

27 September 2013

Army Public Health Weekly Update

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

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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Camp Lejeune Water Registry

The Marine Corps is encouraging anyone who lived or worked at Camp Lejeune, N.C., in 1987 or earlier to register for a database so they can receive information on research into potential health hazards of the base's drinking water supply.

Marine Corps officials say information from the studies will be sent to people who sign up for the Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water registry. Results of the studies are expected this fall.



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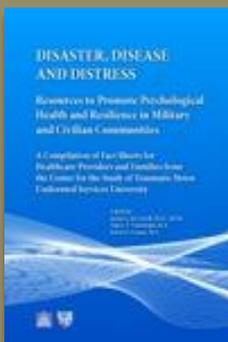
USSOUTHCOM

- Nicaragua keeps dengue warning to prevent resurgence
- Brazil to test new vaccine against dengue fever

**Disaster, Disease
and Distress:
Resources to
Promote
Psychological
Health and
Resilience in
Military and Civilian
Communities**

This book from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences is a compilation of fact sheets and educational resources developed over the past 10 years that address important health and mental health issues of service members and their families impacted by deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.

The resources are geared toward civilian communities around the globe affected by natural and human-made disasters, such as hurricanes, earthquakes and mass shootings.



U.S. MILITARY

Army Combat Uniform without permethrin

23 September - The U.S. Army is allowing Soldiers, trying to become pregnant, pregnant, or post-partum and nursing, the option of temporarily wearing an untreated uniform where the probability of vector-borne disease transmission is remote... To exercise the option of wearing non-permethrin treated ACUs, Soldiers must meet with their health care provider to obtain a temporary eProfile - DA Form 3349, Physical Profile - authorizing the wear of non-treated ACUs. Proof of profile is required to order and purchase a non-treated ACU through AMCS. [Stand-To!](#)

Defense Department conducting review of suicide prevention efforts

24 September - The Defense Department has more than 900 different suicide prevention initiatives. Officials have been working to identify which ones reflect the federal government's new national strategy for reducing suicide. The [Defense Suicide Prevention Office](#) started its review last fall, and an interim report of their findings is expected to be shared with key military leaders in October. "What we have been doing is looking at efficiency and effectiveness," said Jacqueline Garrick, head of the Defense Suicide Prevention Office. "We have started to look at costs associated with these programs and then looking to measure whether or not they are effective." As part of the review process, the Defense Suicide Prevention Office developed an automated management tool to track the efficiency, effectiveness, requirements and costs associated with the more than 900 suicide prevention programs. [MHS](#)

Defense Health Agency aims to expand on-base care

26 September - A new Defense Health Agency (DHA) will come to life Oct. 1, armed with new authorities to control health costs by cutting waste and duplication across the separate medical departments of Army, Navy and Air Force. DHA is tasked to streamline delivery of care, recapture thousands of patients for the direct care system from purchased care contractors, combine common support functions and standardize health care business practices... One impact will be greater access to military facilities, particularly in areas where beneficiaries are most concentrated. Usage of base hospitals has dropped to about 33 percent of capacity, a trend aggravated by years of war when medical staffs routinely deployed to care for wounded in theater... Under DHA, the goal is to increase base hospital usage to reach at least 70 percent of capacity, Woodson said, because care in the military system costs about a third less than TRICARE purchased care... Sometime in 2014 or early 2015, it also will assume responsibility from the services for: medical education and training; research and development; acquisition and contracting; budgeting and resourcing; public health. Plans are to reach full operational capability of all shared services by fall 2015.

[Military.com](#)

**Training for
Healthcare
Providers on
Indicators of
Drinking Water
Contamination**

This webinar will educate public health professionals about drinking water systems and indicators of possible drinking water contamination, and will convey methods for communicating information to partners who play a role in protecting public health. Teleconference and web conference information will be emailed to registered participants in advance of webinar.

Date: October 1, 2013

Time: 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm
(Eastern Time)

Register

DOD mefloquine policy mirrors FDA update on malaria drug

26 September – The Defense Department’s policy on the antimalarial drug mefloquine, which has been in use for decades, is consistent with a stronger, updated warning about the drug from the Food and Drug Administration, senior DOD officials said. On July 29, the FDA posted on its website a public advisory about neurologic and psychiatric side effects associated with mefloquine hydrochloride, a drug used to prevent and treat the deadly mosquito-borne disease. The regulatory agency added a boxed warning -- the most serious kind -- to modify the drug’s label and revise the patient medication guide and wallet-information card given with each prescription to include the possibility that the neurologic side effects could persist or become permanent if the drug is used. Defense.gov

