

25 May 2012

# Army Public Health Weekly Update

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**There will be no Army Public Health Weekly Update next week. Publication will resume on 8 June 2012.**

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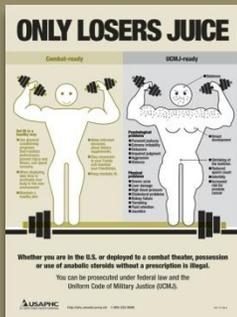
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## Anabolic Steroids Products

Several products on the medical and legal aspects of anabolic steroid use are now available in the **USAPHC Health Information Products eCatalog**.



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## U.S. MILITARY

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# Absolute and relative morbidity burdens attributable to various illnesses and injuries, U.S. Armed Forces, 2011

April 2012 - This report reiterates the major findings of prior annual reports regarding morbidity and health care burdens among U.S. military members. In particular, the report documents that a majority of the morbidity and health care burden that affects U.S. military members is attributable to remarkably few (i.e., less than 8%) of the 139 burden of disease-defining conditions considered in the analysis. In 2011 as in prior years, musculoskeletal disorders (particularly of the back), injuries (particularly of the shoulder, knee and ankle), mental disorders (particularly substance abuse, and disorders of mood, anxiety, and adjustment), and pregnancy and delivery-related conditions accounted for relatively large proportions of the morbidity and health care burdens that affected U.S. military members. For example, in 2011, substance abuse, mood, anxiety, and adjustment disorders accounted for 622 person-years of lost duty due to hospitalization, convalescence, and limited duty dispositions; together, these four mental disorders and two pregnancy/delivery related conditions accounted for more than one-half of all hospital bed days among active component members. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

# Wayne State develops IT solution to help disabled make better wheelchair selections

23 May — A Wayne State University researcher has introduced computer technology that makes it easier for people who need wheelchairs to select one that best suits their needs... Kyoung-Yun Kim, Ph.D., associate professor of industrial and systems engineering in WSU's College of Engineering, introduces a Web-based decision support system for remotely selecting wheelchairs... His system improves the selection and evaluation processes by enabling remote assessment of appropriate wheelchair alternatives with advanced queries and selection criteria. It also provides a reusable information repository and enables systematic evaluation. HCPCS coding changes have increased the gap in decision-making abilities of less experienced clinicians in underserved areas and their more experienced peers in larger population centers, Kim said. In an effort to minimize that gap, the teleconsultation model gives the former group access to the latter, ultimately allowing clinicians to make better selections. [EurekAlert](#)

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## Adult awareness of tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship — 14 countries

According to the 2012 Report of the U.S. Surgeon General, exposure to tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (TAPS) is associated with the initiation and continuation of smoking among young persons... Many countries have adopted partial bans covering direct advertising in traditional media channels; however, few countries have adopted comprehensive bans on all types of direct and indirect marketing. To assess progress toward elimination of TAPS and the level of awareness of TAPS among persons aged  $\geq 15$  years, CDC used data from the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) collected in 14 countries during 2008–2010. Awareness of any TAPS ranged from 12.4% in Turkey to 70.4% in the Philippines. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

## Anti-inflammatory drugs may improve survival from severe malaria

23 May - A novel anti-inflammatory drug could help to improve survival in the most severe cases of malaria by preventing the immune system from causing irrevocable brain and tissue damage. Walter and Eliza Hall Institute researchers have shown that a new class of anti-inflammatory agents, called IDR (innate defense regulator) peptides, could help to increase survival from severe clinical malaria when used in combination with antimalarial drugs... Dr Achtman said that many drugs that prevent malaria infections are not effective in sick patients at preventing tissue damage that arises from the inflammatory immune response. "The most severe forms of malaria, such as cerebral malaria which causes brain damage, are actually the result of the immune system trying to fight infection and causing collateral damage," she said. [EurekAlert](#)

## Dangerous gut bacteria move outside hospitals, infect kids



23 May - Infections with the bacterium *Clostridium difficile* hit record numbers in recent years. Now there's evidence the hard-to-treat infections are becoming a problem for children. The infections often strike the elderly, especially those who've been taking antibiotics that clear out competing bacteria in people's intestines. People sickened by the bug have persistent diarrhea that can, in severe cases, lead to dehydration. *C. diff*, as it's known, is resistant to common broad-spectrum drugs and used to lurk mainly in hospitals... Mayo Clinic researcher Sahil Khanna and his colleagues have found that children are contracting the disease at ever-higher rates, too. And most of them are being infected outside of hospitals... Between 2004 and 2009, the rate of *C. diff* infections among children was a whopping 12 times higher than it was between 1991 and 1997. Most of the infected kids had been taking antibiotics, which was no big surprise. But

what was surprising was that 75 percent of them became infected outside of the hospital.

