

17 October 2014

Army Public Health Weekly Update

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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Ebola Virus Disease Resources

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Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry Products

Printed posters and tip cards are now available from the [USAPHC Health Information Products eCatalog](#) to inform Service members about the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry.



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U.S. MILITARY

Erectile dysfunction among male active component service members, U.S. Armed Forces, 2004–2013

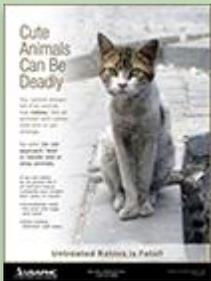
September 2014 - Erectile dysfunction (ED) is considered a common medical disorder and it is the most common sexual complaint reported by men to healthcare providers. The epidemiology of this condition in active component U.S. service members has been unclear. This report describes the counts and rates of newly diagnosed ED in active component servicemen during 2004–2013. There were 100,248 incident cases of ED (rate: 8.4 per 1,000 person-years) during that period. ED cases classified as psychogenic comprised almost half of all ED cases. Annual incidence rates more than doubled between 2004 and 2013. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

Mild traumatic brain injury can have lasting effects for families, reports the American Journal of Nursing

16 October - ...[Patient] and family adjustment after mild TBI has received "scant" attention in the medical literature. Patients with mild TBI may have a range of cognitive, physical, and psychological symptoms. In most patients, these symptoms resolve promptly—but "a subset experience persistent symptoms that create unique treatment challenges," Hyatt writes. The injured patient may express stress in the form of anger, depression, and anxiety—sometimes perceived by family members as a "personality change." Without prompt recognition and intervention, mild TBI can have a major impact in terms of reintegration into to the family, changes in family functioning, and disrupted family relationships. Family members may not understand that the person may have difficulty doing everyday tasks—for example, balancing a checkbook or helping children with homework. The impact may be especially great for families that weren't functioning well before the injury. [EurekAlert](#)

Rabies: Cute Animals Can Be Deadly

Printed posters on the prevention of rabies in garrison are now available for ordering from the from the **USAPHC Health Information Products eCatalog**.



Military Health System preparation for potential Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) infection among DoD Personnel

17 October - Currently, members of the U.S. military have begun to deploy to the Ebola-stricken nation of Liberia. The medical and logistic capabilities of the Department, along with our infectious disease expertise, will provide a significant level of support to the clinical and public health workforce in these nations, as well as the many non-governmental organizations serving in the West African countries of Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone... As deployed members return from Liberia, or if other beneficiaries have traveled to West Africa, our responsibilities to protect the health of our force and our communities will grow. DoD leadership has created [comprehensive pre- and post-deployment screening guidance](#), and every MTF needs to be prepared to support the requirements detailed in it. [Federal Health Care News](#) (second item)

Obama authorizes military reservists for Ebola mission in Africa

16 October - President Barack Obama authorized the use of American military reservists on Thursday to support humanitarian aid efforts against the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. In a letter to leaders of the U.S. Congress, Obama said he had determined it was necessary to augment the active duty military with an unspecified number of reservists to help support the fight against the Ebola virus in West Africa. The Pentagon said the notification cleared the way for it to activate members of the military reserves, many of whom are specialists in skills that are available in only limited numbers in the active duty military. Those currently being sought included engineers, logistics staff, communications specialists, civil affairs experts and religious affairs personnel, a Pentagon spokeswoman said, adding that no individuals or units had yet been identified for call-up. [Reuters](#)

Should first responders use acupuncture & integrative medicine in natural disasters & battle zones?

16 October - Delivering traditional emergency medical care at ground zero of natural disasters and military conflicts is challenging. First responders trained in simple integrative medicine approaches such as acupuncture, hypnosis, or biofeedback can provide adjunctive treatment to help relieve patients' pain and stress... "These approaches are usually inexpensive and nontoxic, are inherently low-risk, do not require complicated delivery methods, and can be pushed far forward in disaster relief effort even when other resources cannot be delivered," state the authors. "Such approaches may provide significant and rapid relief for victims of disasters and wars, as well as for their caregivers." [EurekAlert](#)

The secret casualties of Iraq's abandoned chemical weapons

14 October - ... From 2004 to 2011, American and American-trained Iraqi troops repeatedly encountered, and on at least six occasions were wounded by, chemical weapons remaining

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<http://phc.army.smil.mil>

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from years earlier in Saddam Hussein's rule. In all, American troops secretly reported finding roughly 5,000 chemical warheads, shells or aviation bombs, according to interviews with dozens of participants, Iraqi and American officials, and heavily redacted intelligence documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act. The United States had gone to war declaring it must destroy an active weapons of mass destruction program. Instead, American troops gradually found and ultimately suffered from the remnants of long-abandoned programs, built in close collaboration with the West. [New York Times](#)

