

19 June 2015

Army Public Health Weekly Update

U.S. Army Public Health Command



The Army Public Health Update is a collection of articles taken verbatim from public sources to offer awareness of current health issues and the media coverage given to them. The articles do not necessarily represent US Army Medical Department opinions, views, policy, or guidance, and should not be construed or interpreted as being endorsed by the US Army Medical Department.

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Airborne Hazards & Open Burn Registry

The VA has produced a three-minute promotional video encourage eligible Service members and Veterans to sign up for the Burn Pit Registry. The video features testimonial footage from Dr. Stephen Hunt, National Director of the VA Post-Deployment Integrated Care Initiative, and engaging multimedia graphics to provide key information on the Registry.



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USSOUTHCOM

- Caribbean countries vow to step up action on chronic diseases
- Peru: Arsenic poisons the wells and the people in Peru



A new tool from the National Guard's *Guard Your Health* puts PT tips at your fingertips. Texts to train smarter, sleep better and max your performance. Sign up by texting "fit" to 703.997.6747.



U.S. MILITARY

\$70M to be invested in veterans' mental health

18 June - A new program funded by Wounded Warrior Project aspires to improve mental health services and care for veterans in the private sector. The charity is using \$70 million to fund an effort that will create outpatient programs at four of the nation's top academic medical facilities, aimed at helping sufferers of post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury. [Military Times](#)

As stress drives off drone operators, Air Force must cut flights

16 June - After a decade of waging long-distance war through their video screens, America's drone operators are burning out, and the Air Force is being forced to cut back on the flights even as military and intelligence officials are demanding more of them over intensifying combat zones in Iraq, Syria and Yemen. The Air Force plans to trim the flights by the armed surveillance drones to 60 a day by October from a recent peak of 65 as it deals with the first serious exodus of the crew members who helped usher in the era of war by remote control. [New York Times](#)

Congress to VA: More oversight needed for vets in pain

11 June - Around 22 veterans commit suicide each day, and Congress wants to know what's being done to save them. A subcommittee to the House Committee on Veteran Affairs questioned the Department of Veteran's Affairs about the unrelenting tide of soldier suicides and mismanagement of opioid prescriptions at a hearing on Wednesday. Some representatives suggested the two crises might be intertwined. "I'm concerned that a potentially deadly mix of opioid use, mental health disorders, and lack of oversight is contributing to our high rate of veteran suicide," said ranking member Ann McLane Kuster (D-N.H.). ... A recent report from the Government Accountability Office questioned the VA's efforts both to address veterans' mental health problems and to properly oversee prescriptions. The report noted that the VA doesn't have an accurate count of the number of veterans with depression because of "inappropriate coding." [MedPage Today](#)

Pentagon Surgeons General express concerns over proposed Tricare choice program

15 June - Some senior health leaders at the Defense Department have voiced their concerns over the potential impact of a new proposed healthcare plan for soldiers on military readiness and medical skills, DoD News reported Friday. Terri Moon Cronk writes that under the Tricare choice program, active duty family members and retirees would have the option to adopt commercial health plans. ... Lt. Gen. Patricia D. Horoho, U.S. Army surgeon general, said non-active duty members account for more than 80 percent of the Military Health

**DHA Immunization
Healthcare Branch:
Training
Opportunities**

A complete description of all the courses offered by DHA-IHB is located on the [Immunization University website](#).

The presentations are directed primarily towards a military audience, but are open to everyone with an [IHB Immunization University account](#).