[NPR](#)

## Drug found for parasite that is a major cause of death worldwide

22 May – Research... has led to identification of an existing drug that is effective against *Entamoeba histolytica*. This parasite causes amebic dysentery and liver abscesses and results in the death of more than 70,000 people worldwide each year. Using a high-throughput screen for drugs developed by the research team, they discovered that auranofin – a drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) 25 years ago for rheumatoid arthritis – is very effective in targeting an enzyme that protects amebae from oxygen attack (thus enhancing sensitivity of the amebae to reactive oxygen-mediated killing). [Infection Control Today](#)

## Fake malaria drugs litter SE Asia, Africa

22 May - A study says more than a third of malaria-fighting drugs tested over the past decade in Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa were either fake or bad quality. The study published Tuesday says bogus and badly made drugs are threatening to upend a decade of progress fighting the mosquito-transmitted disease. Fake drugs can lead to deaths because they contain no malaria-fighting agents. Pills without enough of the active ingredient to kill all malaria parasites are problematic because they increase drug resistance. That means malaria eventually will outsmart medicines and render them useless. [TIME World](#)

## Muslim leaders enlisted to help stamp out polio

24 May - The last three countries where polio is still paralyzing children -- Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria -- said on Thursday that they have enlisted Muslim women and religious leaders to allay fears of vaccination and wipe out the disease. Polio cases are at an all-time low worldwide, following its eradication in India last year, raising hopes but also fears about a threat of resurgence especially in sub-Saharan Africa unless remaining reservoirs of polio virus are stamped out. Conflict and insecurity is preventing health workers from reaching hundreds of thousands of children in Afghanistan and Pakistan with doses of polio vaccine, health ministers said. [Reuters](#)

## New TB test promises to be cheap and fast

22 May - Biomedical engineers at UC Davis have developed a microfluidic chip to test for latent tuberculosis. They hope the test will be cheaper, faster and more reliable than current testing for the disease. "Our assay is cheaper, reusable, and gives results in real time," says Ying Liu, a research specialist working with professor Alexander Revzin in the UC Davis Department of Biomedical Engineering. The team has already conducted testing of blood samples from patients in China and the United States... Commercially available tests require sending samples to a lab, and can be used just once. [Infection Control Today](#)

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## INFLUENZA

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### CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 19 (6-12 May 2012), influenza activity declined nationally and in most regions, but remained elevated in some areas of the United States. [FluView](#)

### Google.org: Flu Trends

24 May – Estimates of flu activity based on flu-related Internet search queries indicate that the level of flu activity ranges from minimal to low in all areas reporting data. [Google.org Flu Trends](#)

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

For the week ending 19 May 2012:

Adenovirus: Type 14 adenovirus is present at MCRD Parris Island.

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](#)

## PANDEMIC AND AVIAN INFLUENZA

### Study: H1N1 vaccine generates antibodies to range of flu strains

22 May - The pandemic 2009 H1N1 (pH1N1) vaccine produced antibodies in people not only against pH1N1, but also against other influenza virus strains, including H5N1 avian flu and H3N2 seasonal flu, according to a study yesterday from Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. The antibodies were reactive to the relatively stable stem region of the influenza virus hemagglutinin (HA), as opposed to the HA head, which can vary widely among strains. The findings bring researchers a small step closer to developing a vaccine that protects against a host of flu viruses, a group led by Emory University scientists said.

