

15 August 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

The Army Public Health Weekly Update will be on hiatus for the next two weeks. See you in September!

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### INFLUENZA

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- CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report
- DoD Global Laboratory-Based Influenza Surveillance Program - Respiratory Highlights

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## HAN 365: CDC Ebola Update #1

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is working with other U.S. government agencies, the World Health Organization, and other domestic and international partners in an international response to the current Ebola outbreak in West Africa. This document summarizes key messages about the outbreak and the response. It will be updated as new information becomes available and distributed regularly. Please share the document with others as appropriate.



- DoD Global Laboratory-Based Influenza Surveillance Program - Respiratory Highlights: Supplemental EUCOM Report
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview
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### USAFRICOM

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- Kenya's lead poisoning victims narrate ordeal

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- Iran: Iranian parliament bans vasectomies in bid to boost birth rate
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- Saudi Arabia reports another MERS case

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- United Kingdom: Philip Morris prepared to sue UK over plain cigarette packaging

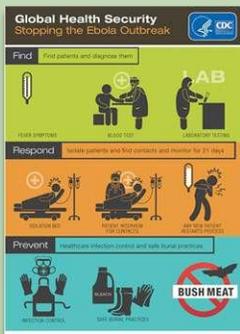
### USNORTHCOM

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- U.S.: Idaho reports alarming rise in whooping cough cases
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- U.S.: Sugar-sweetened beverage consumption among adults — 18 states, 2012
- U.S.: Texas emblematic of national battle against abortion providers
- U.S.: Two out of five U.S. adults at risk of developing diabetes: study

## Ebola Resources from CDC

List of resources includes new Ebola infographics.



## USPACOM

- [India: Uranium mining fuels health crisis](#)
- [Thailand: Thai military government moves to outlaw commercial surrogacy](#)

## USSOUTHCOM

- [Chikungunya outbreak expands by 12%, to 576,000 cases](#)

## U.S. MILITARY

### Is it time for a tobacco-free military?

14 August - Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus recently announced that he wanted to end tobacco sales on all Navy installations. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, citing both financial costs and tobacco's harmful effects on readiness, added that military tobacco policy in general should be reviewed, including the possibility of ending tobacco sales and establishing smoke-free military installations. Currently, a Department of Defense review of the tobacco issue is under way, 5 years after the Institute of Medicine called for a tobacco-free military. Military personnel are required to pass fitness tests, undergo periodic drug tests, and meet weight and body-composition standards or face disciplinary action, including possible discharge. Yet despite the underlying expectations for superlative fitness — and despite the availability of state-of-the-art tobacco-cessation programs — many military personnel still use tobacco. [New England Journal of Medicine](#)

### Health study for a new generation of U.S. Veterans

August 2014 - The National Health Study for a New Generation of U.S. Veterans, a 10-year longitudinal study of 60,000 recent Veterans, is one of the largest scientific research studies of this group of Veterans... More than 20,500 Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Veterans participated in the first survey in this study. Explore the research findings:

- [Sinusitis, asthma, and bronchitis](#): 29% of OEF/OIF Veterans were more likely to report having sinusitis
- [Infertility](#): 6% of OEF/OIF Veterans surveyed reported they sought infertility treatment

Researchers continue to analyze data from this study and will share their findings in future publications. [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

### Military pioneers use of lasers to treat scars

8 August – Military dermatologists have pioneered the use of laser treatments developed for cosmetic purposes to heal scar tissue from injuries sustained by service members in the line of duty... [Ablative] fractional lasers commonly used to smooth out wrinkles or erase acne marks can also improve battlefield scars, helping patients regain use of the area. The lasers deliver tiny columns of heat quickly to the damaged skin, producing a new wound on

## Army Vector-borne Disease Report

This issue of Army Vector-borne Disease Report has information on 2 new cases of chikungunya acquired in the U.S. Also, PHCR-North has identified 35 WNV-positive mosquito pools.



top of the original burn that then heals with the help of the surrounding healthy skin tissue. [Health.mil](#)

## Relationships between diagnoses of sexually transmitted infections and urinary tract infections among male service members

July 2014 - A previous MSMR report found that 42.8% of all incident (first-time) urinary tract infections (UTIs) in males, but only 0.4% of such UTIs in females, were diagnosed as "urethritis, unspecified" (ICD-9: 597.80). This study explored the possibility that many of the diagnoses of urethritis in males represented sexually transmitted infections (STIs), even though ICD-9: 597.80 is explicitly reserved for cases of urethritis that are deemed to not be sexually transmitted... Most service members who were diagnosed with "urethritis, unspecified" had no documented diagnoses of an STI in their Military Health System health records; however, recurrent UTIs were more common among service members who did have documented STIs. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

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## GLOBAL

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## Apple prepares Healthkit rollout amid tangled regulatory web

12 August - Apple Inc has been discussing how its "HealthKit" service will work with health providers at Mount Sinai, the Cleveland Clinic and Johns Hopkins as well as with Allscripts, a competitor to electronic health records provider Epic Systems, people familiar with the discussions said. While the talks may not amount to anything concrete, they underscore how Apple is intent on making health data, such as blood pressure, pulse and weight, available for consumers and health providers to view in one place. Currently, this data is being collected by thousands of third-party health care software applications and medical devices, but it isn't centrally stored. [Reuters](#)

## Global sodium consumption and death from cardiovascular causes



14 August - In 2010, the estimated mean level of global sodium consumption was 3.95 g per day, and regional mean levels ranged from 2.18 to 5.51 g per day. Globally, 1.65 million annual deaths from cardiovascular causes... were attributed to sodium intake above the reference level [of 2.0 g per day]; 61.9% of these deaths occurred in men and 38.1% occurred in women... The rate of death from

## The Reach of War: Chronicling a Day with Doctors Without Borders

TIME's photo essay chronicles the Syrian war's reach beyond the country's borders.



