

22 November 2013

# Army Public Health Weekly Update

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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## NOTICE

Because of the Thanksgiving holiday, there will be no APH Weekly Update next week. Publication will



resume on 6 December.

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## Subscription or Comments

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## Follow us!



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## USSOUTHCOM

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- Brazil reports 573 deaths from dengue this year
- El Salvador/U.S.: Fixed drug eruption associated with sulfonamides sold in Latino grocery stores

## Healthy Trips to Exotic Places

Traveling safely with children means taking familiar precautions in unfamiliar settings, as well as learning to handle some unfamiliar precautions and exotic risks — all while trying to make sure everyone has a good time.

Increasing numbers of children are now traveling to developing countries. Depending on where they're going, children, like their parents, may need anti-malaria medication and immunizations against diseases like typhoid, yellow fever and Japanese encephalitis.

They also need to be up-to-date on regular immunizations, since those diseases, including flu, measles, meningitis, polio and hepatitis A, will be more prevalent in the developing world.



## U.S. MILITARY

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### Fierce floor debate ahead on military sexual assault proposals

20 November - ... Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., had hoped to schedule votes on Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand's and Sen. Claire McCaskill's proposals for this evening, but Republicans objected last night. He hopes to reach an agreement to hold a vote later today... Six in 10 Americans support letting independent prosecutors decide whether to place charges in sexual assault cases in the U.S. military, removing such decisions from the traditional chain of command... Thirty-six percent instead prefer to keep authority over sexual assault cases within the usual channels. Support for the change includes equal numbers of women and men, albeit more married women than single women, 65 vs. 53 percent. [ABC News](#)

### Pentagon launches major child abuse study

16 November - The Defense Department's newly organized child abuse working group will conduct a rapid review of child and domestic abuse and will issue its first report in February. The group project, which will last a year, was ordered in light of revelations of widespread child abuse in the services. Two "rapid improvement events" are planned. An initial study to begin this month will focus on child abuse and neglect. A second will look at domestic and intimate partner abuse starting in January... In 2011 and 2012, there were 12,881 cases of child abuse and neglect in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps. Of those, 67 children died, and more than 753 of the cases were sexual assaults. [Military Times](#)

### Update: Cold weather injuries, active and reserve components, U.S. Armed Forces, July 2008-June 2013

October 2013 - From July 2012 through June 2013, the number of active and reserve component service members treated for cold injuries (n=479) was the lowest of the last five cold seasons (2008-2013). Over the last five years hypothermia was the most common cold injury among service members in the Marine Corps and Coast Guard, while frostbite was the most common type of cold injury in the other three Services. Consistent with trends from previous cold seasons, service members who were female, less than 20 years old, or of black, non-Hispanic race/ethnicity tended to have higher cold injury rates than their respective counterparts. Among service members overall, Army personnel accounted for the majority (62%) of cold injuries. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

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## 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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## GLOBAL

### Climate change and health

November 2013 - Key facts:

- Climate change affects the social and environmental determinants of health – clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter.
- Global warming that has occurred since the 1970s caused over 140 000 excess deaths annually by the year 2004.
- The direct damage costs to health (i.e. excluding costs in health-determining sectors such as agriculture and water and sanitation), is estimated to be between US\$ 2-4 billion/year by 2030.
- Many of the major killers such as diarrhoeal diseases, malnutrition, malaria and dengue are highly climate-sensitive and are expected to worsen as the climate changes. [WHO](#)

### Dealing with road deaths: global safety projects that are saving lives



15 November - While London has recently suffered a spate of cyclist road deaths, every year, 1.2 million people are killed in road crashes around the world... More than 90% of road deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, where road safety laws are struggling to keep pace with rising car ownership. To mark the World Day of Remembrance for Road

Traffic Victims on Sunday, we're highlighting a handful of projects around the world that are working to save lives from being lost on the roads. [Guardian](#)

### Global fund suspends 2 mosquito net makers

20 November - The two top producers of mosquito nets for the war on malaria have been temporarily banned as suppliers by a global disease-fighting fund after admitting that they paid bribes to health officials in Cambodia. Although the suspensions raise the possibility that the world will not get the 200 million nets it needs in 2014, a spokesman for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which suspended the two net makers, said he was confident no shortage would develop... Until recently, Vestergaard and Sumitomo together supplied 80 percent of all the nets the fund bought; last year, they supplied about half... The fund hopes to have seven suppliers soon. [New York Times](#)

### Is the 'other' malaria getting more dangerous?

15 November - Two new genetic studies of a parasite that causes malaria suggest that it may be evolving new ways to invade human blood cells. The development could make

certain strains of the parasite more dangerous for populations who have some natural immunity. Now roughly 95% of people in sub-Saharan Africa—where the malaria burden is the highest—are thought to be resistant to the parasite in question, *Plasmodium vivax*... Although less deadly than its cousin *Plasmodium falciparum*, which causes most malaria deaths, *P. vivax* is starting to be recognized as an important cause of serious disease across the globe. To enter human blood cells, the parasite usually uses the so-called Duffy blood group protein, a protein on the surface of red blood cells. But because up to 95% of the population across sub-Saharan Africa lacks the protein—a genetic trait called “Duffy negative”—they have long been thought to be protected from infection. [However,] nearly 10% of Duffy-negative patients in Madagascar who had clinical malaria were infected with *P. vivax*... [They] had two copies of the gene that codes for the Duffy-binding protein.

