

30 November 2012

# 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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## New Redeployment Health Card

A new Redeployment Health Card is now available in print from the **USAPHC Health Information Products eCatalog**. The pamphlet covers medical and environmental concerns as well as deployment-related stress.



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## U.S. MILITARY

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### Battle ready?

17 November - About 17% of American troops returning from Iraq and 11% of those coming back from Afghanistan suffer from [post-traumatic stress disorder]. The most common treatment is known as exposure-based therapy. This asks those afflicted to

## Sexual Assault Posters

Two new sexual assault posters are now available in print from the **USAPHC Health Information Products eCatalog**. The posters give contact information for the DoD Safe Helpline.



## World AIDS Day

The 2012 theme for World AIDS Day is "Working Together for an AIDS-Free Generation."

The National HIV/AIDS Strategy, aims to reduce new infections, increase access to care, reduce health disparities, and achieve a more coordinated national response to HIV/AIDS here in the United States.



imagine the sights and sounds that traumatised them, and helps them confront those memories. It often works. But not always. And it would undoubtedly be better if troops did not develop the condition in the first place. With this in mind, a team of engineers, computer scientists and psychologists led by Skip Rizzo at the University of Southern California propose a form of psychological vaccination. By presenting soldiers with the horrors of war before they set off to fight, Dr Rizzo hopes to inure squaddies to anything they might witness on the field of battle. [Economist](#)

## Big disappointment in brain injury treatment study

20 November - The hunt for brain injury treatments has suffered a big disappointment in a major study that found zero benefits from a supplement that the U.S. military had hoped would help wounded troops. The supplement is marketed as a memory booster online and in over-the-counter powders and drinks. It is also widely used by doctors in dozens of countries to treat traumatic brain injuries and strokes, although evidence on whether it works has been mixed. U.S. scientists had high hopes that in large doses it would help speed recovery in patients with brain injuries from car crashes, falls, sports accidents and other causes. But in the most rigorous test yet, citicoline (see-tee-KOH'-leen) worked no better than dummy treatments at reducing forgetfulness, attention problems, difficulty concentrating and other symptoms. [Boston.com](#)

## Reported vectorborne and zoonotic diseases, U.S. Army and U.S. Navy, 2000-2011

October 2012 - During the 12-year surveillance period, 4,534 cases of vectorborne and zoonotic disease were reported among beneficiaries receiving care at Army and Navy medical treatment facilities. A majority of cases occurred in males (80.9%), military members (70.5%), and the Army (53.1%). Over one-half (54.9%) of cases occurred in individuals aged 18-34; nearly one-quarter (23.1%) occurred in individuals aged <1 to 17. Lyme disease accounted for 39 percent (n=1,762 cases) of all reported vectorborne or zoonotic diseases during the period. Malaria and leishmaniasis each accounted for nearly a quarter of all cases (malaria: 25%; n=1,119; leishmaniasis: 23%, n=1,061). Unlike Lyme disease, cases of malaria and leishmaniasis were far more likely to be reported in military members than other beneficiaries (86.1% and 97.3%, respectively). [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

## Study provides more clues to Gulf War illness - and hope



26 November - Gulf War illness, the series of symptoms ranging from headaches to memory loss to chronic fatigue that plagues one of four veterans of the 1991 Persian Gulf war, is due to damage to the autonomic nervous system, a study released Monday shows. "This is the linchpin," said the study's lead author, Robert Haley, chief of epidemiology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. "The disease itself is so difficult to express and to understand," Haley said, explaining that veterans described simply that they "don't feel well" or "can't function," without being able to further explain a disease that affects the automatic functions of their bodies, such as heat regulation, sleep or even their heartbeats... Veterans of suffering from

## Classified Version of the Weekly Update

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<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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Gulf War illness tend to fall in three categories: Syndrome 1, or cognitive and depression problems, Syndrome 2, or confusion ataxia, which is similar to early Alzheimer's disease, Syndrome 3, or severe chronic body pain. [USA Today](#)

