

17 January 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.

U.S. Military | Global | Influenza | Veterinary/Food Safety | Wellness | Contact Us

USAFRICOM | USCENTCOM | USEUCOM | USNORTHCOM | USPACOM | USSOUTHCOM

Approved for public release, distribution unlimited.

Contents

U.S. MILITARY

- Bacterial skin infections, active component, U.S. Armed Forces, 2000-2012
- Breathing in vs. spacing out
- Congress seeks to improve military sex assault investigations
- Data predict spike in female troop injuries
- H.I.V.-positive person, told otherwise, is being sought
- Lawmakers seek data on sailors' exposure to Fukushima radiation
- Stateside Tricare service centers closing April 1

GLOBAL

- Belgian clinic repairs bones with novel technique
- Child shock guidelines 'are deadly'
- Eye doctors warn of damage from lasers
- From millions of cases to 148: Guinea worm's days are numbered
- Gut parasite may keep locusts from swarming
- Novel paramyxovirus found in field biologist returning from Africa
- MSF pioneers opening up access to humanitarian data

INFLUENZA

- Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center: DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary
- CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report
- DoD Global Laboratory-Based Influenza Surveillance Program
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview
- Google.org: Flu Trends
- Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update
- USAPHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report
- WHO: H1N1 dominates global flu picture
- PANDEMIC AND AVIAN INFLUENZA
- China reports second H7N9 bird flu death in a week
- Human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus – update

VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

- Belarus: Suspected African swine fever
- Chicken-linked prison *Salmonella* cases grow to 9

Subscription or Comments

If you wish to be added to the APH Weekly Update mailing list, removed from the mailing list, or if you have comments or questions about the update, please [contact us](#). We welcome your comments. Please feel free to share this update with others who may be interested.



Follow us!



Facebook



Twitter



YouTube

**2014 'State of
Public Health' with
CDC Director
Tom Frieden**

Tom Frieden, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, speaks to the public health community on CDC's health priorities, challenges in having a "2002 budget but living in a 2014 world," how the Affordable Care Act intertwines with prevention, and how APHA and public health professionals can improve the nation's health with "six essential components for success."



- Improper use of biocides in food production poses public health risks
- U.S.: Tyson Foods announces recall of more than 33,000 pounds of chicken over salmonella

WELLNESS

- Can winter really make you sick? The truth about seasonal affective disorder
- Diet soda mixers up breathalyzer readings
- Should you drink coffee before or after a learning task?
- The Well smoking quiz: Who looks older?

USAFRICOM

- Democratic Republic of the Congo: No one to turn to – life for children in eastern DRC
- Namibia: Drought still severe amid sparse rainfall
- Nigeria: Lassa fever
- Zimbabwe: Fresh typhoid outbreak hits Zimbabwe

USCENTCOM

- Iraq: Iraq fighting complicates aid to the displaced
- Pakistan: CCHF remains entrenched in Pakistan
- Pakistan: Politicians, Muslim scholars join vaccination effort as violence hinders polio drive
- Syria: Charities pledge \$400 million to Syria aid

USEUCOM

- Georgia: Cutaneous anthrax cases increase, particularly near cities
- Israeli soldiers to be compensated for anthrax vaccine side effects
- United Kingdom: Obesity crisis - future projections 'underestimated'
- United Kingdom: U.K. researchers ask the public to share medical data

USNORTHCOM

- Canada: Supreme Court to revisit decision banning assisted suicide
- U.S.: Current cigarette smoking among adults — United States, 2005–2012
- U.S.: Death dust
- U.S.: Doctors say pressure on ERs may rise, give U.S. failing grade
- U.S.: IOM panel offers suggestions on preparedness funding
- U.S.: Preoccupation with bioterrorism hobbles preparations for natural spread of deadly viruses
- U.S.: Levels of controversial chemicals in Americans fall—and rise
- U.S., West Virginia: CDC - Pregnant women should not drink contaminated tap water
- U.S., West Virginia: Tens of thousands cleared to resume using tap water in West Virginia

USPACOM

- China closes more than 8,000 polluting firms in 2013
- China: Doctor gets suspended death sentence for trafficking newborn babies
- China: Superbugs were found breeding, spreading in sewage plants
- India hails polio-free 'milestone'
- India: Hepatitis C
- Indonesia: Hopes and fears as Indonesia rolls out universal healthcare
- Micronesia: Chikungunya
- Philippines: Measles cases up in Angeles City, Tacloban City
- South Korea cuts future reliance on nuclear power, but new plants likely
- Thailand: Rethinking Thailand's war on methamphetamines
- Tonga: Specter of disease in Tonga after Cyclone Ian batters islands

2013-2014 Influenza Season: Updates and Recommendations for Clinicians

This influenza season, CDC has received a number of reports of severe respiratory illness among young and middle-aged adults, many of whom were infected with influenza A (H1N1) pdm09 (pH1N1) virus. Multiple pH1N1-associated hospitalizations, including many requiring intensive care unit (ICU) admission, and some fatalities have been reported.

During this COCA conference call, critical care physicians will comment on their recent experiences caring for patients with severe influenza, and a CDC subject matter expert will summarize the 2013-14 season to date and review CDC recommendations for health care providers including the use of antiviral medications for the treatment of influenza.

Date: January 23, 2014

Time: 2:00 – 3:00 pm ET

Call-in: 888-233-9077

Passcode: 8207177

[More information](#)



USSOUTHCOM

- [El Salvador: Chaparrastique volcano](#)
- [More chikungunya cases confirmed in Caribbean](#)
- [Panama to use transgenic mosquitoes in anti-dengue bid](#)
- [Uruguay: Hantavirus update](#)

U.S. MILITARY

Bacterial skin infections, active component, U.S. Armed Forces, 2000-2012

December 2013 - From 2000 through 2012, health care records of the Military Health System documented 998,671 incident cases of bacterial skin infections among active component members of the U.S. Armed Forces... Cellulitis accounted for half (50.9%) of all cases of bacterial skin infection but 96 percent of associated hospital bed days. Of all cases, 42.3 percent were "other" skin infections (i.e., folliculitis, impetigo, pyoderma, pyogenic granuloma, other and unspecified infections). The remainder were attributable to carbuncles/furuncles (6.6%) and erysipelas (0.1%). Rates of infection were higher among female service members except for "other" skin infections. In general, the highest rates were associated with youth, recruit trainee status, and junior enlisted rank; however, rates of erysipelas were highest among those 50 years and older. Annual incidence rates of all bacterial skin infections have increased greatly since 2000. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#) (page 2)

