

24 January 2014

# Army Public Health Weekly Update

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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## **Malaria Cases in the U.S. Reach 40-Year High: Information and Guidance for Clinicians**

The number of malaria cases reported in the United States in 2011 was the largest since 1971, representing a 14% increase from 2010 and a 48% increase from 2008. The majority of malaria infections occurred among persons who traveled to regions with ongoing malaria transmission.

Imported malaria can reintroduce malaria into regions where the disease is not endemic.

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- U.S.: Diabetes, cost of care top health concerns for U.S. Latinos
- U.S.: Fatal hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis associated with locally acquired dengue virus infection — New Mexico and Texas, 2012

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- Cambodia sees 59 pct drop in dengue fever cases last year
- Fiji: Dengue figure increases
- Philippines: Leptospirosis outbreak feared in Mindanao
- Philippines: More evacuees die in Zamboanga
- Philippines: Olongapo City declares measles outbreak, Philippines 2013 total is 2,232 cases

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- Chikungunya virus spreads to more Caribbean Islands
- Climate-sensitive diseases affecting the Caribbean
- Uruguay: Outbreak of "clostridium difficile" in Uruguay's largest hospital; situation under control

## American Public Health Association's Obesity Infographic

For the first time in recent years, obesity rates have declined. Innovative public health approaches and partnerships are contributing to improved food choices and creating opportunities for physical activity, helping to curb obesity.



## U.S. MILITARY

### Bat caught at Lackland dorm not rabid

22 January - Experts say a bat caught inside an Air Force basic training dormitory in South Texas has tested negative for rabies. Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland spokesman Brent Boller said Wednesday that immunizations continue for more than 200 trainees who might have been exposed. Several Mexican free-tailed bats, which are common to South Texas, were seen in the dorm this month. The bat that tested negative for rabies was captured Friday. [Air Force Times](#)

### New Defense Health Agency takes on support functions formerly run by services

20 January - As the man charged with chipping away at the Defense Department's ballooning health budget, Air Force Lt. Gen. Douglas Robb gets positively energized discussing the complex challenges facing the new Defense Health Agency that he leads. The organization, which stood up a little more than 100 days ago, is supposed to make the military health system more efficient by standardizing medical practices and consolidating support services once run by the Army, Navy and Air Force and managing joint facilities in six major military medical regions. [Army Times](#)

### Pilonidal cysts, active component, U.S. Armed Forces, 2000-2012

December 2013 - ...During the surveillance period of 2000 through 2012, there were 35,517 incident cases of pilonidal cyst among active component U.S. service members. Of cases arising in non-deployed service members (n=32,134), 6.7 percent (n=2,175) required hospitalization for care. The overall incidence rate was 1.9 cases per 1,000 person-years (p-yr). Annual incidence rates of hospitalized and outpatient diagnoses of pilonidal cyst were stable during the period. Approximately 11 percent of incident cases suffered recurrences. Although pilonidal cyst is said to affect males more commonly than females, the incidence rates among male and female service members were similar (1.9 and 1.7 per 1,000 p-yrs, respectively)... Incidence rates decreased with advancing age, and rates were highest in recruits and junior enlisted service members compared to their respective counterparts.

[Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

### Questions abound for potential pot entrepreneurs who are active-duty spouses

18 January - Kathy, a South Kitsap resident, saw once-in-a-lifetime potential in the newly legalized marijuana industry. She spent months last fall combing through the state's Liquor Control Board rules, lining up investors and nailing down locations for three retail stores. After filing applications with the state, she had one more thing to do: tell her husband.

## 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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Kathy's spouse is an active duty military service member. He happened to be deployed and out of contact during the months she was making her plans. Kathy broke the news of her planned business venture when he returned this month. He was surprised but supportive... The question now is whether her husband's military employers will be so understanding.

[Kitsap Sun](#)

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## GLOBAL

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### Blood test might help spot pancreatic cancer early

21 January - A new blood test might one day help doctors spot pancreatic cancer in its early stages, Danish scientists report. The researchers said their testing is still too preliminary to be certain it can accurately diagnose pancreatic cancer in patients whose chances of survival are higher. There currently is no screening test for pancreatic cancer, the fourth leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States, according to the American Cancer Society. It is typically diagnosed at a late stage, making treatment problematic and the prognosis poor.