[Science](#)

## Polio outbreak can be halted in its tracks

20 November - Prompt public health measures, including a mass vaccination campaign, snuffed out an outbreak of polio in northwestern China, researchers reported. During the 2011 outbreak in the northwestern province of Xinjiang, 21 cases of acute flaccid paralysis were laboratory-confirmed as wild-type poliomyelitis, according to Wei-Zhong Yang, MD, of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention in Beijing, and colleagues... In the Chinese outbreak, officials did not have to contend with civil strife, but they did find that their immunization rates had been suboptimal... [O]verall, 90.4% of participants had antibodies against polio, with geometric mean titers averaging 1:39... The index case was reported on July 5, 2011, Yang and colleagues wrote, and the outbreak was confirmed Aug. 26. More than 1,000 health workers were trained in response immunization and surveillance by Aug. 31, and more than 5 million doses of trivalent oral polio vaccine had been shipped to Xinjiang by Sept. 1, with the first vaccination under way by Sept. 8. All told, 43 million doses of vaccine were administered in five rounds of vaccination, three with the trivalent vaccine and two with a monovalent vaccine against poliomyelitis type 1. There were no new cases after Oct. 9, 2011 -- a month and a half after the outbreak was confirmed, Yang and colleagues reported. [MedPage Today](#)

## WHO confirms Kuwait's MERS cases; Spain cites new case

18 November - The World Health Organization (WHO) today confirmed the first two Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) cases in Kuwait, while a media report said Spain now has its second probable case in a woman who participated in the recent Hajj in Saudi Arabia. Kuwait's... first patient is a 47-year-old man who became ill Oct 30, was hospitalized Nov 7, and is in critical condition, the WHO said... The agency said the second patient, also in critical condition, is a 52-year-old man who got sick on Nov 7 and was hospitalized Nov 10. A media report last week said the man had performed the Hajj... Meanwhile, Spanish officials said a woman who traveled to Saudi Arabia with Spain's first probable MERS case-patient is believed to have the virus, the Canadian Press reported today. Officials said the two women shared sleeping quarters. [CIDRAP](#)

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## INFLUENZA

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### Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center: DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary

- 15 November - Across the overseas DoD laboratory surveillance network, influenza activity remains low and comparable to past influenza seasons.
- The influenza vaccination coverage for the DoD (active duty component only) is 70%. [AFHSC DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary](#)

### CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 45 (November 3-9, 2013), influenza activity increased slightly in the United States.

- Viral Surveillance: Of 4,257 specimens tested and reported by U.S. World Health Organization (WHO) and National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS) collaborating laboratories during week 45, 231 (5.4%) 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: Two influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported. [FluView](#)

### DoD Global Laboratory-Based Influenza Surveillance Program

- During Weeks 44 & 45 (27 October - 9 November 2013), 89 specimens were collected and received from 37 locations. Results were finalized for 55 specimens from 27 locations. For specimens collected during Week 44, there was one influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 identified. For specimens collected during Week 45, there were four influenza viruses (three A(H1N1)pdm09 and one A(H3N2)) identified.
- Cumulative results were finalized for 234 specimens from 52 locations. There were 12 specimens positive for influenza (seven A(H1N1)pdm09, four A(H3N2), and one B/unknown lineage). Other respiratory pathogens identified were six adenovirus, one *Chlamydomydia pneumonia*, one coronavirus, three human metapneumovirus, 11 *Mycoplasma pneumonia*, 23 parainfluenza, two RSV, and 70 rhinovirus/enterovirus. To date, eight non-influenza co-infections have been identified (three adenovirus & rhinovirus/enterovirus, one *Chlamydomydia pneumoniae* & Rhinovirus/Enterovirus, one coronavirus & RSV, one human metapneumovirus & rhinovirus/enterovirus, and two RSV & rhinovirus/enterovirus).

- Of 234 ILI cases, 121 are service members (51.7%), 53 are children (31.2%), and 40 are spouses & other beneficiaries (17.1%). There are no unknown beneficiary types. The median age of ILI cases with known age (n=234) is 24 (range 0, 85) and 77 (32.9%) of these specimens are from ILI cases 18 years of age or younger. [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

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

During week 45/2013:

- All 27 reporting countries experienced low intensity influenza activity.
- Of 375 sentinel specimens tested across 19 countries, 2% were positive for influenza virus.
- One hospitalised laboratory-confirmed influenza case was reported by the UK.