Breathing in vs. spacing out

14 January - Two and a half millenniums ago, a prince named Siddhartha Gautama traveled to Bodh Gaya, India, and began to meditate beneath a tree. Forty-nine days of continuous meditation later, tradition tells us, he became the Buddha — the enlightened one. More recently, a psychologist named Amishi Jha traveled to Hawaii to train United States Marines to use the same technique for shorter sessions to achieve a much different purpose: mental resilience in a war zone. "We found that getting as little as 12 minutes of meditation practice a day helped the Marines to keep their attention and working memory — that is, the added ability to pay attention over time — stable," said Jha, director of the University of Miami's Contemplative Neuroscience, Mindfulness Research and Practice Initiative. "If they practiced less than 12 minutes or not at all, they degraded in their functioning." [New York Times](#)

Congress seeks to improve military sex assault investigations

14 January - The \$1.012 trillion omnibus spending bill for fiscal 2014 includes a provision directing the service secretaries to fully fund programs that would improve the ability of military law enforcement agencies to collect evidence and process crime scenes. In a report

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.

Links

[A-Z Index](#)

[About USAPHC](#)

[Army Public Health and Health Information Weekly Update Archives](#)

[Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

[Medical Threat Briefings \(AKO\)](#)

[Request USAPHC Services](#)

[USAPHC Library](#)

[USAPHC Homepage](#)

[USAPHC Training](#)

[Contact USAPHC](#)

released July 9, the DoD Inspector General found that more than 10 percent of the military's criminal sex assault investigations were flawed. The IG urged the services to improve processing, supervision, collection and documentation as part of such investigations... The bill also directs Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel to review separation records of service members who made unrestricted reports of sexual assault and correct those records if a member was improperly discharged. [Army Times](#)

Data predict spike in female troop injuries



13 January - As the military prepares to allow female troops in ground combat units, studies show the Department of Veterans Affairs can expect more female veterans will suffer from the kinds of injuries that go with being a ground-pounder. No one can yet say what that means in treatment program costs or disability compensation increases, but Army and VA studies

show that women will be at greater risk for musculoskeletal injuries. Advocates for women serving in direct combat units say the problem may be overcome without lowering standards by improved training and fitness, while critics say nothing is going to change the fact that women are not built to be in the infantry. For its part, the VA says it has to be ready for a possible rise in the number of female troops with bone, joint and ligament injuries.

[Military.com](#)

H.I.V.-positive person, told otherwise, is being sought

15 January - For the last six weeks, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center has been engaged in a highly unusual effort to identify an individual who is H.I.V. positive but was wrongly informed that he or she was H.I.V. negative after a mix-up of blood samples taken at the hospital. The mistake occurred in late October when the military's flagship hospital, in Bethesda, Md., sent 150 blood samples to a contract laboratory for analysis. One sample tested positive for H.I.V., hospital officials said, but it was wrongly labeled with the name of a patient who subsequent tests showed was not infected. A hunt is now underway to identify the infected person, who may be in need of treatment and could be unknowingly infecting others through unprotected sex or the sharing of needles. [New York Times](#)

Lawmakers seek data on sailors' exposure to Fukushima radiation

14 January - House and Senate lawmakers want answers on whether U.S. sailors received high doses of radiation while supporting humanitarian operations in Japan following the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami. In the fiscal 2014 omnibus budget bill, lawmakers direct Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Dr. Jonathan Woodson to provide Congress a full accounting of those who served on the carrier Ronald Reagan during the operation and any medical problems they later developed... The Pentagon has released data on the levels of radiation seen during and after the disasters and established a registry for 70,000 troops and family members who worked or lived near the affected region to monitor their health. [Army Times](#)

Stateside Tricare service centers closing April 1



14 January - All stateside Tricare in-person service centers will be closing April 1, Tricare officials recently confirmed. The closure of the 189 facilities is expected to save the Defense Department about \$50 million a year, officials said. The Tricare Service Centers, which handle about 137,000 visitors a month, are staffed by contractors and handle issues ranging from processing provider changes to billing problems. "The change will not -- let me repeat that -- will not affect any Tricare medical benefit or health care service," Army Col. Steve Warren, a DoD spokesman said in a statement. "What it will do is allow the department to save \$250 million over the next five years, allowing Tricare to invest in more important services."

Military.com

[top of page...](#)

GLOBAL

Belgian clinic repairs bones with novel technique

15 January - Belgian medical researchers have succeeded in repairing bones using stem cells from fatty tissue, with a new technique they believe could become a benchmark for treating a range of bone disorders... The ground-breaking technique of Saint Luc's centre for tissue and cellular therapy is to remove a sugar cube sized piece of fatty tissue from the patient, a less invasive process than pushing a needle into the pelvis and with a stem cell concentration they say is some 500 times higher. The stem cells are then isolated and used to grow bone in the laboratory. Unlike some technologies, they are also not attached to a solid and separate 'scaffold'. [Reuters](#)

Child shock guidelines 'are deadly'



13 January - Thousands of children could be dying each year because the World Health Organization has not updated guidelines for treating those going into shock, UK researchers warn. They say the advice to give large quantities of fluid is deadly. The updated guidelines in 2013 did not recommend a change, which the researchers described as "disappointing and puzzling". The WHO said it had to be "very vigilant" when changing guidelines. And that it aimed to publish a new set of interim guidelines by early 2015. [BBC](#)

Eye doctors warn of damage from lasers

14 January - Powerful lasers that are easily purchased online pose a serious danger to vision, according to a new report. Doctors from the Duke University Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina, report on the case of a nine-year-old boy who showed up at their hospital after being blinded by an adult playing with a handheld laser... The high-power laser had passed through the boy's eye lenses and burst the blood vessels in the back of his eyes. "This was a larger device that was sold as some toy, but it's a dangerous weapon," Toth said. "You can start a fire with the power that was coming out of that one." ...The high-power laser was made from a component of a dismantled home theater projector and purchased online. [Reuters](#)