[Medline Plus](#)

### Drug alternatives to antibiotics may not be perfect, study shows

22 January - New types of drug intended for use in place of antibiotics have been given a cautious welcome by scientists. Researchers have been probing the long-term effectiveness of drugs currently being developed by the pharmaceutical industry. These work by limiting the symptoms caused by a bug or virus in the body, rather than killing it outright. These treatments are designed to avoid the problem of infections becoming resistant to treatment, which has become widespread with antibiotics. This approach is intended to enable the patient to tolerate disease, and buy the immune system valuable time to get rid of the infection naturally. [EurekAlert!](#)

### Google's smart contact lens: what it does and how it works



17 January - ...[Google] announced a project to make a smart contact lens on its official blog Thursday... This project is working to tackle one of the biggest health problems facing the country today: diabetes. The soft contact lens that Google's is introducing — it's still just a prototype — houses a sensor between two layers of lenses that measures the glucose levels in tears. The lens also features a small — really small — antenna, capacitor and controller, so that the information

gathered from the lens can move from your eye to a device where that data can be read and analyzed. According to a short explanation of the technology provided by Google, the chip and sensors are mounted on a small plastic-like film. A tiny pinhole in the lens lets tear fluid seep over the glucose monitor to get regular readings. Right now, the company said, it can get a level reading once every second. [Washington Post](#)

## More diseases from air pollution uncovered by improved data material

22 January - Good health and personal registers in combination with model calculations of air pollution down to an individual address has helped Danish researchers to become among the very best in the world to detect harmful diseases deriving from polluted air. At rest, we breathe approx. 12-15 times per minute, and for each inhalation we change approx. one litre of air. Depending on the activity level, this makes up a daily quantity in the order of twenty cubic metres of air that - with its content of pollution in the form of particles and different gases - can make us ill depending on how polluted the air is. [EurekAlert!](#)

## W.H.O. may begin webcast of health ministers' meeting

20 January - The World Health Organization, responding to an angry letter to a British medical journal, says it may soon start streaming its annual meeting of the world's health ministers on the web. If it does, health campaigners and journalists from many poor countries who cannot afford to attend may finally be able at least to watch. The meeting, the World Health Assembly, is often criticized as long-winded and bureaucratic, and it takes place in Geneva, where hotel rooms are expensive. But it considers questions of life and death, such as which diseases are fought first or how best to prevent infant mortality. [New York Times](#)

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## **INFLUENZA**

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

In Week 2 (through 17 January 2014):

- During week 02, Influenza-like-illness (ILI) and Pneumonia and Influenza (P&I) increased in NORTHCOM, EUCOM and PACOM.
- Among training centers in week 02, there were 2 cases of H1N1.
- The influenza vaccination coverage for the DoD (active duty component only) is 95% (as of 15 January 2014). [AFHSC DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary](#)

## CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 2 (January 5-11, 2014), influenza activity remained high in the United States.

- **Viral Surveillance:** Of 10,841 specimens tested and reported during week 2, 2,721 (25.1%) were positive for influenza.
- **Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality:** The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was above the epidemic threshold.
- **Influenza-Associated Pediatric Deaths:** Ten influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported.
- **Influenza-associated Hospitalizations:** A cumulative rate for the season of 13.8 laboratory-confirmed influenza-associated hospitalizations per 100,000 population was reported.
- **Outpatient Illness Surveillance:** The proportion of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) was 3.6%, above the national baseline of 2.0%. All 10 regions reported ILI above region-specific baseline levels. [FluView](#)