## Tomodachi registry aids Japan's DOD population

29 November - The U.S. Army Public Health Command played a significant public health role in the aftermath of the March 11, 2011, Japanese earthquake and tsunami. USAPHC responders monitored radiation levels from the damaged Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, checked the safety of water and food, and assessed search-and-rescue dogs coming into the country to assist in finding the missing. A year-and-a-half later, it looks as though USAPHC will have a decades-long role to play through the creation and maintenance of the Operation Tomodachi Registry. The registry's purpose is to provide general information about the incident; location-based, estimated radiation doses for the DOD-affiliated population; and a way for registry users to contact the registry staff. [Army.mil](#)

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## GLOBAL

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## J&J says it won't enforce AIDS drug patent in Africa

29 November - Generic manufacturers are to be given a free rein to make cheap copies of Johnson & Johnson's HIV/AIDS drug Prezista for sale in Africa and other poor countries. U.S. healthcare group J&J said on Thursday it would not enforce patents, provided generic firms made high-quality versions of the drug - known generically as darunavir - for sub-Saharan Africa and Least Developed Countries. Prezista is a relatively new drug used when patients develop resistance to older antiretrovirals. The need for it was expected to grow rapidly as more patients in Africa stop responding to existing therapies. Pharmaceuticals head Paul Stoffels said he expected Indian drugmakers, in particular, to take advantage of the patent move, adding that competition among different companies should drive prices down further. [Reuters](#)

## Latest coronavirus cases prompt WHO call for vigilance

26 November – The reporting of four more novel coronavirus infections in recent weeks, raising the total to six, has prompted the World Health Organization (WHO) to suggest that governments consider a major escalation of testing for the virus, a potentially burdensome undertaking... The global case count since the virus emerged in June has reached six, of which two were fatal. The latest cases noted by the WHO apparently include two that were reported earlier by Saudi health officials and the news media. Until more is known, the WHO statement said, "It is prudent to consider that the virus is likely more widely distributed than just the two countries which have identified cases. Member States should consider testing of patients with unexplained pneumonias for the new coronavirus even in the absence of travel or other associations with the two affected countries." [CIDRAP](#)

## Measles vaccine using a microneedle patch could boost immunization programs

27 November - Measles vaccine given with painless and easy-to-administer microneedle patches can immunize against measles at least as well as vaccine given with conventional hypodermic needles, according to research done by the Georgia Institute of Technology and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In the study, the researchers developed a technique to dry and stabilize the measles vaccine – which depends on a live attenuated virus – and showed that it remained effective for at least 30 days after being placed onto the microneedles. They also demonstrated that the dried vaccine was quickly released in the skin and able to prompt a potent immune response in an animal model.

[RedOrbit](#)

## Novel coronavirus infection, WHO update

23 November - WHO has been notified of four additional cases, including one death, due to infection with the novel coronavirus. The additional cases have been identified as part of the enhanced surveillance in Saudi Arabia (3 cases, including 1 death) and Qatar (1 case). This brings the total of laboratory confirmed cases to 6. Investigations are ongoing in areas of epidemiology, clinical management, and virology, to look into the likely source of infection, the route of exposure, and the possibility of human-to-human transmission of the virus. Close contacts of the recently confirmed cases are being identified and followed-up. [WHO](#)

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### **INFLUENZA**

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

21 November 2012 -

- Overall, Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) incidence rates continued to decrease in the MHS for most regions.
- Influenza activity is at moderate levels across the overseas DoD laboratory surveillance network except in Europe where the activity is low; influenza A/H3 is the predominate circulating subtype this week.
- The influenza vaccination coverage for the DoD (Active Duty component only) is 88%.

[AFHSC DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary](#)

## CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 46 (November 11-17, 2012), influenza activity increased in the U.S.