During the first six weeks of the 2013–2014 influenza season, there has been no evidence of sustained influenza activity in Europe. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

## Google.org: Flu Trends

21 November – Estimates of flu activity based on certain Internet search queries indicate that the level of flu activity ranges from minimal to low worldwide with the exception of Mexico where the level is moderate. [Google.org Flu Trends](#)

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

For the week ending 16 November 2013:

- Influenza: One cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza (B) 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](#)

## Research shows that anti-fungal medicine may increase vulnerability to influenza and other viruses

21 November – Scientists... have discovered evidence that a widely used anti-fungal medicine increases susceptibility to flu infection in mice and cell cultures. Published online in *Cell Reports*, the study shows that Amphotericin B, commonly given to cancer and bone marrow transplant patients to fight invasive fungal infections, neutralizes an important anti-viral protein, making it easier for viruses to infect cells. These findings suggest that patients taking the antifungal therapy may be functionally immunocompromised and vulnerable to influenza and potentially other viruses. [EurekAlert](#)

## USAPHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report

For the week ending 9 November 2013 (Week 45):

- The Southeastern states continue to experience slightly elevated influenza-like illness (ILI) activity while overall activity remains low in both Army and civilian populations nationwide.
- ILI Activity: Army incident ILI outpatient visits in week 45 were 24% lower than for the same week last year.
- Influenza cases: No hospitalized influenza cases were reported to USAPHC in week 45; to date, three cases have been reported during this influenza season for Army MTFs.
- Viral specimens: During week 45, 120 of 656 (18%) laboratory specimens tested were positive for respiratory pathogens. For the first time this season, more specimens were positive for Influenza A (36%) than for RSV (32%). The majority of influenza A-specimens were submitted by MTFs in SRMC.
- Army Vaccination Rates: Army (COMPO 1) compliance in week 45: USAREUR 96%, MEDCOM 92%, TRADOC 83%, USARPAC 79%, FORSCOM 75%, USARSO 51%. [USAPHC U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report](#)

## PANDEMIC AND AVIAN INFLUENZA

### Indonesian woman dies of H5N1 avian flu

18 November - A 31-year-old Indonesian woman from near Jakarta has died of H5N1 avian flu, the country's health ministry said today, according to Agence France-Presse (AFP). Her case is Indonesia's third this year, all fatal. The woman, from Bekasi in West Java province, developed a fever last week but died before health workers could get her to a hospital for specialized treatment, the story said. The health ministry suspects the woman contracted H5N1 from either a pet bird in her house or neighborhood poultry. [CIDRAP News Scan](#)

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## VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

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### FDA investigates multistate outbreak of E. coli o157 illnesses possibly linked to pre-packaged salad products

21 November - The FDA, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and state and local

officials are investigating a multi-state outbreak of E coli O157:H7 illnesses possibly linked to prepackaged salad meals. As of November 19, 2013, the CDC reports that there have been 32 cases of illness reported in 4 states, Arizona, California, Texas, and Washington. On November 10, 2013, the FSIS announced that Glass Onion Catering, a Richmond, Calif. establishment, is recalling approximately 181,620 pounds of ready-to-eat salads and sandwich wrap products with fully-cooked chicken and ham because some of these products have been linked to the illnesses through epidemiological and traceback investigation. In a related recall announcement, Atherstone Foods, Inc. of Richmond, Calif. recalled ready to eat salads and wraps with "Best Buy" dates 9-23-13 through 11-14-13 because they may be contaminated with E. coli O157:H7 bacteria. [FDA](#)

## ***Salmonella* outbreak linked to chicken grows to 389 cases**

20 November - The number of people infected by *Salmonella* linked to chicken products produced by Foster Farms at three facilities in California has grown to 389 in 23 states and Puerto Rico, up by 27 cases and 2 states in the past 3 weeks, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said in an update yesterday. Among 312 patients with available information, 125 (40%) were hospitalized. That figure is up from 38% in the previous CDC update on Oct 30. Illness-onset dates range from Mar 1 to Oct 29, with patients' ages ranging from less than a year to 93 years (median, 19). About 14% of case-patients have developed blood infections, the CDC said, which compares with 5% in a typical *Salmonella* outbreak. No deaths have been attributed to the outbreak, which involves several strains of *Salmonella* Heidelberg. The outbreak strains have shown resistance to several common antibiotics, the agency said. As in earlier reports, about three fourths of cases (74%) have been in California. [CIDRAP News Scan](#)

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### **WELLNESS**

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## **Condom contest produces 812 ideas for improvement**

