

15 May 2015

Army Public Health Weekly Update

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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AFHSC Integrated Biosurveillance Dashboard

The Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center Integrated Biosurveillance division has released unclassified versions of its health surveillance summaries. The surveillance summaries comprise relevant data on diseases of importance to the Department of Defense personnel and beneficiaries.



- USDA to require labeling of mechanically tenderized beef

WELLNESS

- Body composition may hasten hip osteoarthritis
- Ease of weight loss influenced by individual biology
- Female children of service members more vulnerable to eating disorders, obesity than civilians
- Healthy woman's stroke linked to drug in sports supplement
- Palm 'holds secrets of future health'
- People have misconceptions about miscarriage, and that can hurt
- Seasons affect 'how genes and immune system work'
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USAFRICOM

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- Malaria morbidity and mortality in Ebola-affected countries caused by decreased health-care capacity
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- Sub-Saharan Africa: Widespread male circumcision could prevent more than a million HIV infections

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- U.S.: A prescription for mental health in America
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- U.S.: Cuomo orders emergency measures to protect workers at nail salons
- U.S.: FDA approves new drug to treat, prevent plague
- U.S.: FDA ready to lift ban on blood donation by gay men
- U.S.: Free contraceptives must be free, Obama administration tells insurers
- U.S.: House plan highlights mental health, courts, hospice and foster care
- U.S.: House votes to ban most abortions after 20 weeks
- U.S.: Mentally ill inmates are routinely physically abused, study says
- U.S.: Tornadoes kill at least 5 in Arkansas, Texas, South Dakota as winds of 125 mph and above wreak havoc
- U.S.: Will pregnancy tests in Alaska bars dissuade moms-to-be from drinking?

You've survived Ebola! What's next?

This instructional flipbook provides a discussion guide for healthcare workers in West Africa in speaking with an Ebola survivor. The flipbook includes helpful tips in describing what an Ebola survivor can expect in the recovery ahead.



USPACOM

- Malaysia and Thailand leave migrant boats adrift
- Nepal: Fresh earthquake brings panic, damage and death
- Nepal: Pregnant women vulnerable after Nepal quake
- Sri Lanka: Surge in dengue cases in Jaffna, Batticaloa, Kurunegala and Ratnapura

USSOUTHCOM

- Brazil: Dengue epidemic in Brazil
- PAHO reports 12,000 new chikungunya cases

U.S. MILITARY

12 years later, a mystery of chemical exposure in Iraq clears slightly

14 May - The toxic vapors acted quickly against the Second Platoon of the 811th Ordnance Company, whose soldiers were moving abandoned barrels out of an Iraqi Republican Guard warehouse in 2003. ... [The] the task force organized by the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency to examine Iraq's special weapons programs, identified the contents as benzenamine 3,4 dimethyl, an organic compound with multiple industrial uses. In boldface letters, the report called the compound "a carcinogen and poisonous chemical." ... The fuel, sometimes called TG-02 or Tonka fuel, is known to cause acute exposure symptoms that partly mirror those for nerve agents, including intense headaches, confusion, weakness, depression of the central nervous system and death. [New York Times](#)

Court vacates \$85 million award for Oregon National Guardsmen in Iraq health case

14 May - The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned on Thursday a jury verdict awarding \$85 million to 12 Army National Guardsmen who accused defense contractor KBR of failing to protect them from cancer-causing chemicals when they served in Iraq. ... KBR has been appealing that decision for the last year, arguing the U.S. District Court in Portland did not have jurisdiction in the case. ... KBR has been appealing that decision for the last year, arguing the U.S. District Court in Portland did not have jurisdiction in the case. ... [KBR lead trial attorney Geoffrey] Harrison said it was possible the case could be moved to a Texas court where approximately 133 similar claims are being heard. [Reuters](#)

Hospitalizations among members of the active component, U.S. Armed Forces, 2014

April 2015 - ... In 2014, for every 19 active component service members, there was one hospitalization for any cause; for every 24 members, there was one hospitalization for a condition not related to pregnancy and delivery. Hospitalization rates for all causes among

Sierra Leone's Hidden Ebola Outbreak

Sheri Fink, a New York Times reporter, recounts her discovery that Sierra Leone's outbreak started much earlier than the official story suggests. An exclusive video by the PBS series "Frontline."



active component members decreased in 2014 to the lowest rates in the past decade. As in the past, in 2014, mental disorders, pregnancy and delivery-related conditions, and injuries and poisonings accounted for more than half of all hospitalizations of active component members. In 2014, adjustment reactions (including post-traumatic stress disorder) and mood disorders were among the leading causes of hospitalizations of both male and female service members. In recent years, attention at the highest levels of the U.S. military and significant resources have focused on detecting, diagnosing, and treating mental disorders. ... Although annual numbers of hospitalizations for mental disorders had been rising each year since 2008, in 2014, the number fell to the lowest level since 2008. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

Military sexual assault claims: 1 in 20 lead to jail time

13 May- Last year, 6,131 service members reported a sexual assault. But only about 317 service members were court-martialed and sentenced to confinement as a result of a reported sexual assault. The dizzying details underlying that roughly 1-in-20 conviction-and-incarceration rate were buried in the latest annual military sexual assault report released May 1, which reveals how sexual assault complaints were handled by criminal investigators and commanders. [Military Times](#)

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GLOBAL

Antibiotic-resistant typhoid spreading across Asia, Africa

11 May - An antibiotic-resistant strain of the bacteria that causes typhoid fever has spread to many countries and reached epidemic levels in Africa, a new study warns. The strain, H58, emerged in South Asia between 25 and 30 years ago and has slowly grown to become one of the predominant forms of the bacteria *Salmonella Typhi*, said study author Vanessa Wong, a microbiologist at the University of Cambridge in England. "This multidrug-resistant strain, H58, is resistant to a number of first-line antibiotics used to treat the disease and is continuing to evolve and acquire new mutations to newer drugs," Wong said. [Medline Plus](#)

Bacteria may be remaking drugs in sewage

14 May - Wastewater treatment plants not only struggle removing pharmaceuticals, it seems some drugs actually increase after treatment. When researchers tested wastewater before and after treatment at a Milwaukee-area treatment plant, they found that two drugs—the anti-epileptic carbamazepine and antibiotic ofloxacin—came out at higher concentrations than they went in. The study suggests the microbes that clean our water may also piece some pharmaceuticals back together. Carbamazepine and ofloxacin on average increased by 80 percent and 120 percent, respectively, during the treatment process. [Scientific American](#)

Women's Health Month

As the Army recognizes Women's Health Month in May, [Army Medicine](#) seeks to educate and empower women to make their health a top priority and encourage them to take steps to improve their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. Sleep, activity, nutrition, regular checkups and preventive screenings are paramount in improving one's health.