## 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.

cardiovascular causes associated with sodium intake above the reference level was highest in the country of Georgia and lowest in Kenya. [New England Journal of Medicine](#) (See video on the same page, "Salt.")

## Injecting bacteria shrinks tumors in dogs and one patient: study

13 August - Common soil bacteria injected into solid cancers in pet dogs and one human patient shrank many of the tumors, scientists reported on Wednesday. The preliminary findings offered hope that the experimental treatment could turn out to be more effective than existing cancer therapies for some inoperable tumors such as those of the lung, breast, and pancreas, which often fail to respond to radiation and chemotherapy... [A] decade ago Hopkins scientists resurrected the approach using *Clostridium novyi* soil bacteria. They genetically modified the bug by removing DNA that makes a toxic protein, and decided to inject only spores, which are less likely to cause infection. [Reuters](#)

## On the frontiers of cyborg science

10 August – No longer just fantastical fodder for sci-fi buffs, cyborg technology is bringing us tangible progress toward real-life electronic skin, prosthetics and ultraflexible circuits. Now taking this human-machine concept to an unprecedented level, pioneering scientists are working on the seamless marriage between electronics and brain signaling with the potential to transform our understanding of how the brain works — and how to treat its most devastating diseases... "By focusing on the nanoelectronic connections between cells, we can do things no one has done before," says Charles M. Lieber, Ph.D. "We're really going into a new size regime for not only the device that records or stimulates cellular activity, but also for the whole circuit. We can make it really look and behave like smart, soft biological material, and integrate it with cells and cellular networks at the whole-tissue level. This could get around a lot of serious health problems in neurodegenerative diseases in the future." [EurekAlert](#)

## Passengers who survived terrifying Air Transat flight in 2001 help psychologists uncover new clues about post-traumatic stress vulnerability

13 August – An extraordinary opportunity to study memory and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in a group of Air Transat passengers who experienced 30 minutes of unimaginable terror over the Atlantic Ocean in 2001 has resulted in the discovery of a potential risk factor that may help predict who is most vulnerable to PTSD... The study produced two key findings. First, the Flight 236 passengers showed tremendously enhanced vivid memories of the plane emergency... Second, neither the vividness nor accuracy of memory related to who developed PTSD, but those with PTSD recalled a higher number of details external to the main event (i.e. details that were not specific in time, or were repetitions or editorial statements) compared to passengers who did not have PTSD and to

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healthy controls. This pattern was observed across all events tested, not just the traumatic event, suggesting that it is not just memory for the trauma itself that is related to PTSD, but rather 'how' a person processes memory for events in general. [EurekAlert](#)

## Readmission rates high in lupus

11 August - One in six patients with lupus discharged from the hospital was readmitted within a month, with underserved minority populations being most vulnerable, researchers found. In a study of admissions in five states during 2008 and 2009, there were 55,936 hospitalizations among 31,903 patients with lupus. Of these, 16.5% required readmission within 30 days... Each year, almost one-quarter of patients with systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) are admitted to the hospital, and lupus has the sixth highest rate of early readmissions. However, reasons for those readmissions have been unclear. [MedPage Today](#)

## Scientists create a 3-d model that mimics brain function



11 August - A doughnut created in a lab and made of silk on the outside and collagen gel where the jelly ought to be can mimic a basic function of brain tissue, scientists have found. Bioengineers produced a kind of rudimentary gray matter and white matter in a dish, along with rat neurons that signaled one another across the doughnut's center. When the scientists dropped weights on the material to simulate traumatic injury, the neurons in the three-dimensional brain model emitted chemical and electrical signals similar to those in the brains of injured animals. It is the first time scientists have been able to so closely imitate brain function in the laboratory, experts said. If researchers can replicate it with human neurons and enhance it to reflect other neurological functions, it could be used for studying how disease, trauma and medical treatments affect the brain — without the expense and ethical challenges of clinical trials on people. [New York Times](#)

## Short latent TB therapy matches standard care

11 August - Short courses of rifamycin-containing treatment regimens prevented active tuberculosis as well as standard monotherapy did, researchers reported. In a Bayesian network meta-analysis, some of the rifamycin-containing regimens also were less likely to cause liver damage than standard therapy with isoniazid (Nydrazid), according to Helen Stagg, PhD, of University College London, and colleagues... While 9 months of isoniazid -- the standard in the U.S. -- is efficacious at preventing latent TB from becoming active, the regimen's length means many patients do not complete therapy, the researchers noted. [MedPage Today](#)