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GLOBAL

Faecal capsules 'may help stop gut infection'

11 October - Capsules containing frozen faecal material may help clear up *C. difficile* infections, research suggests. Twenty people were given the therapy, using material from volunteers, in an attempt to treat serious diarrhoea caused by *Clostridium difficile* bugs. The work builds on previous studies showing that faecal transplants may help reset the balance of bacteria in the gut... For 14 of the 20 people involved their symptoms completely disappeared, with no recurrences in the following two months. After another course of treatment, only two patients had further worrying episodes of diarrhoea. [BBC News](#)

Stem cells from human embryos prove safe, improve vision –study

14 October - The longest-running trial of stem cells derived from a human embryo found that the cells caused patients none of the problems scientists feared, such as forming tumors, and reversed partial blindness in about half the eyes receiving transplants, researchers reported on Tuesday. The results, published in *The Lancet*, could help re-invigorate the controversial quest to harness stem cells, which have the ability to turn into any of the 200 kinds of human cells, to treat diseases. [Reuters](#)

World Health Organization backs higher tobacco taxes to cut smoking

15 October - The World Health Organization (WHO) approved guidelines on Wednesday urging countries to increase cigarette taxes to help discourage smoking. The guidelines, which leave it to individual countries to determine their own tax rates, were adopted by a conference of the parties to the WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, a treaty signed by 179 countries with the aim of reducing tobacco use and improving global health. "Any policy to increase tobacco taxes that effectively increases real prices reduces tobacco use," said the draft guidelines, noting that young people and others with lower disposable income were more responsive to tax and price changes. [Reuters](#)

EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE

CDC setting up U.S. Ebola response team of experts to aid hospitals

14 October - U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is setting up an Ebola response team for hospitals with Ebola patients and has vowed to put a team on the ground anywhere in the United States "within hours," the agency director said on Tuesday. CDC Director Dr Thomas Frieden said contacts of the first Ebola patient in Dallas, Thomas Duncan, have passed through the highest risk period of quarantine and are now unlikely to develop symptoms. [Reuters](#)

Cities, states scramble after Dallas's Ebola missteps expose planning gaps

11 October - The missteps in Dallas's handling of the first Ebola case diagnosed in the United States have revealed an uncomfortable reality: state and city plans for handling the deadly virus are based on generic recommendations for everything from measles to floods, to hurricanes and dirty bombs. Officials acknowledge they need to do more... There is a lot to do: hospital drills, 911 emergency operator guidelines, quarantine rules, even details such as checking that plastic body bags meet the minimal thickness - 150 micrometers - recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "It takes a certain amount of reverse engineering to get the plan to where it can respond to new, emerging threats," said political scientist Chris Nelson, an expert on public health systems at Rand Corp. [Reuters](#)

Congress pushes for answers as Ebola response stumbles

16 October - Two nurses infected with Ebola at a Dallas hospital are being moved to specialized centers, and federal officials and a hospital executive faced tough questions from Congress today about speed bumps in the response to the quickly evolving Ebola situation. At a hearing today, members of the US House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations also covered one of the latest Ebola developments, that the second sick nurse, Amber Joy Vinson, consulted with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) before she flew back to Dallas from Ohio and was reportedly cleared to fly... Several members of the committee pressed federal officials hard on why the nation hasn't put imposed a travel ban for people coming from the three Ebola-hit countries, with many raising worries that enhanced screening might miss some sick people, given the disease's long incubation period and the possibility that some could mask their fever or exposure history. [CIDRAP](#)

Ebola crisis: WHO says major outbreak in West 'unlikely'

16 October - A major outbreak of Ebola in the US and elsewhere in the West is unlikely given the strong health systems, the World Health Organization (WHO) says. US President

Barack Obama also said the risk of Americans getting the virus was "extremely low", although he ordered a "much more aggressive response". The US is investigating how a nurse infected when treating a victim in Texas was allowed to travel on a plane. Officials are trying to trace the 132 people who flew with Amber Vinson. [BBC News](#)

Ebola: WHO cites cases with longer incubation period of 42 Days

16 October - ...[A] WHO [situation assessment](#) report gives more cause for concern by stating that the incubation period of the virus has been seen to extend to as long as 42 days in some cases. It says that recent studies conducted in West Africa have demonstrated that 95% of confirmed cases have an incubation period in the range of 1 to 21 days; 98% have an incubation period that falls within the 1 to 42-day interval. For WHO to declare an Ebola outbreak over, a country must pass through 42 days, with active surveillance supported by good diagnostic capacity and no new cases detected in the period. The organisation has also criticised rapid determination of infection within a few hours, noting that two separate tests 48 hours apart are required before discharging a patient or a suspected one as Ebola negative. [International Business Times](#)

