was analyzed in relation to demographic factors and prior deployment. There were 247 "possible" cases of HTLV infection identified, or 1.88 cases per 100,000 person-years (p-yrs) (95% CI 1.66, 2.13)... Under the restrictive definition, a higher rate was noted among females versus males, service members with a healthcare occupation versus those who are primarily trained to engage in combat, and service members with any deployment experience. These findings, and a prior military case report of transfusion-transmitted HTLV-I, suggest a need to better define the epidemiology of HTLV in U.S. military personnel to further ensure emergency transfusion safety. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

Lawsuits revived by soldiers over exposure to burn pit toxins

6 March - A federal appeals court on Thursday revived dozens of lawsuits by soldiers and others who claim they were harmed by improper waste disposal while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. The lawsuits claim Houston-based contractors KBR and Halliburton Co. exposed soldiers to toxic emissions and contaminated water when they burned waste in open pits without proper safety controls. U.S. District Judge Roger W. Titus in Maryland dismissed the lawsuits last year, ruling that the contractors could not be sued because they were essentially an extension of the military... The consolidated cases now go back to Titus for further proceedings... Susan L. Burke, attorney for the soldiers [said,]"The 4th Circuit clarified the law in a way that's quite helpful. The decision makes it clear nobody can stand in the shoes of the sovereign and get immunity if they're doing things contrary to what the sovereign directed them to do." [Stars and Stripes](#)

More vets suffer from ALS, but the VA moves effectively to help

11 March - ...[N]o one knows why U.S. military veterans are twice as likely to develop [amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, known as Lou Gehrig's disease] than the general population, or why those who deployed during the Gulf War in 1990-91 may be twice as likely to get the disease as other troops. Although it's still a rare illness, affecting about 30,000 people across the country, it is so devastating to its victims and their families that the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs have made a mission out of trying to reduce their

10 Steps to Look and Feel Better Without Going to the Gym

Are your habits hurting your health? If you want big changes, it's best to focus first on taking small steps. To help you get started, the National Guard's Guard Your Health program created this



infographic that includes some of the simplest ways to fast-track your health and happiness and lengthen your life.

suffering... "Right now, the main culprit for a possible cause of ALS in the military is exposure to environmental factors that occur very early in the training of people in the military," Charlotte neurologist Dr. Benjamin Brooks said. "There is an environmental link," he said. "We just don't know what it is." [Charlotte Observer](#)

Prevalence of respiratory diseases among veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom: results from the national health study for a new generation of U.S. Veterans.

March 2014 - This study investigated the population prevalence of asthma, bronchitis, and sinusitis among veterans deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq compared to nondeployed veterans. A 2009-2011 population-based health survey of 60,000 veterans (34% response rate) asked about the history of doctor-diagnosed respiratory disease. Analyses included smoking history, deployment status, and year of diagnosis. The prevalence of asthma, bronchitis, and sinusitis among those diagnosed during or after 2001 was 3.3%, 5.9%, and 6.9%, respectively, among the deployed veterans and 3.4%, 5.3%, and 5.6%, respectively, among the nondeployed veterans. Deployed veterans were 29% more likely to have been diagnosed with sinusitis during and after 2001 compared to nondeployed veterans (adjusted odds ratio = 1.30, 95% confidence interval = 1.13, 1.49). Deployed veterans are at increased risk for sinusitis compared to nondeployed. There was no significant difference in asthma or bronchitis risk between deployed and nondeployed veterans. [PubMed abstract](#)

Researchers link Iraq dust with some vets' lung problems

7 March - Researchers at Stony Brook University in New York have coined the term "Iraq-Afghanistan war lung injury" to describe respiratory symptoms developed by some veterans — and they have duplicated the problem in mice, using dust from Camp Victory in Baghdad. In an article published Friday in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, researchers including Dr. Anthony Szema, an allergist and assistant professor of medicine at Stony Brook, found that exposing mice to dust collected from Camp Victory in 2007 produced inflammation and changes to respiratory airways similar to those found in Iraq veterans diagnosed with constrictive bronchiolitis. [Military Times](#)

Senate approves McCaskill sex assault bill

10 March - The Senate on Monday finalized plans for broad reforms in how sexual assault cases are handled in the military... Under the Senate-passed bill, military commanders no longer would be able to overturn jury convictions; the statute of limitations for military rapes would be erased; and victims would receive their own independent counsel in sex crimes cases. The bill also would require civilian review if a commander declines to prosecute a sexual assault case; require dishonorable discharges for troops convicted of such crimes; and create harsh punishments for anyone who retaliates against victims who report rapes and assaults. And it dumps the so-called "good soldier" defense, which allowed

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.