## Study finds MRSA colonization common in rectal, groin areas

14 August - Although the front part of the nasal passages is known as a leading site for colonization of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), the rectal and groin areas are not far behind, according to a recent study in *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology*. Researchers obtained swabs from 480 men and 265 women within 72 hours of admission at a Chicago hospital from March 2011 through April 2012. Of the 115 who tested positive for the presence of community-acquired MRSA, 62% had colonization of the anterior nares (nostrils), compared with 58% in the perirectal region, 56% in the groin, 44% in the throat, and 38% in the axilla (armpits). Also, 43% harbored MRSA in both the perirectal and groin areas. All told, 92% had colonization outside the nose. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

## This tick may make you allergic to red meat. How long will it last?

12 August - ...Doctors are seeing more and more people who have developed allergies to red meat after being bitten by a tick that has become a fixture in the eastern United States. A bite from the lone star tick can prompt such a severe reaction to meat that people are even landing in the hospital. "Classically three to six hours after eating red meat [a person with the allergy] can get with hives, swelling and problems breathing," says Dr. Robert Valet... "They may even have a full anaphylactic reaction in which their airways close." Scientists believe the allergy to red meat is caused by a sugar called alpha-gal passed from the lone star tick to its victims during the bite. Once the sugar enters the blood stream, it can be flagged by the immune system as an invader which results in antibodies being formed against it. The problem is alpha-gal is found in all red meats, including beef, pork and venison... When you get a tick bite, it primes the immune system by exposing the blood to this sugar — and that allows the allergy to develop. [Today](#)

## EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE

### As Ebola toll tops 1,000, WHO official says she hopes more medicine will be available by the end of 2014

12 August - As the death toll from the Ebola virus in four West African nations topped 1,000, an official from the World Health Organization said she hopes accelerated efforts to develop treatments might yield more medicine by the end of this year. Marie-Paule Kieny, assistant WHO director general, said she hopes that work to produce more of the medication developed by a small San Diego biopharmaceutical company, as well as other drugs, could result in wider availability sometime late in 2014 — perhaps between November and January of 2015. WHO said Tuesday that the death toll in Guinea, Sierra

Leone, Liberia and Nigeria had reached 1,013. A small number of doses of an experimental treatment — perhaps 10 total, Kieny said — were exhausted with their distribution to Liberia on Monday for the treatment of two doctors there who have been stricken by the virus, according to Mapp Biopharmaceutical, which developed the drug. [Washington Post](#)

## Ebola response up but huge gaps remain

12 August – While Ebola treatment and containment efforts are gradually gaining pace in Sierra Leone and Liberia, there are still far too few health workers, contact tracers and community monitors on the ground to keep up with the disease's spread, particularly in urban areas, say Health Ministry staff and aid workers. "It's hard for us to cut transmission rates," Liberia's Assistant Health Minister Tolbert Nyensuah told IRIN. "Most of the hospitals in Monrovia are still not fully operational. More community surveillance is needed. We don't have it right yet." [IRIN](#)

## Emergency food drops eyed for quarantined Ebola region of West Africa



14 August - International agencies are looking into emergency food drops and truck convoys to reach extremely hungry people in Liberia and Sierra Leone, who are cordoned off from the outside world to halt the spread of the Ebola virus, a top World Bank official said on Thursday. Hunger is spreading fast as farmers die leaving crops rotting in fields. Truckers scared of the highly infectious disease halt deliveries. Shops close and major airlines have shut down routes, isolating large swathes of the countries... The World Bank, along with the UN and the World Health Organisation, is urgently assessing how to make emergency food deliveries, or they face the danger of a deepening health crisis from malnutrition and the spread of other diseases, he said. [Thomas Reuters Foundation](#)

## Nigeria: Ebola latest – U.S. rejects Nigeria's request for trial drug

8 August – The United States of America, yesterday, dashed the hope of an early cure for Ebola Virus victims in Nigeria when it refused to share the trial drug with Nigeria. US President Barak Obama says it would be premature to share the experimental drug with Africa. The Federal Government had earlier reached out to the United States Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, in Atlanta, to request for the drug for treatment of EVD affected persons in Nigeria, but President Obama turned down the request, saying it would be far more beneficial to focus on prevention instead. Nigeria recorded its first Ebola Virus disease fatality on Tuesday when one of the nurses who was one of the primary contacts of the American-Liberian, Patrick Sawyer, passed on. [allAfrica](#)

## Tracing Ebola's breakout to an African 2-year-old

9 August - Patient Zero in the Ebola outbreak, researchers suspect, was a 2-year-old boy who died on Dec. 6, just a few days after falling ill in a village in Guéckédou, in southeastern Guinea. Bordering Sierra Leone and Liberia, Guéckédou is at the intersection of three nations, where the disease found an easy entry point to the region. A week later, it killed the boy's mother, then his 3-year-old sister, then his grandmother. All had fever, vomiting and diarrhea, but no one knew what had sickened them. Two mourners at the grandmother's funeral took the virus home to their village. A health worker carried it to still another, where he died, as did his doctor. They both infected relatives from other towns. By the time Ebola was recognized, in March, dozens of people had died in eight Guinean communities, and suspected cases were popping up in Liberia and Sierra Leone — three of the world's poorest countries, recovering from years of political dysfunction and civil war. [New York Times](#)

