

26 September 2014

# Army Public Health Weekly Update

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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A new information sheet for Family members has questions and answers about Ebola Virus Disease. Find it along with other resource on the [USAPHC Ebola Virus Disease page](#).

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- El Salvador says nearly 30,000 infected with mosquito-borne chikungunya

## Army Vector-borne Disease Report

**West Nile Virus:** 725 cases and 25 deaths reported to CDC from 38 states and Washington D.C. No cases in Army beneficiaries in 2014.

### West Nile Virus Mosquito

**Pools:** Since the last report, PHCR-North and PHCR-West identified 23 and 2 positive WNV pools, respectively.

**Chikungunya:** Guatemala (8) and Brazil (2) report their first locally-acquired infections; total cases increased by 8.6% since the last report.

**PHCR-South:** PHCR-South tested 611 mosquito pools for West Nile Virus and none were positive.



## U.S. MILITARY

### Report: Some causes of suicide in military need more study

22 September - While the military has poured more money into suicide research than any other sector of American society in recent years, certain targets in dire need of study remain under-funded, according to a RAND Corp. report released Monday. Researchers sampled opinions of leading suicide experts within the military and on the RAND Corp. staff about the most important areas needing research. They found the those areas — improving ways of identifying those who are suicidal; and developing better methods for the ongoing care of those with self-destructive tendencies — receive little or moderate focus in either funding or number of studies. [USA Today](#)

### Troops aiding Ebola effort in Africa have minimal chance of infection, USARAF chief says

24 September - Soldiers sent to Liberia to assist in fighting an Ebola epidemic that experts say could kill hundreds of thousands face minimal chance of contracting the deadly disease, U.S. Army Africa's commander assured concerned families Tuesday. "We're going to take care of them. You have my word on it," Maj. Gen. Darryl Williams said, addressing deploying troops' families via video conference from the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia, the Liberian capital... The task force, announced by President Barack Obama last week, is to provide logistics and organizational capabilities and build 17 100-bed hospitals for health workers to isolate and treat Liberians infected with the highly contagious and often fatal virus. The new hospitals are not expected to be up and running for weeks or even months. [Stars and Stripes](#)

### Update: Routine screening for antibodies to Human Immunodeficiency Virus, civilian applicants for U.S. military service and U.S. Armed Forces, Active and Reserve Components, January 2009–June 2014

August 2014 - ...From January 2013 through June 2014, a total of 500,828 civilian applicants for U.S. military service were tested for antibodies to HIV, and 87 applicants were identified as HIV antibody positive (seroprevalence: 0.17 per 1,000 applicants tested). From 2009 to 2013, annual seroprevalences among applicants for service declined 49% (2009: 0.37 per 1,000 tested; 2013: 0.19 per 1,000 tested). Throughout the period, seroprevalences were much higher among males than females and among black, non-Hispanics than other racial/ethnic group members. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

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

Look under Hot Topics & Current Issues.

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## Allowing blood donations from gay men could help save over a million lives - U.S. study

24 September - Lifting a ban on blood donations from gay men would increase the amount of available blood by hundreds of thousands of pints (liters) each year and save more than a million lives a year, a California study showed on Friday. The U.S. Federal Drug Administration has banned gay men from donating blood since 1983, when it was discovered that HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, was being transmitted through transfusions. Eliminating the ban could bring in roughly 615,300 pints (291,145 liters) of blood annually, while allowing donations from gay men who had not had a sexual partner in a year could yield 317,000 pints (150,000 liters), the study estimated. [Reuters](#)

## Eighty percent of heart attacks are preventable by lifestyle changes

24 September - Eighty percent of heart attacks in men are preventable by changes in lifestyle, according to research conducted at the Karolinska Institute. The study, published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology, surveyed data on over 20,000 Swedish men aged 45-79, who were tracked from 1997 to 2009. The team isolated five aspects of a healthy lifestyle - eating a healthy diet, staying in good shape, exercising regularly, staying away from tobacco and controlling alcohol intake - and surveyed the men on their lifestyles. Based on the findings of the study, the team estimated that practicing the five healthy behaviors could prevent nearly 80 percent of first time heart attacks in men. [RTT News](#)