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lawyers to cite service members' past exemplary service as evidence that they would not commit violent crimes. [Military Times](#)

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GLOBAL

After Fukushima, utilities prepare for worst

9 March - ...If the experience at Fukushima taught anything, it was that if an earthquake or flood strikes, the reactors may have to cope with only what is on hand, at least for the first few hours. But outside help may also be needed. Going up soon at a building near the FedEx hub in Memphis, and at a site near an airport in Phoenix, are industry depots, each with five "kits" including pumps, hoses and other emergency gear, 20 truck trailers comprising a single kit, deliverable to any reactor in the country within 24 hours. The whole industry, despite using vastly different reactor designs, has devised a standard for hose fittings, pump types and other basic backup equipment. [New York Times](#)

Bioprinters -- Printing a bit of me

8 March - ...[T]he promise of 3D bioprinting is...to create human tissues -- layer by layer -- for research, drug development and testing, and ultimately as replacement organs, such as a kidney or pancreas, for patients desperately in need of a transplant. Bioprinted organs could be made from patients' own cells and thus would not be rejected by their immune systems. They could also be manufactured on demand... All tissue engineers have the same goal... but their approaches differ. In particular, they are divided on how much of a support structure or scaffold they need to provide for the cells, and what building materials are the most suitable. [Economist](#)

Blood test offers swifter, safer diagnosis of sport brain injury

13 March - Swedish researchers say they have devised a blood test that could better diagnose sports-related brain injuries and prevent American football, rugby and ice hockey players returning to the field in danger. In findings from a study of ice hockey players, the researchers said their method can show just an hour after a head injury how severe the concussion is, whether there is a risk of long-term symptoms, and when the player can return to the sport... Zetterberg said the same test could also be used in general emergency medical care to diagnose brain damage from concussions, regardless of how they happened. [Reuters](#)

Can antibiotics trigger arrhythmias?

10 March - Azithromycin and levofloxacin were both associated with elevated risks of death and serious cardiac arrhythmias during standard lengths of prescription, a study of mostly male military veterans showed. Through the first 5 days after a prescription was dispensed, the risk of all-cause death was 48% greater (hazard ratio 1.48, 95% CI 1.05-2.09) and the risk of serious arrhythmia was 77% greater (HR 1.77, 95% CI 1.20-2.62) with azithromycin, which is typically taken for 5 days, compared with amoxicillin, according to Gowtham Rao, MD, PhD, of the University of South Carolina in Columbia, and colleagues. There were no longer any significant differences in risk 6 to 10 days after starting treatment. [MedPage Today](#)

Gel protects monkeys from H.I.V. after sex, study finds

12 March - In another promising development in AIDS prevention, scientists have shown that monkeys can be protected against infection with a vaginal gel even when it is used as long as three hours after sex. If it works in humans, such a gel would be particularly useful in countries where women have little protection against domestic violence or rape, because they could apply it surreptitiously after a partner fell asleep or a clinic could administer it after a rape. But if the technique does move into human trials, scientists said, it is more likely that women would be asked to try to use it both before and after sex. [New York Times](#)

Inconsistency seen as barrier to stopping resistant bacteria

10 March - ...The [Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology] study was a survey of hospitals' approaches to multidrug-resistant gram-negative bacteria (MDR GNB), which include such common healthcare-associated pathogens as Acinetobacter, Pseudomonas, and the Enterobacteriaceae family, which includes Klebsiella pneumonia, among other species... Sixty-six hospitals (39%) from 26 states and 15 other countries responded to the survey, according to the report. More than 80% of those reported having experience with each of the resistant strains mentioned. More than 78% said they had encountered GNB resistant to all antibiotics except colistin, an older drug that's known for kidney toxicity. The hospitals reported many different specific definitions of MDR with respect to the different pathogens: 14 for Acinetobacter, 18 for Pseudomonas, and 22 for Enterobacteriaceae species... The varied definitions influenced decisions on isolating patients. For example, 48% of hospitals used isolation for Enterobacteriaceae species only if they were resistant to more than three antimicrobial classes, while 15% set the isolation bar lower for those species. [CIDRAP](#)

NIH funds new center for translational research

12 March - W. Ian Lipkin, MD, PhD, director of the Center for Infection and Immunity at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University, has received a grant of up to \$31 million over 5 years from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to establish a center for translational research... The Center for Research in Diagnostics and Discovery (CRDD) will

tap leading experts in microbial and human genetics, engineering, microbial ecology, and public health to explore mechanisms of disease and methods for detecting pathogens, characterizing microflora, and identifying biomarkers to guide clinical management, the NIH said in the release. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