## DoD Global Laboratory-Based Influenza Surveillance Program

- During Weeks 1 & 2, 256 specimens were collected and received from 45 locations. Results were finalized for 156 specimens from 36 locations. For specimens collected during Week 1, 52.7% were positive for influenza (47 influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and one influenza A(H3N2)). For specimens collected during Week 2, 73.8% were positive for influenza (47 influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and one influenza A/not subtyped).
- Cumulative results were finalized for 1,124 specimens from 71 locations. There were 299 specimens positive for influenza A (278 A(H1N1)pdm09, 13 A(H3N2), two A(H1N1)pdm09 & parainfluenza, one A(H1N1)pdm09 & rhinovirus/enterovirus, and five influenza A/not subtyped). There were seven specimens positive for influenza B (six B/unknown lineage and one B/Yamagata). Other respiratory pathogens identified were 22 adenovirus, 16 Chlamydia pneumoniae, 20 coronavirus, 16 human metapneumovirus, 31 Mycoplasma pneumoniae, 53 parainfluenza, 57 RSV, and 184 rhinovirus/enterovirus.
- Vaccination percentages for active duty service members are as follows:
- Army - 96%, Air Force - 98%, Marines - 91%, Navy - 92%, and Coast Guard -
- 97%. [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

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

In week 2/2014:

- Of the 30 reporting countries, four (Bulgaria, Greece, Portugal and Spain) reported medium intensity of influenza and Portugal, Spain and the UK (England) reported geographically widespread activity.
- Of 842 sentinel specimens tested across 25 countries, 217 (26%) from 16 countries were positive for influenza virus.
- Bulgaria, Greece, Spain and the UK (Scotland) reported influenza A(H1)pdm09 virus as the dominant subtype.
- Ireland, Romania, Spain, and Sweden reported 97 hospitalised laboratory-confirmed influenza cases.

Based on reports of geographically widespread ILI activity in three countries and the growing number of countries with an increasing proportion of specimens testing positive for influenza virus, which is an indicator of influenza transmission, the season has now started in EU/EEA countries. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

## Google.org: Flu Trends

23 January – Estimates of flu activity based on certain Internet search queries indicate that the level of flu activity in North America and Mexico is high, levels in Europe range from low to high, and in the southern hemisphere levels range from minimal to low. [Google.org Flu Trends](#)

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

For week 2 ending 11 January 2014:

- Influenza: Two cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza (A/H1N1) among US military basic trainees. Increased flu activity at MCRD San Diego and southern California civilian population
- 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](#)

## Pain relievers may amplify flu spread

22 January - Taking drugs like aspirin, acetaminophen or ibuprofen when you have the flu reduces fever and makes you feel better, but it may have unintended consequences. A new study using mathematical projections has concluded that the use of anti-fever drugs during flu epidemics increases disease transmission, both by raising the amount of flu virus shed and increasing the interaction that flu sufferers have with uninfected people. Fever fights

viruses by reducing their ability to reproduce. Reducing fever defeats this effect, increasing the rate and duration of viral shedding. [New York Times](#)

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

For the week ending 11 January 2014 (Week 2)

Influenza activity in the United States remained similar to previous seasonal trends. The 2013-2014 influenza vaccine appears to be well-matched to the circulating strains; unimmunized persons without contraindications to influenza vaccine can still benefit from vaccination.

- **ILI Activity:** Army incident ILI outpatient visits in week two were 27% lower than for the same week last year.
- **Influenza cases:** Nine hospitalized influenza cases have been reported to USAPHC through DRSi in week two. To date, 47 cases have been reported during this influenza season: seven in Active Duty (AD) Service Members (SMs) and 40 in non-AD beneficiaries.
- **Viral specimens:** During week two, 482 of 1,740 (28%) laboratory specimens tested positive for respiratory pathogens. Most of the influenza positive specimens have been from SRMC (56%), while NRMCM and WRMC accounted for 20% and 18% respectively. [USAPHC U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report](#)

## PANDEMIC AND AVIAN INFLUENZA

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

23 January - On 22 January 2014, the National Health and Family Planning Commission of China notified WHO of 10 additional laboratory-confirmed cases of human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus... The source of infection is still under investigation. So far, there is no evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission. [WHO](#)

### South Korea: AI outbreak may also have originated with migratory bean geese

23 January - The government says it now suspects that a migratory bird called the "bean goose" could be the culprit behind the country's first avian flu in three years in addition to the baikal teal ducks originally blamed for bringing the virus to Korea. The Agriculture Ministry says that H5N8, the same AI strain found in the baikal teal ducks, was detected in the carcasses of bean geese found near a reservoir where the outbreak was first detected in Gochang-gun County, Jeollabuk-do Province. The ministry added that the number of farms

in Korea infected with avian influenza has now increased to eight, and that six other farms are being inspected for signs of the virus. [Arirang News](#)