## Using a tactic unseen in a century, countries cordon off Ebola-racked areas

12 August - The Ebola outbreak in West Africa is so out of control that governments there have revived a disease-fighting tactic not used in nearly a century: the "cordon sanitaire," in which a line is drawn around the infected area and no one is allowed out... They have the potential to become brutal and inhumane... Plans for the new cordon were announced on Aug. 1 at an emergency meeting in Conakry, Guinea, of the Mano River Union, a regional association of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia, the three countries hardest hit by Ebola, according to Agence France-Presse. The plan was to isolate a triangular area where the three countries meet, separated only by porous borders, and where 70 percent of the cases known at that time had been found. [New York Times](#)

## West Africa: Ebola virus disease update

13 August – Between 10 and 11 August 2014, a total of 128 new cases of Ebola virus disease (EVD) (laboratory-confirmed, probable, and suspect cases) as well as 56 deaths were reported from Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. Contact tracing in Guinea, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone has resulted in a range between 94% and 98% of contacts of EVD cases being identified and followed-up. In Liberia, efforts are underway to strengthen contact tracing, but help is needed in this area. The Liberian Army has also recently placed a third province under quarantine as part of the ongoing effort to stop transmission of EVD. [WHO](#)

## WHO declares Ebola a public health emergency

8 August – Acting on the unanimous recommendation of an emergency committee, World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Margaret Chan, MD, MPH, today declared that Ebola outbreak developments constitute a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) and accepted a list of measures to limit the spread of the disease in and outside of Africa. "This is the largest, most severe, and most complex outbreak in the nearly four-decade history of the disease," Chan said at a media briefing. "Its [the committee's] advice

to me acknowledges the serious and unusual nature of the outbreak and the potential for further international spread." [CIDRAP](#)

## WHO ethics panel affirms use of experimental Ebola drugs

13 August - A World Health Organization (WHO) ethics panel has given a unanimous green light to use experimental medications in the West Africa Ebola outbreak. But exactly how to use such medications -- and especially who gets them and in what circumstances -- remains up in the air. The ethics panel said using medications that haven't been tested in humans must be done in a transparent fashion, including "informed consent, freedom of choice, confidentiality, respect for the person, preservation of dignity, and involvement of the community," according to Marie-Paule Kieny, PhD, an assistant director-general of the WHO. In addition, there is "a moral obligation" to collect and share all data that is generated, whether from compassionate use of a medication or from a clinical trial, Kieny told reporters in a telephone briefing. [MedPage Today](#)

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## INFLUENZA

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### CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

- During week 31, ending August 2, 2014, 5.8 % of all deaths reported through the 122-Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to pneumonia and influenza. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 6.0% for week 31. [FluView](#)

### DoD Global Laboratory-Based Influenza Surveillance Program - Respiratory Highlights

- During 29 June - 2 August, 35 specimens were collected and received from 17 locations. Results were finalized for 33 specimens from 16 locations. There was one specimen positive for influenza A(H3N2). [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

### DoD Global Laboratory-Based Influenza Surveillance Program - Respiratory Highlights: Supplemental EUCOM Report

- From 29 September 2013 - 2 Aug 2014, testing has been completed on 1,480 specimens from 25 locations. Of those specimens tested, 447 were positive for influenza (134 influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, 200 influenza A(H3N2), 31 A/not subtyped, four influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and A(H3N2) co-infections, 19 influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 co-

infections, 32 influenza A(H3N2) co-infections, 13 influenza A/not subtyped co-infections, and 14 influenza B).

- There have been 500 other respiratory viruses isolated (25 adenovirus, 85 human metapneumovirus, 33 parainfluenza virus, 86 RSV, 197 rhinovirus/enterovirus, and 74 non-influenza co-infections) cumulatively this season. [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

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

For weeks 21 to 30/2014:

- Low intensity and local or sporadic activity were indicated by all countries submitting reports. ILI and ARI levels remained at or below baseline levels in all countries.
- Ten sentinel specimens tested positive for influenza, eight of which were type A viruses.
- Two countries reported a total of seven hospitalised laboratory-confirmed influenza cases, five of these cases were admitted to ICU and there was one death.

Overall, influenza activity and circulation of influenza viruses in reporting countries was low in Europe during the period in question. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

## Large trial finds high-dose flu shot beneficial for seniors

13 August - A 2-year randomized trial involving close to 32,000 volunteers at more than 100 sites has yielded evidence that a high-dose (HD) influenza vaccine intended for seniors offers significantly more protection in that age-group than the standard-dose (SD) vaccine, according to a *New England Journal of Medicine* report published today. The researchers concluded that the relative efficacy of the HD vaccine was 24.2% higher than that of the SD vaccine. About 1.4% of the volunteers in the HD group had a confirmed flu case, compared with 1.9% of those in the SD group. [CIDRAP](#)

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

For week 32 ending 9 August 2014:

- Influenza: No new cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza among US military basic trainees.
- FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated moderately elevated FRI rates at CGTC Cape May. [NHRC Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)

## Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) – United States, 2014–15 influenza season

15 August - This report updates the 2013 recommendations by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) regarding use of seasonal influenza vaccines (1). Updated information for the 2014–15 influenza season includes 1) antigenic composition of U.S. seasonal influenza vaccines; 2) vaccine dose considerations for children aged 6 months through 8 years; and 3) a preference for the use, when immediately available, of live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) for healthy children aged 2 through 8 years, to be implemented as feasible for the 2014–15 season but not later than the 2015–16 season. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