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INFLUENZA

Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center: DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary

7 March:

- NORTHCOM: Influenza A (H1N1) remains predominant. Influenza activity continues to decrease.
- CENTCOM: The percent of encounters that were ILI related decreased this week and was below baseline. The percent of encounters that were P&I related decreased this week and was at baseline.
- EUCOM: ILI activity increased. P&I activity decreased among those vaccinated and remained low among those unvaccinated.
- PACOM: ILI activity remained stable. P&I activity decreased among vaccinated service members and remained low among unvaccinated. [AFHSC DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary](#)

Canadian study: Vaccine cut risk of flu-related hospitalization 59%

7 March - Using data from hospitals across Canada, researchers have produced a preliminary estimate that this year's influenza vaccine reduced Canadians' risk of flu-related hospitalization by about 59%, according to a report in yesterday's *Eurosurveillance*. The authors also found that about two thirds of severe flu illnesses in adults involved people younger than 65, supporting previous indications that this season has been hard on younger adults. The 2009 H1N1 (pH1N1) virus has been overwhelmingly dominant in Canada and the United States this year, the first time this has happened since the 2009 pandemic. [CIDRAP](#)

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 9 (February 23-March 1, 2014), influenza activity continued to decrease in the United States.

- **Viral Surveillance:** Of 6,748 specimens tested and reported during week 9, 587 (8.7%) were positive for influenza.
- **Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality:** The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was above the epidemic threshold.
- **Influenza-Associated Pediatric Deaths:** Four influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported.
- **Outpatient Illness Surveillance:** The proportion of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) was 2.0%, which is at the national baseline. [FluView](#)

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

For week 9/2014:

- Of the 30 countries providing clinical data, Greece and Finland reported high-intensity influenza activity, 10 reported medium intensity, and 18 countries reported low-intensity influenza activity.
- Of the 1 152 sentinel specimens tested across 24 countries, 394 (34%) were positive for influenza virus, representing a decrease in the proportion of positive specimens for the sixth consecutive week.
- Seven countries reported 227 hospitalised, laboratory-confirmed influenza cases of which 100, mainly infected by A(H1N1)pdm09 virus, were admitted to intensive care units (ICUs).

Based on the various indicators for the influenza season, the status of the season varies considerably between EU/EEA Member States. Some countries are experiencing decreasing influenza activity while six countries still reported increasing and high ILI/ARI rates. Influenza A(H1)pdm09 and A(H3) viruses are co-circulating in outpatient settings; however, A(H1)pdm09 is predominant in hospitalised cases. Influenza B viruses have been detected only rarely. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For the week ending 1 March 2014:

Influenza

- Five cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza (A/H3) among US military basic trainees (four A/H1N1 and 1 type B.)
- Increased influenza B and H3N2 activity among civilians in California near US-Mexico border

FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates were moderately elevated at CGTC Cape May. [NHRC Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)

Prevalence of influenza-like illness and seasonal and pandemic H1N1 Influenza vaccination coverage among workers — U.S., 2009–10 influenza season

14 March - ... In a representative sample of 28,710 employed adults, 5.5% reported ILI symptoms in the month before the interview, and 23.7% received the 2009 pandemic H1N1 (pH1N1) influenza vaccine. Among employed adults, the highest prevalence of ILI was reported by those employed in the industry groups "Real estate and rental and leasing" (10.5%) and "Accommodation and food services" (10.2%), and in the occupation groups "Food preparation and serving related" (11.0%) and "Community and social services" (8.3%). Both seasonal influenza and pH1N1 vaccination coverage were relatively low in all of these groups of workers. Adults not in the labor force (i.e., homemakers, students, retired persons, and persons unable to work) had ILI prevalence and pH1N1 vaccination coverage similar to those found in all employed adults combined; in contrast, ILI prevalence was higher and pH1N1 vaccination coverage was lower among unemployed adults (i.e., those looking for work). [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

USAPHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report

For the week ending 1 March 2014 (Week 9):

In both the civilian and military populations the number of specimens testing positive for Influenza A continued to decline in week 9. All regions, except PRMC and ERMC, have shown declining trends from peaks earlier in the influenza season.