Ebola: WHO lists 15 priority countries

16 October - The WHO has said it is focusing its attention on 15 countries [Ivory Coast, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Senegal, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, DR Congo, Gambia, Ghana, Mauritania, Nigeria, South Sudan and Togo] to prevent the spread of Ebola, as the EU announced a review of its entry policies and the disease was reported in the last untouched area of Sierra Leone. Dr Isabelle Nuttall, the WHO's global director, said on Thursday that cases were doubling every four weeks and that health officials were trying to prevent the disease spreading from Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, the worst-hit nations, to neighbouring countries and those with a strong travel and trade relationship. [Al Jazeera](#)

How can people in proper gear contract Ebola?

14 October - CNN Chief Medical correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta demonstrates how staff treating patients suit up. Even using CDC guidelines, it's possible to be exposed while removing protective gear. (Video) [HLN](#)

Liberian health workers end Ebola wage strike

15 October - Liberian health workers have ended their two-day old strike over demands for higher pay for taking care of Ebola patients. Joseph Tamba, president of the National Health Workers Association, said they ended the strike Tuesday after receiving appeals from Liberians and the international community. Tamba said the health workers did not want to be responsible for deaths of more Liberians... The workers said they were promised a monthly wage of US \$750 for nurses and lab technicians, and US \$500 for others, but they have received about one-third less. [VOA](#)

National nurses group says US hospitals unprepared for Ebola

15 October - The largest union representing nurses across the United States, National Nurses United, says a survey of its members shows most U.S. hospitals are not adequately prepared to deal with Ebola. The diagnosis of a second nurse with Ebola at a Dallas hospital has energized nurses nationwide to demand action... According to a survey of members conducted by the union, 85 percent of American hospitals have not provided staff with adequate training on how to deal with Ebola, and 40 percent lack simple safety devices like masks to protect the eyes of nurses working with Ebola patients... The nurses objected to statements by officials from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control suggesting that the infected nurses in Dallas had breached protocol. They say there was no protocol to breach, and they provided examples of actions taken by hospital officials that put both health care workers and patients at risk... The CDC has responded to complaints by nurses and others by pledging to send large teams of experts to any U.S. hospital where a new Ebola case emerges. [VOA](#)

New Ebola vaccine study has begun in Maryland

15 October - ...The World Health Organization has said researchers should make **blood transfusions** a priority for testing. Although there's no definitive proof that blood transfusions work, the goal is to give blood from an Ebola survivor to a patient in the hope that the donor's antibodies could help a patient's immune system fight the Ebola virus... Two types of **vaccines** are being tested. A vaccine developed by the Public Health Agency of Canada began testing Monday at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in Silver Spring, Md. The vaccine uses a vesicular stomatitis virus (VSV) to deliver its payload and offers promise for preventing and treating Ebola, Hotez said. A second type of vaccine, which uses an adenovirus, is being developed by pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline... The Japanese company Fujifilm has said it has 20,000 doses of an [**antiviral**] influenza drug called fabipiravir. The drug was given to a French nurse infected with Ebola in Africa and evacuated to France for treatment. That nurse, a volunteer with Doctors Without Borders, has recovered from Ebola and was released from a hospital. As with any experimental Ebola treatments, doctors can't say whether the new drug is responsible for curing the nurse... ZMapp, made by Mapp Biopharmaceutical of San Diego, contains **man-made antibodies** against Ebola. About seven Ebola patients have been treated with ZMapp. [USA Today](#)

News from Annals of Internal Medicine: Conventional medical centers may be unable to prevent spread of Ebola

16 October - A group of infectious disease experts suggests that conventional U.S. medical centers are unprepared and ill equipped to manage Ebola and a national network of specialized containment and treatment facilities may be needed to reduce the virus' spread, according to an article being published in Annals of Internal Medicine. Despite efforts from

the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to prepare hospitals for Ebola, enormous challenges remain. The authors express doubt that conventional settings can adequately prepare and train staff to meet the challenge of a virus that requires significant attention to every detail of care from the safe donning and doffing of personal protective equipment (PPE) to waste disposal. With no margin for error, policies and procedures must be reinforced through repetitious training. This level of readiness may be more than traditional medical centers are equipped to handle. Since very few high-level biocontainment patient facilities exist in the U.S. today, the authors foresee a need for a network of strategically located regional referral centers to which Ebola patients could be transferred for a higher level of care. [EurekAlert](#)