[CIDRAP News Scan](#)

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## VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

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### Bagged lettuce recall expands across nation

22 May - A California lettuce grower has expanded a recall of some bagged salads after routine sampling detected listeria contamination. No illnesses have been reported. The voluntary recall by River Ranch Fresh Foods of Salinas initially included lettuce shipped to

California and Colorado. The company said Monday it had expanded the recall to the entire nation. The bagged salads are sold under the names River Ranch, Farm Stand, Hy-Vee, Marketside, Shurfresh, The Farmer's Market, Cross Valley, Fresh n Easy, Promark, and Sysco. The recalled retail and foodservice salad bags have "best by" dates between May 12 and May 29 or Julian dates of 118 and 125. The code date is typically located in the upper right hand corner of the bags. Symptoms of listeria infection include high fever, headache and neck stiffness. [MSNBC](#)

## Europe: Schmallenberg virus, serosurvey (vector)

21 May - Infections with Schmallenberg virus (SBV) are associated with congenital malformations in ruminants. Because reporting of suspected cases only could underestimate the true rate of infection, we conducted a seroprevalence study in the Netherlands to detect past exposure to SBV among dairy cattle. A total of 1123 serum samples collected from cattle during November 2011-January 2012 were tested for antibodies against SBV by using a virus neutralization test; seroprevalence was 72.5 percent. Seroprevalence was significantly higher in the central-eastern part of the Netherlands than in the northern and southern regions ( $p$  under 0.001). In addition, high (70-100 percent) within-herd seroprevalence was observed in 2 SBV-infected dairy herds and 2 SBV-infected sheep herds. No significant differences were found in age-specific prevalence of antibodies against SBV, which is an indication that SBV is newly arrived in the country. [ProMED-mail](#)

## 'Misleading' pomegranate juice ads violated law, FTC judge rules



22 May - POM Wonderful LLC's advertising claims about the health benefits of its pomegranate juice drink violated the law, according to a U.S. Federal Trade Commission administrative law judge. POM Wonderful made "false or misleading" claims about the effects of the drink, according to D. Michael

Chappell, the FTC's chief administrative law judge in an initial decision released today. The advertisements claimed the product would treat or prevent heart disease, prostate cancer and erectile dysfunction. Chappell rejected the agency's position that the company needed to conduct clinical trials, similar to what is required for approval of medication, to make the health claims. [The Toronto Star](#)

## Salmonella Paratyphi B outbreak grows

20 May - The Salmonella Paratyphi B case-count associated with contaminated starter culture used in raw tempeh products sold by Smiling Hara, an Asheville, NC-based company, continued to grow last week, with the number of Salmonella Paratyphi B cases reaching 83 on Friday. According to the Asheville Citizen-Times, 62 of the cases were counted among residents of Bruncombe County, NC. Smiling Hara purchased the contaminated spore culture from Tempeh Online, a Maryland-based Company that has since taken down its web page and deleted all but one of its Twitter posts. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is working with state health officials to determine whether or not

Tempeh Online's contaminated culture might have been used by any other producers. Smiling Hara has recalled all of its tempeh made between January 11 and April 11 with best-by dates of July 11 through October 25. [Food Safety News](#)

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## WELLNESS

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### Aspirin may prevent recurrence of deep vein blood clots

23 May - After suffering a type of blood clot called a venous thromboembolism, patients usually take a blood-thinner such as warfarin (Coumadin). But aspirin may do just as well after a period of time, according to a new Italian study. Blood-thinning, or "anticoagulant," therapy is used to prevent another clot, which occurs in about 20 percent of patients. However, extended use of warfarin can increase the risk for bleeding, so researchers wanted to know whether aspirin would be a good alternative after two years of treatment with warfarin. "Aspirin given after a standard course of anticoagulant treatment may reduce recurrence of venous thromboembolism without increasing complications," said lead researcher Dr. Cecilia Becattini, from the Internal and Cardiovascular Medicine and Stroke Unit at the University of Perugia. So aspirin can be an alternative after an initial period of warfarin treatment, Becattini said, and "patients could be shifted to aspirin after talking it over with their doctor." [Yahoo! News](#)

### Calcium supplements may increase heart attack risk

24 May - An analysis of data on nearly 24,000 people followed for over a decade suggests taking calcium supplements may increase the risk of having a heart attack. This is the main finding of a study published online this week in the journal *Heart* that also concludes boosting overall calcium intake through dietary sources brings no significant benefit in terms of reducing risk of heart disease or stroke. The researchers say calcium supplements, which are often recommended to the elderly and women after the menopause to protect against bone thinning, should be "taken with caution". Some experts are saying we should wait for further research to corroborate these findings before acting on this advice, and people who take supplements who are concerned should talk to their doctor. [Medical News Today](#)