From millions of cases to 148: Guinea worm's days are numbered

16 January - ...The world recorded only 148 cases of Guinea worm last year, the Carter Center said Thursday. That's nearly three-quarters less than in 2012, and a tiny fraction compared to the 3.5 million cases back in 1986... Since 1991, the number of countries endemic for Guinea worm dropped from 21 to four: South Sudan, Chad, Mali and Ethiopia. And cases have plummeted from millions to a few hundred. (You can watch an animation of the eradication progress [here](#).) But, as with polio, war will be an obstacle to wiping out Guinea worm. Three quarters of the infections reported last year occurred in South Sudan, where fighting broke out a month ago. [NPR](#)

Gut parasite may keep locusts from swarming



13 January – By itself, the migratory locust is about as harmless as a grasshopper. But under the right conditions, it can assemble with billions of its comrades into apocalyptic swarms that destroy thousands of hectares of crops in Africa, Asia, Australia, and New Zealand. Now, scientists have discovered that a gut parasite may be key to keeping these insects living the single life... To uncover how the parasite stemmed the swarms, Shi and colleagues infected healthy locusts with [a microbe known as *Paranosema locustae*]. Locusts release chemical signals called pheromones in their scat to notify their neighbors that it's time to swarm... The parasite acidified the locusts' lower guts, subduing the growth of bacteria responsible for creating the pheromones. Additionally, the researchers found that infected locusts produced lower levels of the neurotransmitters serotonin, which can initiate swarming behavior, and dopamine, which can sustain the behavior. [Science](#)

Novel paramyxovirus found in field biologist returning from Africa

15 January - A wildlife biologist who became severely sick after returning from a 6-week African field expedition that included handling rodents and bats and collecting their blood

and tissues was found to have been infected with a novel paramyxovirus related to rubula-like viruses isolated from fruit bats... The 25-year-old experienced a fever, malaise, headache, generalized myalgia and arthralgia, neck stiffness, and a sore throat 5 days after returning to the United States. She was hospitalized and during her stay developed a maculopapular rash on her back and arms... The authors named the new virus Sosuga (a combination of South Sudan and Uganda) and said it most likely originated in bats; they said efforts to detect it in African bats are under way. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (fourth item)

MSF pioneers opening up access to humanitarian data



13 January - Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is pioneering an open-access approach within the humanitarian sector in the hope that other medical aid organisations will follow suit. MSF decided to make the data of its clinical and research staff collect freely available online, says a report published in PLOS Medicine last month (10 December). This is the first

time a medical humanitarian organisation has fashioned a policy to openly share its data, MSF says. By making its medical data open access, MSF will enable other scientists to conduct further research on them, potentially leading to health benefits for the vulnerable and neglected communities where MSF works, says Leslie Shanks, who led the development of MSF's data-sharing policy. [allAfrica](#)

[top of page...](#)

INFLUENZA

Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center: DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary

During Week 1 (ending 4 January 2014), Influenza-like illness (ILI) and Pneumonia and Influenza (P&I) activity increased in Northern Command, European Command and Pacific Command. [AFHSC DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary](#)

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 1 (December 29, 2013-January 4, 2014), influenza activity continued to increase in the United States.

- **Viral Surveillance:** Of 9,482 specimens tested and reported by collaborating laboratories during week 1, 2,486 (26.2%) were positive for influenza.
- **Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality:** The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was below the epidemic threshold.

- Influenza-Associated Pediatric Deaths: Four influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported.
- Outpatient Illness Surveillance: The proportion of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) was 4.4%, above the national baseline of 2.0%. [FluView](#)

DoD Global Laboratory-Based Influenza Surveillance Program

- During Weeks 52 & 1 (22 December 2013 - 4 January 2014), 118 specimens were collected and received from 33 locations. Results were finalized for 65 specimens from 25 locations. For specimens collected during Week 52, 61.4% were positive for influenza (32 influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and three influenza A/not subtyped). For specimens collected during Week 1, 50.0% were positive for influenza (four influenza A(H1N1)pdm09).
- Cumulative results were finalized for 934 specimens from 67 locations. There were 195 specimens positive for influenza A (177 A(H1N1)pdm09, 12 A(H3N2), two A(H1N1)pdm09 & parainfluenza, one A(H1N1)pdm09 & Rhinovirus/Enterovirus, and three influenza A/not subtyped). There were seven specimens positive for influenza B (six B/unknown lineage and one B/Yamagata). Other respiratory pathogens identified were 22 adenovirus, 16 *Chlamydomphila pneumoniae*, 12 coronavirus, 11 human metapneumovirus, 31 *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*, 50 parainfluenza, 49 RSV, and 175 rhinovirus/enterovirus. To date, 51 non-influenza co-infections have been identified.
- Vaccination percentages for active duty service members are as follows: Army - 96%, Air Force - 98%, Marines - 90%, Navy - 92%, and Coast Guard - 96%. [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

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

For week 1/2014:

Of the 29 reporting countries, 28 reported low-intensity influenza activity while Spain reported medium intensity.

- Of 305 sentinel specimens tested across 24 countries, 70 (23%) from 11 countries were positive for influenza virus.
- The viruses circulating this season remain well-matched with the 2013/14 seasonal vaccine viruses.
- Thirty-six hospitalised laboratory-confirmed influenza cases were reported by Ireland, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

Based on reports of widespread, local or sporadic spread from the majority of countries and the increasing proportion of specimens testing positive for influenza virus across 11 countries, which is indicative of influenza transmission, the season appears to be slowly getting started in EU/EEA countries. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

Google.org: Flu Trends

14 January – Estimates of flu activity based on certain Internet search queries indicate that the level of flu activity in the northern hemisphere is high throughout North America and Spain and in the southern hemisphere ranges from minimal to low. [Google.org Flu Trends](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For the week ending 4 January 2014:

- Influenza
- Three cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza (2 influenza A/H1N1 and 1 influenza B) among US military basic trainees.
- Increased flu activity at MCRD San Diego
- 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](#)

USAPHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report

For the week ending 4 January 2014 (Week 1):

- Over the past few weeks, influenza activity increased in Army MTFs. Dependent populations were most affected, although the number of Active Duty (AD) cases increased from previous weeks.
- ILI Activity: Army incident ILI outpatient visits in week one were 35% lower than for the same week last year.
- Influenza cases: Nine hospitalized influenza cases were reported to USAPHC in week one. To date, 32 cases have been reported during this influenza season: six in AD SMs and 26 in non-AD beneficiaries.
- Viral specimens: During week one, 357 of 1,292 (28%) laboratory specimens tested positive for respiratory pathogens. Most of the influenza positive specimens were from SRMC (50%), although WRMC and NRMC accounted for larger proportions of positive Influenza A tests, 27% and 20% respectively. [USAPHC U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report](#)