## Even when abortion is illegal, the market may sell pills for abortion

23 September - ...[The] illicit trade in misoprostol has cut the rate of maternal deaths in El Salvador significantly, says Sofia Villalta Delgado, with the Salvadoran Ministry of Health. Before misoprostol, women were regularly turning up at hospitals with major complications from botched abortions. "When we were students and when we first started in medicine, women were arriving at the hospital totally septic, with infection in their entire abdomen," she says through a translator. "You had to take out the whole uterus." This has gone down significantly, she adds... In 2000, the Food and Drug Administration approved misoprostol for abortions in the U.S., but only in conjunction with another drug called mifepristone. The combination has come to be known as the "abortion pill." It's also become the most common form of medication abortion in the U.S., Canada, China, India and much of Europe. [NPR](#)

## Experts unveil plan to end rabies globally via dog vaccinations

25 September - Rabies experts on Thursday unveiled a blueprint for eliminating the pernicious disease, which almost always is caused by bites from rabid dogs and kills tens of thousands of people a year worldwide, through a program of mass dog vaccinations in targeted regions. The viral disease is rare in developed countries thanks to routine vaccination of pet dogs, but still kills about 69,000 people globally every year, mostly in poor and rural parts of Africa and Asia. About a third of rabies-related deaths are in India alone... Efforts in Latin America and pilot projects in Africa and Southeast Asia have shown that mass dog vaccination programs can prevent human rabies in low-income countries as well as wealthy ones, they said. Vaccinating 70 percent of dogs in a given region is the threshold for halting rabies, they noted. [Reuters](#)

## Second screening 'may alter the brain and trigger emotional problems'



24 September - ...Many people now watch television while surfing the internet on their computers or smartphones, a phenomenon known as 'second screening' but it could be harmful. Researchers at the University of Sussex found that an area of the brain known as the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) was smaller in people who used the most electronic devices simultaneously. That part of the brain regulates emotions and is involved in decision making, reasoning, impulse control and empathy. Nearly two thirds of teenagers in Britain use a second screen while watching TV. Although the researchers admit that people with smaller ACCs may be predisposed to use more media devices, they claim it is 'equally plausible' that too much technology is directly damaging the brain. [Telegraph](#)

## We need a global health emergency corps to fight Ebola

25 September - ... To confront Ebola and future waves of "flashdemics" — high velocity, high lethality outbreaks — a new intervention strategy is needed: The creation of an international medical ground force that can be immediately dispatched to stricken zones, endowed with authority to enter countries unimpeded and begin operations. This rapid response unit can quickly and directly treat the ill, humanely care for the dying, and prevent spread to the vulnerable. This unit would implement strategies worked out in advance from a response playbook with pre-determined roles for responders. A medical reserve force could terminate nascent outbreaks quickly and spare further cost in lives and resources. A stricken country can then recover and rebuild from the emergency response to strengthen its health system against future threats. A coalition of countries, especially those with advanced health systems, could create a force in short order by contributing teams from existing agencies. [Time](#)

## World risks spending \$250 billion just to monitor U.N. development goals

24 September - The world risks having to spend about \$250 billion just to monitor U.N. development targets for 2030, diverting cash from goals such as ending poverty or protecting the environment, according to a study published on Wednesday. The report said governments should sharply cut a current draft list of targets for 2030 from a current 169 to avoid over-spending on compiling statistics. A World Bank official contested the study, calling the cost estimates too high... The report by Morten Jerven, a development expert at Simon Fraser University in Canada, estimated that each new target would cost \$1.5 billion if it were tracked via censuses and surveys of households, living standards and health. [Reuters](#)

## EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE

### Ebola 'contained in Senegal and Nigeria'

23 September - The World Health Organisation has said the Ebola epidemic that has killed 2,811 in West Africa has been contained in Senegal and Nigeria. The UN health agency said on Monday that Senegal had not reported any new cases of the virus since the first case was reported on August 29, while the last case reported in Nigeria was on September 8. "On the whole, the outbreaks in Senegal and Nigeria are pretty much contained," a WHO statement said. The incubation period for Ebola is 21 days, and double that time must pass without any new cases arising before a country can be deemed transmission-free. Both Senegal and Nigeria implemented strict measures to isolate the ill and track down further possible cases. Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone have failed to impose such steps, allowing the disease to take hold. [Al Jazeera](#)