System's inpatient care. "These patients are vital to sustain our graduate medical and health professionals' education programs," she told members of the panel. "The loss of these inpatients from our direct health-care system would pose tremendous risk to our training and negatively impact our medical forces readiness posture." [Executive Gov](#)

Surveillance snapshot: Influenza vaccination coverage during pregnancy, active component Service women, October 2009–April 2014

May 2015 - ... Vaccination coverage increased for all services since the 2009–2010 influenza season. Overall, influenza vaccine coverage was 90.4% for the 2013–2014 season but ranged from 86.9% (Marine Corps) to 93.7% (Air Force), depending on the Service. Of all influenza vaccinations among pregnant women during the 2013–2014 season, 39.7% occurred prior to the estimated date of conception and the remaining vaccinations were evenly distributed during each trimester (approximately 20% during each trimester). [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

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GLOBAL

Antibiotics are effective in appendicitis, study says

16 June - For more than 100 years, the standard treatment for appendicitis has been surgery. Now a large Finnish study provides the best evidence to date that most patients can be treated with antibiotics alone. The study, published Tuesday in JAMA, involved 530 patients aged 18 to 60 who agreed to have their treatment — antibiotics or surgery — decided at random. Three out of four who took antibiotics recovered easily, the researchers found. And none who had surgery after taking antibiotics were worse off for having waited. [New York Times](#)

Better sight yields better sleep

11 June - Undergoing cataract surgery appears to have more benefits than just improving vision -- it may also allow patients to get better sleep and to have better cognitive function, researchers said here. ... Miyata also reported that in the fully adjusted model, the risk of being diagnosed with cognitive impairment was reduced 33% in the patients who had undergone cataract surgery. ... She hypothesized that ... the surgery brings more light to the retina and may allow the individuals to have a more normal circadian rhythm, which manifests in better sleep quality and, in turn, prevention of sleep-modulated cognitive decline. [MedPage Today](#)

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.

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Free animations spread lifesaving tips via smartphones

17 June – Impoverished communities across the globe are receiving lifesaving tips for dealing with disease, draught and depression from short, user-friendly videos that are free online. Agriculture animations, for example, show how to build raised planting beds using layers of animal manure, vegetation and soil, or how to install drip irrigation systems to help conserve water. Health videos cover topics such as washing hands, using malaria-preventing bed nets, preventing tuberculosis and removing poison from Cassava flour. [Reuters](#)

Immunization could halt post-traumatic stress

15 June - ... Studies of military personnel suggest that immune function can influence the development of PTSD. Soldiers whose blood contains high levels of the inflammatory protein CRP before they are deployed, or who have a genetic mutation that makes CRP more active, are more likely to develop the disorder. To directly test whether altering the immune system affects fear and anxiety, Lowry and colleagues injected mice with a common bacterium ... to modulate their immune systems. The scientists then placed these mice, and a control group of unimmunized mice, in cages with larger, more aggressive animals. Mice that had received the injections were more 'proactive' in dealing with the aggressor, Lowry says, rather than simply surrendering, as most mice do. And the guts of the immunized mice remained healthy, whereas the animals in the control group developed inflamed colons and their gut bacteria shifted to favour species associated with stress. [Scientific American](#)

New drug compound may beat malaria with single \$1 dose

17 June – Scientists have discovered a new anti-malarial compound that could treat patients with a single \$1 dose, including those with strains of the mosquito-borne disease that are resistant to current drugs. Although it is still years from reaching the market, results from tests conducted on human blood in the laboratory and in live mice suggest it is highly potent, researchers reported in the journal *Nature* on Wednesday. [Reuters](#)

Study finds Ebola virus mutated slower than first thought

17 June – The Ebola virus that devastated parts of West Africa over the past year did not mutate at a faster rate than in previous outbreaks, according to an international study published on Wednesday. Contrary to research conducted early in the outbreak which suggested the virus was mutating at twice the rate previously seen, this study showed the mutation rate was only slightly higher in the West Africa epidemic. [Reuters](#)

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INFLUENZA

Avian flu hits again in Iowa and Nebraska

16 June – Iowa ended an 8-day quiet spell today with the report of a new avian influenza outbreak on a chicken farm, while Nebraska reported that the virus was found on a farm that was already being depopulated because of outbreaks at neighboring farms. The Iowa outbreak involves an egg farm with an estimated 1 million birds. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

- During week 22, 6.2% of all deaths reported through the 122 Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to Pneumonia and Influenza. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 6.4% for week 22.
- Nationwide during week 22, 1.2% of patient visits reported through the U.S. Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) were due to influenza-like illness (ILI). This percentage is below the national baseline of 2.0%. [FluView](#)

Flu News Europe

This site is currently being blocked at the Army NETCOM level. We hope to get access again shortly.