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## VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

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### Hendra virus vaccine, a One Health approach to protecting horse, human, and environmental health

March 2014 - In recent years, the emergence of several highly pathogenic zoonotic diseases in humans has led to a renewed emphasis on the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health, otherwise known as One Health. For example, Hendra virus (HeV), a zoonotic paramyxovirus, was discovered in 1994, and since then, infections have occurred in 7 humans, each of whom had a strong epidemiologic link to similarly affected horses. As a consequence of these outbreaks, eradication of bat populations was discussed, despite their crucial environmental roles in pollination and reduction of the insect population. We describe the development and evaluation of a vaccine for horses with the potential for breaking the chain of HeV transmission from bats to horses to humans, thereby protecting horse, human, and environmental health. [Emerging Infectious Diseases](#)

### Norovirus outbreak linked to Texas oysters



18 January - A norovirus outbreak is linked to oysters from Texas. The FDA is warning consumers not to eat raw or partially cooked oysters harvested from Copano Bay in Aransas County, Texas, that were harvested between December 26, 2013 and January 9, 2014 because they may contain norovirus. The Texas Department of State Health Services closed the Bay to shellfish harvesting on January 9, 2014. Six norovirus illnesses in Louisiana have been linked to oysters harvested from that Bay and shipped by Alby's Seafood of Fulton, Texas. A recall of the oysters harvested on December 26, 2013 has been issued, but other shellfish harvested from Copano Bay before it was closed may still be in the marketplace. [Food Poisoning Bulletin](#)

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## WELLNESS

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### Bodybuilders bulk up using ... cancer drugs?

17 January - ...Arimidex, also known by its chemical name anastrozole, is an aromatase inhibitor -- a breast cancer drug. While steroids and growth hormone make headlines when athletes abuse them, breast cancer drugs are a lesser-known staple of doping regimens, for athletes and "weekend warriors" alike. Star therapies of the breast oncology world -- like tamoxifen (Nolvadex) and exemestane (Aromasin) -- provide an easy, non-injectable means of cutting estrogen's unwanted side effects. And bodybuilders are packing other little-known pharmaceuticals into their routines -- some of which, like ghrelin mimetics and selective androgen receptor modulators (SARMs), are still under investigation in clinical trials and are not available on any regulated market. [MedPage Today](#)

### Buzzed drivers under legal limit still risk car accidents

21 January - Even drivers with a slight "buzz" are more likely to be at fault for accidents than the sober drivers they hit, according to a new study. The authors looked at fatal car crash data from a U.S. national database of more than 570,000 collisions between 1994 and 2011 and found there appears to be no safe level of alcohol in the bloodstream when it comes to driving. "This has a very wide range of implications," lead author David Phillips, a sociologist at University of California, San Diego, said. "For the individual driver it means don't drive while buzzed, and for a passenger, don't get in a car with a driver who is buzzed. Find a way to make the sober one the driver." [Reuters](#)

### Consumer Reports: Too many sodas contain potential carcinogen

23 January - A chemical found in many sodas may be dangerous to your health, Consumer Reports says. And no, it's not sugar (this time). The golden-brown color of many soft drinks comes with a dose of the chemical 4-methylimidazole, or 4-MeI. On U.S. product labels it appears simply as "caramel coloring." Those who say the chemical may possibly cause cancer include the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer and the state of California, which now limits manufacturers to 29 micrograms of exposure for the average consumer per day. [CNN](#)

### Into thin air: Weight loss at high altitudes

21 January - In addition to a lack of oxygen, there may be another reason it's called thin air-- researchers have been exploring the relationship between weight loss and high altitudes. Last year, a study published in the International Journal of Obesity found a strong association between altitude and obesity prevalence within the United States. Using data for over 400,000 people, researchers found Americans living closest to sea level were four to five times more likely to be obese, compared to people who live well above sea level in

Colorado... Many studies have looked at climbers at high altitudes and, expectedly, increased energy expenditure due to increased physical activity can contribute to some of their weight loss. Exercise at high altitudes doesn't fully explain weight loss, though. Studies have indicated that decreased energy consumption due to lack of appetite is one of the more significant causes of weight loss during high altitude exposure. [Scientific American](#)