### Ebola spread stabilizing in Guinea as toll nears 3,000: WHO

25 September - The spread of Ebola seems to have stabilized in Guinea, one of three West African states worst-hit by the disease, but a lack of beds and resistance in affected communities means its advance continues elsewhere, the World Health Organization said. Underscoring drastic measures being taken to halt the worst outbreak on record of the deadly virus, Sierra Leone put three more districts -- home to over a million people and major mining operations -- under indefinite quarantine... "The upward epidemic trend continues in Sierra Leone and most probably also in Liberia," the WHO said in its latest update on the disease, which has killed about half of those confirmed and suspected to have been infected. [Reuters](#)

## **Ebola virus disease in West Africa — The first 9 months of the epidemic and forward projections**

23 September - As of September 14, 2014, a total of 4507 confirmed and probable cases of Ebola virus disease (EVD), as well as 2296 deaths from the virus, had been reported from five countries in West Africa — Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sierra Leone. In terms of reported morbidity and mortality, the current epidemic of EVD is far larger than all previous epidemics combined. The true numbers of cases and deaths are certainly higher. There are numerous reports of symptomatic persons evading diagnosis and treatment, of laboratory diagnoses that have not been included in national databases, and of persons with suspected EVD who were buried without a diagnosis having been made. [New England Journal of Medicine](#)

## **Estimating the future number of cases in the Ebola epidemic — Liberia and Sierra Leone, 2014–2015**

23 September - The first cases of the current West African epidemic of Ebola virus disease (hereafter referred to as Ebola) were reported on March 22, 2014, with a report of 49 cases in Guinea. By August 31, 2014, a total of 3,685 probable, confirmed, and suspected cases in West Africa had been reported. To aid in planning for additional disease-control efforts, CDC constructed a modeling tool called EbolaResponse to provide estimates of the potential number of future cases. If trends continue without scale-up of effective interventions, by September 30, 2014, Sierra Leone and Liberia will have a total of approximately 8,000 Ebola cases. A potential underreporting correction factor of 2.5 also was calculated. Using this correction factor, the model estimates that approximately 21,000 total cases will have occurred in Liberia and Sierra Leone by September 30, 2014. Reported cases in Liberia are doubling every 15–20 days, and those in Sierra Leone are doubling every 30–40 days. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

## **FDA warns three companies against marketing their products as Ebola treatments or cures**

24 September - The U.S. Food and Drug Administration sent letters to three companies this week, warning them against marketing their products as possible treatments or cures for Ebola. The letters, posted online on Wednesday, document multiple claims from the companies or their paid representatives that essential oils and other natural remedies can "help prevent your contracting the Ebola virus" and in at least one instance, "effectively kill the Ebola virus." There are currently no approved treatments, cures or vaccines for Ebola. Natural Solutions Foundation, Young Living, and dōTERRA International LLC all produce products that were promoted on the Web as cures for a variety of ailments, all without FDA approval. [Washington Post](#)

## How the U.S. screwed up in the fight against Ebola

24 September - ...Could a large stockpile of ZMapp have halted the spread of Ebola? No one can say. What's certain is that the U.S. government hasn't done a good job taking the idea behind ZMapp and turning it into a treatment. The technology for antibody cocktails such as ZMapp has "been around for a few decades," says Robert Garry, a professor of microbiology at Tulane University. "This is something that, given the emergency, the government could have moved a little faster on, quite honestly." He's more right than he knows. The treatment came into the hands of a little-known Pentagon agency in late 2010, and, Bloomberg Businessweek has learned, ZMapp sat there dormant, waiting for a contract, for two years. [Bloomberg Businessweek](#)

## In Guinea, 2,000 young people to educate public on Ebola

24 September - The Guinean government says it is sending 2,000 young people door to door to educate families about Ebola. The initiative comes after the brutal killings of eight health workers and journalists as they traveled in the southeast as part of a government convoy to raise awareness about the virus. Guinea's government said what happened in the village of Wome last week must not happen again. Government spokesman Albert Damatang Camara said 20 people have been arrested in an ongoing investigation and that changes are under way in their Ebola strategy. "What happened in Wome goes beyond description and it came as a surprise," Camara said. "[They] are reinforcing security around the awareness campaign teams." He noted security forces will not be quarantining any areas. Their mission will be to protect health workers. Local organizations are calling upon the government to intensify its Ebola awareness campaign. Churches and mosques around Conakry have joined in on education efforts at the request of the government. [VOA](#)

