

31 August 2012

Army Public Health Weekly Update

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U.S. MILITARY

Army study finds that troops suffer concussions in training

24 August - Traumatic brain injury is considered the "signature injury" of soldiers fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. An [NPR](#) and [ProPublica](#) investigation has uncovered the military's failure to diagnose, treat and document brain injuries. Evidence suggests tens of thousands

Army Vector-borne Disease Report

The Army Vector-borne Disease Report is now available from the USAPHC [Periodic Publications Library](#).



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.

of soldiers are falling through the cracks. ***This story has been corrected.*** A new military study has found that almost 6 percent of soldiers who took hand-to-hand combat courses at a Texas Army base were struck in the head and suffered symptoms the Pentagon says are consistent with concussions, also called mild traumatic brain injuries. Over the last decade, hundreds of thousands of soldiers have taken such classes – called “combatives” – at bases nationwide before deploying overseas. Researchers stress that the study is relatively small, drawing from classes at Ft. Hood with just under 2,000 soldiers. And they haven’t finished the study yet. But the preliminary results have sparked concern among brain specialists inside and outside the military, suggesting that some soldiers went to war in Iraq and Afghanistan having suffered mild traumatic brain injuries in training – and might have been more vulnerable to long-term consequences from additional concussions later. [Stars and Stripes](#)

Army to issue bug-proof ACUs in 2013



29 August - Soldiers who have spent any time in the field know that chiggers, ticks and other biting critters can burrow into unspeakable places on the body, spread disease, and generally destroy any chance for personal comfort. In an effort to win the war on bugs, Army equipment officials have decided to issue insecticide-treated uniforms to every new soldier entering the Army starting next year. The move is part of a plan to replace standard Army Combat Uniforms with new ones that have been specially treated with permethrin, a potent insecticide known as a synthetic pyrethroid that’s been a key ingredient of the Defense Department Insect Repellent System for two decades. “There is going to be a requirement for all soldiers to have permethrin-treated Army Combat Uniforms,” said Lt. Col. Eugene Wallace, product manager for Soldier Clothing and Individual Equipment at Fort Belvoir, Va. [Military.com](#)

Care of military working dogs at heart of legislation

29 August - Sgt. Rambo injured his shoulder during training back in April. The devastating injury will likely result in amputation. But Rambo is no ordinary soldier. Rambo is a designated military working dog. Military working dogs that can be killed saving lives shouldn’t be designated as “equipment,” according to Lisa Phillips, who adopted Rambo last week after the dog’s retirement ceremony at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point. “Equipment doesn’t bleed” Phillips said. Rambo is one of 10 working dogs aboard the base and with units serving in war-torn countries like Afghanistan and Iraq. The 4-month-old German shepherd never got the opportunity to serve overseas because of the injury. Phillips, with the Retired Military Working Dogs Assistance Organization, drove up from Texas to adopt Rambo. She and U.S. Rep. Walter B. Jones, R-N.C., used the occasion to bring awareness to a new bill before Congress called the Support the Canine Members of the Armed Forces Act. “It’s just a wonderful thing that after the time is over for these dogs to serve this nation that these dogs should have an opportunity to have a quality life, and this will ensure that,” Jones said of the legislation. “It’s just a real win, and we’re real excited about it.” [Stars and Stripes](#)

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Iron deficiency anemia, active component, U.S. Armed Forces, 2002-2011

July 2012 - Iron deficiency anemia (IDA) is the most common cause of anemia in the United States, and it particularly affects women of child-bearing age and black, non-Hispanic race/ethnicity. During the surveillance period there were 10,157 incident ("new") cases of IDA among active component service members; the overall incidence rate was 7.1 per 10,000 person-years. The annual incidence rates increased in both males and females during the period. Rates of IDA were higher among service members who were female, in the youngest (<20 years) and oldest age groups (40+ years), and of black, non-Hispanic race/ethnicity. Most (85.3%) incident cases had no additional encounters for IDA one year or more after their incident encounter. The most common diagnoses associated with IDA during the one year before or after the incidence dates of IDA were "gastrointestinal hemorrhage" (12.4%) in males and "disorders of menstruation and other abnormal bleeding from the female genital tract" (15.2%) in females. Because IDA can adversely affect physical work capacity and cognitive functioning, health care providers should be alert to IDA among service members, particularly servicewomen, before intensive training activities and deployment. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

Study explores injury risk in military Humvee crashes



27 August - A new report by researchers from the [Johns Hopkins Center for Injury Research and Policy](#) examines the risk factors for injuries to U.S. military personnel from crashes involving highly mobile multipurpose wheeled vehicles (HMMWVs), more commonly known as Humvees. According to the study, involvement in combat and serving as the vehicle's operator or gunner posed the greatest risk for injury. It is the first published analysis of factors associated with Humvee injury risk in a deployed setting, and is in the August issue of the journal *Military Medicine*. [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health](#)