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For the week ending 13 June 2015:

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

WHO Influenza Update

15 June - Globally, influenza activity has decreased from its peak in early 2015 to low levels in the Northern Hemisphere.

- In North America, influenza activity was at inter-seasonal levels. Influenza B remained predominant in recent weeks, but at low levels.
- In Europe, countries reported low influenza activity levels with influenza B continuing to dominate in recent weeks.
- In northern Africa and western Asia, influenza activity remained low in most countries

with influenza A activity predominant.

- In the temperate countries of Asia, influenza activity continued to remain at low levels in most countries.
- In tropical countries of the Americas and tropical Asia, influenza activity continued to decrease and remained low in most countries. In China, Hong Kong (SAR) and Singapore had slight increases in influenza activity while Sri Lanka and Viet Nam both reported a higher level of activity compared to recent weeks.
- In the southern hemisphere, influenza activity was slightly higher in most countries but remained at low levels. However, South Africa reported a greater increase in influenza activity in recent weeks, with co-circulation of A(H1N1)pdm09 and A(H3N2) viruses.

[WHO](#)

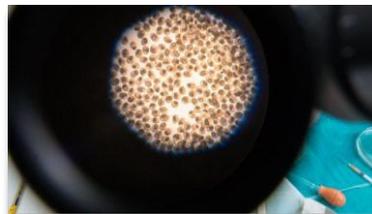
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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Boise Co-Op redesigning kitchen after *Salmonella* outbreak

17 June - The Boise Co-Op's deli could be given the OK to resume operations soon after a *Salmonella* outbreak was linked to it. The Central District Health Department estimates that 200 people are associated with the outbreak, with the illnesses occurring from June 1 to June 10. CDHD said it met with the Co-Op on Wednesday to discuss an in-depth plan for the deli that will improve its daily operations to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. ... CDHD said the Co-Op is working to redesign its kitchen area for better flow of food preparation. Among those changes, according to the health department: additional sinks, color-coded cutting boards to keep foods separate and prevent cross contamination and increased food safety training for employees. [KTVB](#)

Deadly dish: the dinner that can give you cancer



13 June – A local delicacy in north-east Thailand, made from raw fish, has been found to be behind a high incidence of liver cancer in the area, and doctors are trying to educate people about the risk. The Isaan plateau of north-eastern Thailand is poor, dry, and far from the sea. ... Where there are rivers or lakes, they use the smaller fish they catch in a pungent dish called koi plaa. The fish are chopped up finely, and mixed by hand with local herbs, lime juice and live red ants, and served up raw. ... For decades, certain populations in the north-east have been known to have abnormally high

levels of liver cancer. ... The high prevalence has long been linked to infection by liver flukes, a kind of parasite, found in raw fish. [BBC News](#)

FDA moves to ban trans fats from foods



16 June - The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Tuesday made good on its proposal to effectively ban artificial trans fats from a wide range of processed foods, from microwave popcorn to frozen pizza, saying they raise the risk of heart disease. Under new FDA regulations, partially hydrogenated oils, which have been shown to raise LDL cholesterol, will be

considered food additives that cannot be used unless authorized by the FDA. [MedPage Today](#)

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WELLNESS

Blood chemical predicts brain decline

16 June – Scientists have discovered a chemical in blood that indicates whether people will have declining brain function. Looking for the earliest signs of Alzheimer's disease, they analysed levels of 1,129 proteins circulating in the blood of more than 200 twins. These were compared with data from cognitive-function tests over the next decade, in Translational Psychiatry. And levels of one protein, MAPKAPK5, tended to be lower in those people whose brains declined. [BBC News](#)