WHO: H1N1 dominates global flu picture

13 January - In a virologic update today, the World Health Organization (WHO) noted increasing global influenza in the last weeks of 2013, with 2009 H1N1 the predominant strain. Data from FluNet reporting that covers 99 countries or territories showed that worldwide labs tested 88,471 specimens. Of those, 17,640 (20.0%) were positive for influenza. Of the 17,640 flu-positive samples, 15,233 (86.4%) were influenza A and 2,406 (23.6%) influenza B. Of the subtyped influenza A viruses, 6,889 (67.2%) were 2009 H1N1 and

3,365 (32.8%) were H3N2. Of the B viruses, 352 (81.1%) were of the Yamagata lineage and 82 (18.9%) of the Victoria lineage. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

PANDEMIC AND AVIAN INFLUENZA

China reports second H7N9 bird flu death in a week



13 January - [China](#) reported one more death from the H7N9 strain of bird flu in southwestern Guizhou province, state news agency Xinhua said on Monday, in the second death from the virus in the past week. A 38-year-old man from Zunyi city died last Thursday, Xinhua said, citing health authorities in Guizhou. Xinhua said it was the first human case of H7N9 in Guizhou this

year. Last Friday, [China](#) said a 38-year-old man in eastern Fujian province died from H7N9. The World Health Organisation (WHO) said last week that seven more people in [China](#) had been found to be infected with the H7N9 strain of bird flu in the previous week, taking to around 150 the total number of cases so far. [Reuters](#)

Human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus – update

16 January -On 14 January 2014, the National Health and Family Planning Commission of China notified WHO of 3 additional laboratory-confirmed cases of human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus... The source of infection is still under investigation. So far, there is no evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission. [WHO](#)

[top of page...](#)

VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Belarus: Suspected African swine fever

13 January – Last week, 2 pigs died in a private holding in the village Boyarsk, 30 km from Smorgon. The owner immediately called the veterinarian. Pig carcasses were burned and buried. Currently, quarantine measures are being applied in the village, including prohibition of exported meat. According to the deputy director of the District Veterinary Office, Elena Yakovleva, the cause of the pig deaths has not yet been established, but precautionary measures to prevent the potential spread of African swine fever [ASF] are being applied. This is also justified in view of earlier ASF cases in the Grodno [Hrodna] region of Belarus. [ProMED-mail](#)

Chicken-linked prison *Salmonella* cases grow to 9

15 January - A *Salmonella* Heidelberg outbreak at a Tennessee prison has grown to nine cases, and investigators are probing 19 infections caused by the same strain in 12 other states to see if they are linked to the outbreak, which has been tied to chicken products from Tyson Foods. As of Jan 13, two of the nine cases have required hospitalization, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said in an update yesterday. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

Improper use of biocides in food production poses public health risks

9 January – Biocides used in the food industry at sublethal doses may be endangering, rather than protecting, public health by increasing antibiotic resistance in bacteria and enhancing their ability to form harmful biofilms, according to a study published in *Applied and Environmental Microbiology*. This is among the first studies to examine the latter phenomenon. An ASM release reports that the study was designed to test whether exposing *Escherichia coli* bacteria to sub-lethal concentrations of each of three food-grade biocides could result in greater antibiotic resistance, a greater ability to form damaging and potentially virulent biofilms and to survive normally lethal doses of biocides. [Homeland Security News Wire](#)

U.S.: Tyson Foods announces recall of more than 33,000 pounds of chicken over salmonella

13 January - Tyson Foods is recalling nearly 34,000 pounds of mechanically separated chicken products that may be contaminated with a strain of salmonella. The U.S. Department of Agriculture said Friday in a news release the product was not sold in retail stores. It was produced on Oct. 11 and shipped nationwide for institutional use. The chicken has been linked to illnesses in a Tennessee correctional facility, where seven people got sick and two were hospitalized. [ABC2 News](#)

[top of page...](#)

WELLNESS

Can winter really make you sick? The truth about seasonal affective disorder



10 January - The cold is bad enough, but winter's shorter days make the season a downer, to say the least. But how real is seasonal affective disorder (aptly known as SAD)? SAD is often a catch-all term to describe the winter dumps, but experts say it's often misused and the condition is actually less common

than people think. "There are a lot of myths. SAD is not a myth. It is a mental disorder that is incompletely understood and also something that is complicated by questions about the role of evolutionary biology," says Dr. Jeffrey Lieberman, the president of the American Psychiatric Association. That diagnosis is different from the lows that many feel during the winter months. In fact, research shows many people overestimate the impact of seasons on their moods in general. [TIME](#)

Diet soda mixers up breathalyzer readings

14 January – Diet soda may help or hinder attempts to lose weight. But it definitely can get you drunker. Because a drink made from alcohol and a diet mixer boosts breathalyzer readings higher than the same drink with a sugary mixer. The finding is in the journal *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research*. For the study, 16 casual drinkers knocked back one of three drinks: vodka mixed with sugary soda, vodka mixed with sugar-free soda, or a placebo. Over three different sessions, each participant got each drink. After the drink, the subjects were given breathalyzer tests and reaction time measurements... When both men and women drank vodka with the diet mixer, their breath alcohol levels were on average 18 percent higher than when they consumed the alcohol with full-calorie soda. And their reaction times were slower. [Scientific American](#)

Should you drink coffee before or after a learning task?

14 January – Popular wisdom holds that caffeine enhances learning, alertness and retention, leading millions to consume coffee or caffeinated drinks before a challenging learning task such as attending a business strategy meeting or a demanding scientific presentation. However a new study in the journal *Nature Neuroscience* conducted by researchers from Johns Hopkins hints that when it comes to long-term memory and caffeine, timing may be everything; caffeine may enhance consolidation of memories only if it is consumed after a learning or memory challenge. [Scientific American](#)

The Well smoking quiz: Who looks older?