Mental health leading cause of military hospital stays

25 September - Through 2012, mental illness in the military took up more days for hospitalization than any other mental or physical problems, including war wounds, accidents, illness or pregnancies. Post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse and other mental illnesses accounted for more days spent by troops in the hospital than any other medical condition in the military in 2012, including war wounds, injuries and illness, according to Pentagon data. The numbers show how years of exposure to combat trauma created a core of servicemembers with severe mental health problems — about 20,000 last year — who accounted for more lost workdays than those with any other health issue. In the worst cases, troops remained hospitalized more than a month. Only servicemembers with severe amputations and long rehabilitation stay longer, according to Pentagon data provided in response to USA TODAY queries. USA Today

New camouflage on the way, SMA says

23 September - Sergeant Major of the Army Raymond Chandler told a gathering of troops in Afghanistan that the Army’s new camouflage pattern will soon be unveiled and likely phased in next year. New appearance standards are also expected. The top enlisted soldier said the next camouflage uniform will come in different colors for different environments and the pattern will be similar to the “MultiCam” now used in Afghanistan. Army Times

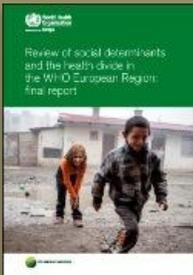
Programs curb suicide risks: Money, relationship problems

25 September - A recent study by military researchers showed that the risk factors associated with suicides in the military are the same as those in the civilian population. Among these factors are financial and relationship problems. “There is almost always a relationship problem or financial problem,” Navy Adm. William McRaven, commanding general for the Special Operations Command, said during his appearance at the 2013 Warrior Resilience Conference in August. Dr. William Brim, director of the Center for Deployed Psychology, also spoke at the conference. He noted that the study, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, “points to the fact that it is not necessarily combat that is driving suicide ... it is everyday stress.” MHS

Review of social determinants and the health divide in the WHO European Region: final report

The WHO European Region has seen improvements in the conditions in which people are born, grow, live and work.

Inequities persist, however, both between and within countries. This review of inequities in health across the 53 Member States of the Region was commissioned to support the development of the new European policy framework for health and well-being.



Surveillance Snapshot: Lyme disease among beneficiaries of the Military Health System, 2001-2012

August 2013 - Among U.S. military service members of the active component, annual incidence rates of Lyme disease rose during the years 2001-2008, but appear to have stabilized since 2008. The peak incidence rate in the surveillance period 2001-2012 was in 2011 (n=233), when there were 16 cases of Lyme disease per 100,000 person-years. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

Vets may not get speedy cancer care

20 September - Adults diagnosed with colon or rectal cancer are experiencing longer wait times before receiving cancer treatment in Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Centers across the U.S., according to a recent report. The growing treatment delays may not be specific to VA centers alone, and whether the delays are tied to worse outcomes, as previous studies have found for breast and other cancers, is unknown, researchers said. "Our study identified a trend in increasing wait times at VA hospitals that will most certainly continue in the next decade," lead study author Dr. Ryan P. Merkow told Reuters Health, adding that "large, academic institutions also are dealing with similar issues." [Reuters](#)

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GLOBAL

APA calls for less antipsychotic use

23 September - In concert with the American Board of Internal Medicine's "Choosing Wisely" initiative, the American Psychiatric Association has released its list of "Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question." The list, focusing on limiting antipsychotic use, advises the following:

- Don't prescribe antipsychotics without "appropriate" evaluation and continual monitoring.
- Don't routinely prescribe two or more antipsychotics at the same time.
- Don't prescribe antipsychotics as first-line treatment for the behavioral or psychologic symptoms of dementia.
- Don't routinely use antipsychotics as first-line therapy for insomnia.
- Don't routinely prescribe antipsychotics as first-line treatment for pediatric patients for any condition other than a psychotic disorder. [NEJM Journal Watch](#)

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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Children at risk despite malaria treatment



24 September - Repeated bouts of malaria may leave children vulnerable to other deadly infections and even cardiovascular disease later in life. Now, a new study may explain why. About 200 children in Blantyre, Malawi, took part in the study. It compares kids in one group, who have

mild or the more serious cerebral malaria, to those in another group, who are healthy. Malaria is caused by the bite of an infected mosquito that transmits parasites first to the liver and then to red blood cells. Tests showed the blood vessels of the two groups of children were different – especially those with cerebral malaria. It has to do with inflammation. It's long been known that diseases that cause acute fevers – febrile diseases – trigger inflammation in the endothelium. That's the smooth, thin layer of cells lining blood vessels throughout the body. [VOA](#)