## In Liberia, home deaths spread circle of Ebola contagion

24 September - ... So many Ebola victims are dying at home because of the severe shortage of treatment centers here in Monrovia, Liberia's capital, that they are infecting family members, neighbors and others in a ballooning circle of contagion. Only 18 percent of Ebola patients in Liberia are being cared for in hospitals or other settings that reduce the risk of transmission by isolating them from the rest of the population, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Unless that rate reaches 70 percent, the center predicted this week, Ebola cases will keep soaring... In the coming weeks, the United States military will try to overhaul the fight against Ebola in Liberia, home to 1,580 of the 2,800 Ebola deaths so far recorded in West Africa. The 3,000-strong American mission will not treat patients, but will build as many as 17 treatment centers, with a total of 1,700 beds, and try to train 500 health workers a week. But building the centers is expected to take weeks and it is unclear who will run them, especially since the disease has decimated Liberia's already weak health care system and the fear of Ebola has long kept many international aid workers away. [New York Times](#)

## Mass delivery of Ebola protection kits starts in Liberia

25 September – A mass delivery of almost half a million household kits to help stop the spread of the deadly Ebola virus in West Africa began on Thursday with the first batch of 9,000 packages containing gloves, soap and chlorine arriving in Liberia... The kits contain protective gowns, gloves and masks, as well as soap, chlorine and a sprayer, along with instructions on the use and safe disposal of materials. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) plans to distribute kits to up to 400,000 households across Liberia, which is the worst hit country with over 3,280 cases and 1,677 deaths according to the latest WHO figures. [Reuters](#)

## Top 10 Ebola response planning tips: Ebola readiness self-assessment for state and local public health officials

23 September - ...This document identifies rapidly emerging CDC guidelines for Ebola applicable to the public health preparedness national standards for state and local planning. It will:

- guide planning and readiness for Ebola response at the state and local levels
- assist state and local public health officials in assessing their jurisdictions' level of readiness for a potential Ebola response (including individual patients and persons under investigation);
- allow state and local public health systems to identify preparedness and operational gaps relative to Ebola
- identify resources that will assist state and local jurisdictions in closing self-identified gaps. [CDC](#)

## U.S. Department of Defense health official speaks out on Ebola and other threats

22 September - ... Dr. Rohit Chitale of the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center (AFHSC)... is an infectious disease epidemiologist and had worked at the CDC and WHO before he came to the Department of Defense. Rohit generously agreed to answer some of my questions about the Ebola outbreak. Horgan: How much of a threat is Ebola to regions outside Africa? Chitale: Given various factors including the nature of global travel today, the incubation period of Ebola, and the sheer number of cases in this outbreak, imported cases of Ebola into other regions are a significant possibility. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), and many nations have established guidance for entry and exit screening (e.g., thermal or fever screening at airports), and many nations had put them in place weeks or even months ago. Regardless, some cases will probably be imported into other nations. However, as many others have indicated including Dr. Paul Farmer as Theresa MacPhail quoted in your blog, if cases occur in nations with a strong medical and public health infrastructure, like the U.S., patients that are suspected for Ebola will be isolated, exposed patients will be quarantined, and we would expect little to no spread of cases locally. [Scientific American](#)

## U.S. hospitals unprepared to handle Ebola waste

24 September - U.S. hospitals may be unprepared to safely dispose of the infectious waste generated by any Ebola virus disease patient to arrive unannounced in the country, potentially putting the wider community at risk, biosafety experts said. Waste management companies are refusing to haul away the soiled sheets and virus-spattered protective gear associated with treating the disease, citing federal guidelines that require Ebola-related waste to be handled in special packaging by people with hazardous materials training, infectious disease and biosafety experts told Reuters. Many U.S. hospitals are unaware of the regulatory snafu, which experts say could threaten their ability to treat any person who develops Ebola in the U.S. after coming from an infected region. [Reuters](#)

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### INFLUENZA

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## CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 37 ending September 13, 2014:

- Novel Influenza A Viruses: No additional human infections with novel influenzas A viruses were reported during week 37. A total of two H3N2v cases have been reported in 2014 and are not epidemiologically linked.
- Pneumonia and Influenza (P&I) Mortality Surveillance: During week 37, 5.5 % of all deaths reported through the 122-Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to P&I. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 6.0% for week 37.