### Happy feet: Tips for healthier running

23 May - After hearing a lot about barefoot running, *New York Times* Phys Ed columnist Gretchen Reynolds decided to try it out for herself. An amateur runner for several decades, Reynolds says she thought the transition would be easy. But almost immediately, she got injured. "I hurt my iliotibial band on the outside of the knee, and I also hurt my Achilles tendon, which I had never done before," she tells *Fresh Air's* Terry Gross. "A lot of people are trying barefoot running without preparation and without the knowledge of what happens when you take off your running shoes, and I was one [of them]. And what often

happens is exactly what happened to me, which is that you almost immediately hurt your Achilles tendon." That's because many people ramp up their barefoot running programs too quickly, which doesn't allow the muscles in the legs and feet time to catch up, she says. [NPR](#)

## Sigmoidoscopy an option for colon cancer screening

21 May - Screening for colon cancer using a flexible tube -- which is less invasive and more convenient than colonoscopy -- may also help prevent new cases and deaths from the disease, a new study suggests. In a large trial of more than 150,000 older U.S. adults, those who were randomly assigned to get screened using so-called flexible sigmoidoscopy on two different occasions were 21 percent less likely to get colon cancer than those not offered the screening. They were also 26 percent less likely to die of cancer, probably because screening picked up pre-cancerous lesions and early-stage cancers before they could cause serious harm, researchers reported Monday in the New England Journal of Medicine.

[Reuters](#)

## Study shows that fever during pregnancy more than doubles the risk of autism or developmental delay

23 May— A team of UC Davis researchers has found that mothers who had fevers during their pregnancies were more than twice as likely to have a child with autism or developmental delay than were mothers of typically developing children, and that taking medication to treat fever countered its effect. "Our study provides strong evidence that controlling fevers while pregnant may be effective in modifying the risk of having a child with autism or developmental delay," said Ousseny Zerbo, lead author of the study, who was a Ph.D. candidate with UC Davis when the study was conducted and is now a postdoctoral researcher with the Kaiser Permanente Northern California Division of Research. "We recommend that pregnant women who develop fever take anti-pyretic medications and seek medical attention if their fever persists." [EurekAlert](#)

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### **USAFRICOM**

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## African child mortality: The best story in development

19 May - ... 16 of the 20 African countries which have had detailed surveys of living conditions since 2005 reported falls in their child-mortality rates (this rate is the number of deaths of children under five per 1,000 live births). Twelve had falls of over 4.4% a year, which is the rate of decline that is needed to meet the millennium development goal (MDG) of cutting by two-thirds the child-mortality rate between 1990 and 2015 (see chart). Three countries—Senegal, Rwanda and Kenya—have seen falls of more than 8% a year, almost twice the MDG rate and enough to halve child mortality in about a decade. These three now have the same level of child mortality as India, one of the most successful economies in the

world during the past decade. The decline in African child mortality is speeding up. In most countries it is now falling about twice as fast as during the early 2000s and 1990s. More striking, the average fall is faster than it was in China in the early 1980s, when child mortality was declining around 3% a year, admittedly from a lower base... What makes a bigger difference, Mr Demombynes argues, is some combination of broad economic growth and specific public-health policies, notably the increase in the use of insecticide-treated bednets (ITNs) which discourage mosquitoes, which cause malaria. [The Economist](#)

## Ethiopia: Farmers to supplant imported food for school lunches

20 May - A total of 1,600 farmers, identified for a World Food Programme pilot project to grow food for a school feeding programme will start planting red haricot beans this coming June 2012. The WFP has been conducting feeding programmes in schools in six regional states since 1994. Currently a total of 681,195 students from 1,187 schools in Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Tigray, Somali, and Southern regional states are getting one meal a day, using imported food. Girls are also given vegetable oil to encourage their attendance at schools in pastoralist areas, a scheme which has reached 127,000 girls. The aim of the pilot project is to replace the imported food with local produce and to eventually hand over the project to the government, according to Askale Teklu, team leader for the Child Food for Education Programme of the WFP. [Addis Fortune](#)