Cigarettes linked to half of deaths from 12 common cancers

15 June - Roughly half of deaths from 12 smoking-related cancers may be linked directly to cigarette use, a U.S. study estimates. While the largest proportion of deaths associated with smoking were for cancers of the lung, bronchus, trachea and larynx, about half of fatalities from tumors of the oral cavity, esophagus and bladder were also tied to cigarettes, the study found. ... Siegel and colleagues estimated that out of 345,962 cancer deaths in 2011 among U.S. adults 35 and older, 167,805 were associated with smoking. [Reuters](#)

Fitbit use tied to increase in activity

18 June - Postmenopausal women who are given an activity level goal for the week end up getting more activity when using a Fitbit than a traditional pedometer, according to a new study. ... Half of the women were given a Fitbit One tracker and an instructional session on how to use it, plus a follow-up call at the one-month point. ... The other half were given a

simple pedometer. ... Before the study, the women were getting an average of 33 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity in bouts of at least 10 minutes each per week and took an average of almost 6,000 steps each week. Those in the Fitbit group increased this weekly total by 38 minutes and added an average of 789 steps per week. The pedometer group did not increase their activity enough to be statistically significant, the researchers found.

[Reuters](#)

Lack of sleep affects long-term health

16 June – New research from the University of Copenhagen has found that maintaining a good night's sleep is important for our future health, partly because of how it affects lifestyle factors. Previous population based studies have not provided sufficient information on the timing of changes in both sleep and lifestyle to tease out cause and effect relations of this highly intertwined relationship. ... The researchers found that maintaining a good night's sleep made it easier to maintain a healthy lifestyle. For example; they found that smokers who maintained a sleeping pattern characterized by normal sleep duration and undisturbed nights were less likely to still be smoking and more likely to have quit smoking four years on, when compared to those who either shortened their average sleep duration or experienced an increase in sleep disturbances. [Medical Xpress](#)

Parents' denial fuels childhood obesity epidemic

15 June – ... Despite widespread publicity about the obesity epidemic, parents increasingly seem to be turning a blind eye as their children put on pounds. In a recent study in Childhood Obesity, more than three-quarters of parents of pre-school-age obese sons and nearly 70 percent of parents of obese daughters described their children as "about the right weight." The researchers also compared these 2012 survey results with those from a similar survey in 1994. Not only were the children in the recent survey significantly heavier, but the likelihood that parents could identify their child's weight accurately had declined about 30 percent. [New York Times](#)

SCOPE program developed to engage communities in preventing childhood obesity

16 June – A multidisciplinary group of researchers from British Columbia has developed a participatory action research program to help address healthy body weight in children... The SCOPE program promotes 'Live 5-2-1-0', which encourages children to enjoy five or more fruits per day; to power down -- no more than two hours of screen time per day; to play actively for at least 1 hour per day; and to choose healthy foods -- zero sugar-sweetened beverages. [EurekAlert!](#)

Sleeplessness bad for the heart

16 June - Men who slept badly were twice as likely to suffer a heart attack and up to four times as likely to have a stroke compared with those who slept well, according to a Russian study presented at EuroHeartCare. ... The study included 657 men ages 25 to 64 with no

history of cardiovascular disease or diabetes. They were enrolled in 1994 as part of the World Health Organization's MONICA (multinational monitoring of trends and determinants in cardiovascular disease) project. ... Compared with men who rated their sleep as "good," those who rated it "poor" or "very bad" had more than twice the risk of experiencing MI at 5 years. This increased risk for MI was also seen at 10 years and at 14 years of follow-up. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of the men experiencing their first MI described their sleep as "poor" or "very bad." [MedPage Today](#)