[FluView](#)

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

For week 38 (through 20 September 2014):

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

## WHO Influenza Update

22 September - Globally the influenza season was ongoing in the southern hemisphere. Elsewhere influenza activity remained low, except for some tropical countries in the Americas.

- In Europe and North America, overall influenza activity remained at inter-seasonal levels.
- In tropical countries of the Americas, influenza B was predominant with co-circulation of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).
- In Africa (with exception of the southern cone) and western Asia, influenza activity was low.
- In eastern Asia, influenza activity remained low in most countries with influenza A(H3N2) the main detected virus subtype. Influenza A(H3N2) and B activity continued in south China.
- In the southern hemisphere, the influenza season was ongoing. In the temperate zone of South America, influenza activity associated mainly with A(H3N2) viruses decreased. In Australia and New Zealand, the influenza season was ongoing. Australia reported continued high activity associated with A(H1N1)pdm09 and A(H3N2) viruses. In South Africa the influenza season continued with A(H3N2) predominating. [WHO](#)

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## **VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY**

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### **Chinese restaurant owner admits serving opium-laced noodles to hook customers**

24 September - A Chinese restaurant owner has been arrested after allegedly lacing dishes with opium in an effort to keep customers coming back, BBC News reported. The owner of the Yan'an noodle shop, known only as Zhang, admitted he bought 4.4 pounds of poppy buds in August. The buds contain the opium poppy seeds, from which the addictive narcotic opium is made. Zhang allegedly crushed the buds into powder form and mixed them into menu items. Police discovered the secret ingredient after one of Zhang's customers, Liu Juyou, 26, tested positive for drugs during a routine traffic stop. Cops held Juyou for 15 days until he sent relatives to the restaurant to eat the noodles in question. After the family members tested positive for drugs, police launched an investigation. [BBC News](#)

### **FSMA revisions aim to give flexibility to producers and suppliers**

19 September - Revised provisions to four proposed rules that fall within the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) were announced today by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in a news release... FSMA focuses on preventing food-related problems rather than responding to them after the fact, the FDA said. Today's revisions address rules on produce

safety, preventive controls for both human and animal food, and foreign-supplier verification... Specifically, the changes address:

- Water quality testing rules so they account for natural variations in water sources
- Adjustments in regulations about the use of manure and compost
- The definition of which farms are subject to produce-safety rules
- Use of spent grains, which are byproducts of brewing and distilling that are fed to animals
- More flexibility in foreign-supplier verification based on risk and history [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

## Scientists step up food fraud efforts following horse meat scandal

24 September - ...As a result of the [European horse meat] scandal, European governments started rethinking their food regulation practices. And scientists started kicking into high gear, looking for ways to improve the technology to quickly test batches of meat for contaminants. Just this month, a paper in the *Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry* details a new method that uses mass spectrometry to quickly detect even tiny traces of pork and horse mixed into raw and cooked beef products. The new technology looks promising, Lipp says. "But there is no way [food regulators] can test 100 percent of the food. We can never test ourselves to safety." Adulterated meat is just the tip of the iceberg, says John Spink, who heads Michigan State University's Food Safety Program. Food fraud is a huge, expansive problem, Spink says. Adulterated products show up in the market all the time — affecting everything from olive oil and milk to spices and additives. [NPR](#)

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### WELLNESS

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## Sayonara to 'super-size me'? Food companies cut calories, so do we



25 September - It just might be the dawn of a new era in American eating. Two-thirds of us are now more likely to go for foods marketed as lower-calorie and "better for you," and that means we're finally eating fewer calories... As we've reported, 16 companies, including General Mills, Kraft and Nestle, have removed 6.4 trillion calories from the marketplace. The calorie cuts — tracked by the Healthy Weight Commitment Foundation — are part of a nationwide

effort to tackle the obesity epidemic. And a new paper published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine finds that as a result of companies' trimming calories, Americans are cutting back on salty snacks and sugary treats. "We found that families with children cut 101 calories per day [per person] in their purchases," researcher Barry Popkin of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill tells us. [NPR](#)