## WHO Influenza update

11 August - Globally influenza activity continues to increase in the southern hemisphere.

- In Europe and North America, overall influenza activity remained at inter-seasonal levels.
- In eastern Asia, influenza activity reached inter-seasonal levels in most countries with influenza A(H3N2) and influenza B virus predominating. Influenza activity still continued in the south region of China mainly due to influenza A(H3N2) viruses.
- In Africa and western Asia, influenza activity was low.
- In the southern hemisphere, influenza activity continued to increase in most countries. In the temperate zone of South America influenza-like illness continued to increase, but was predominantly due to respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Influenza A(H3N2) was the most commonly detected influenza virus. In Australia and New Zealand, the influenza season seemed to have started with increased influenza-like illness and increasing number of influenza detections reported. Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 the most commonly detected virus. In South Africa the influenza detection rate increased with influenza A(H3N2) the most frequently detected virus. [WHO](#)

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### **VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY**

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## China halts some U.S. pork imports over feed additive use

12 August – China has barred pork imports from six U.S processing plants and six cold storage facilities effective on Wednesday to enforce its ban on the use of a feed additive

that promotes lean muscle growth, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said on Tuesday. China currently requires third party verification that U.S. pork shipped to the country is free of the additive ractopamine, which is sold for hog farm use under the name Paylean. Pork packing plants now ineligible to export to China include Tyson Foods plants. [Reuters](#)

## Denmark: 10 feared dead in Denmark listeria outbreak

12 August - Danish officials say a listeria outbreak caused by contaminated sausages may have killed 10 people during the past few months, and they have closed down a small meat producer in the capital, Copenhagen. Steen Ethelberg of the state health agency SSI says the outbreak, which hit elderly people and those weakened by other illnesses, was serious but that it is believed to be under control after the food authorities traced the source of the bacteria... The meat producer was ordered shut late Monday and all products recalled. It was not immediately clear whether any of the products were exported. [ABC News](#)

## USDA vows to speed tracing of tainted ground beef



14 August - The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced yesterday that in a few months it will launch a long-discussed plan to speed up the hunt for the contamination source when ground beef is found tainted with Escherichia coli O157:H7. Under the plan, officials will launch investigations at grinding facilities and their suppliers as soon as samples are positive for E coli O157 on an initial test, rather than waiting for a confirmatory test, which generally takes 2 days, said the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). [CIDRAP](#)

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### WELLNESS

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## Classroom hand sanitizers don't curb absences, study finds

12 August - Placing hand sanitizer dispensers in classrooms doesn't reduce student absences, according to new research... Students were asked to use the dispensers after coughing or sneezing and on the way out of the classroom for lunch or recess. Rates of student absences due to any illness were similar whether the classrooms had hand sanitizer dispensers or not... While the findings suggest that installing hand sanitizer dispensers in classrooms provides little benefit, there were some limitations to the study, the researchers noted. For example, the study was conducted during a flu epidemic, which means that public health messages about good hand hygiene may have boosted hand hygiene among all children and limited the effect of the hand sanitizer dispensers. [HealthDay](#)

## Confusion over best way to brush teeth, study finds

8 August – Advice on the best way to brush teeth for adults and children is confusing and inconsistent, according to University College London researchers. There is also a lack of agreement on how often to brush and for how long, they said, because of an absence of good research. The researchers looked at advice given by dental associations, toothbrush companies and in dental textbooks. But experts say there is no evidence that one method is better than another. [BBC](#)

## Farmers market vouchers may improve access to healthy food

8 August - Vouchers for shopping at farmers markets can help families on food assistance programs consume more fruits and vegetables, new research shows... [Carolyn] Dimitri, a researcher with the Department of Nutrition, Food Studies and Public Health at New York University, added that this is an easy intervention for markets that are already accepting SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) or other federal nutrition benefits, and the payoff is high for the consumers who participate... Of the women who completed the study, more than half said they ate vegetables more frequently at the end of the study. [Reuters](#)

## How exercise helps us tolerate pain

13 August – Regular exercise may alter how a person experiences pain, according to a new study. The longer we continue to work out, the new findings suggest, the greater our tolerance for discomfort can grow. For some time, scientists have known that strenuous exercise briefly and acutely dulls pain. As muscles begin to ache during a prolonged workout, scientists have found, the body typically releases natural opiates, such as endorphins, and other substances that can slightly dampen the discomfort. This effect, which scientists refer to as exercise-induced hypoalgesia, usually begins during the workout and lingers for perhaps 20 or 30 minutes afterward. But whether exercise alters the body's response to pain over the long term and, more pressing for most of us, whether such changes will develop if people engage in moderate, less draining workouts have been unclear. [New York Times](#)

## Making cashews safer for those with allergies

11 August – For the millions of adults and children in the U.S. who have to shun nuts to avoid an allergic reaction, help could be on the way. Scientists are now developing a method to process cashews — and potentially other nuts — that could make them safer to eat for people who are allergic to them... [Chris] Mattison's team is looking at ways to modify proteins in tree nuts and peanuts (which are legumes) that trigger an immune response in people who are allergic. The response is launched by antibodies called immunoglobulin E (IgE), which recognize and latch onto the proteins. Mattison explains that changing the shape of the proteins makes it harder for IgE to find them. But past research taking this approach has involved harsh chemicals. Mattison, a researcher with the