NIH to admit Texas nurse diagnosed with Ebola virus

16 October - Later today, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Clinical Center expects to admit the first nurse who contracted the Ebola virus at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital while providing patient care to the index patient who died of Ebola. The nurse is being admitted to the Special Clinical Studies Unit of the NIH Clinical Center at the request of Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital. She will receive state-of-the-art care in this high-level containment facility, which is one of a small number of such facilities in the United States. [NIH](#)

U.N.'s new Ebola trust fund running out of money

16 October - The new United Nations trust fund for Ebola has received a small fraction of the \$1 billion that the world body says is needed to tackle the outbreak, and has only \$100,000 left in its account, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said Thursday. Speaking to reporters, Mr. Ban urged governments and private donors to open their pocketbooks to contribute to the trust fund established in mid-September. It has received \$20 million in cash, most of which it has spent. [New York Times](#)

UN nuclear agency to help West Africa fight Ebola

14 October - The United Nations atomic agency plans to help West African countries fight the Ebola epidemic with nuclear-related technology that can quickly diagnose a disease which has killed more than 4,400 people. Specialized equipment is expected to be delivered in coming weeks to Sierra Leone and then to Liberia and Guinea, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said in a statement on Tuesday... The IAEA said a nuclear-derived diagnostic technology known as Reverse Transcriptase Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) allows the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) to be detected within a few hours. Other methods, it said, require growing on a cell culture for several days before a diagnosis is determined. [Reuters](#)

U.S. lawmakers blast government's Ebola response, urge travel ban

16 October - Congressional lawmakers criticized the government's response to Ebola in the United States on Thursday as some called, at a congressional hearing probing efforts to contain the virus, for a ban on travel from epidemic-stricken West Africa. Federal Aviation Administration chief Michael Huerta told reporters separately that the United States is assessing whether to issue a travel ban "on a day-to-day basis" but that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) had determined that a ban would not address the challenges posed by Ebola. The congressional hearing comes as concerns about the virus in the United States are accelerating. Several schools in Ohio and Texas were closed after concerns that a nurse with Ebola traveled on a plane with people with ties to the schools... Lawmakers focused questions and pointed criticism at the hearing on CDC chief Dr. Thomas Frieden. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: Second Ebola case confirmed. Texas health worker wore 'full' protective gear.

12 October - In the first case of Ebola transmission in the United States, a Texas nurse who treated an Ebola-stricken Liberian man has tested positive for the deadly virus. The diagnosis was confirmed Sunday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, four days after the death of Ebola patient Thomas Eric Duncan in Dallas. Thomas Frieden, director of the CDC, said that an unknown breach in protocol led to the Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital worker being infected and that federal officials are investigating... Frieden also said the CDC is considering having Ebola patients be treated at one of the four facilities in the United States that have special isolation units. [Washington Post](#)

WHO finds 70 percent Ebola mortality rate

15 October - The Ebola outbreak in West Africa kills seven out of 10 victims and new cases could hit 10,000 a week within two months if it is not brought under control, the World Health Organisation has said. Dr Bruce Aylward, WHO's assistant director-general, said on Tuesday that the death rate was higher than the official 50 percent rate and that "a lot more people will die" if the West Africa outbreak was not stopped. "What we're finding is 70 percent mortality," Aylward said, adding that he had a "working forecast" of 5,000 to 10,000 new cases a week by December to guide the international response. "It's been running at about a thousand cases a week now for about three to four weeks. The labs sometimes can't keep up with the amount of specimens they're getting." ... WHO figures released on Tuesday show 8,914 confirmed cases and a total of 4,447 people dead. [Al Jazeera](#)

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INFLUENZA

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 40 (September 28-October 4, 2014), influenza activity was low in the United States.

- Viral Surveillance: Of 6,192 specimens tested and reported by U.S. World Health Organization (WHO) and National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS) collaborating laboratories during week 40, 199 (3.2%) were positive for influenza.
- Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality: The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was below the epidemic threshold.
- [FluView](#)

DoD Global Laboratory-Based Influenza Surveillance Program

- During 28 September - 4 October, results were finalized for nine specimens from six locations. Among those specimens finalized, there was one parainfluenza, two rhinovirus/enterovirus, one adenovirus & rhinovirus/enterovirus co-infection, and one Mycoplasma pneumonia & rhinovirus/enterovirus co-infection.
- USAFSAM's Epidemiology Laboratory has the capability to test for Enterovirus, however, specific testing for EV-D68 must be performed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)... Of the samples USAFSAM has submitted to the CDC, five have been positive for EV-D68. These were from a cluster of children with ILI symptoms at JB Langley-Eustis, VA. [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For week 41 (through 11 October 2014):

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

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Mexican state government plans to kill stray dogs for 'clean' image for Central American Games