## Meningococcal disease: situation in the African Meningitis Belt

24 May 2012 - From 1 January to 17 April 2012 (epidemiologic week 17), outbreaks of meningococcal disease have been reported in 42 districts in 10 of the 14 countries of the African Meningitis Belt 1. These outbreaks have been detected as part of the enhanced surveillance. The 10 countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Sudan) reported a total of 11 647 meningitis cases including 960 deaths resulting in a case fatality ratio of 8.2%. The outbreaks were mainly caused by the W135 serogroup of *Neisseria meningitidis* (Nm) bacteria. [World Health Organization](#)

## Niger: Late for school after a long journey for a drop to drink



21 May - Wars keep children out of school. So does sickness. But in Niger, a sun-baked land where drought occurs with alarming frequency, a major impediment to education is thirst and the long trek required to quench it. The school day had already begun on a recent morning as a procession of small children on donkeys, school-age all, made their way over a sandy field, joining other youths gathered with their animals around deep holes in the ground. As low rainfall has dried up the countryside, the search for water has become ever more difficult. The job of securing

water frequently falls to Niger's children, some as young as 10 or 11. They ride donkeyback as much as five miles out of town, with giant plastic jerrycans, half as high as the children themselves, strapped to the animals' sides. The more they work, the emptier become the classrooms of eastern Niger... A rainfall deficit last year — the short rainy season ended early, and rains were rare and irregular — left the land without the surface ponds that many of Niger's 17 million people, most subsistence farmers, depend on. Nearly a third of the population now faces a food deficit. But more immediately, the people must have water, and with good wells ever harder to find, the quest for it falls to the next generation. [New York Times](#)

## Nigeria: New cases raise fresh concerns over polio

22 May - With the recent discovery of new cases of wild polio virus in Sokoto State, it has been identified as one of state having the highest number of cases of the virus in Nigeria... Five new cases of polio were confirmed at Helele and Waziri B ward of Sokoto North local government area as well as Kwanni and Marna areas of the state. [Daily Trust](#)

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### USCENTCOM

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## Afghanistan: 122 girls, 3 teachers poisoned at Afghan school

23 May - More than 120 girls and three teachers were admitted to an Afghanistan hospital Wednesday after being poisoned in their classes with a type of spray, a Takhar provincial official said. The incident occurred in the provincial capital of Talokhan, in the Bibi Hajera girls school, said Dr. Hafizullah Safi, director of public health for the northern Afghanistan province. Forty of the 122 girls were still hospitalized, he said, with symptoms including dizziness, vomiting, headaches and loss of consciousness. Blood samples have been sent to Kabul in an effort to determine the substance used, he said. "A number of girls from 15 to 18 were brought from a school to hospital today," said hospital director Dr. Habibullah Rostaqi. "Generally they are not in a critical condition"... "The Afghan people know that the terrorists and the Taliban are doing these things to threaten girls and stop them going to school," said Khalilullah Aseer, spokesman for Takhar police. "That's something we and the people believe. Now we are implementing democracy in Afghanistan and we want girls to be educated, but the government's enemies don't want this." [CNN](#)

## Bahrain: Secret clinics tend to Bahrain's wounded

21 May - Three young men were slumped on a living room mat, groaning with pain from nuggets of birdshot lodged in a cheek, a forehead and under the lid of an eye. Bahrain's nightly protests had exacted their reliable toll. Friends dragged the men away from the clashes and the riot police, to a safe house nearby. Soon, it was time to go, but not to a

hospital: the police were there, too. "No one goes to the hospital," one protester said. Instead, the men traveled to one of dozens of houses that are scattered throughout this island nation, where a secret and growing network of caregivers — doctors, first-aid medics or people with no medical experience at all — wait daily for the casualties from the protests. The houses are not really field hospitals, but rather sitting rooms, often equipped with nothing more than bandages and gauze. For the injured protesters, the houses have replaced the country's largest public hospital, the Salmaniya Medical Complex... Last spring, the hospital became a symbol of the state's repression, as the government arrested — and in some cases tortured — protesters, doctors and nurses for their involvement with the uprising. [New York Times](#)

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## USEUCOM

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### Ukraine: Parliament passes smoking ban before Euro 2012