STAND-TO!
THE OFFICIAL FOCUS OF THE U.S. ARMY

Immunizing pregnant women rated as best pertussis defense for infants

12 May - Immunizing pregnant women against pertussis in each of their pregnancies, thereby conferring passive immunity on their infants, is the most effective and feasible strategy for protecting infants against the disease, says a review article published yesterday in *Pediatrics*. A second strategy, "cocooning," which involves vaccinating individuals who will be in close proximity to an infant, should be used secondarily if the first is not possible, the report says. The two prevention methods have been recommended by the Global Pertussis Initiative (GPI), an international forum of experts convened in 2001 to address the global burden of pertussis, which has seen a recent resurgence. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

PCV-13 tied to less pneumonia, but not less pneumococcal meningitis

13 May - Although the introduction of the 13-valent (13-strain) pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV-13) in 2010 was associated with fewer cases of invasive pneumococcal disease (IPD) at eight US children's hospitals, it was not linked to reduced pneumococcal meningitis (PM), according to a study today in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. Researchers from the eight hospitals, located in different regions, compared cases of PM before and after 2010, when PCV-13 was introduced. They noted that PM accounted for 76 (12%) of 645 IPD cases from 2007 through 2009, compared with 69 of 394 cases (18%) in 2011 through 2013. In addition, severe PM cases were more prevalent after PCV-13 introduction. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

Public health groups propose global drug innovation fund

13 May - Two health advocacy groups, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi) are urging public health authorities to create a global fund to tackle what they call "deadly gaps in innovation." Citing the rising threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), emerging infectious diseases and neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), the two organizations say the pharmaceutical industry is failing to address certain public health challenges. ... In a paper published to PLOS Medicine this week, researchers ... call the "deficit in innovation" a major threat to public health and security. The authors point out that more than a year into the Ebola crisis, treatments "remain experimental ... while the current antibiotic pipeline is drying out." This is in part, the authors say, because the market for products addressing these health threats is "limited, unpredictable, and therefore unattractive" to industry. To address these issues, the authors propose a globally funded research and development framework similar to "large, international, multilateral funds [that] exist for global health delivery. [Regulatory Affairs Professional Society](#)

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.

Study: TB test produces genetic sequence data in under 1 week

13 May - A test could detect and provide genetic sequence data on *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* in less than a week and allow for individualized tuberculosis (TB) therapy, according to a study today in the *Journal of Clinical Microbiology*. A UK, US, and Danish team captured the full *M tuberculosis* genomes directly from 24 infected sputum samples, results that have previously been achievable only via lab cultures, which can take weeks, the authors wrote. The sequencing data were deemed high quality for 20 of the 24 samples, and the results were comparable to those obtained via conventional methods. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (fifth item)

WHO issues disease-naming advice to avoid offence

9 May - New human diseases should be given socially acceptable names which do not offend people and countries or mention animals, the World Health Organization (WHO) has said. It has produced advice for scientists and the media on choosing names. The WHO says Middle East Respiratory Syndrome and Spanish Flu are examples of what to avoid because they mention specific locations. Instead, names should contain generic terms that are "easy to pronounce". The WHO said several new human infectious diseases had emerged in recent years and some had stigmatised certain cultures, regions and economies. ... Dr Fukuda said certain disease names had created a backlash against members of particular religious or ethnic communities. They had also put up barriers to travel, commerce and trade, he added, and in some cases triggered the needless slaughtering of animals. [BBC News](#)

World Health Statistics reports on global health goals for 194 countries

13 May - 2015 is the final year for the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – goals set by governments in 2000 to guide global efforts to end poverty. This year's "*World Health Statistics*" ... assesses progress towards the health-related goals in each of the 194 countries for which data are available. The results are mixed. By the end of this year if current trends continue, the world will have met global targets for turning around the epidemics of HIV, malaria and tuberculosis and increasing access to safe drinking water. It will also have made substantial progress in reducing child undernutrition, maternal and child deaths, and increasing access to basic sanitation. [WHO](#)

EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE

Ebola in Liberia

9 May - For more than a year, Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone have been experiencing the largest and most complex outbreak of Ebola in history. Cases continue to be reported in

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Guinea and Sierra Leone. The World Health Organization declared the end of the Ebola outbreak in Liberia on May 9, 2015, meaning that 42 days (two incubation periods) had passed since the last Ebola patient was buried. The health system in Liberia continues to monitor for new cases and to take precautions to prevent transmission in the country. ... CDC is no longer recommending that US residents avoid nonessential travel to Liberia. However, CDC recommends that US residents practice enhanced precautions when traveling to Liberia. [CDC](#)

Ebola sickens Italian nurse; cases decline in outbreak region

13 May - Italian health officials today announced that a nurse who recently returned from serving in Sierra Leone has been hospitalized with an Ebola infection, as the two African countries still affected by the disease reported another steep drop in cases. The Italian nurse's illness represents the first exported case since March, a sign that the global Ebola threat still remains despite weekly cases in the outbreak region dropping to the single digits. ... The man did not show any symptoms upon his arrival in Italy and monitored his health status according to protocols. Because his first symptoms occurred 72 hours after his last flight, contact tracing of international travelers isn't necessary, the WHO and ECDC said. ... Meanwhile, the two countries in West Africa where Ebola transmission is still ongoing reported 9 cases last week, half of the number reported the previous week, along with a geographic disease footprint that continues to shrink, the WHO said today in its weekly epidemiologic update. The number reported for last week is the lowest so far this year. [CIDRAP](#)