- ILI Activity: Army incident ILI outpatient visits in week 9 were 30% lower than for the same week last year.
- Influenza cases: Four hospitalized influenza cases have been reported to USAPHC through DRSi in week 9. To date, 95 cases have been reported during this influenza season: 23 in Active Duty (AD) Service Members and 72 in non-AD beneficiaries.
- Viral specimens: During week 9, 260 of 1,090 (24%) laboratory specimens tested positive for respiratory pathogens. The most influenza A positive specimens were reported from PRMC (39%), followed by ERMC and NRMC which accounted for 21% and 15%, respectively. [USAPHC U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report](#)

WHO sees seasonal flu declines in North America, China

11 March - Flu activity in the Northern Hemisphere showed some signs of decline, especially in North America, but patterns varied in the European region, with some northern and eastern countries showing increasing trends, the WHO said yesterday in a global seasonal flu update. Reports from influenza labs suggest that influenza B detections in North America have slightly increased, while both influenza A strains are circulating in Europe, with the 2009 H1N1 virus somewhat more common. Seasonal flu also varied in other parts of the world, such as eastern Asia. China saw an overall decline in seasonal flu activity, at a time when H7N9 influenza cases have noticeably dropped off. Hong Kong, Mongolia, and South

Korea, however, continued to report elevated flu activity. Another flu hot spot is Egypt, where the number of 2009 H1N1 illnesses was high, the WHO said. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

PANDEMIC AND AVIAN INFLUENZA

Cambodia reports 2 new H5N1 cases, 1 fatal

10 March - Cambodia has reported two more cases of H5N1 avian flu in children, one of them fatal, according to a story today from Xinhua, China's state news agency. The fatal case was in an 11-year-old boy from Kampong Chhnang province who was hospitalized at Kantha Bopha Children's Hospital in Phnom Penh in "very serious" condition last week. He died on Mar 7, the hospital's deputy director, Dr. Denis Laurent, said. AFP, citing a different doctor, reported that the boy had eaten infected poultry. Also, an 8-year-old boy from Kandal province contracted H5N1 avian flu, both news outlets reported. He is in stable condition and is recovering, Laurent said. Kandal province surrounds Phnom Penh, and Kampong Chhnang borders Kandal to the northwest. So far this year Cambodia has reported eight H5N1 cases, all in children, and three of them have been fatal. Since 2005 the country has confirmed 55 H5N1 cases, including 36 deaths. [CIDRAP Flu Scan](#) (second item)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Drug-resistant *Salmonella* linked to hospitalization, study finds

12 March - Drug-resistant *Salmonella* is associated with more severe clinical illness than drug-susceptible strains are, according to a study yesterday in *Foodborne Pathogens and Disease*. Scientists from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state health departments directed a collaboration of the Foodborne Diseases Active Surveillance Network (FoodNet) and the National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System to analyze data on *Salmonella* isolates from 2006 through 2008... "Adjusted for age, serotype, and bloodstream infection, hospitalization was significantly more common among patients infected with strains resistant to only three agents or to ceftriaxone (all ceftriaxone-resistant isolates were resistant to other agents) than among patients with pansusceptible isolates," they write. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

Horsemeat from US is a 'health risk' to French

13 March - Horses from the United States, Canada and other countries in the region whose meat is sold in France for human consumption pose a health risk and are often cruelly

treated, a leading animal rights group said on Thursday. L214, which derives its name from an article in a 1976 French law that stipulates that animals have to be kept properly and in healthy conditions, said the conclusions followed a wide-reaching, two-year investigation launched in 2012. Horses from the US, Canada, Mexico, Uruguay and Argentina destined for human consumption were found to be emaciated, sick, injured or had been administered strong doses of anti-inflammatory medicines, according to the findings. [The Local](#)

U.S.: Deadly pig virus cases on the rise

7 March - Cases of the deadly Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus, a highly contagious pig disease, are increasing across the U.S. farm belt, a group of animal health researchers said. Confirmed cases of PEDv increased by 252 in the week ending March 1, bringing the total number to 4,106 in 26 states, according to data released on Thursday by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Animal Health Laboratory Network. While one case can represent an individual animal or an entire herd at a single site, swine specialists estimate PEDv has killed at least 4 million U.S. hogs since it was discovered in May 2013. [Reuters](#)

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WELLNESS

Seeking solutions for sexual aggression against women in bars

7 March - Earlier this week we [covered](#) a study from the University of Toronto that found that men who were sexually aggressive in bars weren't necessarily drunk, and that their actions usually weren't the result of miscommunication. The researchers hired and trained young adults to go into bars in the Toronto area and observe people's behavior. They found that 90 percent of the victims of sexual aggression were women being harassed by men — and that the perpetrators' aggressiveness didn't correlate with their level of intoxication. Bystanders and bar staff rarely intervened... Hundreds of you weighed in, and the debate was passionate. Several people felt that the study merely confirmed the obvious. [NPR](#)