20 November - The condom of the future might be made of cow tendon or fish skin. It might have "shape memory" to instantly mold to a specific man. Or it might come with pull tabs so a man could slip it on with little fuss. Those ideas are among the winners announced Wednesday by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation of a contest to create a condom that men would actually use. The contest, the foundation said, aimed to decrease unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases with "a next-generation condom that significantly preserves or enhances pleasure." The foundation received 812 applications, chose 11 and awarded the winners \$100,000 each. They could receive up to \$1 million after they develop the ideas. [New York Times](#)

## Go nuts! Consumption of nuts linked to mortality benefit

20 November - Nut consumption has long been linked to healthy lifestyles. Now, a [study](#) in the New England Journal of Medicine extends the finding and demonstrates a strong association with improved mortality. Ying Bao and colleagues examined data from nearly 120,000 people enrolled in the Nurses' Health Study and the Health Professionals Follow-up Study to assess the relationship of nut consumption and mortality. With over 3 million person-years of follow-up, the investigators found a strong inverse correlation between the frequency of nut consumption and mortality, after adjusting for other risk factors. [Forbes](#)

## How a vitamin D test misdiagnosed African-Americans

20 November - By the current blood test for vitamin D, most African-Americans are deficient. That can lead to weak bones. So many doctors prescribe supplement pills to bring their levels up. But the problem is with the test, not the patients, according to a new study...Dr. Ravi Thadhani... and his colleagues looked closely at various forms of vitamin D in the blood of 2,085 Baltimore residents, black and white. They focused on a form of the vitamin called 25-hydroxyvitamin D, which makes up most of the vitamin circulating in the blood. It's the form that the standard test measures. The 25-hydroxy form is tightly bound to a protein, and as a result, bone cells, immune cells and other tissues that need vitamin D can't take it up. It has to be converted by the kidneys into a form called 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D. For Caucasians, blood levels of 25-hydroxyvitamin D are a pretty good proxy for how much of the bioavailable vitamin they have. But not for blacks. That's because blacks have only a quarter to a third as much of the binding protein, Thadhani says. So the blood test for the 25-hydroxy form is misleading. [NPR](#)

## Skipping meals may shed lbs., boost brain

18 November - Adopting a habit of "intermittent fasting" that involves foregoing food every other day may eventually lead to weight loss and improve cognition in heavier patients, researchers reported here. In a single-center, randomized, pilot study, patients who fasted completely every other day lost about the same amount of weight over 2 months as those who didn't fast at all... But at 6 months, after patients were technically off the intervention, those who had the initial "intermittent fasting" intervention had greater weight loss and greater improvements in cognitive function than those on a standard diet, Donahoo reported... In an earlier paper, Mattson wrote that intermittent fasting is consistent with the way humans evolved to eat. "From an evolutionary perspective, intermittent fasting is normal, and eating 3 meals a day plus snacks is abnormal. Going without food for most of the day or even for several days is a challenge that we are very capable of meeting," he stated. [MedPage Today](#)

## Sleep therapy seen as an aid for depression

18 November - Curing insomnia in people with depression could double their chance of a full recovery, scientists are reporting. The findings, based on an insomnia treatment that

uses talk therapy rather than drugs, are the first to emerge from a series of closely watched studies of sleep and depression to be released in the coming year. The new report affirms the results of a smaller pilot study, giving scientists confidence that the effects of the insomnia treatment are real. If the figures continue to hold up, the advance will be the most significant in the treatment of depression since the introduction of Prozac in 1987... The new report, from a team at Ryerson University in Toronto, found that 87 percent of patients who resolved their insomnia in four biweekly talk therapy sessions also saw their depression symptoms dissolve after eight weeks of treatment, either with an antidepressant drug or a placebo pill — almost twice the rate of those who could not shake their insomnia. [New York Times](#)

## Supplement shell game: Reumofan & its mystery maker



20 November – Video: USA TODAY investigates the company behind the popular pain-relief supplement, Reumofan. [USA Today](#)

## Using birth control pills may increase women's glaucoma risk

18 November - Taking birth control pills may increase a woman's risk of eye disease later in life, a study finds, because they may reduce protective levels of estrogen. Doctors have long known that cells in the eye have estrogen receptors. But in the past few years they've started looking into whether the changes in a woman's estrogen levels as she goes through life could affect her risk of glaucoma... In this study, researchers looked at data on 3,406 women over 40 who participated in a big national health survey administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The women who had taken oral contraceptives for more than three years were more than twice as likely to be diagnosed with glaucoma. But the absolute risk of getting glaucoma after age 40 is small, about 1.86 percent, according to the CDC. So doubling that risk would bring it up to a bit under 4 percent. [NPR](#)

## Watchful eye in nursing homes

18 November - ...On Nov. 1, propelled by the outcry over the Mayberry case, Oklahoma became the third state — along with New Mexico and Texas — to explicitly permit residents in long-term care facilities to maintain surveillance cameras in their rooms. In the last two years, at least five states have considered similar legislation. Although some states have administrative guidelines for electronic monitoring, most legislative efforts have stalled because of questions about liability and, in particular, privacy rights, raised by facility owners, unions, elder care lawyers and families... Families must balance fears for their relative's safety against an undignified invasion of their privacy. They must also consider the

privacy rights of others who pass through the room, including roommates and visitors.