## Lower the thermostat, whittle your waistline?

22 January - You may want to program the thermostat in your office down a couple of degrees today, despite the more-than-chilly temperatures outside. A paper published Wednesday in the scientific journal Trends in Endocrinology & Metabolism suggests doing so could help you lose weight. Regular exposure to mildly cold temperatures help people burn more calories, according to the paper's authors, who have been studying this phenomenon for more than a decade. [CNN](#)

## NIH research network finds many youth have high levels of HIV

23 January - More than 30 percent of young males who had sex with other males and who were subsequently enrolled in a government treatment and research network were found to have high levels of HIV, reported researchers from the National Institutes of Health and other institutions... The study authors noted that the high blood levels of the virus seen in the majority of study participants indicated that they were diagnosed early in the course of HIV infection, when the chances for minimizing the health consequences of HIV are greatest. The researchers added, however, that the study results suggest that HIV is highly likely to be transmitted among members of this group. [NIH](#)

## NIH Study: Research-based strategies help reduce underage drinking

14 January - Strategies recommended by the Surgeon General to reduce underage drinking have shown promise when put into practice, according to scientists at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), part of the National Institutes of Health. These approaches include nighttime restrictions on young drivers and strict license suspension policies, interventions focused on partnerships between college campuses and the community, and routine screening by physicians to identify and counsel underage drinkers... "The downward trend in underage drinking and alcohol-related traffic deaths indicates that certain policies and programs put in place at the federal, state, and local levels have had an impact," said NIAAA Acting Director Kenneth R. Warren, Ph.D. [NIH](#)

## Too much sitting may raise heart failure risk for men

21 January - Older men who spend a lot of time sitting around are more likely to face heart failure down the road, a new study shows. The research included more than 82,000 men between the ages of 45 and 69. Those who spent more time being sedentary outside of

work hours, even if they exercised, had a higher risk for heart failure, reported the researchers from Kaiser Permanente Southern California. "Men with low levels of physical activity were 52 percent more likely to develop heart failure than men with higher levels of physical activity," said study author Deborah Rohm Young, a senior scientist at Kaiser Permanente in Pasadena, Calif. [Medline Plus](#)

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## **USAFRICOM**

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### **Guinea: Measles outbreak threatens children's lives**

21 January - UNICEF and its partners have begun to organize a campaign to vaccinate over 1.6 million children to stop a measles outbreak in Guinea amid growing number of cases among children especially in the capital Conakry. Since November last year, 37 cases have been confirmed in the capital-all children under 10 years old. Over the past few weeks, the number of cases of measles has been increasing sharply and led to the death of one child.

[allAfrica](#)

### **Kenya: Post-poll victims still in trauma, new study shows**

19 January - Almost six years after the unprecedented post-election violence of 2007, a new medical study shows thousands of affected Kenyans are still suffering from debilitating mental health conditions. The findings published on Saturday show more than a third of those who suffered violent attacks are still nursing serious mental health conditions similar to what has become a nightmare for returning US servicemen in Iraq and Afghanistan. "Over 30 per cent of those surveyed, four years later, showed to suffer from major depressive disorder (MDD) and post- traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)," says the study carried out by several medical institutions including the University of Nairobi... The study carried out since 2011 recorded high rates of successful, attempted or suicidal tendencies among women who were sexually assaulted during the period and drug abuse among similarly treated men. [Standard Digital](#)

### **Namibia: Outbreak under control - MOHSS**

22 January – The cholera outbreak in the Kunene Region has completely stabilised, the Ministry of Health and Social Services said on Monday. According to the ministry's spokesperson, Ester Paulus, the number of suspected cases that have been treated at health facilities in the region now stands at 373 with a total of 11 deaths. Paulus said new cases being attended to at each health facility do not amount to more than two per day. [allAfrica](#)

## South Africa: XDR-TB spreading as uncured patients go home

17 January - Extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB) appears to be spreading in South Africa, fueled by patients who are discharged despite failing therapy, researchers reported. In a prospective cohort of patients with XDR-TB, most patients died and only a handful were cured, according to Keertan Dheda, PhD, of University of Cape Town in South Africa, and colleagues. About 40% were eventually discharged into the community and of those, almost half had failed treatment and remained alive and contagious for a median of 19.8 months, Dheda and colleagues reported online in *The Lancet*. [MedPage Today](#)