10 January - We know that smoking is bad for you, and that it ages you prematurely. Now, a study provides photographic evidence for this claim. Scientists gathered health and lifestyle information on 79 pairs of identical adult twins who fit into one of three groups: a pair in which one was a smoker and the other had never smoked; a pair in which both were smokers; or a pair in which both were smokers but with at least a five-year difference in the duration of their smoking habit. The researchers photographed them and had independent judges rate the pictures side-by-side for wrinkles, crow's feet, jowls, bags under the eyes, creases around the nose, lines around the lips and other evidence of aging skin. The differences in some other factors that can age skin prematurely — alcohol consumption, sunscreen use and perceived stress at work — were statistically insignificant between twin pairs. But the

judges' decisions on which twin looked older coincided almost perfectly with their smoking histories. [New York Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

USAFRICOM

Democratic Republic of the Congo: No one to turn to – life for children in eastern DRC

13 January – ...A generation of children in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are at risk of permanent physical and psychological damage as a result of persistent conflict, a new report by aid agency World Vision finds. More than a third (36%) of children interviewed for No One To Turn To had experienced or witnessed violence first hand, often extreme and graphic in nature, and 38 per cent said they were scared on a daily basis. The organisation says that children living in areas regularly rocked by bloody and brutal conflicts are developing in an environment of toxic stress, potentially altering their brain structures and leading to a host of life-long illnesses... The continual violence, and their exposure to it, can alter their brain's architecture, potentially having a lasting impact on their learning abilities, memories and emotional control, along with leading to an increased risk of mental illness and heart, liver and lung disease in adulthood. [ReliefWeb](#)

Namibia: Drought still severe amid sparse rainfall

15 January – The drought relief programme that includes the distribution of food, seed, subsidies for fertilisers and grazing should continue "until such time the affected people are able to regain their normal livelihoods". This is part of the recommendations contained in the just released Agricultural Input and Household Food Security Report by the National Early Warning and Food Information System (NEWFIU), in the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry. The government's drought relief programme was to end in March this year. A food assessment found that many households are without sufficient food, have lost huge numbers of their livestock, have insufficient seeds to plant this season and that surviving livestock are too weak to be used as draught animals in the crop fields. [ReliefWeb](#)

Nigeria: Lassa fever

10 January – The Nasarawa state commissioner for health, Emmanuel Akabe, on Thursday [9 Jan 2014] confirmed that there is an outbreak of Lassa fever in Lafia, which has so far claimed the life of one person... He said that the infected person was admitted into the hospital last week with symptoms of severe fever and bleeding. The commissioner explained that these symptoms prompted the medical personnel to send his blood specimen to the Lassa fever diagnostic centre at Irua in Edo, where he was confirmed positive to Lassa infection... He disclosed that a blood specimen taken from the victim's wife and others who had close contact with him was sent for examination, and all came out negative. [ProMED-mail](#)

Zimbabwe: Fresh typhoid outbreak hits Zimbabwe

12 January – There has been a fresh outbreak of typhoid in Harare as the city council battles to address the water crisis which has seen many suburbs going for weeks with dry taps. The latest weekly surveillance report from the Ministry of Health and Child Care, show that 28 cases of typhoid have been reported countrywide, 13 of these in Harare alone. The erratic supply of running water has resulted in many Harare residents seeking alternative sources which include unsafe water points. [allAfrica](#)

[top of page...](#)

USCENTCOM

Iraq: Iraq fighting complicates aid to the displaced

8 January – The UN is warning of a “critical humanitarian situation” that is only “likely to worsen” following sustained fighting among Islamic insurgents, tribal groups and government forces in the Iraqi province of Anbar that has displaced at least 5,000 families. Aid agencies are on standby to deliver food, water and other relief items to those affected by the violence, which erupted in and around the cities of Fallujah and Ramadi, but they are struggling to gain access due to the fighting... “The situation in Fallujah is particularly concerning as existing stocks of food, water and life-saving medicines begin to run out,” Nickolay Mladenov, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSG), said in a statement issued in Baghdad on Wednesday. [IRIN](#)

Pakistan: CCHF remains entrenched in Pakistan

5 January – In 2013, Pakistan has probably seen one of the worst outbreaks from Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF). As of December 2013, a total of 100 cases were reported across the country including 20 deaths (CFR: 20%). 64 of these cases have been laboratory-confirmed. The current outbreak of CCHF in Pakistan may well be documented as the worst in its history given the size and scale of the outbreak as well as the geographic distribution of cases. [WHO / ReliefWeb](#)

Pakistan: Politicians, Muslim scholars join vaccination effort as violence hinders polio drive

11 January - ...Last year, 83 new polio cases were reported in Pakistan, more than in either Afghanistan or Nigeria, the other countries where it is endemic. But aggressive efforts to combat the virus are being hampered by a surge of attacks attributed to Islamist extremists. In the past three months, at least a dozen government vaccinators or their police escorts have been killed or wounded in the northwest region near the Afghan border. Now officials hope that by enlisting influential Pakistanis, including Muslim scholars, in a high-profile campaign to endorse polio vaccines, they can defeat the shadowy gunmen and the remnants of doubt about the program among devout Muslims. [Washington Post](#)

Syria: Charities pledge \$400 million to Syria aid

14 January - Non-governmental organizations have promised to donate a combined \$400 million for humanitarian aid for Syria ahead of an international donor conference to be held in Kuwait, the Gulf state's official news agency KUNA said on Tuesday. The donor conference, which opens on Wednesday, aims to help the United Nations raise \$6.5 billion for Syria and neighboring countries in 2014, the biggest humanitarian aid appeal in the organization's history. A similar donor conference held in Kuwait last year pledged \$1.5 billion, mainly from Gulf Arab governments, to help provide food, drinking water, medicine and shelter for Syrians inside and outside of the country. [Reuters](#)

[top of page...](#)

USEUCOM

Georgia: Cutaneous anthrax cases increase, particularly near cities

10 January - The incidence of human cutaneous anthrax (HCA) in the country of Georgia has increased recently even as the disease has reportedly declined worldwide, say findings of a study published this week in *Emerging Infectious Diseases*. The authors studied passive surveillance data on HCA cases reported to Georgia's National Center for Disease Control and Public Health from 2010 through 2012. A total of 251 HCA cases were reported during that time, as well as 74 cases in livestock, with the number of cases peaking in 2012. The risk for HCA was found to be higher during the study period than in 2007-09. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (fourth item)