'Facts' of *C. Diff* transmission challenged

25 September - A sophisticated genetic analysis of *Clostridium difficile* cases is challenging the conventional wisdom that symptomatic patients are responsible for most transmission in hospitals. Whole-genome sequencing of *C. difficile* isolates from more than 1,200 patients found that only 35% were related to a previous case in a large, four-hospital study... And 45% were genetically distinct from all other cases, suggesting that diverse sources -- not just patients with *C. difficile* disease -- are responsible for a large proportion of transmissions. [MedPage Today](#)

Foundation to provide open access to blood cancer research data

24 September - Multiple myeloma research advocates on Tuesday will begin providing open Internet access to genetic and research data on hundreds of patients in hopes of speeding the development of new treatments for the deadly blood cancer. The Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation's (MMRF) Researcher Gateway, a \$40 million program funded by the foundation and drug company partners, will give researchers around the world access to information, such as specific patient gene mutations associated with the disease and how patients respond to treatment. That could help identify biological targets for future medicines, hasten enrollment in studies by finding the right patients for the trials and enhance researcher collaboration. [Reuters](#)

Health apps don't save people, people do

19 September - Silicon Valley thinks it has found a way to address lifestyle diseases (hypertension, Type 2 diabetes, and the like) that are increasingly straining global health care systems: smartphone apps... Last year mobile health apps for iPhones and devices that use Google's Android operating system generated some \$718 million in revenue, up from an estimated \$100 million in 2010... Yet so far there's little evidence that the smartphone apps can effectively reduce lifestyle diseases or the huge costs associated with them... This

year researchers at Johns Hopkins published one of the first papers to put health apps through a sort of rigorous equivalent to medical trials. The findings showed the apps were mediocre at best. Most of the apps' ability to manage disease was of "low quality, and nearly all were undertaken in high-income countries," they wrote... A study highlighted in the journal *Diabetes Care* called attention to one group of early adopters who already seem to benefit from health apps: kids. In it, children with Type 1 diabetes used their smartphones to better monitor and manage blood-glucose levels. Bernard Tyson, CEO of Kaiser Permanente, sees integrating technology into health care as a balancing act. "The trick is to figure out what it is about certain technologies that works so both doctors and their patients can partner to improve health outcomes," he says. [CNN](#)

Increasingly clogged sewers attributed to popular 'flushable' wipes

23 September – [C]logged sewers are becoming more and more common around the country. Sewage authorities attribute the obstructions to the moistened wipes that are becoming popular as a replacement for toilet paper and for other household purposes. The manufacturers claim that their products disintegrate in sewers. Utility officials say that one of the manufacturers' key tests for wipes marketed as "flushable" does not simulate conditions in real-life sewer systems. The "slosh box" test requires that at least one-quarter of a wipe agitated in water be broken into pieces small enough to pass through a small sieve within three hours. However, utility officials say wipes can reach a pump within a couple of minutes. Moreover, many sewer systems... move sewage primarily via gravity and are not nearly as hard on the wipes as the agitation test, utility officials say. [The Washington Post](#)

Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) – WHO update

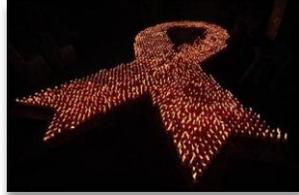
20 September - Two patients earlier reported as laboratory-confirmed with Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) infection in Italy in the Disease Outbreak News on 2 June 2013 are being reclassified as probable cases. The reclassification follows further analysis of the laboratory tests performed in May 2013, which has shown that the two cases do not fulfil the current WHO case definition for a "confirmed case" for MERS-CoV. The two cases are the two-year-old girl and a 42-year-old woman who were identified as close contacts of the index case who travelled from Jordan. [WHO](#)

Natural nerves improve robotic leg performance

25 September - Redirecting nerves from the thigh muscle to control an experimental robotic leg makes it easier to use and more like a natural leg, researchers report. The leg's movements are guided by the patient's original nerves, which have been redirected to a small area of the thigh muscle. The robotic leg senses the unconscious muscle movements and translates them into movements for the knee and ankle of the 10-pound device. "This technology offers a seamless transition to walking around, climbing stairs, and descending stairs and moving around on slopes and even repositioning the prosthesis without thinking

about it. That's something no other device offers now," Levi Hargrove of the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago told Reuters Health. [Reuters](#)

United Nations reports 'dramatic' progress in fight against AIDS



23 September - The global rate of HIV infection and the number of AIDS-related deaths have been dramatically reduced, thanks to expanding access to treatment, the [United Nations](#) said in a report issued on Monday. In its annual update on HIV, which it said now infects around 35.3 million people worldwide, UNAIDS said deaths from AIDS and HIV infection rates were falling, while the number of people getting treatment is going up. AIDS-related deaths in 2012 fell to 1.6 million, down from 1.7 million in 2011 and a peak of 2.3 million in 2005. And the number of people newly infected with the disease dropped to 2.3 million in 2012 down from 2.5 million in 2011. [Reuters](#)