[New York Times](#)

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## USAFRICOM

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### African fruit bats could spread viruses across continent



19 November - Straw-colored fruit bats, found across much of Africa, carry two deadly viruses that could spread to people. While scientists knew the bats were carriers, a new study outlines the extent of the infection - a third of the bats are infected with a virus similar to the one which causes

rabies, and 42 percent carry henipaviruses, which can cause a fatal disease. Researchers with the University of Cambridge and the Zoological Society of London looked at blood and tissue samples from more than 2,000 bats in 12 African countries. They found the animals were largely genetically similar, which means they travel and mix freely across the continent. Senior author James Wood, from the University of Cambridge, says that facilitates the spread of the viruses. [VOA](#)

### Cameroon: Wild poliovirus

21 November - Wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) has been confirmed in Cameroon, the first wild poliovirus in the country since 2009. Wild poliovirus was isolated from two acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) cases from West Region. The patients developed paralysis on 1 October and 19 October 2013. Genetic sequencing indicates that these viruses are linked to wild poliovirus last detected in Chad in 2011. [WHO](#)

### Niger, Tanzania probe two unknown-illness outbreaks

20 November - Health officials in Africa are investigating two separate outbreaks of unknown illness, a small one in **Niger** that has killed nearly a third of patients and a larger one in Tanzania in which no deaths have been reported so far, the World Health Organization (WHO) African regional office said today. In Niger, the outbreak as of the middle of October had sickened 23 patients in two villages in Tera District, located in the country's Tillaberi Region. The area is located in far southwestern Niger, not far from the Burkina Faso and Mali borders. Seven deaths have been reported, according to the WHO report. Symptoms included fever, dysphagia, nosebleeds, vomiting, neck pain, submandibular lymphadenopathy, and ulceronecrotic tonsil lesions.

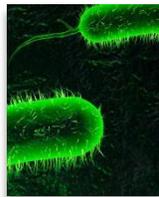
Meanwhile, **Tanzania's** health ministry is investigating an unknown disease in Kasulu district, located in the northwestern part of the country not far from the Burundi border.

Since late August, 794 illnesses have been reported, none of them fatal, according to a separate WHO outbreak report. The main symptoms are fever, headache, vomiting, and abdominal pain, but tests for dengue fever conducted on some of the patients were negative. The WHO said more tests are under way to determine the cause of the outbreak and that health officials are weighing several possibilities, including dengue fever, yellow fever, and hepatitis A or E. [CIDRAP](#)

## Uganda: Spiritual healers keep watch for plague

19 November - When medical anthropologist Mary Hayden visits her colleague Yoset, he tells her, "Mary, you don't need to call before you arrive because I already know you're coming." Yoset, you see, is a traditional healer in northern Uganda. "The spirit comes over him and tells him how to treat people," Hayden tells Shots. But recently, Yoset... and about 40 other healers and herbalists are helping to track down the plague in Uganda for scientists here in the U.S. "We trained traditional healers how to spot the symptoms of the plague," says Hayden, at the National Center for Atmospheric Research. "We gave them cellphones with the hospital's number programmed into it. And we gave them bicycles so they could help get people to clinics." [NPR](#)

## Zimbabwe: Cholera outbreak looms in capital



19 November - Human Rights Watch on Tuesday warned that Zimbabwe's capital Harare was at risk of repeating a cholera outbreak five years ago that killed over 4 200 people. The group said a long-running sanitation crisis in the city of two million meant drinking water was often taken from wells that were contaminated with sewage from broken pipes. "In many communities there is no water for drinking or bathing, there is sewage in the streets, there is diarrhoea and typhoid and the threat of another cholera epidemic," Tiseke Kasambala, the southern Africa director of HRW said. "Harare's water and sanitation system is broken and the government isn't fixing it." A 60-page report warned that history showed the risks of doing nothing. [News 24](#)

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### USCENTCOM

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## Kuwait: Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

18 November - WHO has been informed of an additional two laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) from Kuwait. The first patient is a 47 year-old man who became ill on 30 October 2013 and was hospitalised

on 7 November 2013. He is in critical condition. The second patient is a 52-year-old man with underlying medical conditions. He became ill on 7 November and was hospitalised on 10 November 2013. He is in critical condition. Globally, from September 2012 to date, WHO has been informed of a total of 157 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV, including 66 deaths. [WHO](#)