- Viral Surveillance: Of 3,742 specimens tested and reported by U.S. World Health Organization (WHO) and National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS) collaborating laboratories during week 46, 494 (13.2%) were positive for influenza.
- Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality: The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was below the epidemic threshold.
- Influenza-associated Pediatric Deaths: One influenza-associated pediatric death was reported and was associated with an influenza A (H3) virus. [FluView](#)

## DoD Global Laboratory-Based Influenza Surveillance Program

- During week 46 (11 - 17 November 2012), 24 specimens were collected and tested from 17 locations. There were three influenza A/H3 viruses detected at three Air Force bases (MacDill AFB FL, Tinker AFB OK, and Luke AFB AZ), and one influenza B (Ellsworth AFB SD).
- To date, 333 specimens have been submitted from 46 locations of which 22 were positive for influenza A (one co-infection A/H3 & B, 17 A/H3 and four A(H1N1pdm09) and four were positive for Influenza B. There have been 20 parainfluenza, five RSV, two enterovirus, and 10 adenovirus isolated.
- Since 30 September 2012, ILI activity across the DoD has been low compared to the 2011-2012 influenza season. [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#) (restricted access)

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

During week 46 (12-18 November 2012), all 27 countries reporting experienced low intensity of clinical activity with influenza-like illness.

- Of 416 sentinel specimens tested across 21 countries, 13 (3%) were positive for influenza virus.
- No hospitalised laboratory-confirmed influenza cases were reported.

Although the proportion of positive sentinel specimens has increased slightly since week 42, there is currently little evidence of sustained influenza virus transmission in EU/EEA countries. Much of the clinical activity with influenza-like illness will be due to other respiratory pathogens. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

## FDA approves first seasonal influenza vaccine manufactured using cell culture technology

20 November - The U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced today the approval of Flucelvax, the first seasonal influenza vaccine licensed in the United States produced using cultured animal cells, instead of fertilized chicken eggs. Flucelvax is approved to prevent seasonal influenza in people ages 18 years and older. The manufacturing process for Flucelvax is similar to the egg-based production method, but a significant difference is that the virus strains included in the vaccine are grown in animal cells of mammalian origin instead of in eggs. Cell culture technology has already been in use for several decades to produce other U.S. licensed vaccines... Advantages of cell culture technology include the ability to maintain an adequate supply of readily available, previously tested and characterized cells for use in vaccine production and the potential for a faster start-up of the vaccine manufacturing process in the event of a pandemic. [FDA](#)

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

For the week ending 24 November 2012:

Adenovirus: Type 14 adenovirus cases seen at MCRD Parris Island in November.

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](#)

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

For the week ending 10 November (Week 45), influenza activity has remained relatively stable during the past three weeks; overall influenza and influenzalike illness (ILI) activity remains low in US Army and civilian populations.

- ILI Activity: Army outpatient visits for incident ILI are 19% lower than the same time last year.
- Influenza cases: Eight hospitalized influenza cases have been reported in DRSi this influenza season.
- Acute Respiratory Disease at BCT sites: ARDS rates remain lower at all Army BCT sites compared to the same period last year.
- Viral specimens: During week 45, 102 of 489 (21%) clinical specimens tested were positive for respiratory pathogens. Influenza A was identified in 51 (50%) of these positive samples. Most of the Army influenza positive specimens were reported by SRMC (42%), primarily Ft. Gordon (53%) and Ft. Campbell (23%). [USAPHC U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report](#)

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## Consumer Reports finds most pork contaminated with Yersinia

27 November - In a new study of raw pork chops and ground pork, Consumer Reports found 69 percent of samples were contaminated with *Yersinia enterocolitica*, according to a report published by the group today. A lesser-known foodborne pathogen, *Yersinia enterocolitica* can cause fever, abdominal pain and diarrhea, lasting one to three weeks, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. There is approximately one confirmed infection per 100,000 people reported each year, but since these cases are severely under-reported, CDC estimates there are actually around 100,000 infections in the United States annually. Consumer Reports tested 198 samples and found that while the vast majority were positive for *Yersinia*, only 3 to 7 percent were positive for the more common foodborne pathogens *Salmonella*, *Staphylococcus aureus* or *Listeria monocytogenes*. [Food Safety News](#)