WHO raises concerns about MERS-CoV patterns and pace

20 September - The World Health Organization (WHO) today aired concerns about surging numbers of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) cases and clusters and said that the disease pattern seems to be trending younger and affecting women more often. In a separate report, the WHO downgraded two cases from confirmed to probable, which left its official global tally at 130 cases... Regarding changes in demographics, the WHO said the median age of sporadic cases has dropped slightly, but a shift in gender is more pronounced and persistent. More than half (56%) of the newer case-patients have been female. This contrasts with earlier cases: Through the middle of July, 83% of the patients were male. [CIDRAP](#)

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INFLUENZA

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week ending September 14, 2013:

- Two additional novel influenza A virus infections were reported. Two infections with influenza A (H1N1) variant (H1N1v) viruses were reported by Arkansas, bringing the total number of variant influenza virus infections to 20.
- During week 37, 5.8% of all deaths reported through the 122-Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to pneumonia and influenza. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 6.1% for week 37. [FluView](#)

Google.org: Flu Trends

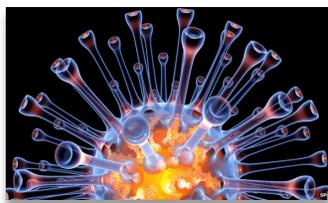
26 September – Estimates of flu activity based on certain Internet search queries indicate that the level of flu activity in the northern hemisphere ranges from minimal (Japan) to high (Russia) and in the southern hemisphere ranges from minimal to moderate. [Google.org Flu Trends](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For the week ending 21 September 2013:

- Influenza: Two new cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza (A/H1N1) among US military basic trainees.
- FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates were at or below expected values. [NHRC Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)

Scientists take big step towards universal flu vaccine



22 September - Scientists say they have made a significant leap towards creating a vaccine that would protect against every form of flu. The influenza virus is a constantly shifting target so seasonal flu vaccines rapidly become useless and new ones are needed each year. A team at Imperial College London say they have made a "blueprint" for a universal flu vaccine... Vaccine researchers believe targeting the core of the virus may be the way to develop a universal vaccine. A specific part of the immune system, called T-cells, is thought to be able to recognise proteins in the core. [BBC News](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Roll over? Fat chance

25 September - ...[T]he problem of overweight dogs cuts across breeds. More than half of American dogs are overweight, according to the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention, an organization founded by a veterinarian to draw attention to the problem. And in dogs, as in people, extra weight is linked to diabetes, arthritis and high blood pressure as well as kidney and respiratory diseases. Reducing calorie intake is part of the solution, veterinarians and pet behaviorists say. But diet without exercise isn't enough. So dogs have been hitting the gym for fitness programs at kennels and pet spas around the country. [New York Times](#)

U.S.: Colo. farmers arrested in fatal Listeria outbreak

26 September - The owners of a Colorado cantaloupe farm were arrested Thursday on charges stemming from a 2011 listeria epidemic that killed 33 people in one of the nation's deadliest outbreaks of foodborne illness. Federal prosecutors said brothers Eric and Ryan Jensen were arrested on misdemeanor charges of introducing adulterated food into interstate commerce. Each man faces six counts... Prosecutors said the federal Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention determined the Jensens didn't adequately clean the cantaloupe. [ABC News](#)

USDA criticized for proposed changes to poultry and hog inspection

13 September - The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently issued a [report](#) finding that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) did not adequately evaluate the impact of proposed poultry and hog inspection changes that would replace some USDA inspectors on slaughter lines with plant personnel tasked with ensuring quality and safety standards. According to the report, USDA implemented several pilot projects at poultry and hog processing plants over the past decade but ultimately failed to gather enough data to assess the effectiveness of these new systems... Based on these findings, GAO has called on USDA to (i) "collect and analyze information to determine if the young hog pilot project is meeting its purpose" and (ii) "clearly disclose to the public limitations in the information it relied on for the proposed rule to modernize poultry slaughter inspections." [Lexology](#)

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WELLNESS

Diet of defeat: Why football fans mourn with high-fat food

20 September - ... A study that links sports outcomes with the eating behavior of fans finds that backers of NFL teams eat more food and fattier food the day after a loss. Backers of winning teams, by contrast, eat lighter food, and in moderation. After a defeat, the researchers found that saturated fat consumption went up by 16 percent, while after a victory it decreased by 9 percent... It wasn't just about eating saturated fats, either. Overall calorie consumption went up by 10 percent after losses, and down by 5 percent after wins. [NPR](#)