Agricultural Research Service branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, wanted to see if his team could achieve the same results, but using compounds that are "generally regarded as safe." [EurekAlert](#)

## Newborns commonly are exposed in womb to germ-killing, endocrine-disrupting chemicals



11 August - Half of newborns in a Brooklyn-based study were exposed in the womb to triclosan, a germ-killing chemical widely used in consumer products, researchers reported today at an annual meeting of chemists. "Our study suggests that expectant mothers may be highly exposed to these compounds which have endocrine-disrupting capabilities," said study coauthor Laura Geer, an environmental health scientist at SUNY-Downstate Medical Center in New York. In addition to triclosan, about one-quarter of the newborns were exposed to traces of triclocarban, another germ-killing chemical in some bar soaps. The researchers also reported today that pregnant women with higher levels of butylparaben, used as a cosmetics germ-killing preservative, gave birth to shorter babies than women with lower levels. [Scientific American](#)

## One of science's most baffling questions? Why we yawn

12 August – ...Andrew Gallup, now at the State University of New York at Oneonta, was first inspired with the idea during his undergraduate degree, when he realised that yawning might help to chill the brain and stop it overheating. The violent movement of the jaws moves blood flow around the skull, he argued, helping to carry away excess heat, while the deep inhalation brings cool air into the sinus cavities and around the carotid artery leading back into the brain. What's more, the strenuous movements could also flex the membranes of sinuses – fanning a soft breeze through the cavities that should cause our mucus to evaporate, which should chill the head like air conditioning. [BBC](#)

## Postmenopausal breast cancer risk decreases rapidly after starting reg. physical activity

11 August – Postmenopausal women who in the past four years had undertaken regular physical activity equivalent to at least four hours of walking per week had a lower risk for invasive breast cancer compared with women who exercised less during those four years, according to data published in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*, a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research. Postmenopausal women who in the previous four years had undertaken 12 or more MET-h of physical activity each week had a 10 percent decreased risk of invasive breast cancer compared with women who were less active. [EurekAlert](#)

## Status of spray sunscreens still uncertain

11 August - The FDA has not reached a decision about the safety and efficacy of spray-on sunscreens, but continues to accumulate information to base an eventual verdict, a skin specialist said here. After manufacturers stated their case, the agency concluded that available information about spray-on sunscreens is insufficient to rule on its safety or whether it works as advertised. With respect to safety, the principal issues relate to the inhalation potential of spray-on sunscreens, according to Henry Lim, MD... The FDA has been monitoring the situation since June 2011, when the agency issued rules for manufacturer testing to establish the safety and effectiveness and rules that tightened labeling requirements for sunscreens. [MedPage Today](#)

## The F.D.A. approves a pill to help people stay asleep

13 August - Merck won federal approval for a new type of sleeping pill designed to help people with insomnia stay asleep. The tablet, Belsomra, temporarily blocks chemicals known as orexins that control the sleep cycle. The Food and Drug Administration approved the drug on Wednesday in four doses for various degrees of insomnia. The agency said doctors should warn patients taking the highest dose to avoid activities the next day that require full concentration. [New York Times](#)

## What happens when a suicide is highly publicized in the wrong way: The suicide contagion effect

12 August – The outpouring of grief and public mourning for comedic legend Robin Williams has included an emerging conversation around mental health. Williams, his media agent said, had been battling severe depression, and the Marin County Sheriff's Office said his death was suicide by asphyxia. Suicide is a substantial public health issue. Instances have risen over the past decade, according to a 2013 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study, particularly among the middle-aged. More people die in the U.S. by suicide than in car accidents. But focusing media attention on suicide — while well-intentioned — can lead to the tragic outcome of fueling more if such a national conversation is not handled in the right way. [Washington Post](#)

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### **USAFRICOM**

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## UNICEF Report: Africa's population could hit 4 billion by 2100

13 August - "The future of humanity is increasingly African." That's the prediction in a new UNICEF report, which estimates that by the end of this century, 40 percent of the world's

people will be African — up from 15 percent now. The continent's population currently sits at roughly 1.2 billion but will soar to more than 4 billion by 2100. Nearly 1 billion will live in Nigeria alone. In a report released Wednesday, UNICEF projected the growth of Africa's child population within the next century. And the numbers are staggering. An estimated 1.8 billion births will take place in Africa in the next 35 years, the authors predict. By 2050, Africa will have almost 1 billion children under 18, making up nearly 40 percent of kids worldwide.