## The reason you make unhealthy choices

25 September - ...This analysis looked at 15 studies of more than 3,000 total people across the age spectrum and discovered a link between self-compassion and four key health-promoting behaviors: eating better, exercising more, getting more restful sleep, and stressing less. People who were more self-compassionate practiced these health habits more often. "So much research right now is suggesting that not engaging in these behaviors can be the precursor to a variety of different life-threatening and chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, arthritis, you name it," says study author Fuschia Sirois, professor of psychology at Bishop's University in Quebec. Developing self-compassion is a way to commit to the behaviors you already know you should do, she says. [Time](#)

## When cigarettes cost more, people drink less. Except for wine

24 September - ...Raising cigarette taxes also lowers the amount of drinking, the most recent analysis finds. The study, published Wednesday in *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research*, highlights the tie between the vices. "It seems logical that as smoking decreases due to these policies that drinking might also decrease," Melissa Krauss, a data analyst at the Washington University School of Medicine and one of the authors of the study, tells Shots. However, the beneficial effect only applied to beer and spirits, not wine. Wine drinkers, the authors say, are more likely to have healthier lifestyle habits than beer or spirits drinkers. As Krauss says: "[The results] made sense to us because prior research shows that wine drinkers are less likely to smoke." [NPR](#)

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### **USAFRICOM**

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## Food aid and rainfall save South Sudan from famine

25 September - Emergency food aid, normal rainfall and the start of the harvest have helped to stave off famine in South Sudan, the latest analysis shows, but there is a risk of mass starvation in early 2015. Aid agencies scrambled to avert famine in South Sudan by launching the world's largest humanitarian operation after fighting erupted in the world's youngest country in December. Some 10,000 people have died and 1.7 million, one seventh

of the population, have been displaced since conflict broke out between President Salva Kiir's government forces and rebels allied to his former deputy Riek Machar. [Scientific American](#)

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#### **USCENTCOM**

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### **Iraq: Health conditions in Iraq become alarming**

24 September - ...Representatives from Doctors Without Borders just back from a mission to Iraq, report conditions in that country are grim. They say their medical activities are focused mainly in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq because they have no access to territories seized by the militant group Islamic State. The United Nations reports more than 1.5 million people have been displaced in Iraq since the beginning of the year; about 900,000 are in Kurdistan. The rest, more than one million, are trapped in areas controlled by IS. MSF Director General Bruno Jochum says... the risk of epidemics of diarrhea, skin diseases and gastrointestinal infections is on the rise. [VOA](#)

### **Pakistan: Left behind in North Waziristan**

25 September - Humanitarian attention during the ongoing Pakistan army offensive against militants in North Waziristan Agency (NWA) has focused on the roughly one million internally displaced persons (IDPs) who have fled. But a less accessible group of people exist: those who stayed behind... Many of those who decided not to flee are now far from basic services and humanitarian support. "We have been trying to get food supplies through to them, but the trucks from Bannu are not being allowed in," said Safdar Dawar, president of the Tribal Union of Journalists... As a result of the military action, access to NWA is extremely limited, but Dawar estimates that close to 40 percent of the population has remained despite the army operation, a figure disputed by security officials. [IRIN](#)

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#### **USEUCOM**

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### **UK opens first clinic for child victims of female genital mutilation**

22 September - Britain's first specialist clinic for child victims of female genital mutilation (FGM) opened in London on Monday as part of a push to eradicate the illegal ritual in the

country. The University College Hospital clinic, initially to be held once a month while demand is assessed, will offer medical treatment and psychological help to girls up to 18, who have suffered or may be at risk of FGM - a ritual usually involving the partial or total removal of external genitalia... The clinic will liaise closely with police, social care and community groups and will provide evidence and expert witness statements for court cases.

[Reuters](#)

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**USNORTHCOM**

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## U.S.: A rising tide of contaminants



25 September –...The number of chemicals contaminating our environment is growing at exponential rate, scientists say. A team of researchers at the U.S. Geological Survey tracks them in American waterways, sediments, landfills and municipal sewage sludge, which is often converted into agricultural fertilizer.