Serious diarrheal infection in kids linked to antibiotics

10 March - A new study by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) finds that most cases of the severe - and potentially fatal - diarrhea illness in children caused by *Clostridium difficile* infection picked up outside of the hospital occur among those who have recently taken prescribed antibiotics. The CDC urges doctors to improve antibiotic prescribing to protect the health of American children... The study is published in the journal [Pediatrics](#). [Medical News Today](#)

The fat drug

9 March - ...Recently, a group of medical investigators have begun to wonder whether antibiotics might cause the same growth promotion in humans [as in livestock]. New evidence shows that America's obesity epidemic may be connected to our high consumption of these drugs... By the time most meat reaches our table, it contains little or no antibiotics. So we receive our greatest exposure in the pills we take, rather than the food we eat. American kids are prescribed on average about one course of antibiotics every year, often for ear and chest infections. Could these intermittent high doses affect our metabolism? [Researchers] raised mice on both high-calorie food and antibiotics... The results of the study were dramatic, particularly in female mice: They gained about twice as much body fat as the control-group mice who ate the same food. [New York Times](#)

What your activity tracker sees and doesn't see



11 March - High-tech fitness and activity trackers all share one thing: an accelerometer. Here's how they work — and don't. Accelerometers record changes in motion relative to the device: up and down, side to side, and front to back. This little device contains a three-axis accelerometer. When still, it records only the force of gravity. When moved, it records acceleration. [New York Times](#)

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USAFRICOM

African demography: The dividend is delayed

8 March- ...Recent census and survey data suggest that African fertility is falling more slowly than the UN had expected in 2010, when it produced its regular worldwide population survey. Since then, 17 African countries with half the continent's population have reported fertility rates higher than the UN had estimated. Only ten, with 14% of the population, came in lower. In almost all countries fertility is falling. But in about half of them, the fall has slowed down and in a few cases it has stopped. Using recent figures, Messrs Guengant and May divide Africa into four groups... The first are those which really are converging, with fertility rates below 4.0. There are 13 of them, and they have 22% of the continent's population. All are either in the north or south, or are islands, such as the Seychelles. Not a single one is in west, central or east Africa. [Economist](#)

Senegal: An alarming outlook for Senegal's hungry

12 March - The number of food insecure in the Sahel is expected to grow from 11.3 million in 2013 to more than 20 million in 2014, mainly due to an increase in cases in northern

Nigeria, northern Cameroon and Senegal... The number of food insecure in Senegal is slightly higher this year in 2011, the year of a major drought crisis. Rains were poor - in some cases nonexistent - in 2011, decent in 2012 and poor again in 2013, say farmers in Louga. As a result, even though families built up some stocks in 2012, they were starting this year at a deficit, and many of them were in deep debt, making them highly vulnerable when 2013's rains came late and ended early. This dynamic, combined with improved food security surveys that are identifying previously invisible groups of food-insecure people, has caused the number of those classified as hungry to shoot up in Senegal. [IRIN](#)

South Africa battles drug-resistant TB

12 March- ...South Africa is facing a growing drug-resistant tuberculosis (TB) burden as nationally there remains a large gap between the number of patients diagnosed with multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) and those who start treatment. Between 2007 and 2012, recorded cases of MDR-TB, which is resistant to at least two of the primary drugs used to combat standard TB, almost doubled. South Africa has improved its ability to test for drug-resistant TB by introducing GeneXpert, a rapid testing machine that can diagnose TB in sputum samples in less than two hours. But in 2012, just 42 percent of patients diagnosed with MDR-TB began treatment, according to government figures. The success rate for those on treatment is about 40 percent. [Inter Press Service](#)

South Africa: Women gain more from HIV treatment

9 March - The rollout of antiretroviral therapy in rural South Africa has resulted in a rapid recovery of life expectancy for HIV-infected individuals, with women appearing to have benefited more than men, researchers reported here. Since 2004, overall longevity for childhood survivors of HIV-infection in the region has risen from about age 50 to age 60. However, in men longevity has gone from 46 to 55 years, while in women it has increased from 50 to 64 years, said Till Barnighausen, MD, PhD, from Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, and colleagues. [MedPage Today](#)