[NPR](#)

## Kenya's lead poisoning victims narrate ordeal

13 August - ...Shikanga's story is representative of a wider public health problem in Mombasa, Kenya's main coastal city. Thousands of people face serious health consequences from exposure to poisonous lead, says the New York-based Human Rights Watch, which published a report on lead poisoning in June. The poisoning comes from discarded rubber and battery casings, burned paper, and used motor vehicle tyres... Kenyan experts say interventions to reduce the effects of lead poisoning should not only involve medical care but decontamination of houses and villages. "Both [treatment and decontamination] are needed, because medical treatment alone is ineffective if children return home to contaminated homes and are re-exposed to lead." [Al Jazeera](#)

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**USCENTCOM**

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## Iran: Iranian parliament bans vasectomies in bid to boost birth rate

11 August - Iran's parliament has voted to ban permanent forms of contraception, the state news agency IRNA reported, endorsing the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's call for measures to increase the population. The bill, banning vasectomies and similar procedures in women, is parliament's response to a decree Khamenei issued in May calling for more babies to "strengthen national identity" and counter "undesirable aspects of Western lifestyles". Doctors who violate the ban will be punishable by law, the ISNA news agency reported. The bill, approved by 143 out of 231 members present in parliament, according to IRNA, also bans the advertising of birth control in a country where condoms had been widely available and family planning considered entirely normal. [Reuters](#)

## Iraq: Amid Iraq's political chaos, a new polio vaccination campaign faces challenges

11 August - Increasingly worried about the possible spread of polio amid Iraq's escalating chaos, Unicef and the World Health Organization said Monday that they had begun a mass

vaccination in what amounts to a test case of whether Islamist extremists will allow such an effort in areas they control. "It's a little bit of a challenge," Juliette Touma, a Unicef spokeswoman, said by telephone after completing a 10-day visit to Iraq. "This is extremely timely because of the mass movement of the population, the poor living conditions," Ms. Touma said. While health teams can administer polio vaccine to displaced children in areas under government control, it is unclear whether fighters of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria would countenance a vaccination campaign in areas they have seized, given their antipathy to other government authorities and international organizations. [New York Times](#)

## Iraq evacuation may not require U.S. troops on Mount Sinjar

13 August - A review by U.S. special operations troops of conditions on Iraq's Mount Sinjar on Wednesday has determined that the conditions of a religious minority seeking refuge there are better than believed and may not require a U.S.-led evacuation, the Pentagon said. The team of fewer than 20 U.S. troops "has assessed that there are far fewer Yazidis on Mount Sinjar than previously feared, in part because of the success of humanitarian airdrops, airstrikes on (Islamic State) targets, the efforts of the peshmerga (Kurdish fighters) and the ability of thousands of Yazidis to evacuate from the mountain each night over the last several days," said Rear Adm. John Kirby, spokesman for Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel. [USA Today](#)

## Pakistan: Worries pile up as waste grows



11 August - ...Both Ishaq and Ali are among thousands of Pakistani children who work as scavengers, combing through piles of rubbish for a daily pay that maxes out at about \$2. Besides being out of school, these children face severe health hazards from the unsafe handling of waste... Even as child labour remains rampant in Pakistan, almost 5.2 million people;

including four million children, die each year from waste-related diseases in Pakistan. A report by Triple Bottom-Line found that globally, many people did not know their old computers and televisions were shipped to countries such as China, India and Pakistan for "recycling". Manually dismantling electronic devices comes with a slew of health hazards, including exposure to toxic substances called furans and dioxins. Burning these materials is even worse: A burning computer releases dioxins, lead, chromium and other toxic substances. [Al Jazeera](#)

## Saudi Arabia reports another MERS case

12 August - For the second time in as many days, Saudi Arabia has reported a new MERS-CoV (Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus) case after a month-long hiatus, its Ministry of Health (MOH) said today... The MOH reported no new deaths or recoveries from the disease. The country has now confirmed 723 MERS-CoV cases, by far the most of any country. Of those cases, 299 have proved fatal. The World Health Organization so far has

confirmed 838 MERS-CoV cases and 292 deaths. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

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## **USEUCOM**

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### **United Kingdom: Philip Morris prepared to sue UK over plain cigarette packaging**

12 August - Philip Morris International, the world's largest tobacco company, is prepared to sue the British government should it implement a law requiring plain packaging of cigarettes, a document seen by Reuters on Tuesday showed. The UK government has conducted a consultation with its Department of Health on potential legislation which would force cigarette makers to sell their products in plain packages with graphic health warnings and no branding. The maker of Marlboro cigarettes "is prepared to protect its rights in the courts and to seek fair compensation for the value of its property," the company has told the UK government in response to its consultation. The UK government said in April it wanted to implement plain packaging after a review found it could reduce the incidence of children taking up smoking. It published draft regulations in June, and launched a six-week consultation that ended last week. Philip Morris submitted its response to the UK government after the consultation. [Reuters](#)

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## **USNORTHCOM**

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### **U.S.: Idaho reports alarming rise in whooping cough cases**

12 August – Idaho health officials on Tuesday urged vaccination to combat what they said was an alarming rise this year in the number of cases of whooping cough, which has killed an infant and afflicted 240 other state residents since January. The 241 cases of whooping cough, or pertussis, reported in Idaho from January to July compares to the 122 and 129 cases reported during the same period in 2013 and 2012 respectively. The Idaho Department of Health described the latest outbreak as "troubling," but said it could be eased by vaccination. [Reuters](#)

### **U.S.: La Crosse, West Nile cause most pediatric neuro arbovirus cases**

12 August - La Crosse and West Nile viruses lead the list of pathogens responsible for neuroinvasive arboviral infections in US children, a study yesterday in Pediatrics revealed.