The pain of the new normal: Guinea after Ebola

13 May - ... West Africa's Ebola outbreak is believed to have started here, in the Gueckedou forest region, in December 2013. More than 3,500 Guineans have since contracted the virus and 2,391 of them have died. ... "It's true that life continues," said 29-year-old Gabriel Kamano from Gueckedou town. "But we lost so much [due to Ebola]. "We've lost family members and work. Now, there is a food problem developing because people couldn't cultivate their fields last year. It's very difficult, but we just keep trying to do the best we can." The World Bank estimates that Guinea will suffer \$540 million in lost income in 2015 due to the Ebola outbreak. In 2014, rice production fell by 20 percent, coffee by 50 percent and cocoa by a third. An estimated 1.2 million people are now suffering severe food insecurity, the World Food Programme says. [IRIN](#)

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INFLUENZA

Avian influenza strikes again in South Dakota, Iowa

13 May - Animal health officials in South Dakota said highly pathogenic H5N2 avian influenza has turned up on two more poultry farms, three weeks after the state's last outbreaks were reported, and Iowa authorities reported one new suspected outbreak at another egg farm. The latest outbreaks hit two turkey farms in the Yankton area. ... [The farms] mark the state's seventh and eighth recent avian influenza detections. In foreign avian influenza developments, Nigeria today reported 54 more highly pathogenic H5N1 avian flu outbreaks, and foreign media reports say the virus has turned up in Iraq after a nearly 9-year hiatus. [CIDRAP](#)

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 17 (April 26-May 2, 2015), influenza activity continued to decrease in the United States.

- **Viral Surveillance:** Of 8,269 specimens tested and reported by U.S. World Health Organization (WHO) and National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS) collaborating laboratories during week 17, 451 (5.5%) were positive for influenza.
- **Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality:** The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was below the epidemic threshold.
- **Outpatient Illness Surveillance:** The proportion of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) was 1.4%, which is below the national baseline of 2.0%. [FluView](#)

China: Human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus

14 May - On 9 May 2015, the National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFPC) of China notified WHO of 6 additional laboratory-confirmed cases of human infection with avian influenza A (H7N9) virus, including 2 deaths. [WHO](#)

DoD Global, Laboratory-Based, Influenza Surveillance Program – Respiratory Highlights

- During 19 April - 2 May 2015, a total of 76 specimens were collected and received from 32 locations. Results were finalized for 49 specimens from 23 locations. During Week 16, the laboratory identified two influenza B. During Week 17, three influenza A(H3N2) and one influenza B were identified.
- On 27 April 2015, a 27 year old male in Ohio who was hospitalized after seeking care for an acute respiratory illness died after a clinical course of pneumonia, respiratory failure, and cardiac arrest. RT-PCR testing results from the state public health laboratory was

suggestive of a novel influenza A virus. On 2 May 2015, CDC testing confirmed infection with an H1N1v virus of classical swine origin. This is the first variant influenza virus infection reported in the U.S. in 2015 and it is the first H1N1v-associated fatality. The patient worked at a livestock facility that housed cattle and swine, but his employer states that he did not have direct contact with swine in the week prior to his illness onset. No illnesses have been reported from people who had contact with him during his illness. An investigation is ongoing and further testing of the virus at the CDC is in progress. [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

Flu News Europe

Week 18/2015 (27 April - 3 May 2015):

- Influenza activity continued to decrease in most of the 42 reporting countries: the proportion of influenza-virus-positive specimens from sentinel sources decreased from 20% in week 17/2015 to 14% in week 18. Since week 51/2014, the positivity rate has been over the threshold of 10%, indicating seasonal influenza activity.
- Low intensity of influenza activity was reported by 37 countries.
- Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, A(H3N2) and type B viruses continued to circulate in the WHO European Region, but type B viruses accounted for 86% of sentinel detections in week 18/2015. [Flu News Europe](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For 2015 Week 18 (through 9 May 2015):

- 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 FRI rates were at or below expected values. [NHRC Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

40 percent of U.S. bee colonies died in past year



13 May - ... A nationwide survey this week found that beekeepers across the United States lost more than 40 percent of their honeybee colonies between April 2014 to April 2015. While winter loss rates improved slightly compared to a year earlier, summer losses were more

severe and enough to increase the annual losses, which were the second-highest in the last nine years. ... One of the prime culprits for the commercial die-offs is a class of pesticide called neonicotinoids, or "neonics." Commonly used on corn and cereal crops as well as many types of fruits and vegetables. these pesticides are believed to block the nerve endings of the bee, paralyzing the bee and forcing it to starve to death. [CBS News](#)

Action and dysfunction in the U.S. food-safety effort

10 May - ... Part of the problem, some believe, is the balkanized nature of safety inspections. Most responsibilities fall to the F.D.A. and to the safety inspection service. But 13 federal agencies play lesser roles as well. Forming this bureaucratic alphabet soup are the C.D.C.; the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service; the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyard Administration; the Agricultural Marketing Service; the Agricultural Research Service; the Economic Research Service; the National Agricultural Statistics Service; the National Institute of Food and Agriculture; the National Marine Fisheries Service; the Environmental Protection Agency; the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau; United States Customs and Border Protection and — are you still with us? — the Federal Trade Commission. ... In February, the Obama administration sought to impose a measure of order by proposing that all these agencies be combined into a single entity: the Food Safety Administration, which would become part of the Department of Health and Human Services. Whether anything will actually change is uncertain. Congress must give its consent. [New York Times](#)

No one's talking about what the Pacific Trade Deal means for diets

11 May - If you think trade deals are just about business, think again. They can also have a sweeping effect on how people eat. Take all those avocados, watermelon and cervezas from Mexico we now consume, and the meat and feed corn for livestock we send there in exchange. The Obama administration hasn't shared much detail about the provisions in its controversial Trans-Pacific Partnership, the free trade deal between the U.S. and 11 countries currently being negotiated. But if it's anything like prior free trade agreements, two things are likely, trade experts say. First, it will have a potentially troubling effect on food and diet in member countries. Second, no one will talk about these dimensions of the deal before it's inked. ... As Mark Bittman argued in a recent [op-ed](#) in the New York Times, the agreements can also be seen as an attack on farmers and food safety. "The pact would threaten local food, diminish labeling laws, likely keep environmentally destructive industrial meat production high (despite the fact that as a nation we're eating less meat) and probably maintain high yields of commodity crops while causing price cuts." [New York Times](#)

Preliminary incidence and trends of infection with pathogens transmitted commonly through food