They've found steroid hormones and the antibacterial agent triclosan in sewage; the antidepressant fluoxetine (Prozac) in fish; and compounds from both birth control pills and detergents in the thin, slimy layer that forms over stones in streams. "We're looking at an increasingly diverse array of organic and inorganic chemicals that may have ecosystem health effects," said Edward Furlong, a research chemist with the U.S.G.S. office in Denver and one of the first scientists to track the spread of pharmaceutical compounds in the nation's waterways. [New York Times](#)

## U.S.: Diabetes rates no longer soaring

24 September - After years of substantial increases, rates of diabetes may be plateauing in the U.S., government data suggested. Although incidence and prevalence of type 1 and type 2 diabetes both rose between 1990 and 2008, trends have been flat through 2012, reported Linda Geiss, MA, of the CDC in Atlanta, and colleagues in the Journal of the American Medical Association. The trend may be related to a recent slowing in obesity rates, the researchers suggested. [MedPage Today](#)

## U.S.: In California, less water means more West Nile virus

22 September - California's historic drought is partly to blame for the recent rise in West Nile virus infections, public health officials say. There have been 311 cases reported so far, double the number of the same time last year, and the most of any state in the country. West Nile virus is spread by mosquitoes. They contract the virus when they feed on infected

birds, then spread it to the birds they bite next. A shortage of water can accelerate this cycle. "When we have less water, birds and mosquitoes are seeking out the same water sources, and therefore are more likely to come in to closer proximity to one another, thus amplifying the virus," says Vicki Kramer, chief of vector-borne diseases at the state Department of Public Health. Also, the water sources that do exist are more likely to stagnate. Stagnant water creates an excellent habitat for mosquitoes to breed. [NPR](#)

## U.S.: One-third of big California wildfire is now contained

23 September - Firefighters made progress containing a massive California wildfire Tuesday, improvement that allowed some evacuated residents to return to their homes. The King Fire in Placer and El Dorado counties, sprawled across nearly 90,000 mostly-forested acres between Sacramento and Lake Tahoe, was 35% contained on Tuesday afternoon. That was up from 18% on Monday evening... Twelve residences and 57 outbuildings were destroyed by fire in the White Meadows area... More than 7,300 workers are trying to contain the fire, which started more than a week ago near Pollock Pines, about 60 miles northeast of Sacramento. Wayne Allen Huntsman, 37, of Pollock Pines, was arrested Sept. 17 on suspicion of arson in connection with the blaze. [USA Today](#)

## U.S.: Prevalence of *Chlamydia trachomatis* genital infection among persons aged 14–39 years — United States, 2007–2012

26 September - Infection with the bacterium, *Chlamydia trachomatis* (often termed "chlamydia") is the most frequently reported sexually transmitted infection in the United States. The urethra is the most common site of infection in males, and the urethra and cervix are most commonly infected in females. Ascending infection in females can cause pelvic inflammatory disease, which can lead to infertility and ectopic pregnancy... Using data from the most recent cycles of [National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES)] (2007–2012), CDC estimated chlamydia prevalence among persons aged 14–39 years overall and by demographic characteristics and sexual behaviors. The prevalence of chlamydia among persons aged 14–39 years was 1.7% (95% confidence interval [CI] = 1.4%–2.0%). Chlamydia prevalence varied by age and race/ethnicity, with prevalence highest among non-Hispanic blacks (5.2%). [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

## U.S.: Respiratory illness spreads to more than half of U.S. states - CDC

23 September - ...As of Monday, 175 people in 27 states had been diagnosed since mid-August with illness caused by the somewhat rare enterovirus D68, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said... The CDC said more states are expected to have confirmed cases in the coming weeks, as clusters of illness are investigated and testing to confirm the virus is completed. [Reuters](#)

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## Bangladesh: Watery Bangladesh works to prevent child drowning deaths

24 September - In Bangladesh, the largest cause of death of children above age one is not malnutrition or disease -- it's drowning. To combat this threat, a local non-profit organization is teaching thousands of children to swim... From 2006 to 2013, local swim instructors have taught about 360,000 children to swim, mostly in villages where the majority of people live. It's a life-saving mission. An estimated 18,000 children drown each year in Bangladesh, making drowning the largest killer of children between the ages of one and 18. [VOA](#)

## China: South China province reports 6,089 dengue cases

23 September -- A total of 6,089 dengue cases have been reported in south China's Guangdong Province since May, local authorities said on Tuesday. The provincial capital of Guangzhou was hit hardest by the virus, with 5,190 cases reported as of Monday, including two deaths, according to the provincial disease control and prevention center... An increasing number of cases contracted abroad and rainy days this year contributed to the dengue outbreak, said Yang Zhicong, deputy director of the Guangzhou municipal disease control and prevention center... Figures from the center show that due to high temperatures and rainy weather in Guangdong, the mosquito population is five times the normal level. [Shanghai Daily](#)