Drivers who test positive for drugs have triple the risk of a fatal car crash

25 September - Drugged driving has been a safety issue of increasing public concern in the United States and many other countries but its role in motor vehicle crashes had not been adequately examined. In a new study conducted at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, researchers assessed the association of driver drug use, as well as the combination of drugs and alcohol, with the risk of fatal crash. They found that drug use is associated with a significantly increased risk of fatal crash involvement, particularly when used in combination with alcohol. The study provides critical data for understanding the joint effect of alcohol and drugs on driving safety. [EurekAlert!](#)

Concussion symptoms may not differ in teen, young adult athletes

24 September - Whether injured athletes are teens or young adults does not affect the severity of their concussion symptoms, according to a new study. However, differences may still exist in the concussion's aftermath, the researchers say. Some previous research has raised concerns that high school-age athletes may suffer more severe symptoms after a concussion than college-age athletes, but this study found no evidence of that. Related symptoms include headache, dizziness, nausea, fatigue, irritability, sleeping difficulties and problems with memory and concentration. [Medline Plus](#)

Rethinking motion sickness

23 September - ...For decades now, Dr. Stoffregen, 56, director of the university's Affordance Perception-Action Laboratory, has been amassing evidence in support of a surprising theory about the causes of motion sickness. The problem does not arise in the inner ear, he believes, but rather in a disturbance in the body's system for maintaining posture. The idea, once largely ignored, is beginning to gain grudging recognition. "Most theories say when you get motion sick, you lose your equilibrium," said Robert Kennedy, a psychology professor at the University of Central Florida. "Stoffregen says because you lose your equilibrium, you get motion sick." ... Dr. Stoffregen said motion sickness may worsen with the proliferation of digital devices and displays. [New York Times](#)

Rules sought for workplace wellness questionnaires

24 September - A federal lawmaker is asking the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to investigate employer wellness programs that seek intimate health information from employees, and to issue guidelines preventing employers from using such programs to discriminate against workers. The request, by Representative Louise M. Slaughter, Democrat of New York and a staunch advocate for health privacy rights, came a few days after Pennsylvania State University **suspended part** of its new employee wellness program that had drawn objections from faculty members. "What happened at Penn State was appalling to me," Ms. Slaughter said in an interview on Tuesday, referring to the university's requiring employees to pay a monthly surcharge of \$100 if they did not fill out detailed health risk questionnaires. [New York Times](#)

Tackling fears 'while you sleep'

22 September - US researchers suggest smells could be used to calm fears - while people sleep. People were trained to associate two images, linked to smells, with fear. During sleep they were exposed to one of those smells - and when they woke they were less frightened of the image linked to that smell. A UK expert praised the Nature Neuroscience study and said it could help treat phobias and perhaps even post-traumatic stress disorders. People with phobias are already commonly treated with "gradual exposure" therapy while they are awake, where they are exposed to the thing they are frightened of in incremental degrees. This study suggests that the theory could be extended to therapy while they are in slow-wave, or deep, sleep. This is the deepest period of sleep, where memories, particularly those linked to emotions, are thought to be processed. [BBC News](#)

Why runners don't get knee arthritis



25 September - One of the most entrenched beliefs about running, at least among nonrunners, is that it causes arthritis and ruins knees. But a nifty new study finds that this idea is a myth and distance running is unlikely to contribute to the development of arthritis, precisely and paradoxically because it involves so much running. It's easy to understand, of course, why running is thought to harm the knee joint, since with every stride, ballistic forces move through a runner's knee. Common sense would suggest that repeatedly applying such loads to a joint should eventually degrade its protective cartilage, leading to arthritis. But many of the available, long-term studies of runners show that, as long as knees are healthy to start with, running does not substantially increase the risk of developing arthritis, even if someone jogs into middle age and beyond. [New York Times](#)

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USAFRICOM

Swaziland shows signs of turning corner on world's highest HIV rates

23 September - Swaziland, the country hardest hit by HIV/AIDS, appears to be stemming the pace of new infections thanks to increased funding, more efficient treatment and greater international help, public health workers said. On a global basis, the rate of HIV infection and the number of AIDS-related deaths have been dramatically reduced, thanks to expanding access to treatment, the United Nations said in a report issued on Monday. Swaziland has a high incidence rate with about a quarter of the adult population and 40 percent of mothers infected with the virus. Life expectancy in the country of about 1.4 million has dropped from about 60 in the 1990s to 49 in 2012 - one of the lowest in the world, according to U.N. agencies. [Reuters](#)