15 May - ... In 10 U.S. geographic areas, the Foodborne Diseases Active Surveillance Network* (FoodNet) monitors the incidence of laboratory-confirmed infections caused by nine pathogens transmitted commonly through food. This report summarizes preliminary

2014 data and describes changes in incidence compared with 2006–2008 and 2011–2013. In 2014, FoodNet reported 19,542 infections, 4,445 hospitalizations, and 71 deaths. The incidence of Shiga toxin–producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) O157 and *Salmonella enterica* serotype Typhimurium infections declined in 2014 compared with 2006–2008, and the incidence of infection with *Campylobacter*, *Vibrio*, and *Salmonella* serotypes Infantis and Javiana was higher. Compared with 2011–2013, the incidence of STEC O157 and *Salmonella* Typhimurium infections was lower, and the incidence of STEC non-O157 and *Salmonella* serotype Infantis infections was higher in 2014. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

USDA to require labeling of mechanically tenderized beef

13 May - Mechanically tenderized beef will need to be so labeled by May 2016, the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) announced today. The new labeling requirements cover raw or partially cooked beef products, the FSIS said in a statement. ... Some cuts of beef are tenderized mechanically by piercing them with needles or small blades in order to break up tissue. But the process can introduce pathogens from the surface of the cut to the interior, making proper cooking very important. ... Labels must include not only that the meat was mechanically tenderized, but validated cooking instructions as well. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

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WELLNESS

Body composition may hasten hip osteoarthritis



11 May - Higher fat mass and increased body mass index (BMI) adversely affected hip cartilage in women, while increases in fat-free mass were associated with beneficial cartilage changes at the hip for women and men, according to an Australian community-based study. After adjusting for age and femoral head bone area, for every 1-unit increase in BMI, there was an associated 26 mm³ reduction in femoral head cartilage volume in women, although no such link was seen in men for BMI and femoral head cartilage volume. [MedPage Today](#)

Ease of weight loss influenced by individual biology

11 May - For the first time in a lab, researchers at the National Institutes of Health found evidence supporting the commonly held belief that people with certain physiologies lose less weight than others when limiting calories. ... Researchers ... studied 12 men and women with obesity in the facility's metabolic unit. Using a whole-room indirect calorimeter -- which allows energy expenditure to be calculated based on air samples -- researchers took

baseline measurements of the participants' energy expenditure in response to a day of fasting, followed by a six-week inpatient phase of 50 percent calorie reduction. After accounting for age, sex, race and baseline weight, the researchers found that the people who lost the least weight during the calorie-reduced period were those whose metabolism decreased the most during fasting. [NIH](#)

Female children of service members more vulnerable to eating disorders, obesity than civilians

11 May - Adolescent female military dependents may be at higher risk than civilians for eating disorders and associated problems. ... [The study] gives insight into the additional vulnerabilities of adolescent female military dependents and shows that they reported more disordered eating and depression than civilians. Researchers ... conducted a study of 23 female overweight adolescent military dependents and 105 age- and BMI-matched civilian peers. ... Military dependents reported more binge eating episodes over the previous three months compared to civilians. Seventeen percent of military dependents met criteria for Binge Eating Disorder as compared to only 2% of civilians. Compared to civilians, military dependents reported more shape, weight, and eating concerns. Military dependents also reported greater depressive symptoms. Also, although preliminary, findings suggested that military dependents may be more likely to have clinically significant insulin resistance than civilians. ... The authors say that these findings may demonstrate the unique vulnerability of military dependents and highlight a need to assess military dependents for eating-related and general psychopathology. [ScienceDaily](#)

Healthy woman's stroke linked to drug in sports supplement

12 May - A woman in Sweden had a stroke while exercising, and doctors suspect it was caused by an ingredient in a workout supplement that she was taking — a compound similar to amphetamine. The 53-year old woman, who was previously healthy and physically active, took a single dose of a sports supplement called Jacked Power ... before she started her usual, vigorous workout in January 2014. About 45 minutes into her workout, she started feeling numbness and clumsiness in her left hand, which continued for the rest of the day, and so she went to her doctor. A CT scan showed she had experienced a hemorrhagic stroke Doctors in Sweden concluded that it was likely something in the supplement she took that led to her stroke, and they published a report about her case last year. After hearing of the case, doctors in the United States asked to test a sample of the woman's supplement for drugs that were not listed among the ingredients on the label, but could have caused the stroke. The only drug found in the supplement was a compound called beta-methylphenethylamine (BMPEA), which is chemically similar to amphetamine, but has never been tested in people. [Fox News](#)

Palm 'holds secrets of future health'

14 May - ... A trial on nearly 140,000 people in 14 countries, published in the Lancet, suggests grip strength is better than blood pressure at predicting risk. The international

research team said it would be a "simple, inexpensive" tool for doctors. Experts argued the link between grip and the heart was unclear and needed more study. The maximum crushing force you can exert in your grip naturally declines with age. But those whose grip strength declines fastest may be at greater risk of health problems, the study suggests. ... The huge trial, in 14 countries, showed each 11lb (5kg) reduction in grip strength increased the odds of an early death by 16%. The odds of a fatal heart problem increased by 17% and a stroke by 9%. [BBC News](#)

People have misconceptions about miscarriage, and that can hurt



8 May - Most people think a miscarriage is rare, and many believe that if a woman loses a pregnancy that she brought it upon herself. Neither of those things is true, but the enduring beliefs cause great pain to women and their partners. In fact, almost half of people who have experienced a miscarriage or whose partner has had one feel guilty, according to a survey to be published Monday in *Obstetrics & Gynecology*. More than a quarter of them felt shame. ... [Between] 15 percent and 20 percent of clinically recognized pregnancies end in miscarriage, defined as a pregnancy loss earlier than 20 weeks of gestation. ... Some 55 percent of all respondents believed that miscarriage occurred in 5 percent or less of all pregnancies. ... Most survey respondents knew that genetic or medical problems were the most common cause of early pregnancy loss. But they also mistakenly believed that other factors could trigger a miscarriage: a stressful event (76 percent); lifting something heavy (64 percent); previous use of contraception like an IUD (28 percent) or birth control pills (22 percent); and even an argument (21 percent). [NPR](#)

Seasons affect 'how genes and immune system work'