## India: Monkey fever outbreak suspected at Bandipur reserve

28 November - Veterinary experts are suspecting an outbreak of the Kysasanur Forest Disease (KFD), popularly known as monkey fever, in Maddur range of the Bandipur Tiger Reserve bordering Mysore district. It is also reported to have affected humans. The tiger reserve authorities have reported deaths of eight bonnet macaques and two common langurs; and it has been transmitted to five workers of the forest department's anti-poaching camp. The workers are undergoing treatment at Gundlupet government hospital and the condition of one of them is serious. [Daily News & Analysis](#)

## Military's dogs of war also suffer post-traumatic stress disorder



26 November – ..."Dogs experience combat just like humans," said Marine Staff Sgt. Thomas Gehring, a dog handler assigned to the canine training facility at Lackland Air Force Base, who works with Cora daily. Veterinarians and senior dog handlers at Lackland have concluded that dogs, like humans, can require treatment for PTSD, including conditioning, retraining and possibly medication such as the anti-anxiety drug [Xanax](#). Some dogs, like 5-year-old Cora, just need to be treated as honored combat veterans and allowed to lead less-stressful lives. Walter Burghardt Jr., chief of behavioral medicine and military working-dog studies at Lackland, estimates that at least 10% of the hundreds of dogs sent to Iraq and Afghanistan to protect U.S. troops have developed canine PTSD. [Los Angeles Times](#)

## 'Bounce house' injuries skyrocketing



26 November - If you're not a parent, you may not be aware of the popularity of inflatable bounce houses, but they are popping up more and more -- at church picnics, county and mall fairs, birthday and "bounce house" parties, and indoor playgrounds... According to [National Electronic Injury Surveillance System] data, the number of inflatable bouncer-related injuries rose 1,500% between 1995 and 2010. In the last two years of the study, from 2008 to 2010, the rate of injuries more than doubled, according to the study published Monday in the journal *Pediatrics*... Arm and leg injuries were the most common injuries. The youngest children, those under 5, were more likely to have fractures, and teenagers were more likely to sustain sprains and strains. [CNN](#)

## Drugged driving bigger problem than drunk driving

20 November - A statewide survey shows there are more drugged drivers than drunken drivers on California roads during the weekend. The California Office of Traffic Safety said Monday that 14 percent of drivers surveyed tested positive for driving under the influence of illegal or prescription drugs. A little more than 7 percent of drivers were driving with alcohol in their system. The Los Angeles Times says the federally funded impaired driving survey involved more than 1,300 drivers who voluntarily provided breath and-or saliva samples at roadside locations in nine California cities on Friday and Saturday nights. Samples were tested for alcohol, marijuana and illegal drugs as well as prescription and over-the-counter medications. Marijuana was most prevalent with 7.4 percent of drivers having it in their system. [SF Gate](#)

## F.D.A. may tap experts on energy drinks

27 November - The Food and Drug Administration said in a letter released on Tuesday that it was likely to seek advice from outside experts to help determine whether energy drinks posed particular risks to teenagers or people with underlying health problems. The letter appears to signal a change in the agency's approach to the drinks, which contain high levels of caffeine. Previously, F.D.A. officials have said that they were investigating possible risks posed by popular products like 5-Hour Energy, Monster Energy and Red Bull. But an agency spokeswoman, Shelly Burgess, said the new letter was the first time that the F.D.A. had said it might turn to outside experts. The F.D.A. letter, which was released Tuesday by Senator Richard J. Durbin of Illinois and Senator Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, follows disclosures that the agency received reports of 18 deaths and over 150 injuries that mentioned the possible involvement of energy drinks. [New York Times](#)

## Long-distance runners lap up miles for the love of it

26 November - Although many people begin running as a practical path to weight loss or fitness, for many it becomes a love affair as the miles increase. Tom Holland, running coach and author of "The Marathon Method," tells his clients that running for 3 miles was horrible for him too, but farther down the road things changed. "It happens for different people at different times and different distances: that runner's high," he said in an interview. Holland calls it a cardiovascular turning point where the run becomes exponentially easier. "There's a point where the run becomes enjoyable," he said. "Whether this happens at 8 or 10 or 12 miles down the road, it will happen," he said. [Reuters](#)