## Qatar, UAE: Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

15 November - WHO has been informed of an additional two laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV). These include one laboratory-confirmed case from the United Arab Emirates and one laboratory-confirmed case in Qatar. The patient reported from the United Arab Emirates is a national of Oman. He is 75 years old, with underlying medical conditions. He became ill on 1 October 2013, was hospitalized on 12 October 2013 and died on 10 November 2013. The patient from Qatar is a 61-year-old man with underlying medical conditions. He became ill on 4 November 2013, and was hospitalised on 7 November 2013. He is in critical condition. Preliminary epidemiological investigation indicates that the patient had exposure to farms where livestock are kept. Additionally, a previously laboratory-confirmed case from Oman has died. [WHO](#)

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### USEUCOM

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## EU reports show rise in carbapenem-resistant infections



15 November - An annual antibiotic resistance surveillance report from Europe shows a spike in serious carbapenem-resistant infections, and a related assessment from the region's national experts suggests the problem is even more widespread, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) reported today... Both sets of findings are worrisome, because carbapenems are among the last-line antibiotics used to treat healthcare-associated infections... In the new surveillance report, the ECDC said the proportion of *Klebsiella pneumoniae* bloodstream infections climbed above 5% in five countries between 2009 and 2012. The experts' assessment, compiled through a self-assessment survey, revealed a serious new concern, the emergence and spread of carbapenem-resistant *Acinetobacter* infections, which exceed 35% in 8 of 18 countries that report data. The trend points to even more limited options for treating patients with those infections. [CIDRAP](#)

## Italy declares state of emergency in Sardinia after deadly cyclone

19 November - A cyclone killed 18 people and made hundreds homeless as extreme rainfall flooded eastern parts of the Mediterranean island of Sardinia, Italian authorities said on Tuesday. The government declared a state of emergency after Cyclone Cleopatra dropped 450mm of rain in an hour and a half overnight, causing rivers to burst their banks, sweeping away cars and flooding homes across the island... Bad weather on the island was forecast to continue on Tuesday, before clearing up on Wednesday. [Scientific American](#)

## Palestinian Territories: Raw sewage and anger flood Gaza's streets as electricity runs low



20 November - Raw sewage has flooded streets in a southern Gaza City neighborhood in recent days, threatening a health disaster, after a shortage of electricity and cheap diesel fuel from Egypt led the Hamas government to shut down Gaza's lone power plant, causing a pump station to flood. Three more sewage stations in Gaza City and 10 others elsewhere in the Gaza Strip are close to overflowing, sanitation officials here said, and 3.5 million cubic feet of raw sewage is seeping into the Mediterranean Sea daily. The sanitation department may soon no longer be able to pump drinking water to Gaza homes. [New York Times](#)

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**USNORTHCOM**

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## U.S.: A son's death reveals chasms in emergency mental health care

21 November - Parents who have a child struggling with serious mental illness live in fear that the worst will happen. The apparent suicide of a young man in Virginia after he allegedly attacked his father, a state senator, shows how difficult it can be for families to get help in the midst of a mental health crisis. The recession brought deep cuts in states' spending on mental health. The reductions made it harder for people to get help before they're in crisis, mental health advocates say, and even harder to find a hospital bed in an emergency... [T]he family had received an emergency custody order from a judge on Monday, the first step in getting a person involuntarily committed to a hospital in the state of Virginia. But then local health officials had to find a hospital bed. For reasons that remain unclear, that didn't happen. The custody order expired, and Gus Deeds was allowed to leave a local mental health facility... When space can't be found in a psychiatric hospital, Honberg says, "families are basically left to fend for themselves." [NPR](#)

## U.S.: CDC notes 624 hantavirus cases in recent decades

15 November - In the 20 years since hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS) was first identified, surveillance has confirmed 624 US cases, 96% of which have occurred west of the Mississippi River, according to a study published yesterday in *Emerging Infectious Diseases*. Scientists from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) noted that the 624 cases of the rodent-borne disease occurred in 34 states, and the total includes 31 cases that occurred before 1993 but were retrospectively diagnosed from archived tissue or blood samples. Of 593 cases with known exposure locations, 570 (96%) happened west of the Mississippi. Four states logged more than 50 cases: New Mexico, 91; Colorado, 80; Arizona, 67; and California, 58. Only 12 of the cases were caused by hantavirus species other than Sin Nombre virus. [CIDRAP News Scan](#)

## U.S.: FAA orders apnea testing for overweight pilots, controllers

20 November - U.S. pilots and air traffic controllers who are deemed overweight will be screened for obstructive sleep apnea, or OSA, a condition that could cause them fatigue on the job, endangering the lives of air passengers, a new FAA order says. In a recent memo, the Federal Aviation Administration's chief medical officer, Dr. Fred Tilton, has ordered physicians to calculate the body mass index of pilots and controllers. Anyone with a BMI of 40 or above will need to be evaluated by a sleep specialist. [NPR](#)