## India: Social media get the right stuff to India's flood victims

19 September - When the floods hit the state of Jammu and Kashmir in the first week of September, Delhi resident Raheel Khursheed was preparing to visit his hometown, Anantnag. "By the middle of the week I realized that it's not going to stop raining through most of the week, and I started to put my plans on hold" ... So he started a social media campaign to organize a nationwide relief effort to aid the flood victims in his home state. Together with a colleague and a few friends, he created a website called JK Flood Relief, a Twitter handle and the hashtag #jkfloodrelief. Then they put out calls for people to donate. They reached out to people in Kashmir to list the items they needed most. Food, medicine, insulin, sanitary napkins, baby formula, and blankets were among them. By using social media, they were able to regularly update their list. Once the Indian company Emami donated a large number of sanitary pads, Khursheed says, "We didn't need pads anymore, so we took it off the list." People from around the country responded to the request for aid. They reached out to the JK Flood Relief team on Twitter and set up collection points across major cities like Bangalore, Chennai and Mumbai. [NPR](#)

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## Brazil releases dengue-fighting mosquitoes

25 September - Brazilian scientists have released thousands of *Wolbachia*-infected *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes in an attempt to tame the spread of dengue fever, a mosquito-borne disease of humans, which re-emerged in the country in 1981 after a 20-year lull and caused some 7 million illnesses over the following 30 years, the BBC reported today. *Wolbachia* is an intracellular bacterium that "acts like a vaccine" for dengue-carrying mosquitoes in that it stops the dengue virus from multiplying in the insect's body, according to the story. The organism also interferes with reproduction in mosquitoes. Eggs fertilized by *Wolbachia*-contaminated male mosquitoes do not turn into larvae, and if a female mosquito is contaminated, all her future generations will also carry the bacterium. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

## Caribbean chikungunya cases top 738,000

22 September - The tally of chikungunya cases in the Caribbean, pushed by 19,000 new cases in the Dominican Republic, has surpassed 738,000, and Florida has registered another locally acquired case of the mosquito-borne viral infection, according to public health agencies. [CIDRAP](#)

## Chikungunya in Central America

22 September - In June 2014, El Salvador reported locally transmitted cases for the first time in Central America. Local transmission means that mosquitoes in the area have been infected with chikungunya and are spreading it to people. Local transmission of chikungunya is now being reported in other countries in Central America. As of September 22, 2014, the following Central American countries have reported cases of chikungunya: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama. [CDC Travelers' Health](#)

## Chikungunya in South America

22 September - In December 2013, French Guiana reported locally transmitted cases for the first time in South America. Local transmission means that mosquitoes in the area have been infected with chikungunya and are spreading it to people. Local transmission of chikungunya is now being reported in other countries in the South America. As of September 22, 2014, the following South American countries have reported cases of chikungunya: Brazil, Colombia, French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname, Venezuela. [CDC Travelers' Health](#)

## El Salvador abortion ban is torture, kills women: Amnesty

25 September - El Salvador's total ban on abortion is killing women and girls, forcing them to undergo dangerous backstreet abortions and landing them in jail, rights group Amnesty

International said on Thursday... Amnesty said the abortion ban was indirectly a leading cause of maternal deaths in El Salvador and had led to the wrongful imprisonment of scores of women and girls for inducing abortions when in fact they had suffered miscarriages, stillbirths, or complications during pregnancy or birth... El Salvador is one of seven Latin American countries that outlaw abortion without exception, and 95 percent of all abortions carried out in the region are considered unsafe, according to the World Health Organization. [Reuters](#)

## El Salvador says nearly 30,000 infected with mosquito-borne chikungunya

24 September - El Salvador has detected nearly 30,000 cases of the painful mosquito-borne viral disease chikungunya, and has undertaken measures to prevent the disease-carrying mosquitoes breeding, the head of the country's emergency services said on Wednesday. Since June, when the first case was reported, there have been 29,704 people infected by the virus, with 204 of them hospitalized, Jorge Melendez told Reuters. "Having never been in contact with this strain, the Salvadoran population has no defense," Melendez said, adding that nobody has died from the outbreak. [Reuters](#)

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