## Mammograms are not effective in lowering breast cancer death rates

24 November - During the last 30 years, millions of women have been diagnosed with breast cancer. Although screenings with mammograms are often used, the prevalence of metastatic breast cancer has not changed and there has been no reduction in the rate of cancer being diagnosed in late stages, according to a recent study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*... [C]lose to one third of all women who are newly diagnosed with breast cancer are over-diagnosed and that screening is not having a great impact on the death rates seen in breast cancer cases. Although fewer women are dying from the disease, the experts say this is not from screenings; it is due to the development of better medications and treatment therapies... The researchers said: "*And although no one can say with certainty which women are overdiagnosed, there is certainty about what happens to them: they undergo surgery, radiation therapy, hormonal therapy for five years or more, chemotherapy, or (usually) a combination of these treatments for abnormalities that otherwise would not have caused illness.*" [Medical News Today](#)

## Prescribe morning-after pills in advance, say pediatricians

26 November - Wading into the incendiary subject of birth control for young teenagers, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) on Monday called on the nation's pediatricians to counsel all of their adolescent patients about emergency contraception and make advance prescriptions for it available to girls under 17. Because current federal policy bans over-the-counter sales of the pills to girls under 17, having a prescription on hand could help younger teens obtain emergency contraception more quickly than if they have to contact a physician only after they need it. [Reuters](#)

## Study: ADHD medicines help curb criminal behavior

21 November - Older teens and adults with attention deficit disorder are much less likely to commit a crime while on ADHD medication, a provocative study from Sweden found. It also showed in dramatic fashion how much more prone people with ADHD are to break the law — four to seven times more likely than others. The findings suggest that Ritalin, Adderall and other drugs that curb hyperactivity and boost attention remain important beyond the

school-age years and that wider use of these medications in older patients might help curb crime. [USA Today](#)

## Traffic pollution tied to autism risk: study

26 November - Babies who are exposed to lots of traffic-related air pollution in the womb and during their first year of life are more likely to become autistic, suggests a new study. The findings support previous research linking how close children live to freeways with their risk of autism, according to the study's lead author. "We're not saying traffic pollution causes autism, but it may be a risk factor for it," said Heather Volk, an assistant professor at the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. [Reuters](#)

## Updating the message to get Americans moving



19 November - ...The public health message about exercise is that any amount is good and that walking is just fine. Everyone has been told, repeatedly, that regular exercise improves health and makes people feel better, happier, more energetic. Nearly all Americans say they have heard those messages. They know that exercise is good for them and that they should do it. Yet they do not... Now, with more recent studies using accelerometers that measure actual movement rather than relying on self-reports, the data are even more dismal. Only 3.5 percent of Americans between the ages of 18 and 59 do the minimum amount of physical activity recommended by the Department of Health and Human Services: 150 minutes a week of moderate activity. Among those over age 60, the percentage is even lower: 2.5 percent. [New York Times](#)

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### USAFRICOM

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## Sudan: Yellow fever

22 November - The Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) in Sudan began a 10-day mass vaccination campaign against yellow fever in Darfur on 20 November 2012, in response to the outbreak. As of 17 November 2012, the outbreak is reported to have affected 26 localities, with a total of 459 suspected cases including 116 deaths. Two cases were confirmed by IgM ELISA test and RT-PCR by the WHO regional reference laboratory for yellow fever, the Institut Pasteur in Dakar, Senegal. An outbreak investigation team led by the Ministry of Health, with support from WHO are in the field to assess the extent of the outbreak and prioritize areas for the mass vaccination campaign. [WHO](#)

## Uganda: Ebola

23 November - As of 23 November 2012, the Ministry of Health (MoH) of Uganda has reported 10 cases (6 confirmed and 4 probable), including 5 deaths in Luweero and Kampala. The last confirmed case was hospitalised on 17 November 2012. Close contacts of

the Ebola cases are being identified and followed up for a period of 21 days. All the cases alerted to the field teams are being investigated. [WHO](#)