24 May - Ukraine's parliament has banned smoking in most public places ahead of the start of the Euro 2012 football championship in June. Lawmakers approved a law to make smoking in schools, colleges, hospitals, restaurants, museums, and public places such as buses illegal. Smoking in airports, hotels, dormitories, and company offices will be allowed only in special smoking zones. President Viktor Yanukovich now has 10 days to either sign the bill into law or send it back to parliament. Some 22 percent of Ukrainians over 12 are smokers, according to the Health Ministry. [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty](#)

### United Kingdom: Hospital infections down but new strains emerging

22 May - While there has been a drop in rates of the superbug MRSA and C. difficile, other infections like E. coli appear to have taken their place, they say. Health Protection Agency data gives a snapshot of infection rates and antibiotic use by NHS hospitals in England in the autumn of 2011. It shows, overall, that infection rates are down but new bacteria are emerging. The total prevalence of healthcare-associated infections (HCAIs) decreased from 8.2% in 2006 to 6.4% in 2011. But much of this decrease was due to lower rates of MRSA and C. difficile - infections that the government has repeatedly targeted with policies. At the same time, rates of other infections, like E.coli, appear to be rising. [BBC News](#)

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## Mexico: Tropical Storm Bud grows into second storm of 2012 season

22 May - Bud, the second tropical storm of the 2012 hurricane season, formed early today off Mexico's southern Pacific coast, the National Hurricane Center said. The storm, bearing winds of 40 miles per hour (65 kilometers per hour), was about 600 miles south of the resort port of Manzanillo, Mexico, the NHC said in a website advisory. Conditions are favorable at sea for Bud to grow into a hurricane by tomorrow night, the Miami-based center said. On the forecast track, Bud will curve from its present 12 mph west-northwest path more northward and then north-eastward and may slow before coming ashore on the Mexican coast later this weekend, the NHC said. In the Atlantic Ocean, Alberto remains a tropical depression with 35 mph winds while moving northeast at 15 mph on a path between the U.S. East Coast and Bermuda and is expected to weaken, the center said in a separate advisory. [Bloomberg Business Week](#)

## U.S., Florida: Osceola County offers workers free surgeries – overseas

19 May – ... Medical tourism, a concept that alarms some consumers and doctors alike, is slowly gaining national momentum, and it will soon be an option for Osceola County government employees. The county's new health plan, which starts Oct. 1, offers employees an incentive to use less-expensive overseas doctors and hospitals in such countries as India, Singapore and Turkey. The new international feature will cover more than a dozen common elective procedures, including heart bypass, joint replacements, gastric procedures and hysterectomies. The unorthodox idea is gaining ground as U.S. health-care consumers contend with the high price of surgery. Medical-travel companies are only too happy to help. But the idea worries some health practitioners. "Patients considering having a procedure in another country need to ask a lot of questions," said Dr. Jamal Hakim, anesthesiologist and chief quality officer for Orlando Health. Key among them are whether the hospital will offer an integrated approach to care and who will handle follow-up, he said. "It makes me nervous to see patients abandoning the continuity of care of their health-care community to get one procedure." [Orlando Sentinel](#)

## U.S.: For Native American women, scourge of rape, rare justice

22 May - ... One in three American Indian women have been raped or have experienced an attempted rape, according to the Justice Department. Their rate of sexual assault is more than twice the national average. And no place, women's advocates say, is more dangerous than Alaska's isolated villages, where there are no roads in or out, and where people are further cut off by undependable telephone, electrical and Internet service... Rape, according to Indian women, has been distressingly common for generations, and they say tribal officials and the federal and state authorities have done little to help halt it, leading to its

being significantly underreported. In the Navajo Nation, which encompasses parts of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, 329 rape cases were reported in 2007 among a population of about 180,000. Five years later, there have been only 17 arrests. Women's advocates on the reservation say only about 10 percent of sexual assaults are reported. [New York Times](#)

## U.S.: Hepatitis C -Boomers urged to get tested for virus

19 May - Bay Area health advocates and doctors welcomed the recommendations by federal health officers Friday that all Baby Boomers get tested for the liver-destroying virus hepatitis C. The draft recommendations issued by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention called for anyone born between 1945 and 1965 to get a one-time blood test for the liver disease, believing that doing so could identify 800,000 people infected with it, prevent many cases of cirrhosis and liver cancer caused by the infection, and save more than 120,000 lives. [San Francisco Chronicle](#)