12 May - The seasons appear to have a profound effect on how human genes work, according to scientists. This may explain why some illnesses are aggravated in the winter, they say in *Nature Communications*. They found genes involved with immunity - the body's defence against infection - were more active in cold months. And while this helps fight off viruses such as flu, it may trigger or worsen conditions, such as arthritis, where the body attacks itself, they say. Of the 22,000 genes they scrutinised - which is nearly all the genes humans possess - a quarter showed clear signs of seasonal variation. The gene changes that interested the researchers the most were ones involved with immunity and, specifically, inflammation. During cold, winter months - December to February for people living north of the equator and June to August for those in the southern hemisphere - these genes were more active. When they studied people living close to the equator, where the temperatures are fairly high all year round, they noticed a different pattern. Immunity and inflammation was linked to the rainy season, when diseases such as malaria are more rife. [BBC News](#)

Sexual orientation influences HPV vaccination uptake

12 May - Lesbian women are as likely as heterosexual and bisexual women to know about the human papillomavirus vaccine — but are less likely to initiate vaccination — according to an *Annals of Internal Medicine* study. ... Among participants aware of the vaccine, 28% had received at least one dose; rates were similar for heterosexual (28%) and bisexual (33%) women and girls, but lower for lesbians (8%). Lesbian women (and perhaps some clinicians) may be unaware that HPV transmission is not limited to heterosexual contact. Lesbians are less likely to obtain Pap smears and are more likely to smoke than their heterosexual counterparts — and thus are at higher risk for cervical cancer. [NEJM Journal Watch](#)

Short on sleep? You could be a disaster waiting to happen

12 May - Missing out on sleep [can] lead to dangerous or even disastrous decision-making. Sleep-deprived operators failed to prevent the Chernobyl nuclear power plant meltdown and the Exxon Valdez oil spill. ... When we lose sleep, it seems we lose our ability to think on our feet — to take in new information and adjust our behavior. ... Researchers at Washington State University figured this out by rounding up 26 volunteers. Half went without any sleep for two days, while the other half slept normal hours. Over the course of a week, the scientists tested everyone's ability to complete decision-making tests. In one test, the volunteers had to click a button when they saw certain numbers and hold back when they saw others. Then the rule was switched. The well-rested group did better on this task in general. But when the rule was reversed, none of the sleep-deprived volunteers were able to get the right answer — even after 40 tries. [NPR](#)

Up-front investment may improve quit rate for smokers

13 May - Want to increase the odds that someone will quit smoking? Make them pay money up front - money they could lose if they relapse - and give them a hefty cash reward if they succeed. That's the lesson of a new study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that compared five smoking cessation techniques in 2,538 employees of the CVS drug store chain, along with their friends and relatives, using a payment system in which participants could earn roughly \$800. ... Compared to programs that simply offered cash for continued abstinence, programs that required the up-front cash deposit were twice as effective among people who agreed to make the deposit in the first place. ... The only problem: not a lot of people were willing to buy into that type of program. Most preferred to sign up for programs that simply offer the cash reward if they are successful. But their failure rate was much higher. [Reuters](#)

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Aid agencies fear disease among 50,000 Burundi refugees by lake

14 May - Up to 50,000 Burundian refugees are stranded in an overcrowded lakeside village on the border with Tanzania, amid mounting tension with local people and fear of disease, the United Nations said on Thursday. Aid agencies are preparing for the regional crisis to worsen following an attempted coup in Burundi on Wednesday. ... Most of the refugees at Kagunga are women and children who have been sleeping out in the rain, said the International Rescue Committee's Tanzania country director, Elijah Okeyo. They are squeezed into a confined space with a shortage of latrines and drinking water in a village that is normally home to 12,000 people, he said. ... The IRC is providing medical care to women giving birth and children with diarrhea and malaria. [Reuters](#)

Lesotho: What might make young people practice safe sex? Lottery tickets!

12 May - ... Researchers wanted to see if they could reach individuals who are prone to taking risks in Lesotho, a country with very high rates of HIV infection. Forty percent of people between the ages of 30 and 34 are HIV-positive. The researchers recruited 3,427 volunteers in 29 villages. One group would come back every four months to be tested for two sexually transmitted infections that are curable. Volunteers were given small gifts to come back every four months. Another group also came back for a test every four months, but these people didn't get a promise of a small stipend. They each got a lottery ticket. And there would be a drawing every four months. Two men and two women in each participating village would get a \$50 prize. That's a lot of money in Lesotho. What the researchers found was extraordinary. After two years, there was a 21.4 percent reduction in HIV infections in the lottery ticket group compared with the volunteers who got the small gifts. [NPR](#)

Liberia: As Ebola leaves Liberia, measles makes a forceful comeback

8 May - ... Just as Liberia is getting ready to declare itself Ebola-free, another disease has cropped up. This January a measles outbreak erupted. So far this year, there have been 562 cases; seven were fatal. "To have this number in just the first quarter of the year is definitely a huge outbreak," says Dr. Zakari Wambai, head of the World Health Organization's immunization program in Liberia. He says in the eight years he has been in the country, there has never been a measles outbreak anywhere near this scale. Now cases are being reported all across the country. The eruption of measles, he says, is a direct result of the Ebola outbreak. That's because when Ebola hit, it caused an almost complete collapse of health care in Liberia, including routine childhood immunization programs. [NPR](#)

Malaria morbidity and mortality in Ebola-affected countries caused by decreased health-care capacity

23 April - The ongoing Ebola epidemic in parts of west Africa largely overwhelmed health-care systems in 2014, making adequate care for malaria impossible and threatening the gains in malaria control achieved over the past decade. We quantified this additional indirect burden of Ebola virus disease. ... If malaria care ceased as a result of the Ebola epidemic, untreated cases of malaria would have increased by 45% (95% credible interval 43–49) in Guinea, 88% (83–93) in Sierra Leone, and 140% (135–147) in Liberia in 2014. This increase is equivalent to 3.5 million (95% credible interval 2.6 million to 4.9 million) additional untreated cases, with 10 900 (5700–21 400) additional malaria-attributable deaths. Mass drug administration and distribution of insecticide-treated bednets timed to coincide with the 2015 malaria transmission season could largely mitigate the effect of Ebola virus disease on malaria. [The Lancet](#)

Malawi: Is peanut butter the best present for malnourished teen moms-to-be?