## U.S.: In stance on renewal of old health policies, states run the gamut

19 November - Just a few days after President Obama said that millions of consumers should be able to keep their old insurance plans for another year — even if they did not meet the requirements of his health care law — he is finding support among states that would not exactly be described as allies. Of the 13 states that have so far said they will allow consumers to renew canceled plans, all but four are led by Republican governors and have generally been opposed to the new health care law. Of the eight that have said they will not carry out the policy, six are in Democratic-led states, many of which have actively worked to put the law into effect and have argued that allowing such an extension could undermine its success. They include New York, which announced its decision on Tuesday, and Massachusetts. Many other states, including California and New Jersey, are still weighing their options. [New York Times](#)

## U.S.: Princeton University to use foreign vaccine



18 November - Princeton University plans to offer students a meningitis vaccine not usually approved for use in the United States in an attempt to prevent an outbreak at the school from spreading, officials said on Monday. The vaccine, which has been approved in Europe and Australia, is expected to be

available on campus at no cost in early December, university officials said. It is recommended for all undergraduates, graduate students living in dormitories and students with some specific health conditions... Six students at the university who were hospitalized with the disease earlier this year have recovered; a seventh, who was found to have it earlier this month, is being treated. University officials have encouraged students to stop sharing drinks and to avoid kissing. The students have come down with a strain of the disease known as serogroup B, which is not covered by the meningitis vaccine that is widely available in the United States. The Food and Drug Administration will allow for the vaccine, called Bexsero, to be used only in this case. [New York Times](#)

## U.S.: Severe illness associated with synthetic cannabinoid use — Brunswick, Georgia, 2013

22 November - On August 23, 2013, the Georgia Poison Center was notified of eight persons examined in an emergency department in Brunswick, Georgia, after smoking or inhaling fumes from synthetic cannabinoids. Georgia Department of Public Health investigators reviewed recent medical records of patients who had gone to the emergency department and found that 22 patients had been examined after using synthetic cannabinoids during August 22–September 9, 2013. The 22 patients were aged 16–57 years (median: 25 years); 18 (82%) were male. Patients experienced hyperglycemia (13 [59%]), hypokalemia (nine [41%]), acidosis (seven [32%]), tachycardia (13 [59%]), nausea/vomiting (eight [36%]), confusion/disorientation (seven [32%]), aggression (seven [32%]), somnolence/unresponsiveness (seven [32%]), and seizures (three [14%]). Complications included pneumonia (two patients), rhabdomyolysis (one), and myocardial infarction (one). Six (27%) patients were admitted to the intensive care unit; five (23%) required assisted ventilation; none died. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

## U.S.: Tornado tally raised to at least 16

19 November - After spending a day in the field, meteorologists for the National Weather Service have determined that at least 16 tornadoes struck Illinois and northwest Indiana on Sunday, as Gov. Pat Quinn declared six more counties as state disaster areas, including Will. The weather service determined that three EF-2 tornadoes, packing winds of 111 to 135 mph, hit Coal City, Manhattan and Frankfort... One the strongest tornadoes to hit Illinois slammed into the town of Washington near Peoria, where one person was killed, 120 others injured and as many as 500 homes damaged. [Chicago Tribune](#)

## U.S.: We're No. 26! US below average on most health measures

21 November - Americans are below average on most measures of health — from obesity to infant mortality — when compared with other rich countries, and they're falling behind on lifespan, too, according to the latest survey. The annual survey from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has been used for years to show that the U.S. spends far more than any other comparable country on health care, yet gets far less for its

money — and the latest survey is no different. Americans are fatter, die younger and don't get particularly good treatment for many diseases, with the exception of strokes and cancer.

[NBC News](#)

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## **USPACOM**

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### **Fiji: Outbreak affects 400 families**

16 November – Four hundred families in the interior of Ba have been affected by an outbreak of communicable diseases that stemmed from an infected water source. Prime Minister Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama confirmed this during a visit to the affected water source yesterday. Commodore Bainimarama was informed by health officials that the communicable diseases affecting the residents were hepatitis A and leptospirosis. So far, 12 confirmed cases of hepatitis A and 23 cases of leptospirosis have been reported by health authorities... Ba health officials revealed that the dam owned by Ba company MR Dayal and Sons was alleged to have been contaminated by nearby farm lands and animals that freely roam the unprotected water source. [Fiji Times](#)

### **India: Second cyclone in six weeks to hit east coast on Friday**

21 November - A hundred thousand residents were being evacuated from coastal areas of India's southeastern Andhra Pradesh state as a cyclone swirling in the Bay of Bengal was forecast to make landfall late on Friday with wind speeds up to 120 kph (75 mph). Cyclone Helen, the second tropical storm to hit the state in six weeks, is likely to cause extensive damage to thatched roofs and huts and disrupt power and communication lines, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Thursday. Officials were widely praised for a mass evacuation that saved thousands of lives last month when Cyclone Phailin struck, even though at least 43 people were killed and 12 million people affected as homes were destroyed and farmland inundated. [Scientific American](#)