Uganda: Uganda reports 121 cases of meningococcal meningitis

10 March – Uganda's health ministry has reported 121 cases of meningococcal meningitis, including 5 deaths in recent weeks in the country's northwestern West Nile subregion, according to a report from the World Health Organization's (WHO's) Regional Office for Africa. Of the cases, 26 have been in South Sudan refugees who crossed into Uganda because of the ongoing civil strife in their country. The index case was reported in Adjumani district on Jan 31. Since then, health officials have confirmed 14 to 18 cases per week, but in the most recent week the number jumped to 29, the WHO statement said. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (fourth item)

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Pakistan: Suspected militants attack polio protection team

11 March - Two policemen who were escorting a polio vaccination team have been shot dead in Pakistan's north-west Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The policemen were attacked by unidentified gunmen in the Dera Ismail Khan district. More than 40 people linked to the polio vaccination programme have been killed in Pakistan since 2012. The Taliban oppose the polio programme and have been responsible for similar attacks in the past. They say the vaccinations are a cover for foreign espionage. Militants have also accused health workers of being part of a Western plot to sterilise Muslims. [BBC News](#)

Pakistan to pay parents in new polio vaccination drive

10 March - Parents in one of Pakistan's most troubled provinces are to be paid to vaccinate their children against polio, the crippling disease the world is tantalisingly close to eradicating. It is hoped some 2 million children from some of the most disadvantaged areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the north-western province wracked by Taliban violence, will benefit from the scheme. Parents will be entitled to claim 1,000 rupees (almost £6) for each newborn child who completes a 15-month programme of vaccinations that will protect them against a number of diseases including measles, hepatitis and polio. It is the first time the country has resorted to monetary incentives, which are rarely used around the world. [Guardian](#)

Saudi Arabia: WHO confirms 2 MERS cases

11 March - The World Health Organization (WHO) supplied a bit of new information today as it noted two recent Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) cases reported in Saudi Arabia. One case involved a 58-year-old man from Al-Ahsa province who became ill on Feb 2 and was hospitalized 2 days later, the WHO said. He recovered and was released from the hospital on Feb 24. The man had multiple chronic diseases and was reported to have had contact with unspecified animals before his illness, the agency said. The animal contact was not mentioned in Saudi Arabia's announcement of the case on Feb 20. The other case was in an 81-year-old woman from the Riyadh region who had chronic diseases and was hospitalized on Feb 2. She experienced MERS symptoms on Feb 5 and died 3 days later, the WHO noted. She had not reported any recent contact with animals. The Feb 20 Saudi announcement of her case did not mention the date of her death or address the question of animal contact. The two cases raise the WHO's MERS-CoV tally to 184 cases, of which 81 were fatal. Saudi Arabia's current MERS count is 151 cases and 62 deaths. [CIDRAP](#)

Syria crisis: Number of children in need doubles to 5.5 million

11 March - The number of Syrian children in need has more than doubled in the past year to 5.5 million, the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) says. Up to a million are living under siege and in areas that the agency and other humanitarian organisations cannot access, according to a new report. Children in Syria have lost "lives and limbs, along with virtually every aspect of their childhood", it warns. UN figures say more than 10,000 have been killed in three years of conflict. However, the report notes that real number is probably higher... More than three million been displaced inside Syria - a threefold increase in the space of a year - and 1.2 million - more than half the total number - have become refugees abroad, up from 260,000. [BBC News](#)

United Arab Emirates: MERS case reported in UAE man who owns camels

12 March - A United Arab Emirates (UAE) man who owns camels is sick with a Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) infection, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced today. The patient is a 68-year-old Abu Dhabi resident who fell ill on Mar 1 and has been hospitalized since Mar 3, the WHO said in a statement. He is in stable condition. "He had no contact with other known MERS-CoV cases and had no travel history," the agency said. "The patient owns a farm that he visits daily, and where he had contact with animals, including camels which he breeds." ...Including the new case, 16 MERS cases have been reported in the UAE, according to a tally maintained by FluTrackers, an online infectious disease message board. [CIDRAP](#)

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USEUCOM

Spain: Reproductive rights in Spain and around the world

11 March - On International Women's Day, March 8, there were women's rights demonstrations in Spain, where the government has announced a plan to outlaw nearly all abortions... The current plan, which could be approved by the [Partido Popular]-led Spanish Congress any day, would outlaw all pregnancy terminations for fetal malformation, even those incompatible with viability, and would only allow abortion in cases of rape – with a police report predating the pregnancy confirmation – or if the woman's life is threatened, and only in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy in either case. This would make it one of the most restrictive laws in the world. Essentially, all abortions will be illegal in Spain. [UConn Today](#)