9 May - ... Gladys, who is pregnant with her first child, lives in Malawi, a country with widespread poverty and malnutrition. In 2012, 78 out of every 1,000 children died before they turned 5, according to UNICEF. Nearly half of all children are stunted. That means their height is below the fifth percentile for their age, and they are prone to chronic diseases and tend to struggle in school. Now one pediatrician is tackling the problem by focusing not just on the children but young mothers like Gladys. And he's using peanut butter as his tool. The problem is malnutrition often starts in the womb. "A third of stunting occurs before birth and there's nothing you can do once the child is born," says Dr. Mark Manary, a pediatrician at Washington University in St. Louis and the founder of Project Peanut Butter. His Malawi-based organization uses a locally produced, high-calorie, nutrient-rich peanut butter called chiponde to treat malnourished children in Malawi, Sierra Leone and Ghana. It's one of many therapeutic foods aid agencies used to treat severe malnutrition. [NPR](#)

Nigeria: Lead poisoning 2015 - outbreak kills 28 young children in Niger State, spreads to Kaduna

14 May - An outbreak of lead poisoning in Nigeria has killed 28 young children in Niger state, health officials told local media Wednesday. At least 65 cases were identified in Niger state, where the poisoning was linked to illegal mining. Although lead poisoning is not contagious, officials expressed concern that the affects had already spread into neighboring Kaduna state. As of Tuesday, 17 girls and 11 boys all under the age of five have died from lead poisoning and more sick children are being treated. Farm animals were also affected by the lead poisoning outbreak, junior health minister Fidelis Nwankwo said Wednesday. [International Business Times](#)

Niger meningitis outbreak worsens

14 May - A meningitis epidemic in Niger has infected well over five thousand people and killed more than 350. The medical aid group Doctors Without Borders warned there's no vaccine available for the particular strain of the rapidly spreading disease. ... The outbreak now underway in Niger is caused by the C strain of bacteria, which is not generally common in the region. In fact, much of the population of Niamey was vaccinated for the A strain in 2010. Massar said no vaccine is available now Niger for the C strain. [VOA](#)

Sub-Saharan Africa: Widespread male circumcision could prevent more than a million HIV infections

11 May - More than a million HIV infections could be prevented over the next 15 years by increasing circumcision of uninfected men in the five countries in Sub-Saharan Africa with the worldwide highest HIV prevalence, according to researchers at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. In addition, the survival benefits of increasing male circumcision coverage compare very favorably to the costs of the intervention. And while expanding anti-retroviral treatment (ART) is another highly cost-beneficial HIV intervention to improve survival, researchers found that circumcision has an even more attractive cost-to-benefit ratio. [Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health](#)

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Afghanistan: US survey says Afghan drug users nearly doubled since 2012

13 May - A survey reveals that the number of drug users in Afghanistan increased to three million last year from an estimated 1.6 million in 2012. Afghan Health Minister Ferozuddin Feroz, while releasing findings of the U.S.-funded study in Kabul Tuesday, said it shows an alarming increase in drug users both in cities and rural areas, with children and women among them. He said the number of drug users across Afghanistan stood at around 900,000 in 2005. ... The survey showed a national drug use rate of 11 percent, one of the highest in the world, suggesting one in every nine Afghans is a user of drugs. [VOA](#)

Saudi MERS pace quickens with 12 cases in 3 days

11 May - After a slow April, the pace of MERS-CoV cases in Saudi Arabia has picked up in the past 3 days, with 3 cases reported May 9 and 9 more today, including 4 that may represent a household cluster. The three cases announced by the Saudi Ministry of Health (MOH) 2 days ago involved three men, none of them healthcare workers, in three widely

separated locations. ... None of them were reported to have had contact with other MERS-CoV (Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus) patients. [CIDRAP](#)

Syria: Five million Syrians at high risk of explosive weapons

11 May - About 5.1 million Syrians are living in areas at high risk from explosive weapons, some of which fail to detonate and so will pose a deadly threat for years to come, aid group Handicap International said. The global charity examined 78,000 violent incidents in Syria's war between December 2012 and March 2015 and found that more than 80 percent involved highly destructive weapons like rockets, mortars and bombs, rather than light arms. [Reuters](#)

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USEUCOM

Denmark: Socioeconomic inequality and mortality - a regional Danish cohort study

14 May - Socioeconomic inequalities in mortality pose a serious impediment to enhance public health even in highly developed welfare states. This study aimed to improve the understanding of socioeconomic disparities in all-cause mortality by using a comprehensive approach including a range of behavioural, psychological, material and social determinants in the analysis. ... The study population was assigned to one of five groups according to highest achieved educational level. ... In comparison with the middle level, the two highest educated levels remained statistically insignificant throughout the entire analysis. Conclusion Socioeconomic inequality influenced mortality substantially even when adjusted for a range of determinants that might explain the association. Further studies are needed to understand this important relationship. [BMC Public Health](#)

European Space Agency backs work mapping Scottish tick hotspots

13 May - The European Space Agency (ESA) has given financial backing to a Scottish project to test a new app mapping tick hotspots. Blood-sucking ticks have been linked to a rise in Lyme disease in humans in the past 10 years, according to NHS Highland. Untreated tick bites can result in neurological problems and joint pain months or years later. ... People out walking or cycling will be encouraged to use the app to upload information about where they find ticks. Using GPS technology, the application will also gather details such as the height, temperature and vegetation cover of the location where a person uploads their information. A one-year study will test the technical and commercial feasibility of LymeMap. [BBC News](#)

France reports 67-case measles outbreak

11 May - French officials have reported a measles outbreak involving at least 67 cases in the Alsace region in northeastern France, which borders Germany and Switzerland, according to a report late last week from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). "The French index case had most probably been infected during a school trip to Berlin, following contact with a confirmed case in the German host family," the ECDC said. An increase in cases in the region was first noted in early April. ... Four patients had received only one dose of measles vaccine, with the rest unvaccinated. Fewer than 30 cases have been reported outside the Alsace region in France this year. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (sixth item)