## U.S.: Youth diabetes, pre-diabetes rates soar

20 May - Diabetes and pre-diabetes have skyrocketed among the nation's young people, jumping from 9% of the adolescent population in 2000 to 23% in 2008, a study reports today. The findings, reported in the journal *Pediatrics*, are "very concerning," says lead author Ashleigh May, an epidemiologist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "To get ahead of this problem, we have to be incredibly aggressive and look at children and adolescents and say you have to make time for physical activity," says pediatric endocrinologist Larry Deeb, former president of medicine and science for the American Diabetes Association. [USA Today](#)

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### USPACOM

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## China: Family doctors find acceptance hard to achieve

19 May - Health authorities have been working to introduce a family doctor model at the community level as part of China's healthcare reform, but the process hasn't gone smoothly in many areas. A State Council plan has set a target, under the family doctor model, for 2020 of having two to three general practitioners at grassroots-level clinics to serve every 10,000 residents. "By contracting with a family doctor for service, people can have more convenient and targeted medical care and ease strains on large hospitals. But it takes time and effort to make the public accept the new model," said Qin Huaijin, who leads the department of maternal and child health and community health under the Ministry of Health. In Jinan, Shandong province, the new approach has not been well-received... Zhang Yujie, who worked as a chief doctor of traditional Chinese medicine at the Fourth People's Hospital in Jinan before shifting to the Banqiao Community Healthcare Center, was upset when attempting to make home visits. "They think I am a swindler. They even don't give me a chance to explain to them," Zhang said... Still, Zhang believes residents will finally accept

the family doctor service. "The family doctor service is a new thing. It takes time to be accepted," Zhang said. Also, the model was well-received among families that had actually tried it, citing efficiency and convenience. [China Daily](#)

## Japan: Fukushima radiation higher than previous estimates

24 May - The amount of radiation released from the March 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant accident in northern Japan was higher than previous government figures have shown, representing about 17% of the release from the 1986 Chernobyl accident, the plant's operator said in a report Thursday. But medical and nuclear safety experts said the new figures won't significantly alter their views on the health risks stemming from Japan's worst-ever nuclear accident. Tokyo Electric Power Co. 9501.TO +0.64% said the amount of radioactive materials released into the air totaled an estimated 900,000 terabecquerels, vs. the latest government estimate of 480,000 terabecquerels released Feb. 16. Tera stands for one trillion, while becquerel is a measurement unit for radioactive activity. The calculation is the first by Tepco and is the highest in what has been a wide range of estimates from government regulators since the accident. [The Wall Street Journal](#)

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### USSOUTHCOM

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## Argentina: Pertussis

20 May - In spite of the fact that there are vaccines to prevent whooping cough, the infection has become a re-emerging disease, which today is one of the major causes of morbidity and mortality in children. The main victims of this acute respiratory infection caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis* (whooping cough), are infants younger than 6 months, usually acquired from their parents or teenage siblings, or even a member of the health care team. In infants, pertussis can be a serious disease that can lead to severe complications or even death, unlike what happens in adults or older children. The reemergence of the whooping cough or pertussis can be observed in the numbers of cases in the country. Up until 30 April 2012 597 cases of pertussis were confirmed by laboratory testing. In the same period of 2011, there were 315 cases: [this is] 90 percent more. The data comes from the National Reference Laboratory for *Bordetella pertussis* of Argentina.

[ProMED-mail](#)

## Honduras: Drug trafficking and raids stir danger on the Mosquito Coast

23 May - The orange glow of a burning house brightened the morning sky. Then another and another. Four homes were set ablaze in this muddy river town [Ahuas] just hours after the Honduran and American authorities swooped down in helicopters as part of a major

drug raid that recovered a half ton of cocaine. "At first we had no idea what was happening," Sinicio Ordoñez, a local leader, said of the fires. It soon became clear: the burned homes were not part of the raid itself, but retaliatory attacks by residents against their neighbors who were working with drug traffickers. As angry as residents were with the Honduran and American governments for a joint commando operation on May 11 that they insist took the lives of four innocent people, they had rage to spare for those who have helped make this poor town on the Mosquito Coast a way station for cocaine moving from the Andes to the United States. [New York Times](#)

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