To cut teen smoking, raise tobacco sales age

17 June - A new study has found a simple way to significantly reduce teenage smoking: raise the tobacco sales age to 21. In 2005, Needham, Mass., did just that, while surrounding communities kept their age limit at 18. Researchers surveyed 16,000 high school students in Needham and 16 surrounding communities four times between 2006 and 2012, gathering data on their smoking habits. ... Over the seven years, the number of children under 18 buying cigarettes in Needham decreased to 11.6 percent from 18.4 percent, while in the surrounding communities it hardly changed — down to 19 percent from 19.4. [New York Times](#)

Wearable devices to prevent sunburn

17 June - ... We have all heard about the devastating effects of ultraviolet radiation. It burns, ages, wrinkles, and can even cause cancer. ... Technology may offer a solution. A new jewel-like wearable device called JUNE can be worn as a bracelet or a brooch. While other wearables are geared toward monitoring exercise, JUNE contains UV sensors that monitor only sun exposure throughout the day. It pairs with a free iOS app to provide a daily sun forecast detailing the expected UV index, a measure of the expected risk of UV radiation from the sun on a scale from 0 to sun-scorched 15, as well as whether to pack sunscreen, sunglasses or a hat. The device sells for \$129, and battery life lasts about a month, then plugs into a specialized USB to recharge. [New York Times](#)

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USAFRICOM

Kenya HIV activists want data destroyed

17 June – Human rights activists have gone to court to get Kenya's government to destroy data which lists children who are HIV positive. They argue it violates the constitution that prohibits the recording of details about people living with HIV. The president ordered the collection of the data in February, to help the provision of health services. [BBC News](#)

Liberia: Study of Ebola survivors opens in Liberia

17 June - The Liberia-U.S. clinical research partnership known as PREVAIL has launched a study of people in Liberia who have survived Ebola virus disease (EVD) within the past two years. The study investigators hope to better understand the long-term health consequences of EVD, determine if survivors develop immunity that will protect them from future Ebola infection, and assess whether previously EVD-infected individuals can transmit infection to close contacts and sexual partners. [NIH](#)

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USCENTCOM

Eradicating polio: Iran offers free vaccines to Pakistan, Afghanistan

16 June - Iran is ready to offer free anti-polio vaccines to Pakistan and Afghanistan in an effort to help them effectively continue the fight against the disease. An Iranian delegation comprising health ministry and medical education officials arrived on Monday for three days to explore options of extending cooperation to Pakistan. ... [An] official pointed out that Pakistan and Afghanistan had recently been declared one epidemiological block in terms of the fight against polio. [Express Tribune](#)

Saudi Arabia: Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

16 June - Between 9 and 12 June 2015, the National IHR Focal Point for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia notified WHO of 3 additional cases of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) infection, including 1 death. Globally, since September 2012, WHO has been notified of 1292 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV, including at least 458 related deaths. [WHO](#)

United Arab Emirates: Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

16 June - On 15 June 2015, the National IHR Focal Point of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) notified WHO of 1 additional case of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) infection. [WHO](#)

Yemen: Dengue fever outbreak infects thousands in war-torn Yemen

18 June - Thousands of people have been diagnosed with dengue fever in southern Yemen, where fighting has raged for months between Shiite rebels and their opponents, international organizations and health officials said Thursday. The top health ministry official in the southern port city of Aden, al-Khadr Al-Aswar, told The Associated Press that at least 5,000 people have been diagnosed with the mosquito-borne virus. He said mountains of uncollected garbage, along with untreated sewage and heat, have contributed to the spread of the disease. The World Health Organization said last week that at least 3,000 suspected cases have been reported since March in several provinces, including Ade, with three people dying from the disease. [ABC News](#)

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USEUCOM

Belgium and Bulgaria in the EU dock over poor air quality

18 June - EU regulators are referring Belgium and Bulgaria to the bloc's top court over the quality of their air, which poses a major risk to health, the European Commission said on Thursday. It has also issued a final warning to Sweden that it needs to take action. Commission data shows about 400,000 premature deaths per year linked to air pollution in the European Union, but member states have systematically missed targets to reduce levels of harmful emissions and dust particles associated with respiratory disease and some forms of cancer. [Reuters](#)