Israeli soldiers to be compensated for anthrax vaccine side effects

13 January - Israeli soldiers and officers who claim they were forced into an anthrax vaccine trial that ended in 2005 will be compensated by the Israeli government for subsequent health problems to the tune of thousands of dollars each, according to media reports yesterday and today. Payments will be given to 716 Israel Defense Force (IDF) members who purportedly volunteered for the experiment, which was undertaken in the late 1990s when the country's defense establishment felt they were under grave threat of an anthrax attack. Ninety-two of the vaccine recipients, calling themselves the Victims of Anthrax Experimentation committee, lodged a court battle, saying they were pressured into participating, were not adequately informed of potential risks, and suffered side effects such as Crohn's disease, epilepsy, thyroid inflammation, pneumonia, allergic dermatitis, and kidney failure. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

United Kingdom: Obesity crisis - future projections 'underestimated'

12 January - Estimates that half the UK population will be obese by 2050 "underestimate" the problem, a report has claimed. The National Obesity Forum said Britain was in danger of surpassing the prediction contained in a 2007 report. The lobbying group is calling for hard-hitting awareness campaigns, similar to the approach taken to smoking, to try to stem the problem. Chairman Prof David Haslam said the crisis could get even worse than the "doomsday scenario" already set out. [BBC](#)

United Kingdom: U.K. researchers ask the public to share medical data



10 January - U.K. medical research charities today urged residents to allow scientists to access patient data from the country's National Health Service (NHS). Making their plea through colorful advertisements in the national press, the charities weighed in on a raging national debate. Patient records in NHS—which is free for all and paid for through taxation—are now held by a patient's general practitioner. But in a few months, doctors will begin sending that data to a central NHS database known as care.data. That information will then be made available, anonymously, to researchers and possibly also to drug companies. This month, the government will send a leaflet to all 22 million U.K. households explaining the changes and telling people how they can choose to opt out of sharing their data. Medical research charities are hoping that not too many will take up that option, however, and today published an ad explaining how important the data could be to medical science. [Science](#)

[top of page...](#)

USNORTHCOM

Canada: Supreme Court to revisit decision banning assisted suicide

16 January - The Supreme Court of Canada agreed on Thursday to take another look at a decision it made in 1993 upholding a ban on assisted suicide, setting up a new battle over the right to die... Canada's Supreme Court last considered assisted suicide two decades ago with the case of Sue Rodriguez, who also suffered from ALS. The court ruled nobody could legally assist in another's death, regardless of terminal illness, pain, prolonged suffering or an expressed wish to die... The Supreme Court majority was a narrow 5-4 in the 1993 Rodriguez decision that it was constitutional to prohibit doctor-assisted suicide. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: Current cigarette smoking among adults — United States, 2005–2012

17 January - Despite significant declines during the past 30 years, cigarette smoking among adults in the United States remains widespread, and year-to-year decreases in prevalence have been observed only intermittently in recent years (1,2)... [T]he proportion of U.S. adults who smoke cigarettes fell to 18.1% in 2012. Moreover, during 2005–2012, the percentage of ever smokers who quit increased significantly, from 50.7% to 55.0%, and the proportion of daily smokers who smoked ≥ 30 cigarettes per day (CPD) declined significantly, from 12.6% to 7.0%. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

U.S.: Death dust



20 January – [Coccidioidomycosis, or cocci] is endemic to the desert Southwest—California, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Texas—and to the semi-arid parts of Central and South America. Digging—building, drilling, tilling, clearing—stirs it up, and dry, hot, windy conditions, a regional feature intensified by climate change, disperse it. In recent years, infections have risen dramatically. According to the Centers for Disease Control, from 1998 to 2011 there was a tenfold increase in reported cases; officials there call it a “silent epidemic,” far more destructive than had been previously recognized. Its circumscribed range has made it easy for policymakers to ignore. Though it sickens many times more people than West Nile virus, which affects much of the country, including the Northeast, it has received only a small fraction of the funding for research. [New Yorker](#)

U.S.: Doctors say pressure on ERs may rise, give U.S. failing grade

16 January - People seeking urgent medical could face longer wait times and other challenges as demand increases under Obamacare, U.S. emergency doctors said in a report on Thursday that gives the nation's emergency infrastructure a near failing grade. In its latest "report card," the American College of Emergency Physicians said such reduced access earned the nation a "D+" -- that's down from the overall "C-" grade from the group's last report in 2009. Shortages and reduced hospital capacity make it more difficult to access emergency care, the group said. It also warned about the impact on disaster preparedness. While the report does not measure the actual quality of care provided, it does offer a snapshot of national and state policies affecting emergency medicine as seen by providers. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: IOM panel offers suggestions on preparedness funding

10 January - US preparedness funding must be allocated strategically during current difficult times, a report from an Institute of Medicine (IOM) forum published yesterday concluded. The group noted that preparedness funding has fallen considerably since 2008 after rising

during the previous years. They add that disaster funding distribution is deeply inefficient, with cash infusions rising substantially after a disaster, only to drop dramatically when interest wanes. "With more limited government funding in the foreseeable future, the government needs to be smarter about how it spends its money on emergency preparedness in this country," said Seth Seabury, PhD, of the University of Southern California (USC), in a George Washington University (GWU) press release. "We need to know which communities are prepared and which aren't, when money is spent, and whether it's really making these communities better off in handling a disaster." [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

U.S.: Preoccupation with bioterrorism hobbles preparations for natural spread of deadly viruses

7 January – Preoccupation with hypothetical bioterrorism attacks is leaving America more vulnerable to the threat of natural spread of deadly viruses. Since the 9/11 attacks, the federal government has poured billions of dollars to prevent and monitor threats of bioterrorism, yet the United States was ill-prepared for the swine flu outbreak of 2009. Experts say it is time to rebalance public health priorities so that preparations for the real threat of the outbreak of infectious diseases will not take a back seat to preparations for the more remote threat of bioterrorism. [Homeland Security News Wire](#)

U.S.: Levels of controversial chemicals in Americans fall—and rise

15 January - Scientists have documented for the first time that several phthalates – controversial chemicals used to make vinyl and fragrances – are declining in people while several others are rising. The study, published today, is the first comprehensive, nationwide attempt to document trends in exposure to these widely used chemicals over the past decade. The researchers said the results suggest that manufacturers may be reformulating products in the wake of a federal regulation and environmental groups' campaigns. Three compounds banned in U.S. toys and other children's products in 2008 have declined. But since other phthalates are increasing, it's possible that industries have substituted them in some products. "Our findings suggest that interventions may be working, though legislation didn't entirely predict which levels went up or down," said Ami Zota, a George Washington University assistant professor of environmental and occupational health who led the research when she was at the University of California, San Francisco. [Scientific American](#)