Russia: In Putin's Russia, universal health care is for all who pay

13 May - After the Soviet era of universal care, Russia today has a mix of public hospitals and clinics, where most treatment is technically free, and much pricier private facilities with better care. The public system improved rapidly over the past decade as health spending rose from \$96 per person in 2000 to \$957 in 2013, according to the World Health Organization. This year, though, Russian health spending is 9 percent lower than two years ago after adjusting for inflation, according to Guzel Ulumbekova, a public health expert who advises Russia's Chamber of Commerce and Industry. ... The government in 2014 initiated what it calls an "optimization" of the medical system. The Health Ministry says the plan is to eliminate waste by concentrating resources in major hospitals and closing many smaller facilities. [Bloomberg](#)

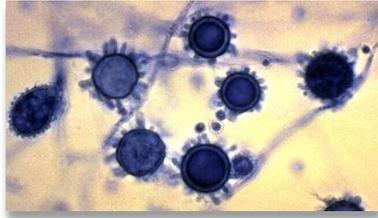
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USNORTHCOM

Mexico: Vaccination infant deaths - 2 babies die from bad vaccines, government suspends certain immunizations nationwide

11 May - Two babies have died and 29 were sickened in a poor area of southern Mexico after receiving routine vaccinations for tuberculosis, rotavirus and hepatitis B, the Associated Press reported. Mexico has suspended vaccinations for babies as a result and opened an investigation into the matter. The babies, who lived in the impoverished municipality of Simojovel, in Chiapas, the southernmost state in Mexico, became sick Friday and were taken to a hospital. Thirty-one children had apparent adverse reactions, and six were in grave condition while 23 were in stable condition, according to the Mexican Institute for Social Security. [International Business Times](#)

U.S.: A fungus causes more unexpected illnesses in Montana



13 May - [The] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention wants to get the word out that they found more people sick with histoplasmosis in Montana and Idaho. ... The *Histoplasma* fungus is common in the Mississippi and Ohio River valleys, but infectious disease doctors hadn't seen it causing illness in

Montana before. It could have been a fluke, they figured. Maybe people had gotten infected while traveling out of state. But now they're reporting two more cases, bringing the total to five in Montana and one in Idaho. Three people were sick enough to be hospitalized; one died. ... "It's a very difficult disease to diagnose because it kind of mimics many other things," he tells Shots. Half of these people had been sick for more than six months before they were correctly diagnosed, Nett says. [NPR](#)

U.S.: A prescription for mental health in America

13 May - The future for the next 10 years of mental health in America will not derive from sudden breakthroughs in decoding our DNA or fashioning designer drugs that are categorically different from what we have now ... A sanguine future is possible if we do what we know now a lot better (quality) and deliver what we know now to a lot more people (access). The greatest gains we can achieve in the next 10 years in public mental health will derive from closing the gap between what we know and what we do in both mental health and the addictions. ... [Lloyd I. Sederer, M.D. offers a] prescription for the future of mental health in America, in David Letterman style. [Huffington Post](#)

U.S.: CDC team to help probe Washington state *E coli* outbreak

11 May - CDC experts are slated to arrive today in Whatcom County in northwestern Washington to help investigate on *Escherichia coli* outbreak linked to a dairy festival. ... At least 47 people have fallen ill and 8 have been hospitalized in the outbreak, according to county officials. Most are among a group of more than 1,300 first-graders. The festival introduces students to farming and gives them an opportunity to pet farm animals. Workers who helped set up and take down the event are also among the ill. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (fifth item)

U.S.: Cuomo orders emergency measures to protect workers at nail salons

11 May - Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo ordered emergency measures on Sunday to combat the wage theft and health hazards faced by the thousands of people who work in New York State's nail salon industry. Effective immediately, he said in a statement, a new, multiagency

task force will conduct salon-by-salon investigations, institute new rules that salons must follow to protect manicurists from the potentially dangerous chemicals found in nail products, and begin a six-language education campaign to inform them of their rights. Nail salons that do not comply with orders to pay workers back wages, or are unlicensed, will be shut down. The new rules come in response to a New York Times investigation of nail salons — first published online last week — that detailed the [widespread exploitation of manicurists](#), many of whom have illnesses that some scientists and health advocates say are caused by the chemicals with which they work. [New York Times](#)

U.S.: FDA approves new drug to treat, prevent plague

11 May - Late last week the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the drug Avelox (moxifloxacin) to treat and prevent plague. The drug, made by Bayer, is approved to treat pneumonic plague (plague of the lungs) and septicemic plague (infection of the blood) in all patients and to prevent plague in adults. It is not approved to treat the third common form, bubonic plague, which involves the lymph nodes. [CIDRAP New Scan](#) (fourth item)

U.S.: FDA ready to lift ban on blood donation by gay men

12 May - Gay and bisexual men who have abstained from sex for one year would be allowed to donate blood in the United States, under a new federal policy unveiled Tuesday. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced its intentions in a draft guidance that was first proposed in December. The agency said it would collect public comments on the proposal for 60 days before issuing final rules. Implementing the "one year deferral" clause for gay or bisexual men would reverse a three-decade-old ban on donations from this group that traces back to the start of the AIDS epidemic. The FDA said it was changing its policy based on data from other countries that show allowing such donations would not increase the risk of HIV-tainted blood entering America's blood supply. [WebMD](#)

U.S.: Free contraceptives must be free, Obama administration tells insurers

12 May - Free means free. The Obama administration said Monday that health plans must offer at least one option for every type of prescription birth control free of charge to consumers. The instructions clarify the Affordable Care Act's contraceptive mandate. "Today's guidance seeks to eliminate any ambiguity," the Health and Human Services Department said. "Insurers must cover without cost-sharing at least one form of contraception in each of the methods that the Food and Drug Administration has identified ... including the ring, the patch and intrauterine devices." The ruling comes after reports by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the National Women's Law Center, an advocacy group, found many insurers were not providing no-cost birth control for all prescription methods. [NPR](#)

U.S.: House plan highlights mental health, courts, hospice and foster care

14 May - The full House budget hadn't been released as of Thursday afternoon, but parts that were unveiled Thursday showed House leaders are looking to invest more money in mental health, courts, hospice, respite and foster care. [WRAL](#)

U.S.: House votes to ban most abortions after 20 weeks

13 May - The U.S. House of Representatives approved a bill on Wednesday that would ban most abortions after 20 weeks, a measure strongly opposed by the White House. The Republican-led House approved the bill by a largely party-line vote of 242-184. An earlier version was pulled by House Republican leaders in January after a revolt by some Republican women in the chamber. ... The bill, called the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, faces an uncertain fate in the Senate. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: Mentally ill inmates are routinely physically abused, study says