Uganda: Suspected Guinea worm outbreak reported in Kitgum

26 September - Doctors in Kitgum are investigating a report of suspected outbreak of Guinea Worm Disease (GWD) in the district ten years after World Health Organization (WHO) declared Uganda a guinea worm free country. The suspected case was reported last week in Akara Labot-Iwonga village, Pajong parish in Mucwini Sub County where a 72-year-old woman, Esther Lamwaka exhibited prospective signs and symptoms of the disease also called dracunculiasis. Lamwaka who first suffered from the parasitic disease one and half decades ago explained that she develops constant fever, swelling and pain on her left foot – very similar signs she once experienced. [New Vision](#)

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USCENTCOM

Pakistan region reports 10 new polio cases

25 September - Ten new polio cases have been confirmed in Pakistan's North Waziristan region, bringing to 25 the number of cases reported this year, *Pakistan Today* reported today. Taliban warlord Hafiz Gulbahadur declared a polio immunization ban in the region 15 months ago, and North Waziristan, in northeastern Pakistan, has remained inaccessible to vaccination teams, the story said. The first polio case in the region was reported in May, and since then 82% of affected children have been younger than 1 year old, indicating their infections are a direct result of the ban, a World Health Organization (WHO) official said. "It is a clear manifestation of what is about to hit us in the future if an immunisation campaign does not start soon," said Elias Durr, MD, head of the WHO's Polio Eradication Initiative. Each infected child puts about 200 to 1,000 children at risk, Durr said. "Not every child is paralysed if infected, but he or she is a potential carrier." [CIDRAP News Scan](#)

Pakistan: Quake death toll rises to 356



26 September - The death toll from the strong earthquake that struck southwestern Pakistan this week has risen to 356 as rescue workers struggle to reach victims, authorities said Thursday. Further complicating relief efforts, two rockets were fired at -- and missed -- a military helicopter on its way to the quake zone. The number of people injured has climbed to 619, said Jan Muhammad Buledi, a spokesman for the government of Balochistan, the province where the quake hit. Authorities estimate that 21,000 houses have been destroyed. The 7.7-magnitude earthquake took place Tuesday in a remote, sparsely populated area of Balochistan. Rescue efforts are under way in the heavily hit districts of Awaran and Kech... Meanwhile, thousands of survivors in need of assistance

after the quake are having to cope with high temperatures, a lack of drinking water and little in the way of shelter. [CNN](#)

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USEUCOM

Israel and West Bank and Gaza Strip: Poliovirus detected from environmental samples

20 September - WHO considers the risk of further international spread of wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) from Israel to be high. The risk assessment reflects evidence of increasing geographic extent of WPV1 circulation in Israel over a prolonged period of time. Recently, WPV1 has also been isolated from sewage samples collected by the Palestinian Authority, both in West Bank and the Gaza Strip. No cases of paralytic polio have been reported by Israel or the Palestinian Authority. [WHO](#)

Turkish protesters are still said to be ailing from tear gas

25 September - Almost 40 percent of protesters surveyed by a Turkish medical group complained of continuing repercussions from their exposure to the tear gas that security forces used to quell last spring's antigovernment demonstrations, the group says. In a report released last week, the Turkish Medical Association, based in Ankara, the capital, said it had questioned more than 11,000 protesters nationwide who were exposed to tear gas for up to eight hours a day over multiple days during the protests, which convulsed Turkey for weeks in June. It said 39 percent complained about continuing effects from the exposure, with 14 percent saying they suffered skin irritations and 10 percent reporting dizziness and balance problems. The government has strongly criticized the medical association, saying it is biased because its members — doctors, nurses and medical students — treated the wounded. During the protests, riot police officers detained dozens of doctors and other medical workers on charges of violating the public order. [New York Times](#)

United Kingdom: Doctor warns killer Russian drug Krokodil could be in Gloucester

22 September – As if the murky drugs underworld wasn't dangerous enough, health experts are concerned a wave of new designer narcotics are set to sweep into Gloucester. Although a recent trend of heroin being cut with lethal anthrax and tetanus by dealers looks to be coming to an end, the latest cheap black market substitutes are proving just as deadly... "Another drug coming into fashion is Krokodil. It is caused nasty necrosis, or cell death. "It has come from Russia and is very unpleasant. There are plenty of warning signs that it could be in Gloucester. "It is cheap and nasty and causes damage to the point where you can see someone's bones through their skin. [This is Gloucestershire](#)

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Mexico storm death toll rises to 110



23 September - The number of people confirmed to have died as a result of Tropical Storms Manuel and Ingrid in Mexico now stands at 110, the interior minister says. Another 68 are still missing, believed dead, after a landslide destroyed the village of La Pintada in western Guerrero

state. President Enrique Pena Nieto asked Congress to increase the federal budget in light of the emergency. Officials are still trying to evaluate the total extent of the damage. [BBC News](#)