United Kingdom: Warning over hospital superbug linked to 16 deaths

6 March - Sixteen people have died in Manchester in the past four years while infected with a highly resistant superbug, figures show. *Klebsiella pneumoniae* carbapenemase (KPC) is causing increasing concern and a rising number of cases. Some 1,241 patients were affected within the Central Manchester University Hospitals trust area from 2009 to 2013, the figures show. Despite infection control, the numbers have increased year on year. The figures, revealed in a Freedom of Information request by the BBC, found 62 patients so far have suffered blood poisoning - with 14 confirmed deaths within 30 days of infection - at Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. [BBC News](#)

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U.S.: Citing urgent need, U.S. calls on hospitals to hone disaster plans

11 March - Federal officials are proposing sweeping new requirements for American health care facilities — from large hospitals to small group homes for the mentally disabled — intended to ensure their readiness to care for patients during disasters. Describing emergency preparedness as an “urgent public health issue,” the proposal by the Department of Health and Human Services offers regulations aimed at preventing the severe disruptions to health care that followed Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy. More than 68,000 institutions would be affected... The regulations would require hospitals, nursing facilities and group homes to have plans to maintain emergency lighting, fire safety systems, and sewage and waste disposal during power losses, and to keep temperatures at a safe level for patients. [New York Times](#)

U.S.: Improving antibiotic prescribing in hospitals can make health care safer

4 March - A new *Vital Signs* report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that clinicians in some hospitals prescribe three times as many antibiotics than clinicians in other hospitals, even though patients were receiving care in similar areas of each hospital. In addition, about one-third of the time, prescribing practices to treat urinary tract infections and prescriptions for the critical and common drug vancomycin included a potential error – given without proper testing or evaluation, or given for too long. The report also found that, in hospitals, a 30 percent reduction in use of the antibiotics that most often cause deadly diarrheal infections with *Clostridium difficile* can reduce these

infections by more than 25 percent. The same antibiotics also prime patients for future super-resistant infections. [CDC](#)

U.S., Oklahoma: Forecasters run social media ‘tornado drill’

11 March - ...The National Weather Service office in Norman, Okla., deep in the heart of the large swath of land known as “Tornado Alley,” has for years been at the forefront of using social media in disseminating weather-related information. But they are trying a new approach in an attempt to find new and better ways to reach people, holding an online “tornado drill.” The recent effort entailed posting a tornado drill message — in English and Spanish — to both Facebook and Twitter and asking followers to “like,” share and retweet it. The post gave tips for using the sites during severe weather. The Norman branch is the first office in the country to conduct the drills on social media. [News OK](#)

U.S.: Report says medication use is rising for adults with attention disorder

12 March - The number of young American adults taking medications for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder nearly doubled from 2008 to 2012, according to a report to be released Wednesday by the nation’s largest prescription drug manager. The drug manager, Express Scripts, which processes prescriptions for 90 million Americans, also found that almost one in 10 adolescent boys were taking medications for the disorder, usually stimulants such as Adderall or Concerta... Express Scripts reported that the number of American adults receiving prescriptions for A.D.H.D. drugs had risen 53 percent. [New York Times](#)

U.S.: Sex trade in eight cities worth nearly \$1 billion, study says

12 March - A study to be released Wednesday about the world’s oldest profession concludes that the lucrative underground commercial sex economy in eight large U.S. metropolitan areas brings in anywhere from \$40 million annually to as much as nearly \$300 million. The unprecedented 340-page study by the Urban Institute, a policy research group, finds _ not surprisingly _ that the reach of the Internet has facilitated the flesh trade and made it harder to combat. The report and its in-depth interviews with 73 convicted pimps and traffickers also challenges conventional wisdom on the illicit side of the sex industry. “We often think about the commercial sex economy as a hustle, where there’s no real thought or planning that’s involved,” said Meredith Dank, the lead researcher on the exhaustive study funded by the Justice Department. “But we found . . . the opposite _ that some pimps and traffickers actually had a business model they followed.” [McClatchy DC](#)

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Fiji: 11 people confirmed dead, 10,000 infected in Fiji dengue fever outbreak

12 March - Fiji's Health Department has confirmed 11 people have died and over 10,000 others have been infected during an outbreak of dengue fever. The department's launched a major campaign to get rid of possible breeding areas for mosquitoes which carry the disease. The Health Minister Dr Neil Sharma says the outbreak involves the type-3 strain of dengue fever which has never been seen before in the country... There are also fears the number of people infected may be actually closer to 15,000 with under reporting a major concern. [ABC](#)