Georgia: Zoo animals on the loose and deaths feared after Georgia floods



14 June - Tigers, lions, wolves and bears are feared to be still on the loose in Georgia's capital, amid chaotic scenes brought by devastating floods that have reportedly killed 12 people. Images of an escaped hippopotamus being cornered in one of Tbilisi's main squares after escaping from the city's zoo have emerged, while other animals

have been killed or remain at large. Heavy rainfall turned the Vere river – which flows through the capital – into a torrent that swept away dozens of buildings and cars. At least 12 people have been killed, according to news agencies, while others are missing. The army has been mobilised to help. ... Three [zoo] staff were among those reported dead in the disaster. [Guardian](#)

German dies of complications from MERS infection

16 June - A 65-year-old German man died this month after contracting MERS during a trip to Abu Dhabi, in the first death linked to the virus in Europe this year, authorities said Tuesday. ... German authorities said they had no indication that the virus had spread and European health officials said the risk of an outbreak in Europe remained low. It is believed the patient was infected with the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) during a visit to a livestock market in the United Arab Emirates. [Yahoo! News](#)

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USNORTHCOM

U.S.: FDA cracks down on over 1,000 illegal online medicine sellers

18 June - The U.S. Food and Drug Administration said on Thursday it had sent warning letters and seized potentially dangerous, unapproved medicines and medical devices from more than 1,050 websites globally. Inspectors from the FDA and other federal agencies screened and seized illegal drugs and medical devices received through international mail facilities in Chicago, Miami and New York, the FDA said in a statement. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: HIV epidemic waning in southern Indiana county

17 June – The number of new HIV cases in a rural southern Indiana county that has seen a recent epidemic has fallen dramatically, public health officials said on Wednesday. Scott County health workers will still need to treat those infected and identify and advise those considered to be at high risk of contracting HIV, the virus that can cause AIDS. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: NACCHO report notes 3,400 jobs lost in local health departments

18 June - Staffing cuts—though not as deep as in recent years—continue to plague local health departments (LHDs), and services have changed because of multiple factors, including budget cuts, according to data published today by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). In its annual report on LHD staffing and services, called "Forces of Change," NACCHO found that 34% of agencies lost at least one staff person because of layoffs or attrition in 2014, with job cuts totaling 3,400. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

U.S.: Older teens, Asians at highest risk of self-harm

15 June - Older teenagers, Asians, females, and those with existing mental disorders had the highest risk among adolescents of incurring a self-inflicted injury (SII), according to a

population-based longitudinal study of emergency department data. Increased risk of SII was found among adolescents ages 15-18, Asian race, adolescents with comorbid conditions, and females. However, African American adolescents had a lower risk of SII compared with white and Asian adolescents. [MedPage Today](#)

U.S.: Opioid overdose prevention programs providing naloxone to laypersons – United States, 2014

19 June –... Since 1996, an increasing number of programs provide laypersons with training and kits containing the opioid antagonist naloxone hydrochloride (naloxone) to reverse the potentially fatal respiratory depression caused by heroin and other opioids. In July 2014, the Harm Reduction Coalition (HRC), a national advocacy and capacity-building organization, surveyed 140 managers of organizations in the United States known to provide naloxone kits to laypersons. ... From 1996 through June 2014, surveyed organizations provided naloxone kits to 152,283 laypersons and received reports of 26,463 overdose reversals. Providing opioid overdose training and naloxone kits to laypersons who might witness an opioid overdose can help reduce opioid overdose mortality. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

U.S.: Synthetic cannabinoid poisonings surge

16 June - US poison control centres have experienced a 229% increase in the number of calls related to synthetic cannabinoid use in 2015 compared with last year, prompting concern from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The agency has announced that it has registered more than 3572 such calls between January and May 2015, versus 1085 calls that came in during the same period in 2014. In addition, there were 15 reported deaths related to use of synthetic cannabinoids in 2015, compared with five in 2014. [Scientific American](#)