## Uganda: Marburg hemorrhagic fever, WHO update

23 November - As of 23 November 2012, a total of 20 (probable or confirmed) cases, including 9 deaths have been reported from 4 districts in Uganda (Kabale, Ibanda, Mbarara, and Kampala). The last confirmed case was hospitalised on 31 October 2012. The Ministry of Health continues to conduct active surveillance and investigation on all cases alerted in the 4 districts. Close contacts of the Marburg cases are being followed-up for a period of 21 days. [WHO](#)

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### USCENTCOM

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## Afghan activist wins Mother Teresa Award

29 November - "Women can wear the burka if they wish to do so but it shouldn't be forced on them. It affects their health as it covers the entire body and doesn't allow sunrays to go into the body. This leads to deficiency of vitamin D and results in poor bone health," said Dr Sima Samar, chief of Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, who was in the city on Wednesday to receive the Mother Teresa Award instituted by the Harmony Foundation. Samar has continuously fought for human rights of girls and women in Taliban ruled Afghanistan. A medical doctor by training, Samar fled to Pakistan in 1984 when her husband was arrested by Afghanistan's communist regime. [Daily News & Analysis](#)

## Pakistan: Toxic cough syrup kills 16: officials

26 November - At least 16 people have died after drinking a toxic cough syrup in the Pakistani city of Lahore, forcing authorities to close three pharmacies and a medicine factory, officials said Monday. The deaths occurred in the low-income Shahdra Town neighbourhood between Friday and Sunday with the victims mostly drug addicts who took the syrup to get high, said local police station chief Atif Zulfiqar. The scandal comes after around 100 heart patients died in January in Lahore, Pakistan's second largest city, after taking faulty medicine made locally. [Hurriyet Daily News](#)

## Relentless Afghan conflict leaves traumatized generation

16 November - ... The concept of mental illness is alien to many in Afghanistan, where the public health system, like much of the country's infrastructure, has been wrecked by decades of war. Frequently, people suffering psychological disorders are thought by their families to be under the influence of malign spirits, or showing symptoms of a physical ailment. The Kabul hospital, which has 60 beds for in-patients and another 40 in a separate facility for drug addicts, is run by the government in partnership with U.S.-based nonprofit

group the International Medical Corps... Psychologists working there say children who have known nothing but fighting since the U.S.-led overthrow of the Taliban government more than a decade ago are especially vulnerable. [Reuters](#)

## Syria begins vaccination campaign against polio and measles

26 November - Syria launched a national campaign today to vaccinate against polio and measles, something which should benefit some 2.5 million children. All the necessary conditions are being created in the 1,816 hospitals and mobile clinics throughout the country, said a source from the Ministry of Health. Doctor Ahmad al-Abboud, Director of the Health Ministry, asked families to come with their children to the health center or the nearest mobile clinic, bringing their vaccination cards. The campaign, which will run for two weeks, is part of the ministry's efforts to promote the health of children and protect them from diseases, especially from those which spread fastest and are life-threatening, he added. [Prensa Latina](#)

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### USEUCOM

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## Portugal: Large dengue fever outbreak in Madeira spreads cases in Europe

21 November - Europe is experiencing its first sustained transmission of dengue fever since the 1920s with more than 1,300 people infected with the mosquito-borne disease in the Portuguese archipelago of Madeira. In a rapid risk assessment, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) said that 25 cases of the disease - which is also called "breakbone fever" because of the severe pain it can cause - have been found elsewhere in Europe in travellers returning from Madeira. Such cases have so far been picked up in Portugal, Britain, Germany, Sweden and France, it said. "Given the dramatic expansion of endemic dengue transmission globally over the last 20 to 30 years and the high number of visitors to Madeira, the outbreak is large and constitutes a significant public health event," the ECDC said in an assessment issued late on Tuesday. [Reuters](#)

## United Kingdom: CPS to crack down on female genital mutilation

23 November - The Crown Prosecution Service has announced plans to crack down on those who compel young girls to undergo female genital mutilation – a criminal offence for nearly 30 years for which there has never been a prosecution. There has been growing concern that the practice continues to take place in the UK and that young girls are taken abroad by their families to undergo it. The very few attempts to bring a prosecution have all

ended in failure. Keir Starmer, director of public prosecutions, has now published an action plan in an attempt to turn the tide. [Guardian](#)