12 May - Mentally ill inmates in prisons and jails across the United States are subjected to routine physical abuse by guards, including being doused with chemical sprays, shocked with electronic stun guns and strapped for hours to chairs or beds, according to a report by Human Rights Watch to be released on Tuesday. The mistreatment, the study says, has led to deaths, though the number of casualties is unclear in part because jails and prisons classify them in various ways. Also, jails and prisons are not uniformly required to report the use of force by guards, the study found. ... The review found that prisoners suffering from serious mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, are often punished with physical force for commonplace behaviors including using profanity and banging on cell doors. ... The study faulted prisons and jails for failing to offer sufficient mental health treatment; doing too little to protect mentally ill patients from physical abuse by staff members, who are often inadequately trained; and having leadership not sufficiently focused on mental health issues. [New York Times](#)

U.S.: Tornadoes kill at least 5 in Arkansas, Texas, South Dakota as winds of 125 mph and above wreak havoc



12 May - A band of tornadoes tore through the nation's middle Sunday, killing at least five people in Texas and Arkansas, including a couple who died saving their baby girl. Between 20 and 25 twisters hammered South Dakota, Iowa, Oklahoma and Texas, according to preliminary reports cited by Greg Carbin of the Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Okla. ... In neighboring Texas, another tornado-laced storm powered through the small town of Van, killing at least two people. ... The fatal storms reached across Texas. Another man died in storm-related flooding in Corsicana, about 70 miles southwest of Van. [New York Daily News](#)

U.S.: Will pregnancy tests in Alaska bars dissuade moms-to-be from drinking?

10 May - "Remember the last time you had sex? Were you drinking? Alcohol use during pregnancy can cause lifelong problems for the child." That's part of the warning on a poster in the women's bathroom at the Peanut Farm bar in Anchorage. It depicts the silhouette of a pregnant woman guzzling straight from a bottle. And it's affixed to a pregnancy test dispenser hanging on the wall. The Peanut Farm and a few other bars in Alaska have begun offering the free pregnancy tests as part of a two-year, state-funded pilot project. ... Alaska has a high rate of women who binge drink, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. State health officials estimate that more than 120 children born in Alaska each year suffer from fetal alcohol symptoms ranging from mental and physical disabilities to impaired growth and organ damage. [NPR](#)

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Malaysia and Thailand leave migrant boats adrift



13 May - As Europe focuses on the migrants in the Mediterranean, another humanitarian crisis is playing out on a stretch of water between the Andaman Sea and the Strait of Malacca in Southeast Asia. Hundreds, possibly thousands, of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar and Bangladeshi migrants have been

deserted by smugglers and left adrift for days without food or water. The decision by smugglers to abandon their human cargo comes after crackdowns on their activities by authorities in Thailand and Malaysia. Thai police arrested several suspected traffickers following the discovery of mass graves containing at least 30 bodies at a camp in Thailand's Sadao District near the Malaysian border two weeks ago. The UN refugee agency, UNHCR, estimates that 25,000 people left Myanmar and Bangladesh on smugglers' boats in the first quarter of 2015. [IRIN](#)

Nepal: Fresh earthquake brings panic, damage and death

12 May - A 7.3 magnitude earthquake killed at least 37 people and spread panic in Nepal on Tuesday, bringing down buildings already weakened by a devastating tremor less than three weeks ago and unleashing landslides in Himalayan valleys near Mount Everest. Most of the reported fatalities were in villages to the east of Kathmandu, only just beginning to pick up the pieces after the April 25 quake that left more than 8,000 people dead. The new

earthquake was centered 76 km (47 miles) east of the capital in a hilly area close to the border with Tibet, according to coordinates provided by the U.S. Geological Survey. Aid workers reported serious damage to some villages seen from the air and witnesses reported seeing rocks and mud crashing down remote hillsides lined with roads and small hamlets. Politicians dashed for the exit of Nepal's parliament building and office towers swayed as far away as central New Delhi. The tremors could be felt in Bangladesh and were followed by a series of powerful aftershocks. [Reuters](#)

Nepal: Pregnant women vulnerable after Nepal quake

10 May - Health experts in Nepal are concerned about the more than 126,000 pregnant women that the UN estimates were affected by last month's devastating earthquake. Pregnant women were among the most vulnerable groups at the time of the quake given that they could not run, said Dr Nuzhat Rafique of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). In post-earthquake Nepal, pregnant women are at a higher risk of giving birth prematurely, suffering miscarriage or experiencing pregnancy complications. ... "There are no health facilities functioning the way they normally do, so women really get affected when there is no health post to go to." [Al Jazeera](#)

Sri Lanka: Surge in dengue cases in Jaffna, Batticaloa, Kurunegala and Ratnapura

12 May - The number of dengue related cases reported so far this year stands at 13,423 and the count includes 3,847 patients from Colombo, 1,778 from Gampaha and 645 patients from Kalutara, a Health Ministry's Epidemiology Unit revealed. The Unit stated that the Jaffna, Batticaloa, Kurunegala and Ratnapura districts have seen a surge in the number of dengue patients. [The Official Government News Portal of Sri Lanka](#)

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USSOUTHCOM

Brazil: Dengue epidemic in Brazil

13 May - The Brazilian Ministry of Health has reported 746,000 registered cases of Dengue fever and 229 confirmed deaths since January 2015. This marks a 234% increase in Dengue cases and a 45% increase in Dengue deaths since the previous year. Although nine states are currently experiencing an outbreak of Dengue, more than half of these cases occurred in São Paulo, which also happens to be Brazil's most populous state. To date, São Paulo has had three times as many Dengue cases as there were reported in 2014. [The Disease Daily](#)

PAHO reports 12,000 new chikungunya cases

11 May - Chikungunya cases in the Americas continued their steady increase last week, with 12,064 new cases reported, bringing the outbreak total to 1,426,515, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) said in its weekly update. The previous weeks saw increases of almost 13,000 and 30,000, respectively. As has been the case in most weeks of late, the vast majority of new infections were reported in Colombia, which saw a 10,120-case increase, to 297,061. Other nations reporting new cases included Brazil, with 553 new cases, and Mexico, with 156. As noted before, however, very few countries have reported cases in recent weeks. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

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