U.S.: Community MRSA cases climb among kids

23 September - Invasive methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) infections haven't fallen among children as in adults, and community-acquired pediatric cases are actually on the rise, according to CDC data. The age- and race-adjusted incidence of [invasive MRSA](#) contracted outside the healthcare setting increased 10.2% year over year, going from 1.1 to 1.7 per 100,000 children from 2005 to 2010, Martha Iwamoto, MD, MPH, of the CDC in Atlanta, and colleagues found. Healthcare-associated and hospital-onset cases remained unchanged over that period among children overall. [MedPage Today](#)

U.S.: Congress moves toward extending worldwide anti-AIDS program

25 September - Senior U.S. lawmakers introduced legislation in the Senate and House of Representatives on Wednesday to extend for another decade a successful and popular program to combat AIDS worldwide launched 10 years ago by former President George W. Bush. The bills feature several provisions to increase oversight of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, known as PEPFAR, due to expire on September 30. The widely praised program is considered a catalyst for advancing HIV treatment, particularly in Africa. It supports more than 5 million people worldwide who are receiving anti-retroviral drugs.

[Reuters](#)

U.S.: Department of Defense response to a multistate outbreak of fungal meningitis — October 2012

27 September - On October 1, 2012, the Department of Defense (DoD) learned of a multistate outbreak of fungal meningitis in persons who received injections of methylprednisolone acetate (MPA) from a single compounding pharmacy... The results of the investigation determined that 471 military members and other beneficiaries had received potentially contaminated epidural or sterile joint injections... Among active duty service members receiving an injection with MPA, three (5%) deployed within a period in which they were at risk for a fungal infection; one deployed service member developed a

fungal infection after the injection and was medically evacuated. Overall, four cases were detected in military members; three of these persons developed meningitis, including two who were active duty service members. As of November 2, 2012, no new cases had been detected through ongoing surveillance. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

U.S. FDA issues final rules on mobile medical apps

23 September - The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has issued final rules governing the development of mobile medical apps, saying it will focus its oversight on those products that have the potential to harm consumers if they do not function properly. The rules, announced on Monday, come more than two years after the FDA released draft guidance in which it proposed regulating any mobile app deemed to be a medical device. The FDA said it will only regulate products that transform smartphones into devices the agency currently regulates, such as electrocardiography (ECG) machines that can determine whether a patient is having a heart attack. The agency will also regulate apps that would be used as an accessory to a regulated device, such as one that displays images used by physicians to diagnose patients. The agency said it will not regulate the sale or general consumer use of smartphones or tablets or mobile app distributors such as the iTunes store or Google Play store. Nor will it regulate personal wellness apps such as pedometers or heart-rate monitors. [Medline Plus](#)

U.S.: Hospitalized patients discharged after hazmat situation at hotel

24 September - The overnight nursing supervisor at Grand Strand Regional Medical Center confirmed all 14 patients who were being treated for respiratory issues following an accidental chemical mixture have been discharged from the hospital. Bob Derr, a Battalion Chief with the City of Myrtle Beach Fire Department confirmed the Hazmat situation was reported after two chemicals were mixed together in the pool maintenance area under the hotel the Landmark Resort at 1501 South Ocean Boulevard, affecting both guests and employees... They know one of the two chemicals was muriatic acid. Captain David Knipes says the other chemical was chlorine. It was later confirmed that the two chemicals were mixed by an employee of the hotel by accident, creating the strong fumes that affected the employees and guests. [WMBF](#)

U.S.: Into the wildfire

19 September - ...Wildfires of a size and intensity that only a decade ago were rare are now almost an annual occurrence. This summer, more than 500 homes were destroyed by fire in the Colorado Springs area; last year, the nearby Waldo Canyon Fire burned down 347 structures, at a cost of \$453 million. In 2011, 5,600 homes and buildings were destroyed by fires in Texas. In 2009, one wildfire lasting several weeks burned an area in Los Angeles County the size of more than 10 Manhattans and cost \$93 million. The amount the federal government spent putting out fires over the last decade was triple what it was in the '90s. We probably wouldn't be as concerned about fires that are getting bigger and spreading farther, of course, were it not for the increasing intrusion of people and buildings into fire-prone landscapes. [New York Times](#)

U.S.: Southern California wildfire: 200-acre blaze burns in Angeles National Forest

24 September - A wildfire chewing through dry brush in the San Gabriel Mountains above this Los Angeles suburb grew to 200 acres early Tuesday, sending up a huge column of smoke. The fire began shortly before 6 p.m. Monday and was mostly burning in the Angeles National Forest, away from populated areas. It was 5 percent contained Tuesday. Smoke was visible to early morning commuters traveling on Interstate 210 and other routes about 25 miles northeast of Los Angeles. Evacuation advisories were lifted early Tuesday for residents of three foothill homes closest to the blaze, said Shawn Rollman, a fire spokesman for the U.S. Forest Service. Although the fire was burning away from that area and into the forest, those homes and others in Azusa could be threatened if the winds change direction and push it to the south, said U.S. Forest Service spokeswoman L'Tanga Watson. [The Weather Channel](#)

U.S.: What happens when weed killers stop killing?