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**USNORTHCOM**

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## U.S.: Deadly 'superbugs' invade U.S. health care facilities

29 November – ... The [drug resistant] bacteria, known as Carbapenem-Resistant Enterobacteriaceae, or CRE, are named for their ability to fight off carbapenem antibiotics -- the last line of defense in the medical toolbox. And so far, they've emerged almost exclusively in health care facilities, picking off the weakest of patients. The bacteria made headlines this summer after a CRE strain of *Klebsiella pneumoniae* battered the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center outside Washington, D.C. Seven died, including a 16-year-old boy... The bacteria's ability to defeat even the most potent antibiotics has conjured fears of illnesses that can't be stopped. Death rates among patients with CRE infections can be about 40%, far worse than other, better-known health care infections such as MRSA or C-Diff, which have plagued hospitals and nursing homes for decades. And there are growing concerns that CRE could make its way beyond health facilities and into the general community. [Detroit Free Press](#)

## U.S.: F.D.A. may tap experts on energy drinks

27 November - The Food and Drug Administration said in a letter released on Tuesday that it was likely to seek advice from outside experts to help determine whether energy drinks posed particular risks to teenagers or people with underlying health problems. The letter appears to signal a change in the agency's approach to the drinks, which contain high levels of caffeine. Previously, F.D.A. officials have said that they were investigating possible risks posed by popular products like 5-Hour Energy, Monster Energy and Red Bull... The F.D.A. letter... follows disclosures that the agency received reports of 18 deaths and over 150 injuries that mentioned the possible involvement of energy drinks. [New York Times](#)

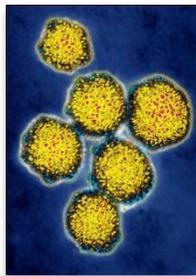
## U.S.: HIV infection, testing, and risk behaviors among youths — United States

30 November - ... Based on the most recent data available from 2009 and 2010, youths represent 6.7% of persons living with HIV in the United States and account for 25.7% of new HIV infections. Of new HIV infections among youths, 45.9% were among black/African American males, the majority of which were attributed to male-to-male sexual contact. Nationwide, the percentage of youths who had ever been tested for HIV was low compared with other age groups: 12.9% among high school students (22.2% among those who ever had sexual intercourse) and 34.5% among persons aged 18–24 years. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

## U.S.: Lawmakers pledge action after meningitis outbreak

15 November - Democratic and Republican lawmakers said on Thursday they would alter the regulation of drug compounding pharmacies in hopes of preventing more crises like the rare fungal meningitis outbreak that has now cost 32 lives. The outbreak of 461 cases in 19 states has been linked to tainted steroid injections from a Massachusetts pharmacy and led to public condemnation of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and state pharmacy regulators for failing to act against known problems over the course of a decade. A Thursday hearing before the Senate Health, Education, Welfare and Pensions Committee brought the strongest signs so far of bipartisan willingness to approve legislation that could break down the current separation of powers between the FDA and individual state regulators charged with overseeing drug compounding. [Reuters](#)

## U.S.: Less support for hepatitis C testing for baby boomers



26 November - An influential advisory committee has given only lukewarm support to a government recommendation that all baby boomers be tested for hepatitis C. In a draft opinion Monday, the United States Preventive Services Task Force said that clinicians may “consider offering” hepatitis C screening to adults born between 1945 and 1965. That falls short of the recommendation made in August by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that all adults in that age group should get a one-time test to see if they are infected. [New York Times](#)

## U.S.: Storm victims, in cleanup, face rise in injuries and illness

19 November - Day and night, victims of Hurricane Sandy have been streaming into ad hoc emergency rooms and relief centers, like the MASH-type medical unit on an athletic field in Long Beach, and the warming tent in the Rockaways the size of a small high school gym. They complain of rashes, asthma and coughing. They need tetanus shots because — house-proud and armed with survivalist instincts — they have been ripping out waterlogged boards and getting poked by rusty nails. Those with back pain from sifting through debris receive muscle relaxants; those with chest pain from overexertion are hooked up to cardiac monitors... It is impossible to say how many people have been sickened by what Hurricane Sandy left behind: mold from damp drywall; spills from oil tanks; sewage from floodwater and unflushable toilets; tons upon tons of debris and dust. But interviews with hurricane victims, recovery workers, health officials and medical experts over the last week reveal that some of the illnesses that they feared would occur, based on the toxic substances unleashed by the storm and the experience of other disasters, notably Hurricane Katrina, have begun to manifest themselves. [New York Times](#)