13 October - The authorities of the Mexican state of Veracruz, in the Gulf of Mexico, plan to kill dozens of stray dogs living in the state capital Xalapa to "clean" the image of the city which will host the Central American Games in November, according to voice records obtained by Apro newsagency. The media explained that the records were provided by a Xalapa official who attended the meeting in which the authorities discussed how to get rid of the animals... The media reported that during the meeting, the officials said the order to put down stray dogs was given by Governor Javier Duarte's administration... Veracruz animal rights law forbids authorities from capturing stray dogs and killing them. [TeleSUR](#)

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WELLNESS

Adenosine can melt 'love handles'

16 October - ...The scientists [from the University Hospital Bonn] discovered a new way to stimulate brown fat and thus burn energy from food: The body's own adenosine activates brown fat and "browns" white fat. The results are now being published in the renowned journal "*Nature*"... Humans have two different types of fat: undesirable white fat cells which form bothersome "love handles", for example, as well as brown fat cells, which act like a desirable heater to convert excess energy into heat. "If we are able to activate brown fat cells or to convert white fat cells into brown ones, it might be possible to simply melt excess fat away" reports the pharmacologist. The group... discovered a new signalling molecule capable of activating brown fat cells: adenosine. [EurekAlert](#)

Can we medicate our way out of the obesity epidemic?

9 October – ...[The] health benefits of weight loss are only accrued over time, as chronic illnesses such as hypertension or type 2 diabetes are controlled or even prevented from occurring in the first place. And that is where the collective research on dietary changes falls down. While high-protein diets may promote a modest achievement in the maintenance of weight loss, exercise alone or dietary supplements do not. This same analysis found that antiobesity drugs were substantially more effective than control treatment in preventing weight regain. The review below highlights the efficacy and safety of different medications used to treat obesity. [Medscape](#)

Eating certain fats might offset some heart risk from weight gain

15 October - ... For seven weeks, two groups of healthy, relatively lean adults ages 20 to 38 were told to keep to their habitual exercise level and daily diets, adding three to four muffins to their diets each day. The researchers provided the 240-calorie muffins, with half their energy from fats. One group of 19 adults received muffins made with sunflower oil, polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA), while the other group of 20 people ate muffins made with palm oil, a saturated fat. The muffins were otherwise identical. After seven weeks, each group had gained between two and three percent of their body weight, about 3.5 pounds (1.5 kilos) each, and waist girth increased by about one percent, but blood pressure did not change significantly... Based on blood tests, the sunflower oil group had lower cholesterol and lipid levels at the end of the study than they had at the beginning of the study. For the palm oil group, cholesterol went up, according to the results in the *Journal of the American Heart Association*. Both groups showed signs of increased insulin resistance, a diminished ability to process blood sugar that can be a warning sign for diabetes onset. [Reuters](#)

I have to walk how many miles to burn off this soda?

16 October - Adolescents who saw printed signs explaining the number of miles they would need to walk to burn off the calories in a sugary drink were more likely to leave the store with a lower calorie beverage, a healthier beverage or a smaller size beverage, according to new Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health research. And those healthier choices persisted weeks after the signs came down. A report on the findings, published online Oct. 16 in the *American Journal of Public Health*, adds to the growing evidence suggesting that simply showing calorie counts on products and menus isn't enough to break Americans from their bad eating habits. With calorie counts expected on menus in chain restaurants with more than 20 outlets by early next year the Affordable Care Act, the researchers say policymakers may need to rethink how that information is communicated. [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health](#)

More evidence that exercise may help fight depression

16 October - Physically active people are less likely to show signs of depression, a new study finds. And exercise can help improve mood in people who already feel depressed, but there's a catch: Depressive symptoms appear to be a barrier to physical activity, the British researchers said. The findings, based on 11,000 adults ages 23 to 50, correlate with previous research suggesting that exercise can have a powerful effect on depression, although it's far from a cure-all... It may seem obvious that exercise improves mood, but it's been difficult to prove scientifically. One of the challenges is that depressed people tend to be withdrawn and don't want to engage in any kind of activity. If they do exercise, it might be because their depression is starting to lift for some reason that has nothing to do with their activity level, experts say. [U.S. News and World Report](#)

Pre-pregnancy lifestyle impacts gestational diabetes risk

14 October - A woman's pre-pregnancy lifestyle may strongly impact her risk of developing diabetes while pregnant. Healthy eating, regular exercise, healthy weight and no history of smoking before pregnancy were each powerfully linked to whether women would develop "gestational diabetes," according to a new U.S. study. Women with all four healthy lifestyle factors before becoming pregnant were more than 80 percent less likely to develop gestational diabetes than those with none of them, researchers found. [Reuters](#)