Suicide rates reach high

27 August - The Pentagon reports that thirty-eight soldiers are suspected of committing suicide in July, which was the worst month for suicides since the Army first started releasing monthly figures in 2009. Suicide rates in other military services are not looking much better with both Marine Corps and Coast Guard suicide rates already above those reported in 2011. For resources to prevent suicide, visit the [U.S. Army Suicide Prevention Program webpage](#). If you are a servicemember in crisis, or know a servicemember who is, confidential support is only a phone call, click, or text away. Call the Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255--press 1. Or text to 838255. Or visit the [Military Crisis Line](#) website to start a confidential chat with a caring, qualified responder. [Military.com](#)

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Birth control plugs male malaria mosquitoes



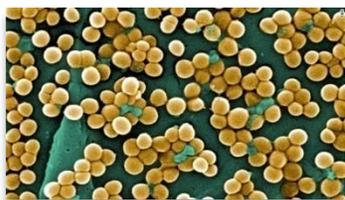
22 August – A team of scientists at Yale University is working on a new birth-control drug 22 August – A team of scientists at Yale University is working on a new birth-control drug for male mosquitoes that could slow the malaria epidemic, a disease that sickens more than 215 million people, killing 655,000 each year. Only female

Anopheles gambiae mosquitoes transmit malaria to humans and they are the principle vector for the disease. But chemistry professor Richard Baxter and his team at Yale University are focused on the males. Malaria mosquitoes mate in airborne swarms. Unlike any other insect, the male inserts a gooey plug to seal its sperm inside the female during mating to ensure reproductive success. At a meeting of the American Chemical Society in Philadelphia this week, Baxter and his colleagues announced a new approach for screening chemical compounds that would inhibit formation of the mating plug. This sterile insect technique has been successfully deployed in Africa against tsetse flies that transmit sleeping sickness, and in the United States to control the screwworm fly, which was once responsible for millions of dollars in losses in the cattle industry and has since been eradicated. [VOA](#)

Drug resistant tuberculosis found across the world

29 August - Scientists have found alarming levels of the lung disease tuberculosis in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America that are resistant to up to four powerful antibiotic drugs. In a large international study published in the *Lancet* medical journal on Thursday, researchers found rates of both multi drug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) and extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB) were higher than previously thought and were threatening global efforts to curb the spread of the disease. "Most international recommendations for TB control have been developed for MDR-TB prevalence of up to around 5 percent. Yet now we face prevalence up to 10 times higher in some places, where almost half of the patients ... are transmitting MDR strains," Sven Hoffner of the Swedish Institute for Communicable Disease Control, said in a commentary on the study. [Medline Plus](#)

Outbreak of NIH 'superbug' provides valuable lessons



30 August - ...So what lessons can we learn from the outbreak? The genetic sequencing of the bacterium shows that the infection originated with what scientists call an index patient, in this case a 43-year-old woman who had come to NIH from a New York hospital already infected

with CRKP. Every possible measure to prevent the spread of the germs was used. She was kept in isolation in intensive care, staff who cared for her wore masks, gowns and gloves every time they interacted with her, dedicated equipment was set aside exclusively for her

use and every item used in her treatment was immediately sterilized or disposed of as infectious waste. When she was moved to a private room, she wasn't even allowed to walk in the hallway unless it was empty and she was wearing a gown and gloves. She left the hospital after a month; her room was cleaned twice and doctors believed that they'd successfully kept everyone else safe. But, as the genetic sequencing ultimately discovered, the bug lurked in sink drains and in a respirator that had been sterilized, although the process had apparently failed. [CNN](#)

Scientists say world's oceans hold great medical promise

24 August - Humans have turned to nature for medicines since ancient times. And modern scientists have searched the world's rainforests for new medicinal compounds. The earth's oceans may be an even better source, though, and at least 26 drugs that come from marine organisms are currently on the market or in development. A generation of innovative chemists hopes to boost this number. Chemist Mande Holford has an unusual partner in her hunt for new medicines: a fierce marine snail that eats fish. Her study of the creature, she said, is not entirely scientific... [VOA](#)

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INFLUENZA

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 33 (week ending 18 August 2012), 6.1% of all deaths reported through the 122-Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to P&I. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 6.5% for week 33. [FluView](#)

Children with neurologic disorders at high risk of death from flu

29 August - A disproportionately high number of children with neurologic disorders died from influenza-related complications during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic, according to a study by scientists with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The report in the journal *Pediatrics* underscores the importance of influenza vaccination to protect children with neurologic disorders. CDC is joining with the American Academy of Pediatrics, Families Fighting Flu and Family Voices to spread the message about the importance of influenza vaccination and treatment in these children. The *Pediatrics* study looked at influenza-related deaths in children during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic based on data submitted to CDC from state and local health departments. The number of pediatric deaths associated with 2009 H1N1 virus infection reported to CDC during the pandemic was more than five times the median number of pediatric deaths that were reported in the five flu seasons prior to the pandemic. Sixty-eight percent of those deaths occurred in children with underlying medical conditions that increase the risk of serious flu complications. [CDC Press Release](#)

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

17 August - During weeks 31–32/2012, all reporting countries experienced low-intensity influenza activity and decreasing or stable trends. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

Google.org: Flu Trends

30 August – Estimates of flu activity based on flu-related Internet search queries indicate that the level of flu activity in the U.S. ranges from minimal to low. [Google.org Flu Trends](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For the week ending 25 August 2012:

Adenovirus

- Vaccination against types 4 and 7 adenovirus was instituted at all basic training centers by mid-November 2011 (week 45).
- FRI rates and the proportion of FRI cases positive for adenovirus have decreased markedly since vaccine was reintroduced.
- A MSMR paper on the initial impact of adenovirus vaccine resumption was recently published.