U.S., West Virginia: CDC - Pregnant women should not drink contaminated tap water

16 January - As officials clear more West Virginians to drink their tap water, the Center For Disease Control advised pregnant women living near the site of a chemical spill to continue using bottled water. A notice posted by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources said "out of an abundance of caution," women should avoid drinking the water

"until there are no longer detectable levels of MCHM [or 4-Methylcyclohexanemethanol] in the water distribution system." The advisory continues, "However, the CDC re-affirmed previous advice that it does not anticipate any adverse health effects from levels less than one part per million." [The Nation](#)

U.S., West Virginia: Tens of thousands cleared to resume using tap water in West Virginia

14 January – West Virginia officials on Tuesday lifted a ban on drinking tap water from 35,000 customers who had been affected by a chemical spill that left the state's water supply nearly unusable for hundreds of thousands since last week. Residents of the Southside and Southridge areas near state capital Charleston are now free to drink or wash with their tap water, according to a news release by West Virginia American Water. Downtown Charleston and nearby Kanawha City were cleared on Monday. Consumers were instructed to flush their systems before using the water, which had been barred for use except for toilets since the chemical discharge into the Elk River on Thursday. More than 300,000 consumers were affected after as much as 7,500 gallons (28,000 liters) of 4-methylcyclohexane methanol, or crude MCHM, leaked into the river. [Scientific American](#)

[top of page...](#)

USPACOM

China closes more than 8,000 polluting firms in 2013

16 January - China shut down 8,347 heavily polluting companies last year in northern Hebei province, which has the worst air in the country, state news agency Xinhua said on Thursday, as the government moves to tackle a problem that has been a source of discontent. Local authorities will block new projects and punish officials in regions where pollution is severe due to lax enforcement, Xinhua cited Yang Zhiming, deputy director of the Hebei provincial bureau of environmental protection, as saying. High pollution levels have sparked widespread public anger and officials concerned about social unrest have responded by implementing tougher policies. Hebei, the country's biggest steel producer, is home to as many as seven of its 10 most polluted cities, Xinhua said, citing statistics published monthly by the Ministry of Environmental Protection. [Scientific American](#)

China: Doctor gets suspended death sentence for trafficking newborn babies

14 January - A Chinese court on Tuesday handed down a suspended death sentence on a doctor who sold seven newborn babies to human traffickers, a case that sparked widespread anger in a country where child trafficking is rampant. Zhang Shuxia, 55, an

obstetrician in northwestern Shaanxi province's Fuping county, was found guilty of selling the babies for as much as 21,600 yuan (\$3,600) each between 2011 and 2013, the court in Weinan city said. Zhang tricked the parents to give up their newborns by convincing them the infants had incurable diseases or deformities, the court said in a statement on its website. [Reuters](#)

China: Superbugs were found breeding, spreading in sewage plants

14 January – ...Tests at two wastewater treatment plants in northern China revealed antibiotic-resistant bacteria were not only escaping purification but also breeding and spreading their dangerous cargo. A Rice University release [reports](#) that joint research by scientists from Rice, Nankai, and Tianjin universities found "superbugs" carrying New Delhi Metallo-beta-lactamase (NDM-1), a multidrug-resistant gene first identified in India in 2010, in wastewater disinfected by chlorination. They found significant levels of NDM-1 in the effluent released to the environment and even higher levels in dewatered sludge applied to soils... We often think about sewage treatment plants as a way to protect us, to get rid of all of these disease-causing constituents in wastewater. But it turns out these microbes are growing. They're eating sewage, so they proliferate. In one wastewater treatment plant, we had four to five of these superbugs coming out for every one that came in." [Homeland Security News Wire](#)

India hails polio-free 'milestone'



13 January – India is marking three years since its last reported polio case, a landmark in the global battle against the disease. It is seen as confirmation of one of India's biggest public health successes, achieved through a massive and sustained immunisation programme. India's health minister hailed it as a "monumental milestone". In

2012 the World Health Organisation removed India from the list of polio-endemic countries. Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria remain on it. The list refers to countries in which the virus is circulating freely and the transmission of the infectious disease has not been stopped. Despite India's success, health experts fear a resurgence of polio in other parts of the world. [BBC](#)

India: Hepatitis C

14 January - The state and central governments have failed to provide any treatment to patients diagnosed with hepatitis C in Kokernag villages of [the south Kashmir district of Anantnag] even as the "silent killer" continues to consume precious lives. At least 10 patients have died in the past 2 months because of hepatitis C in these villages while few others are battling for life in various Kashmir hospitals, reports said. The lives of hundreds of patients in Takia Magam, Sonabarie, and some adjacent villages [in Anantnag district] are at risk, with governments failing to provide them any medicine or monetary assistance. The

hepatitis C was detected in Takia Magam and Sonabarie villages and some adjacent areas in February last year [2013]. After the collection of samples, almost 60 per cent of the population from the twin villages was diagnosed with hepatitis C. Some isolated cases were detected in other villages of Kokernag as well. The state government later sent a proposal to the Centre for providing costly medicine to the patients. The proposal, however, has not been approved even as health experts declared a large-scale epidemic in the area. They also warned of further spread of the infection in case precautionary measures were not taken.

[ProMED-mail](#)

Indonesia: Hopes and fears as Indonesia rolls out universal healthcare



14 January - The rollout of universal health coverage in Indonesia has been greeted with public enthusiasm, but health experts warn that inadequate funding could undermine the quality of care. The government aims to have every Indonesian covered by health insurance by 2019 under a new scheme called Jaminan Kesehatan Nasional (JKN), with nearly 20 trillion rupiah (US\$1.6 billion) allocated to cover premiums for the poor in 2014. Around 65 percent of the country's 240 million people, including 86 million categorized as poor, are covered by some form of regional or national health programme and are automatically entitled to comprehensive coverage under the JKN, which has replaced the previous health schemes.