Rising energy drink consumption may pose a threat to public health, says WHO

15 October - ...Sales of energy drinks have soared in recent years. In the US, sales increased by 60% between 2008 and 2012. It is estimated that 68% of adolescents, 30% of adults and 18% of children under the age of 10 consume the beverages. But increasing consumption of energy drinks has caused an increase in adverse health effects. Last year, a report from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) revealed that the number of emergency department visits involving energy drinks doubled between 2007 and 2011, from 10,068 visits to 20,783. [MNT](#)

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USAFRICOM

Democratic Republic of Congo: Ebola outbreak in DRC not related to West Africa epidemic

15 October - The Ebola virus responsible for an outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) that began in July bears similarities to previous outbreaks in equatorial Africa but is distinct from the virus causing the ongoing epidemic in West Africa and has a different zoonotic origin, say results of a study today in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The DRC outbreak began near the town of Boende in the Equateur province and has remained confined to that province. From Jul 26 through Oct 7, there have been a total of 69 suspected or confirmed cases, 8 of them among healthcare workers, says the study. Case numbers peaked in the second half of August and have now fallen. Forty-nine cases deaths have been reported. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

Uganda: Marburg virus disease

10 October - On 5 October 2014, the Ministry of Health (MoH) of Uganda notified WHO of a confirmed case of Marburg virus disease (MVD) in Kampala, Uganda. The confirmed case was a healthcare worker who had onset of disease on 11 September 2014 while working at

Mengo Hospital, Kampala. The case presented to Mpigi District Health Center on 17 September 2014, and transferred to Mengo Hospital, Kampala, on 23 September 2014. On admission the case presented with symptoms including fever, headache, abdominal pain, vomiting and diarrhoea and died on 28 September 2014. The case reported no history of travel beyond Mpigi, no contact with a person with similar illness. He had not eaten bush meat nor had had contact with bats in the last 4 weeks... As of today, a total of 146 contacts have been identified and are being monitored for signs and symptoms compatible with MVD. Eleven of the contacts developed signs and symptoms compatible with Marburg virus disease. All samples from symptomatic contacts have tested negative so far. [WHO](#)

West Africa: Ebola crisis putting pregnant women, infants lives at risk – UN

16 October - The Ebola crisis is putting the lives of pregnant woman and infants at risk with the spread of the virus in West Africa eroding health services needed for a safe birth and postnatal care, a United Nations official said on Thursday. The United Nation' Population Fund (UNFPA) said up to 800,000 women in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia were expected to give birth in the next year but many are afraid to visit clinics or turned away from overstretched health facilities. It warned more than 120,000 could die of complications of pregnancy and childbirth if the required life-saving emergency obstetric care, such as caesarean sections, was not provided. [Reuters](#)

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Saudi Arabia: Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

16 October - The National IHR Focal Point of Saudi Arabia (SAU) has reported additional laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) to WHO. Between 29 September and 11 October 2014, 7 additional cases of MERS-CoV infection were reported, including 1 death... Globally, 877 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV including at least 317 related deaths have been reported to WHO. [WHO](#)

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European code against cancer calls for smoke-free, active lives

14 October - Cancer experts issued a 12-point code on Tuesday aimed at preventing up to half of all new cases of the disease in Europe by guiding people towards smoke-free, active lives free from cancer-causing infections and substances. Publishing the new European code against cancer, experts at the World Health Organization's (WHO) cancer research agency said the dozen simple steps would help people reduce their risk of developing and dying from the disease... [The] 12-point code - which advises people to avoid all tobacco, maintain a healthy weight, eat whole grains, fruit and vegetables and take regular exercise - could help up to half of those people avoid the unnecessary suffering of cancer. With smoking being the number one cause of cancer in Europe, the top recommendations are: "Do not smoke. Do not use any form of tobacco. Make your home smoke free (and) support smoke-free policies in your workplace." [Reuters](#)

United Kingdom: UK tops WHO gullet cancer table and obesity may be factor

15 October - The UK has the highest rate in the world of one of the two main cancers of the food pipe or gullet, the World Health Organization (WHO) says. Men are about four times as likely as women to develop adenocarcinoma (AC), a type of oesophageal cancer, it says. Obesity could be a factor in the development of the disease, partly because of excess stomach acid... The UK had the highest rate of AC gullet cancer in the world for both men and women, according to figures from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), part of the WHO. It was followed by the Netherlands, Ireland, Iceland and New Zealand in terms of AC cancer rates. The latest figures, from 2012, show the UK had a rate of 7.2 new cases per 100,000 for men, and 2.5 per 100,000 for women. [BBC News](#)

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Bermuda: Category 4 Hurricane Gonzalo aims for Bermuda