U.S.: Teens may be misled by crisis pregnancy center websites

18 June – Teens are likely to find false information about condoms, sexually-transmitted infections (STIs) and other sexual health issues published on crisis pregnancy center websites, according to a new U.S. study. The so-called crisis-pregnancy centers are run by private organizations, but listed in state resource directories for pregnant women, which implies to users that the information is reliable, researchers say. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: West Nile virus - Preliminary maps & data for 2015

16 June - As of June 16, 2015, a total of 13 states have reported West Nile virus infections in people, birds, or mosquitoes in 2015. Overall, four cases of West Nile virus disease in people have been reported to CDC. Of these, two (50%) were classified as neuroinvasive disease (such as meningitis or encephalitis) and two (50%) were classified as non-neuroinvasive disease. [CDC](#)

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India: Typhoid cases reported after water contamination in Bikaner

16 June - Forced to drink contaminated water due to a shortage, diseases like typhoid is spreading rapidly in Bikaner. About eight to 10 cases of typhoid and other water-borne diseases are daily pouring in at PBM hospital in Bikaner. ... [Pipelines] meant for supply of drinking water in Bikaner city are damaged in various places due to digging of roads by private telecom companies. Sewerage lines in many parts of Bikaner city are also damaged and polluted water leaking from these sewerage lines are causing contamination of drinking water. [Times of India](#)

Myanmar: Dengue cases increasing since April, more than 7,000 reported

17 June - In 2014, nearly 14,000 dengue fever cases were recorded across the country of Myanmar, leaving 89 dead. In 2015 to date, according to health minister Dr Than Aung said the case count so far has eclipsed 7,000. Specifically, 7,043 dengue cases, including 28 deaths have been reported by the Health Ministry. Dr Aung said, "The number of patients has been increasing since April. [Outbreak News Today](#)

Nepal: Risk of hepatitis E outbreak 'very high in earthquake-ravaged Nepal

16 June – During the coming monsoon season, survivors of the recent earthquake that destroyed parts of Nepal face a "very high" risk of a hepatitis E outbreak that could be especially deadly to pregnant women, according to a consensus statement from a group of infectious disease experts from around the world. ... The researchers say that 500 pregnant women could die from the virus in the coming months and many more could be sickened. [Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health News](#)

Philippines: Pangasinan gastroenteritis, typhoid cases up in 1st 5 months of 2015

17 June - Pangasinan health authorities on Tuesday reminded the public to be careful of the food they buy, especially from ambulant vendors, as gastroenteritis and typhoid fever cases were on the rise in the province during the first five months of 2015. According to a report from GMA Dagupan, the Provincial Health Office (PHO) found that from January 1 to June 1, there were 261 cases of typhoid fever compared to 230 during the same period last year. There were also 4,100 cases of gastroenteritis from January 1 to June 1, compared to 3,900 last year. [GMA News](#)

MERS OUTBREAK

South Korea begins plasma treatment trial for Mers



16 June – South Korea is to begin trials of an experimental plasma treatment for Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (Mers) which has now killed 19 people. The treatment - which has already proved useful for tackling other deadly diseases, including Ebola - uses blood from patients who have successfully

fought off the same infection. [BBC News](#)

South Korea: MERS death toll rises to 23, 3 new cases diagnosed

18 June - South Korean health ministry said three more people died of the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), raising the death toll to 23 in the country, state-run news agency Yonhap reported on Thursday. This also brings the fatality rate due to the virus to 14 percent as the country struggles to control its spread. Three new cases of MERS were also diagnosed in South Korea on Thursday, taking the total number of infected people to 165. Two of the new cases were of nurses, who treated MERS patients at two local hospitals.