## South Sudan Crisis Situation Report

16 January

- Around 468,000 people are estimated to have been displaced within South Sudan since 15 December.
- Another 83,900 people have crossed into neighbouring countries, over half to Uganda.
- The number of people sheltering in UN bases remained around 66,900, with the largest concentrations of people in Juba and Malakal.
- Aid agencies have so far assisted some 204,500 people affected by conflict. A key need is for healthcare, including surgical capacity, in conflict areas.
- Displacement patterns are fluid, with initial indications that many people displaced may have been absorbed in host communities. [ReliefWeb](#)

## South Sudan: U.N. envoy reports child soldiers in South Sudan

17 January - A top UN rights envoy in South Sudan said child soldiers are fighting in the more than month-long conflict, with mass killings reported to have taken place. "The reports that we have come across involve mass killings, extrajudicial killings, widespread destruction and looting, and child soldier recruitment," the UN's Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ivan Simonovic told reporters. The UN children's agency Unicef added they too had "credible reports that children are participating in the conflict", but gave no details on possible numbers. [The Daily Star](#)

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## Afghanistan: Resurgent drug trade threatening US goals, Pentagon warns

20 January - The drug problem in Afghanistan is growing, and it threatens to undermine the US war effort of building a stable country there, top Pentagon officials say in some of the sharpest warnings they have ever issued on the topic... Destroy the crops – a sizable source of income for poor farmers in a desperately poor country – and risk the ire of Afghan locals, who may turn to violence to protect their livelihood. But the poppy trade, which supplies the world's heroin dealers, is also an important source of income for the Taliban – an estimated one quarter of their \$400 million annual budget comes from the crops, according to the Department of Defense. [Christian Science Monitor](#)

## Afghanistan: The plight of Afghan refugee children



20 January - Afghan refugee children suffer from hunger, malnutrition and disease. Many of those who escaped with their parents from the Taliban have ended up in the slums of Kabul. [Deutsche Welle](#)

## Iraq a hotbed of human trafficking

20 January - The Heartland Alliance, a US organization that deals with human rights issues, has tracked 100 cases of human trafficking in Iraq during the past two years... [The] the majority of the cases the organization has tracked involve human organ trafficking, female sex trafficking and child slavery. These acts are committed by gangs that organize begging and exploit foreign workers, through enslaving the majority of them and depriving them of their basic labor rights such as full wages and regular vacations. Moreover, Dylar clarified that the easiest cases to track are those involving exploitation of women for prostitution. Most victims of such forms of trafficking are originally from provinces in south and central Iraq. [Al-Monitor](#)

## Pakistan: Peshawar world's 'largest reservoir' of polio virus

17 January - The World Health Organization has declared Pakistan's restive city of Peshawar the world's "largest reservoir" of endemic poliovirus. The WHO officials fear Pakistanis could face tough international travel restrictions and visa policies unless transmission of the crippling disease is interrupted through urgent steps. Researchers at WHO have determined that almost every polio case surfacing in the country during 2013 could be linked

genetically to the strains of the virus prevalent in Peshawar. [VOA](#)

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## **USEUCOM**

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### **EU air pollution target 'still too high' for heart health**

21 January - A study confirming a link between atmospheric pollution and heart-attack risk strengthens the EU case for tougher clean-air targets, experts say. Research in the BMJ looking at long-term data for 100,000 people in five European countries found evidence of harm, even at permitted concentrations. Experts stressed that the risk to an individual was still relatively small. And some argued the results were not conclusive as they did not take account of previous exposure to higher levels. Other factors, such as smoking or having high blood pressure, contribute more to a person's risk of heart attack than pollution from traffic fumes and industry, they say. But repeated, long-term exposure to air pollution - living next to a busy road in a city, for example - does take its toll, the research, involving a collaboration of European universities and institutes, reveals. [BBC News](#)