16 October - Hurricane Gonzalo churned toward Bermuda as a dangerous Category 4 storm early Thursday, gaining new strength over the open Atlantic as the small British territory rushed final preparations. The U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami said Gonzalo reached Category 4 strength during the night... The hurricane center said early Thursday that the eye

of Gonzalo was forecast to pass near Bermuda sometime Friday... Forecasters said a dangerous storm surge accompanied by large, destructive waves could cause significant flooding on the island, which has some 64 miles (103 kilometers) of shoreline and has an area about one-third the size of Washington, D.C. Some 3 to 6 inches (8 to 15 centimeters) of rain was predicted. [ABC News](#)

Canada: Rising injuries among older male motorcyclists – study

14 October - Motorcycle injuries requiring a trip to the hospital have increased in recent years among older male riders, while injury rates for women and younger men haven't changed, according to a new study from Canada. The spike in injuries among men over 45 suggests that more male Baby Boomers are taking to two wheels as a leisure activity, and they may need training and other injury prevention strategies, say the researchers... The researchers looked at British Columbia motorcycle injury data from 2001 to 2010 and found that approximately 37 percent of the men who suffered motorcycle-related injuries were between the ages of 45 and 74. They also discovered that motorcycle hospitalization rates for men in that age bracket doubled during that period, from 18.4 per 100,000 to 36 per 100,000. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: 14 million cases of major illnesses tied to smoking

14 October – Cigarette smoking accounts for approximately 14 million major medical conditions that plague the lives of U.S. adults, according to a new government report... Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema, is the illness most tightly linked to smoking, researchers report. About 7.5 million U.S. adults suffer from smoking-related COPD, which makes it harder and harder to draw breath as time passes. But the study, published Oct. 13 in JAMA Internal Medicine, also links smoking to: 2.3 million cases of heart attack, 1.3 million cases of cancer, 1.2 million cases of stroke, 1.8 million cases of diabetes. [CBS News](#)

U.S.: CDC makes faster test for enterovirus strain behind outbreak

14 October - The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has created a faster test for detecting a strain of enterovirus behind an outbreak of respiratory illnesses affecting hundreds of children in recent months, the agency announced on Tuesday. CDC said the new test for enterovirus 68 produces a result within a few days, rather than the several weeks needed under the old test. The faster test will help it track where and when the outbreak of the virus is ending. CDC expects the rate of new infections to decline as the weather turns colder, and is already seeing evidence of this at some hospitals. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: Poll - Majority of Americans worried about U.S. Ebola outbreak

16 October - A Harvard School of Public Health poll finds that more than a third of Americans (38 percent) are worried that Ebola will infect them or a family member over the next year. Most (81 percent) believe Ebola can spread from someone who is sick and has symptoms. And that's correct. Body fluids, such as blood, urine and feces, can carry the virus from one person to another. And almost all of the poll respondents (95 percent) agreed that direct contact with body fluids from a person with Ebola symptoms was likely to cause infection. A large proportion (85 percent) of people believe the virus can be transmitted by a sneeze or cough. That's highly unlikely. " [NPR](#)

U.S.: Report shows disparities in U.S. diabetes prevention, amputation

14 October - Differences in amputation rates for diabetes complications are a sign that disparities in care by region and race start much earlier, according to a new report. U.S. blacks are less likely to get routine preventive care for diabetes than other patients and three times more likely to lose a leg to amputation because of the disease, according to a new report from the Dartmouth Atlas Project, which analyzes Medicare data to see how well the healthcare system is working... Although surgery rates were highest overall in the southern U.S., within that region there was wide variation. In Columbus, Georgia, there were just under 5 surgeries for every 1,000 black patients, compared to 41.7 per 1,000 patients in both Amarillo, Texas and Hattiesburg, Mississippi. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: Two children remain hospitalized after bounce house taken by wind

13 October - A bounce house accident at a farm in Nashua is raising safety concerns about the popular attraction, as two toddlers remain hospitalized. A gust of wind swept the house over a 10-foot fence at Sullivan Farm on Sunday with the two boys trapped inside... On Sunday, the co-owner of Sullivan Farm told News 9 he was airing out the bounce house after last week's rain, and the attraction was not supposed to be open until next weekend. The Department of Safety regulates bounce houses open to the public. The agency is now investigating the incident... The boys injured in the accident are 2 and 3 years old. The younger boy was flown to Tufts Medical Center in Boston in critical condition. The older boy's condition was listed as stable. [WMUR](#)

U.S.: Vaccination coverage among children in kindergarten — United States, 2013–14 school year