French Polynesia: Report details GBS complication in likely Zika virus case

7 March - Researchers from French Polynesia yesterday reported what they call the first known case of Guillain-Barre syndrome (GBS) following a probable Zika virus infection, detailing their findings related to an outbreak in the region... In a weekly communicable disease update today, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) estimated that more than 29,000 people in French Polynesia have sought medical care for Zika-like symptoms since the outbreak began in October. As of Feb 21, there were more than 8,500 suspected cases; 74 were in patients neurologic and autoimmune complications, including 41 with GBS. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

Japan: Fukushima recovery - what's been done and what's still to do

11 March - For the survivors, the [third anniversary of the tsunami] was a time for private, silent tributes to family, friends, and colleagues among the 15,884 dead and 2,636 missing in the three worst hit prefectures of Fukushima, Miyagi, and Iwate... Almost 270,000 people who lost their homes in the tsunami or were forced by radiation to evacuate are still displaced. Almost 100,000 are in temporary housing, according to the reconstruction agency, while the rest have found private accommodation or are staying with relatives... Reconstruction is being held up by red tape, a labor shortage in the affected region, and disagreement among residents over where to rebuild their communities – near the coast or on higher ground beyond the reach of future tsunami. The huge disruption caused by the triple disaster is taking its toll on the health of survivors. According to local government data, deaths caused by suicide or the physical and mental stress of life in temporary accommodation stood at more than 3,000 on the eve of the anniversary. [Christian Science Monitor](#)

Myanmar: Rohingya dying from lack of health care

12 March - ...Living conditions in The' Chaung village and surrounding camps of Myanmar's northwestern state of Rakhine are desperate for the healthiest residents. For those who are sick, they are unbearable. The situation became even worse two weeks ago, when the aid group Doctors Without Borders was forced to stop working in Rakhine, where most Rohingya live. The government considers all 1.3 million Rohingya to be illegal immigrants from neighboring Bangladesh, though many of them were born in Myanmar to families who have lived here for generations... In 2011, before the violence erupted, the European Community Humanitarian Office reported that acute malnutrition rates in parts of northern Rakhine reached 23 percent, far above the 15 percent emergency level set by the World Health Organization. In one township, the number of deaths among children under 5 is nearly triple the national rate, according to the U.N. Now the situation is even more dire, with families split and lives disrupted. [NPR](#)

Nepal's miracle gel saves newborns from infection

10 March - ...[A]n antiseptic gel known as "Navi Malam", or chlorhexidine, was applied to avoid umbilical cord infection - a main cause of newborn deaths in the impoverished Himalayan nation. Made by local firm Lomus Pharmaceuticals and backed by the government, the U.S. aid agency and other donors, the gel was introduced in 2011 in hospitals across Nepal and has helped to reduce the number of babies dying from umbilical cord infection. Trials have shown a 23 percent drop in newborn deaths due to infection since the gel was introduced, according to USAID. Nepal was the first country to adopt chlorhexidine for newborn cord care, with Nigeria and Madagascar in the process of implementing it in their health programs. [Reuters](#)

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USSOUTHCOM

Brazil: 2014 FIFA World Cup - CDC warns about travelers diarrhea, dengue fever, schistosomiasis and STDs

12 March - With just 93 days before the beginning of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association's (FIFA) World Cup 2014 in Brazil, an estimated 500,000 soccer fans from all over the globe, including many Americans, will descend on Brazil to attend the world's largest soccer event. This has prompted the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to release a travel notice today for fans going to Brazil for the month-long futbol (soccer) tournament. The federal health agency recommends you schedule an appointment with your physician or travel medicine clinic at least 4–6 weeks before you

depart on your trip. As part of your visit to the travel medicine clinic, ensure your vaccinations are up to date... Travelers are also advised to follow food and water safety guidelines to prevent infectious diseases such as hepatitis A, typhoid fever, and traveler's diarrhea. Because Brazil is home to dengue fever, malaria and yellow fever, the CDC advises to prevent mosquito bites and use insect repellent. [Global Dispatch](#)

Brazil starts HPV vaccination program

13 March - Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff said on March 10 the country was rolling out a vaccination program to protect five million 11-to 13-year-old girls against the human papilloma virus (HPV), which can cause cervical cancer. "The state has an obligation to protect all girls," Rousseff said as she inaugurated the program in São Paulo... The program's first year will see 15 million doses – three per child – administered. The government hopes to reach at least 80% of Brazil's 5.2 million girls in the targeted age group. [InfoSurHoy](#)

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