### **United Kingdom: BMI obesity measure 'needs to be lower' for millions in UK**

21 January - Millions of people from ethnic minority groups who may be at risk of weight-related diseases are not showing up as obese under current tests, experts say. Medical advisory body NICE says the method of calculating body mass index does not work for some groups. And it wants the BMI "fatness" thresholds to be lowered to ensure up to 8m people of African, Caribbean and Asian descent in the UK are covered. NICE says it would help identify those at risk of diabetes and heart disease. BMI assesses weight relative to height. NICE says a lower BMI threshold should be used as a trigger for action in people from ethnic minority groups since they are more prone to such diseases. [BBC News](#)

### **United Kingdom: Heart-attack survival rate 'should have been better'**

22 January - Thousands of heart attack victims could have been saved if the UK had adopted similar treatment methods to Sweden, research suggests. The study, outlined in the Lancet, looked at the quality of care and outcomes for heart patients in the UK and Sweden between 2004 and 2010. Researchers believe more than 11,000 lives could have been saved if the UK had adopted similar technology sooner. Heart experts say the UK is catching up but still needs to do more. [BBC News](#)

## United Kingdom: Recent infection testing algorithm (RITA) applied to new HIV diagnoses in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2009 to 2011

16 January - In 2009, Public Health England (PHE) introduced the routine application of a recent infection testing algorithm (RITA) to new HIV diagnoses, where a positive RITA result indicates likely acquisition of infection in the previous six months... Between 2009 and 2011, 38.4% (6,966/18,134) of new HIV diagnoses in England, Wales and Northern Ireland were tested. Demographic characteristics of those tested were similar to all persons with diagnosed HIV. Overall, recent infection was 14.7% (1,022/6,966) and higher among men who have sex with men (MSM) (22.3%, 720/3,223) compared with heterosexual men and women (7.8%, 247/3,164). Higher proportions were among persons aged 15–24 years compared with those ≥50 years (MSM 31.2% (139/445) vs 13.6% (42/308); heterosexual men and women 17.3% (43/249) vs 6.2% (31/501)). Among heterosexual men and women, black Africans were least likely to have recent infection compared with whites.

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### USNORTHCOM

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## U.S.: Diabetes, cost of care top health concerns for U.S. Latinos

21 January - Latino immigrants in the U.S. say the quality and affordability of health care is better in the U.S. than in the countries they came from, according to the latest survey by NPR, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Harvard School of Public Health. But many report having health care problems. About a third of immigrant respondents (31 percent) said they'd had a serious problem with being able to pay for health insurance in the past 12 months. And more than 1 in 4 had a serious problem affording doctor and hospital bills and prescription medicines. But the health issue that Latinos said is most concerning for them and their families — whether they were born in the U.S. or immigrated here — is diabetes. [NPR](#)

## U.S.: Fatal hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis associated with locally acquired dengue virus infection — New Mexico and Texas, 2012

24 January - ...This report describes a fatal case of acquired [Hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis] HLH that was apparently triggered by infection with DENV-3. The patient developed an acute febrile illness in August 2012 during a 1-month vacation in New

Mexico. After returning to her home in Texas, she was initially diagnosed with West Nile virus (WNV) infection, developed pancytopenia, liver failure, and disseminated intravascular coagulopathy, and died. DENV-3 was detected in a premortem bone marrow biopsy in which erythrophagocytosis was evident. This case underscores the need for clinicians in the United States to be vigilant for dengue and request diagnostic testing for suspected cases, which should be reported to public health authorities. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

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## **USPACOM**

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### **Cambodia sees 59 pct drop in dengue fever cases last year**

20 January - Cambodia reported about 17,533 dengue fever cases in 2013, down 59 percent from the 42,362 cases in a year earlier, a health official said Monday. The disease killed 59 children, representing a 69 percent decrease from the 189 deaths in a year earlier, said Char Meng Chuor, director of the National Center for Parasitology, Entomology and Malaria Control. Some 119 out of 100,000 people became ill with dengue fever last year, he said in a press release. "Sixty-nine percent of the dengue fever patients are children aged between 5 and 14," he said. [Xinhua](#)

### **Fiji: Dengue figure increases**

21 January – The number of confirmed dengue fever cases continues to rise despite the launch of the dengue clean-up campaign last week. The latest statistics from the Ministry of Health show that there are 1039 cases recorded from October 30, 2013, to January 16. 893 of these positive dengue cases are from the Central Division, 101 from the Western Division and 45 from the North. [Fiji Times](#)