### **Myanmar's infant mortality woes**

15 November - A donor-funded clinic in northwestern Thailand is helping save the lives of underweight babies born to impoverished Burmese mothers who have crossed the border to seek help. In 2012, the clinic delivered a record 3,500 Burmese babies and had at least 5,000 Burmese antenatal care visits. Neonatal equipment such as an infant warmer were donated to the clinic last year when it saw more than 1,000 neonatal admissions, a 60 percent jump from 2011... According to a 2013 UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) report, almost 10 percent of newborns in Myanmar had a low birth weight, which is often caused by malnutrition, malaria, anaemia and prematurity... Mothers who recently gave birth at the

clinic said they crossed the border to obtain better treatment than they can get in Myanmar.

[IRIN](#)

## Philippines: Crowdsourcing goes mainstream in Typhoon Haiyan response

20 November - After typhoon Haiyan smashed into the Philippines on 8 November, an army of volunteers mobilized and worked around the clock to help guide relief efforts. But these were no boots on the ground. Instead, they were citizens from around the world who quickly analyzed satellite imagery and other data, generating maps to provide relief agencies with invaluable crowd-sourced information. Crowd-sourced disaster response, until a few years ago informal and often haphazard, is now getting more organized, and is being embraced by official humanitarian organizations and integrated into relief operations. Volunteer efforts have multiplied thanks to the arrival of online mapping tools, the increasing popularity of social networks such as Twitter and Facebook, and the spread of mobile phones. A suite of volunteer groups are emerging that contribute to disaster response in tight coordination with conventional relief organizations. [Scientific American](#)

## Philippines: Foreign medical teams delivering care in damaged areas

19 November - More than 10 days after Super Typhoon Haiyan devastated the central Philippines, WHO is continuing to coordinate the deployment of foreign medical teams with an immediate focus on injured and traumatized survivors and an eye towards the people's longer-term health needs. "People in the affected areas still need help with their injuries, especially those in isolated areas who we are only just beginning to reach, and we will continue working until they receive help," says Dr Julie Hall, WHO Representative in the Philippines. "But we're also beginning to put a greater emphasis on rehabilitation and the gap in normal health care that was created by the storm. For example, people with diabetes or tuberculosis need access to their medications, and pregnant women need a safe place to give birth." There are currently 22 international medical teams operating in the Philippines in 3 regions, each with a Philippine medical liaison. Another 12 teams are either under or awaiting deployment. In addition, there are 31 national teams who are also working across the affected area. [WHO](#)

## UN: Asia Pacific AIDS epidemic at pivotal stage

19 November - A new UN report warns the HIV epidemic in Asia and the Pacific is at a pivotal juncture with little progress in reducing new infections. AIDS researchers and activists are calling for more political will by governments to address related issues... India, Burma, Nepal, Papua New Guinea and Thailand have all reported reductions of new HIV infections by more than 50 percent during the past decade. But evidence is emerging of new HIV infections increasing sharply in Indonesia, Pakistan and the Philippines. [VOA](#)

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## Brazil reports 573 deaths from dengue this year

21 November - At least 573 people have died from dengue in Brazil so far this year, nearly twice the figure reported in 2012, according to official figures released Wednesday. Last year, 292 deaths were recorded and 473 in 2011, according to the health ministry. The highest death toll was in the southeastern state of Minas Gerais (116), followed by Sao Paulo state (72), Goias (58), Ceara in the northeast (54) and Rio de Janeiro state (48). The total number of serious cases reported so far this year reached 6,566, leading authorities in 157 cities to declare a state of alert, including in Rio, Manaus, Salvador and Fortaleza, host cities for next year's World Cup. [Medical Xpress](#)

## El Salvador/U.S.: Fixed drug eruption associated with sulfonamides sold in Latino grocery stores

22 November - In March 2012, a Salvadoran-American boy aged 7 years living in Maryland developed three slightly painful, well-demarcated, flat, gray-brown patches on his torso. A dermatologist in Washington, DC, suspected a fixed drug eruption (an erythema multiforme-like adverse drug reaction that occurs in the same location each time the person uses a particular medication). The child had recently taken a cough and cold remedy, Baczol Antigripal, which was made in El Salvador and purchased in a Maryland suburb of Washington, DC, without a prescription. The Baczol Antigripal ingredients included the sulfonamide-containing antibiotic trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (TMP/SMX), which is a common cause of fixed drug eruption... In August 2013, staff members from the Children's National Medical Center investigated the availability of Baczol products in grocery stores in Salvadoran neighborhoods of Washington, DC, and neighboring suburbs. TMP/SMX-containing products were found in seven of 19 stores. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

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