[IRIN](#)

Micronesia: Chikungunya

14 January – The Department of Health Services has revealed to the public a new situation report on the chikungunya fever, which has infected over 1000 people within Yap state since the initial outbreak in June [2013]. The department stated in its report that a total of 302 new cases -- of which 263 were in Yap Proper and 39 in the neighboring islands -- had brought the total cases in Yap state to 1404 as of 23 Dec 2013. [ProMED-mail](#)

Philippines: Measles cases up in Angeles City, Tacloban City

15 January - Since the time of Super Typhoon Yolanda in early November, the number of cases of measles have risen sharply in the Eastern Visayas, including Tacloban City, Leyte, according to a Solar News report Tuesday. There have been 56 confirmed cases of the viral infection in the typhoon ravaged areas of the eastern Visayas, with Tacloban reporting 26 cases alone. According to the report, Tacloban is followed by Babatngon with 21 cases, Palo with three cases, MacArthur with two cases while Tanauan, Carigara, Dulag and Alang-alang had one case each. In addition, the region has also seen 56 cases of dengue fever since the November typhoon. [Global Dispatch](#)

South Korea cuts future reliance on nuclear power, but new plants likely

13 January - South Korea has revised down its future reliance on nuclear power, although growing energy demand and the shutdown of aging reactors mean it is still likely to need more nuclear-fired plants over the coming two decades. Asia's fourth-largest economy has been under pressure to curb its use of nuclear power in the wake of a safety scandal that led to the shutdown of some nuclear reactors to replace parts supplied with fake safety certificates. The energy ministry said on Tuesday it has changed its energy policy to reduce the country's reliance on nuclear power to 29 percent of total power supply by 2035, down from a planned 41 percent by 2030 and in line with a draft proposal. Nuclear power made up 26 percent of South Korea's energy mix as at end-2012. [Scientific American](#)

Thailand: Rethinking Thailand's war on methamphetamines



13 January – Despite an aggressive crackdown on drugs, Thailand's fight against methamphetamines is failing, activists say. With supply and demand rising, these highly addictive substances, commonly known as "meth", are now the drug of choice... In fact, the drug in its pill form - locally known as "yaba" which means "crazy medicine" given its ability to keep underpaid workers going for long hours - has grown in popularity. A 2013 [report](#) by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) says in 2012 more than 80 percent of the drug users who received help in treatment centres named meth as their primary drug. [IRIN](#)

Tonga: Specter of disease in Tonga after Cyclone Ian batters islands

15 January - Widespread destruction caused by a tropical cyclone that hit the South Pacific island nation of Tonga last week is raising fears of a disease outbreak in the island kingdom. Tropical Cyclone Ian, a category-five cyclone, appears to have destroyed up to 90 percent of homes on the northern Ha'apai Islands, which are home to about 8,000 people, the regional governor said on Wednesday... Many of the homes on Ha'apai, about 2,630 km (1,630 miles) northeast of the New Zealand capital, Wellington, rely on rooftop collection systems for drinking water. The destruction of those systems, aid workers say, is a cause for alarm. "The main problem right now is water," Vanessa Lolohea, a member of the Tonga National Youth Council who is working with Oxfam, said in an email to Reuters. "Mosquitoes and other insects are becoming a problem." [Reuters](#)

[top of page...](#)

El Salvador: Chaparrastique volcano

6 January – El Salvador's Chaparrastique volcano erupted on 29 Dec 2013, spewing a column of ash that rose more than 5 km above the volcano. Falling ash affected the population living on the volcano's western side, where 2,300 people were relocated to 16 collective centers set up by the authorities while an unknown number moved to homes of relatives living in safe areas. Ash and gas emissions continue, and authorities will consider it a risk situation until sulfur dioxide emissions show a significant and sustained decrease.

[ReliefWeb](#)

More chikungunya cases confirmed in Caribbean

14 January - Three cases of Chikungunya have been confirmed in the Virgin Islands in the midst of an ongoing and widespread outbreak on nearby St. Martin and other Caribbean islands, according to a story yesterday in the Virgin Islands Platinum News. The infected patients, all on Jost Van Dyke island, have no history of travel, meaning the illnesses were locally acquired and the virus is in the mosquito population there, an official with the Ministry of Health and Social Development said. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

Panama to use transgenic mosquitoes in anti-dengue bid

15 January - Panama will try to control a dengue outbreak that has claimed six lives this year by releasing transgenic mosquitoes to render infertile female transmitters of the disease, officials said. Health Ministry director Carlos Galvez told AFP the technique has "shown promise" in Brazil and the Cayman Islands. In Panama, it is being run by the Instituto Gorgas tropical research institute. "The GM male mosquitoes have contact with the females that transmit dengue; then the eggs the (non-GM) females lay no longer produce (dengue-)transmitting mosquitoes," he explained. [AFP](#)

Uruguay: Hantavirus update

13 January – A 28 year old man who worked on a dairy farm in Constancia, a small locality of Paysandu near the capital, [has] died of [a] hantavirus [infection] according to laboratory confirmation. ...[T]his is the 1st case registered in Paysandu and the 2nd north of Rio Negro since 2010, when the death of another rural worker in Artigas was reported. ...Authorities of the Ministry of Public Health made relevant recommendations and are evaluating the environment due to the possibility that other cases may emerge and "to prevent other healthy people from become ill," it was stated. [ProMED-mail](#)

[top of page...](#)

[U.S. Military](#) | [Global](#) | [Influenza](#) | [Veterinary/Food Safety](#) | [Wellness](#) | [Contact Us](#)

[USAFRICOM](#) | [USCENTCOM](#) | [USEUCOM](#) | [USNORTHCOM](#) | [USPACOM](#) | [USSOUTHCOM](#)

The *Army Public Health Weekly Update* does not analyze the information as to its strategic or tactical impact on the US Army and is not a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence is available from the [National Center for Medical Intelligence](#).

External Links: The appearance of external hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement by the U.S. Army of this Web site or the information, products, or services contained therein. For other than authorized activities such as military exchanges and MWR sites, the U.S. Army does not exercise any editorial control over the information you may find at these locations. Such links are provided consistent with the stated purpose of this product.

Although Health Information Operations avoids links to sites that may be blocked, all sites may not be accessible from all locations. While we verify the links at the time of publication, we cannot guarantee that they will be active in the future.

Articles appearing in the Update 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.

The *Army Public Health Weekly Update* is published by the Health Information Operations Program, Deputy Chief of Staff for Communication, United States Army Public Health Command.