### **Philippines: Leptospirosis outbreak feared in Mindanao**

22 January - Barangay health workers have distributed medicines for leptospirosis in different evacuation centers in Cagayan de Oro, but more may be needed, according to the Department of Health. Authorities expressed fear there may be a rise in leptospirosis cases in flood-affected areas, as some 9,000 residents from Cagayan de Oro alone are affected by flooding. Meanwhile, thousands have fled to Butuan City after the Agusan River overflowed Tuesday due to three days of incessant rains spawned by Tropical Depression Agaton. Some 16,000 residents are now housed in different evacuation centers in Butuan City, with one classroom accommodating as much as 15 families or more than 20 individuals. [ABS-CBN News](#)

## Philippines: More evacuees die in Zamboanga

19 January -- Four months after the Zamboanga City stand-off, the city's health office reported that at least 65 evacuees have died in evacuation centers because of common illnesses. City health officer Dr Rodelin Agbulos said the victims died because of severe dehydration, common colds, asthma and hypertension. "Most of the victims are children who are severely malnourished." he added. Meanwhile, Agbulos also reported of 23 cases of dengue inside the Don Joaquin Enriquez Memorial Sports Complex within this month... Thousands of evacuees are still staying at the grandstand after the bloody encounter between the followers of Nur Misuari and government forces last September. [ABS-CBN News](#)

## Philippines: Olongapo City declares measles outbreak, Philippines 2013 total is 2,232 cases

20 January - The Olongapo City government declared a measles outbreak after recording 80 cases for the first two weeks of 2014, according to a ABS-CBN report Saturday... "Eighty patients with suspected measles cases (are being) treated at our hospital, with one confirmed death since Jan. 1, and more patients with suspected viral infectious disease are continuously arriving," Jessie Manuel, administrator of James L. Gordon Hospital, told The STAR... The vast majority of cases were seen in children under five years of age. [Global Dispatch](#)

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### USSOUTHCOM

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## Chikungunya virus spreads to more Caribbean Islands



19 January - What began with just 10 confirmed cases of the chikungunya virus on the French side of St. Martin last month has quickly spiraled into a much larger outbreak with nearly 300 confirmed cases spanning the Caribbean from Martinique to the British Virgin Islands. With more than 200 "probable or confirmed cases," St. Martin remains the epicenter of the outbreak, though there have been four-dozen more cases on Martinique and another two-dozen on Saint Barts, according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Health officials in Dominica, Guadeloupe and French Guiana also reported cases of chikungunya virus, which can cause severe joint pain, fever and headaches. The case in French Guiana is of particular concern because it could mean that the virus has reached the South American mainland. [International Business Times](#)

## Climate-sensitive diseases affecting the Caribbean

20 January - Caribbean countries, struggling to emerge from a slump in exports and falling tourist arrivals brought on by the worldwide economic crisis that began five years ago, have one more thing to worry about in 2014. Dominica's chief medical officer, Dr. David John, said climate change and its effects are taking a toll on the health of people in his homeland and elsewhere in the region... John said the Dominica government would be seeking assistance from international agencies, including the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), to mitigate "the effects of climate change on health as it relates to dengue, leptospirosis and viral disease." In late 2012, the Ministry of Health in Barbados alerted members of the public about a spike in leptospirosis cases... In recent years, dengue has also been on the rise throughout the Caribbean with outbreaks in Dominica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Puerto Rico and the French islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, among other places. Professor of environmental health at the Trinidad campus of the University of the West Indies Dr. Dave Chadee told IPS there is ample "evidence that climate-sensitive diseases are being tweaked and are having a more significant impact on the region". [Caribbean 360](#)

## Uruguay: Outbreak of “clostridium difficile” in Uruguay's largest hospital; situation under control

18 January - Two weeks ago it was revealed that fifteen patients from the University Hospital de Clinicas in Montevideo were infected with “Clostridium Difficile”, a bacteria with severe gastro-intestinal complications and extremely volatile as its spores can remain for days. The outbreak was formally reported 19 December and this week Uruguay's Ministry of Public Health, released a report on the “intra-hospital epidemic outbreak” with a battery of recommendations. [MercoPress](#)

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