CDC and University of Colorado researchers reviewed data on 1,217 cases and 22 deaths involving meningitis, encephalitis, or acute flaccid paralysis in children reported from the lower 48 states to ArboNET, the national arbovirus surveillance system, from 2003 through 2012. They found that La Crosse virus (665 cases, 55%) and West Nile virus (505 cases, 41%) caused by far the most cases, while Eastern equine encephalitis virus (30 cases, 2%) accounted for 10 deaths. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (fourth item)

## U.S.: New Hampshire declares state of emergency over synthetic drug

14 August - New Hampshire Governor Maggie Hassan declared a state of emergency on Thursday in response to 44 reported overdoses linked to people smoking or ingesting "Smacked," a synthetic marijuana-like product sold in convenience stores as potpourri. The state of emergency authorizes public health officials to investigate stores and quarantine the product, and Hassan directed the officials to work with local police departments to do so... The overdoses, none of which have been fatal, have primarily been reported in the Manchester area. Manchester police on Wednesday said they had found Smacked in three convenience stores and that those stores' business licenses were revoked. [Reuters](#)

## U.S. rolls back oversight of potentially dangerous experiments

13 August – As U.S. lawmakers investigate the anthrax and bird flu breaches at a federal laboratory, they have begun to question whether outside oversight of research using dangerous microbes is as independent as federal agencies claim. They are scrutinizing the actions of the nation's leading biomedical research institute, the National Institutes of Health, which in 2004 established a panel of independent advisors to make recommendations about research on pathogens that could be used as biological weapons. Some private sector biosafety experts say NIH has marginalized the board to prevent it from interfering in research that NIH funds. [Reuters](#)

## U.S.: Sugar-sweetened beverage consumption among adults — 18 states, 2012

15 August - ...To assess regular soda and fruit drink consumption among adults in 18 states, CDC analyzed data from the 2012 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Among the 18 states surveyed, 26.3% of adults consumed regular soda or fruit drinks or both  $\geq 1$  times daily. By state, the prevalence ranged from 20.4% to 41.4%. Overall, consumption of regular soda or fruit drinks was most common among persons aged 18–34 years (24.5% for regular soda and 16.6% for fruit drinks), men (21.0% and 12.3%), non-Hispanic blacks (20.9% and 21.9%), and Hispanics (22.6% and 18.5%). [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

## U.S.: Texas emblematic of national battle against abortion providers

13 August - Conservative state legislatures are waging an effective fight to close down the nation's abortion clinics, and nowhere is that battle more evident than in Texas, with one of the most restrictive abortion laws in the country. If a challenge to the state law fails in federal court, as of Sept. 1, there will be seven abortion providers left in Texas, the country's second largest state by population and area, with 26 million people in an area about three times the size of the United Kingdom. That is a plummet from 41 providers in May 2013. Currently there are 19 abortion providers, according to the Texas Policy Evaluation Project (TxPEP). The ongoing study, based at the University of Texas at Austin, analyzes the impact of laws affecting reproductive health passed since 2011 by the state legislature, which meets in odd-numbered years. [Reuters](#)

## U.S.: Two out of five U.S. adults at risk of developing diabetes: study

13 August - Two out of five U.S. adults born between 2000 and 2011 are expected to develop type 2 diabetes at some point in their life, which is double the rate for men and some 50 percent higher for women born two decades earlier, according to a new study. Rising life expectancies and higher rates of obesity are contributing factors to the higher risk of developing diabetes, according to the study published in the *Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology*. The lifetime risk of an American born between 2000 and 2011 developing the disease is roughly 40 percent for men and women, up from 20 percent for men and 27 percent for women between 1985 and 1989, the study said. Hispanics and black women faced an even greater threat, with roughly half of people in those groups predicted to develop the disease during their lives. [Reuters](#)

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### USPACOM

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## India: Uranium mining fuels health crisis

12 August - ...Radioactive waste generated by three government owned mines - Narwapahar, Bhatin and Jadugoda - has spurred fears of a health crisis in the region... Independent nuclear scientist Sanghmitra Gadekar, who conducted a survey on 9,000 villagers living in and around mines, has documented cases of congenital deformities, infertility, cancer, respiratory problems and miscarriages... Gadekar said her survey not only shows excess of congenital deformities among those born after the start of mining operations in 1967, but also extremely high levels of chronic lung disease, "quite likely to be silicosis or lung cancer, in the company's mill and mine workers." [Al Jazeera](#)

## Thailand: Thai military government moves to outlaw commercial surrogacy



13 August - Thailand's military government gave preliminary approval on Wednesday for a draft law to make commercial surrogacy a criminal offense, following a spate of dramatic surrogacy scandals in the past two weeks. The case of an Australian couple accused of abandoning their Down syndrome son with his Thai surrogate mother unleashed an international outcry over the "wombs for hire" business that rights groups say preys on poor and vulnerable women in countries such as India and Thailand. [Reuters](#)

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### USSOUTHCOM

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## Chikungunya outbreak expands by 12%, to 576,000 cases

11 August - Officials reported more than 62,000 new chikungunya cases in the Caribbean and surrounding areas last week—almost all in the Dominican Republic—expanding the outbreak to 576,000 cases, according to an Aug 8 update from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). The total represents an increase of 62,608 suspected and confirmed cases, or 12.2% of the 513,393 reported a week earlier. Of the total, only 646 are imported cases, with the rest locally acquired. The Dominican Republic accounted for 62,279 of the new cases, to bring its outbreak total to 370,212, according to PAHO. The update also included 100 new imported and 2 new locally acquired cases in the United States that were confirmed by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) last week. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

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