17 October - This report describes vaccination coverage in 49 states and the District of Columbia (DC) and vaccination exemption rates in 46 states and DC for children enrolled in kindergarten during the 2013–14 school year. Median vaccination coverage was 94.7% for 2

doses of measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine; 95.0% for varying local requirements for diphtheria, tetanus toxoid, and acellular pertussis (DTaP) vaccine; and 93.3% for 2 doses of varicella vaccine among those states with a 2-dose requirement. The median total exemption rate was 1.8%. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

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India: India tightens rules on cigarettes, tobacco branding

15 October - Tobacco companies in India will have to stamp health warnings across 85 percent of the surface of cigarette packs and other products, the Health Ministry said on Wednesday, joining nations such as Thailand and Australia with stringent marketing rules. Up to 900,000 Indians die every year of diseases related to tobacco use, the government said in 2010. That number could reach 1.5 million by 2020 if users cannot drop the habit, the International Tobacco Control Project estimates. Besides illustrations showing the negative effects of smoking, packets will be required to carry the word "WARNING" and the phrase "Smoking causes throat cancer", the Health Ministry said. Similar warnings would be required on other tobacco products. [Reuters](#)

Vietnam preps for medical makeover to recoup lost billions in healthcare

14 October - With Vietnam's public hospitals stretched beyond their limits and private healthcare a fledgling sector, there's billions to be made courting deep-pocketed Vietnamese for medical treatment overseas... With that flight of overseas cash equivalent to 60 percent of state health spending, private operators both foreign and domestic are smelling opportunity in keeping that in Vietnam... Some 40,000 Vietnamese a year won't take their chances with the snaking queues, chronic bed shortages and overworked doctors at home. While Vietnam's medical spending as a percentage of the economy is the highest in Southeast Asia, it hasn't kept up with the population's demand for quality and timely medical care. [Reuters](#)

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Damage in El Salvador and Nicaragua on alert after massive earthquake

14 October - After the 7.3 magnitude earthquake shook Central America on Monday, El Salvador and Nicaragua have reported significant damage and put out an internal alert. The quake, with an epicenter of 169 kilometers southeast of San Salvador in the Pacific Ocean occurred at 9:51am Monday night and shook the region from Guatemala to Costa Rica. El Salvador has reported one victim killed by a falling telephone post and damage to hospitals electrical systems, buildings and roads. Nicaragua also reported some damages of houses and has closed all schools on Tuesday. Officials in Costa Rica said the quakes were "strong and of long duration" there, but the country's Red Cross had no reports of major damage. [TeleSUR](#)

Jamaica: Jamaica declares national emergency to combat chikungunya

15 October - Jamaica has declared a national emergency due to the rise in chikungunya cases over the past several weeks, the *Caribbean Journal* reported yesterday. Jamaican Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller has requested \$4.5 million in national resources primarily to be used for destroying mosquito breeding areas... The declaration of a national emergency comes as the number of suspected chikungunya cases in the Caribbean, Americas, and Oceania approaches 760,000. On Oct 10, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) reported 325 suspected and 57 confirmed cases of chikungunya in Jamaica. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

Guatemala: Guatemala may weigh softer drug punishments in liberalization push

15 October - Guatemala will weigh easing punishments for minor narcotics-related offenses as part of a push to liberalize drug policy and explore regulating production of opium poppies and marijuana for medical use, President Otto Perez said. Shortly after taking office at the start of 2012, Perez, a conservative retired army general, surprised many of his Latin American peers by proposing legalization as a means of curbing the power of criminal gangs and the deaths they cause. [Reuters](#)

Mexico: Mosquito-borne Chikungunya virus likely to reach Mexico - health ministry

15 October - Mexico is very likely to join the list of countries to register cases of the painful mosquito-borne viral disease chikungunya, a senior health ministry official said on Wednesday... Given that the virus has already shown up in much of the Caribbean, Central

America and the United States, it is also likely to reach Mexico, Pablo Kuri, the deputy health minister in charge of disease prevention, told Reuters... He said that Mexico is home to the mosquito species that carries the virus, adding to the likelihood of its arrival. [Reuters](#)

Venezuela: Shortages hinder Venezuela's battle against fever outbreaks

16 October - Shortages have complicated Venezuela's efforts to treat severe outbreaks of mosquito-borne fevers this year, creating long lines at pharmacies to buy medicines and leaving the ill without treatments for swollen joints and aching bones. Venezuela has South America's highest incidence of chikungunya... The country has also seen an upsurge this year in the similarly harsh dengue fever... Venezuela's rigid currency control system has left businesses without sufficient dollars to import goods, spurring shortages of products as diverse as wheat flour, shampoo, medicine, and insect repellent. The government said this week it will import 29 million acetaminophen tablets to ease the shortage. [Reuters](#)

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