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## Bangladesh: Fire kills 112 workers at garment-maker

26 November - Fire raced up the floors of a Bangladeshi garment factory with no emergency exits, killing at least 112 people, some of whom jumped from the eight-story building where they made clothes for major global retailers. The factory outside the capital, Dhaka, is owned by Tazreen Fashions Ltd., a subsidiary of the Tuba Group, which makes products for Wal-Mart and other companies in the U.S. and Europe. Firefighters recovered at least 100 bodies from the factory and 12 more people died at hospitals after jumping from the building to escape, Maj. Mohammad Mahbub, fire department operations director, told The Associated Press on Sunday. "Had there been at least one emergency exit through outside the factory, the casualties would have been much lower," Mahbub said. Local media reported that up to 124 people were killed. The cause of the blaze that began late Saturday was not immediately clear, and authorities ordered an investigation. [Associated Press](#)

## China: Alarm bells ring on diabetes

24 November - About 6.8% of China's population has the disease, world's highest proportion. China has a huge diabetes problem but its hospital-centered medical care system undermines effective intervention in the rapidly rising chronic disease, a top specialist said... On Nov 16, members of the World Health Organization agreed for the first time to set global targets for the discovery and treatment of non-communicable diseases like diabetes. According to the Ministry of Health, the Chinese mainland is estimated to have more than 92 million diabetics, or 6.8 percent of the population, the highest proportion in the world. Sixty percent of Chinese diabetics remain undiagnosed, owing to low public awareness and limited medical resources, especially at grassroots level. Without efficient intervention, the mainland will have 40 million more patients by 2030, according to the International Diabetes Federation. [China Daily](#)

## China says HIV/AIDS cases up, premier-in-waiting promises help

28 November - The number of new HIV/AIDS cases in China jumped in the first 10 months of the year, as premier-in-waiting Li Keqiang promised to let non-governmental groups play a bigger role in fighting an epidemic spreading fast in vulnerable groups. The number of new AIDS cases rose almost 13 percent in the January to October period, compared with the same period the previous year, while the number of people infected with HIV aged 50 and above leapt more than 20 percent, the official Xinhua news agency said. A total of 492,191 people were living with HIV/AIDS as of the end of October, including 68,802 new cases this year, the news agency said, citing the Health Ministry. [Reuters](#)

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## Dengue keeps advancing in Latam despite efforts to contain the disease

28 November - Dengue continues to claim lives in Latin America with over 400 deaths and nearly 161.000 infection cases according to this year's reports from the different countries. The disease which is endemic in parts of tropical Latinamerica is caused by a virus transmitted by the mosquito *Aedes Aegypti* and its symptoms are high fever, headache, vomiting and skin rashes. A more dangerous manifestation is the hemorrhagic strain which has a high mortality rate. In 2010 the mosquito transmitted disease infected 1.5 million people and caused 1.020 deaths in Latam according to official reports. So far this year dengue has killed 69 people in Paraguay out of 29.277 confirmed cases, with a mortality rate of 0.21%, but according to Health Minister Antonio Arbo the real contagion may range between 150.000 and 200.000 cases. [MercoPress](#)

## Dominican Republic: CDC offers health advice for travelers

28 November - The Dominican Republic has been battling a cholera outbreak for two years this month. In 2012 alone, Dominican health officials have reported more than 6,600 cholera cases, including 47 fatalities. Because of these large numbers, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued [an outbreak notice for travelers to this part of Hispaniola](#) on Nov. 28. Neighboring Haiti has seen well over a half million cases since the outbreak began in Oct. 2010. [Examiner.com](#)

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