20 September - "U.S. farmers are heading for a crisis," says Stephen Powles of the University of Western Australia, Crawley. Powles is an expert on herbicide resistance, a worsening problem in U.S. fields. Weeds resistant to glyphosate—the world's most popular herbicide—are now present in the vast majority of soybean, cotton, and corn farms in some U.S. states. Perhaps even worse, weeds that can shrug off multiple other herbicides are on the rise. Although the problem was highlighted here last week at an American Chemical Society (ACS) meeting symposium, chemists have little to offer: Few new weed killers are near commercialization, and none with a novel molecular mode of action for which there is no resistance. [Science](#)

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USPACOM

China's elderly need beds, caregivers

25 September - China has the world's largest population of citizens over age 65 and in the coming decades their numbers are expected to quickly grow. Already, officials are struggling to cope with the rising numbers of elderly at a time when there is a shortage of nursing home beds and certified caregivers. [VOA](#)

Fiji: Typhoid on the rise

25 September - The number of typhoid cases is expected to rise further this year. 600 cases of typhoid were confirmed between 2011 and 2012, the highest ever recorded in our history. The Ministry of Health's Programme Manager Waste Management and Pollution Control, Samuela Bolalailai, says the increases were noted from 2008 and 2009 with four

hundred cases recorded, to more than five hundred cases recorded in 2010, with numbers exceeding the six hundred figure at the end of 2012. [Fiji Broadcasting Corporation](#)

Philippines: Dengue cases inch to 120,000 mark

24 September – The Department of Health (DOH) on Tuesday reported that there are already close to 120,000 cases of dengue that have been recorded in the first 36 weeks of the year... Most of the cases, the DOH said, came from Western Visayas (14.28 percent), Mimaropa (13.98 percent), Central Visayas (9.38 percent), Eastern Visayas (7.98 percent), and Central Luzon (7.82 percent). The DOH, though, noted that the figure is lower by 5.25 percent compared to the same time period last year... Similarly, the DOH reported that they have also recorded a large decrease in leptospirosis cases during the same period. It said there were only a total of 1,577 leptospirosis cases recorded during the same period. The health department noted that this is 72.13 percent lower compared to last year. [Sun Star](#)

Vietnam: Arsenic contamination threatens water in Hanoi

23 September - Arsenic-laden sediment that washed down from the Himalayas eons ago underlies vast stretches of Asia, from Pakistan to China. When it gets into underground aquifers, as has happened in Bangladesh, it can contaminate public water supplies and cause illness and death. Now researchers say arsenic is leaching into a major drinking-water aquifer that serves Hanoi, Vietnam. The culprit, they say, is pumping from private wells, which is draining that aquifer and drawing water from others that contain arsenic. But the poison is moving more slowly than scientists had feared, and the city still has years or even decades to take protective measures. [New York Times](#)

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USSOUTHCOM

Nicaragua keeps dengue warning to prevent resurgence

22 September - Nicaragua's health minister said Sunday that the government has decided to keep an existing dengue warning in place to prevent a possible resurgence. President Daniel Ortega has called on health officials "not to let down their guard" due to recent heavy rains, Sonia Castro said in comments quoted in the online edition of the El 19 newspaper... An earlier outbreak killed at least five people and prompted the government to issue a warning... During the first half of 2013, the ministry reported 1,400 suspected cases of dengue, nearly double the 777 cases reported in the same period last year. Comparing Nicaragua to its Central American neighbors, Castro said El Salvador has reported double the number of dengue cases, while Costa Rica has registered four times as many. [Xinhua](#)

Brazil to test new vaccine against dengue fever

26 September - Brazilian scientists will next month begin clinical tests on humans of a new vaccine against dengue fever, a leading Sao Paulo-based biomedical research institute said Thursday. The vaccine is being developed to combat the four closely related strains of dengue viruses that have been identified around the world, the Butantan institute said in a statement... Work on the vaccine began in 2005 in partnership with the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), Butantan said... The institute said the vaccine is expected to be ready by 2018. [Medical Xpress](#)

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