[International Business Times](#)

South Korea: Hospital scrutinized in MERS outbreak

17 June - ... It is the jewel of South Korea's medical service: a 1,900-bed hospital of steel and glass owned by the Samsung conglomerate. It is also where a 35-year-old man whose symptoms were misdiagnosed as pneumonia languished for three days in an overcrowded emergency room and hallway, where he coughed up sputum teeming with the Middle East respiratory syndrome virus and exposed dozens. Doctors of the renowned hospital, the Samsung Medical Center in Seoul, were the first to confirm the disease, known as MERS, in another patient a week earlier but failed to make the connection between the two cases. Investigators now say the misdiagnosed patient, awaiting a vacant bed in a general ward upstairs, wheezed and expectorated in common areas with no oversight, turning into a MERS "superspreader." [New York Times](#)

South Korea: MERS Korea outbreak slowing?

16 June - The number of cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in South Korea is still rising, but the rate appears to be slowing, according to official sources. The country's health ministry is reporting 154 confirmed cases with 18 deaths as of June 16. Another 86 people are being tested for the virus. But the day-over-day increase in cases appears to be declining, the World Health Organization said in a situation report. "This suggests that the containment measures in place are having an effect in reducing new infections," the agency report said. The agency also said that the genetic sequences of MERS samples from Korean

patients appear to have no marked differences from those taken from patients in the Middle East. [MedPage Today](#)

South Korea: Schools reopen during MERS outbreak



15 June - In this photo by Ahn Young-joon, elementary school students wearing masks return to a school in Seoul, South Korea, that reopened Monday after a temporary closure due to the outbreak of Middle East respiratory syndrome. About 2,900 of the country's schools and kindergartens had been closed, but the World Health

Organization last week urged them to be reopened because the disease is not spreading in the larger community. The head of the country's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Jeong Eun-kyeong, said the number of MERS cases is now 150 and two more deaths have raised the toll to 16. [Deseret News](#)

South Korea: U.S. personnel in MERS quarantine

15 June - Three people affiliated with U.S. Forces Korea are currently under quarantine after being treated at South Korean hospitals affected by the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, according to the military. One is a U.S. service member stationed at Camp Humphreys who has tested negative for MERS after reporting possible exposure to the virus, according to U.S. Forces Korea. U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan said Monday evening that two others in Seoul — a service member stationed at K-16 Air Base and the family member of another service member stationed at Yongsan — are under quarantine, though neither has shown MERS symptoms and are not contagious. The garrison said USFK health officials are closely monitoring both. [Stars and Stripes](#)

Thailand confirms first MERS case: health ministry

17 June – Thailand confirmed its first case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) on Thursday, becoming the fourth Asian country to register the deadly virus this year. Public Health Minister Rajata Rajatanavin told a news conference that a 75-year-old businessman from Oman had tested positive for MERS. "From two lab tests we can confirm that the MERS virus was found," Rajata said, adding the man had traveled to Bangkok for medical treatment for a heart condition. [Reuters](#)

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USSOUTHCOM

Caribbean countries vow to step up action on chronic diseases

12 June - Representatives of CARICOM governments ended a high-level meeting in Barbados this week by declaring that noncommunicable diseases (NCDs)—such as heart

disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes—are the greatest health and development threat facing the Caribbean. They urged stepped-up efforts using all-of-government and all-of-society approaches to tackle NCDs and called for greater investments in health systems to reverse what they termed a "tsunami" that threatens economic and social development throughout the subregion. [PAHO](#)

Peru: Arsenic poisons the wells and the people in Peru

13 June - ... An estimated 14 million people in Latin America are exposed to drinking water with unsafe levels of arsenic, making it the most widespread toxic chemical exposure in the region. Numerous studies tie the poison to a long and terrible list of serious illnesses like cancers, Type 2 diabetes, premature birth, infant mortality, heart disease, lung disease and cognitive and motor impairment for children. ... The region's poverty, corrupt officials and distrust of outsiders ensure the problem's longevity. [Al Jazeera](#)

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