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](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Russia: More ASF outbreaks in Tver region

28 August - Dead pigs found dumped in a forest in the Kalinin district have been confirmed as African Swine Fever (ASF). Measures have been put in place to stop the spread of infection. Elsewhere in the country, representatives of the Krasnoyarsk veterinary service discussed the threat of ASF in the Krasnoyarsk region. The representatives stated that farms and producers in the region are not fully prepared to resist the introduction of the infection. In addition, the introduction of infection may be due to the situation in the region with the collection and disposal of food waste, and the lack of control over the activities of veterinary hunting. [The Pig Site](#)

Russia says one dead after anthrax outbreak in Siberia

26 August - An anthrax outbreak in a Siberian village left one person dead and 10 others hospitalized as the Russian government declared a state of emergency in the area in a bid to prevent an epidemic. There were at least two other confirmed cases of anthrax infection in the village of Druzhba in the Altai region, state-run Rossiya 24 television reported... Veterinary officials killed several heads of cattle infected with anthrax and vaccinated another 187, as well as 21 horses and pigs, the Altai region's press office said on its website. [Bloomberg Businessweek](#)

Searching for animal disease transmission



29 August - Researchers are not waiting for the next new disease to emerge. They're studying our near and distant primate relatives to try to prevent future epidemics. HIV/AIDS is a well-known zoonotic disease, an illness transmitted from animals to humans. The disease – linked to African primates - has killed tens of millions and more than 30 million people are now living with the disease. Dr. Natalie Cooper said there may be many more diseases ready to jump from animals to humans. The Trinity College Dublin assistant professor and her colleagues are focusing their research on primates. [VOA](#)

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WELLNESS

Adolescent pot use leaves lasting mental deficits

27 August - The persistent, dependent use of marijuana before age 18 has been shown to cause lasting harm to a person's intelligence, attention and memory, according to an international research team. Among a long-range study cohort of more than 1,000 New Zealanders, individuals who started using cannabis in adolescence and used it for years afterward showed an average decline in IQ of 8 points when their age 13 and age 38 IQ tests were compared. Quitting pot did not appear to reverse the loss either, said lead researcher Madeline Meier, a post-doctoral researcher at Duke University. The results appear online Aug. 27 in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. [Science Daily](#)

An immune disorder at the root of autism



25 August - In recent years, scientists have made extraordinary advances in understanding the causes of autism, now estimated to afflict 1 in 88 children... At least a subset of autism — perhaps one-third, and very likely more — looks like a type of inflammatory disease. And it begins in the womb. It starts with what scientists call immune dysregulation. Ideally, your immune system should operate like an enlightened action hero, meting out inflammation precisely, accurately and with deadly force when necessary, but then quickly returning to a Zen-like calm. Doing so requires an optimal balance of pro- and anti-inflammatory muscle. In autistic individuals, the immune system fails at this balancing act. Inflammatory signals dominate. Anti-inflammatory ones are inadequate. A state of chronic activation prevails. And the more skewed toward inflammation, the more acute the autistic symptoms. [New York Times](#)

Less is more with exercise, study says

29 August - Thirty minutes of daily exercise achieves the same amount of weight loss as 60 minutes, according to a small new study. The research included 60 heavy but healthy Danish men who exercised for either 30 or 60 minutes a day while wearing a heart-rate monitor and calorie counter. The training sessions were designed to generate a light sweat, but the participants were expected to boost the intensity and push themselves harder three times a week. The men who exercised 30 minutes a day lost an average of about 8 pounds over three months, compared with an average of 6 pounds for those who exercised 60 minutes a day. [Medline Plus](#)

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USAFRICOM

Cameroon winning battle to reduce malaria

24 August - ...Sunny and humid, most of Cameroon is a breeding ground for anopheles mosquitoes that transmit the malaria parasite. The country's 20 million people are now on the frontline of the war on malaria in Africa. Dr. Esther Tallah is the manager of the Cameroon Coalition against Malaria and a major player in the struggle against the disease. She says the war is being won by expanding effective prevention and treatment. "Once you invest in the right things that we know work for malaria prevention and control, you see results immediately," she said, "The world has shown and repeatedly proven that when [people] adopt the habit of sleeping under mosquito nets and that you achieve universal coverage you see a drop in the incidence of malaria." "If the country decides that they want to do indoor residual spraying, and they do it effectively," she continued, "you see a drop in the incidence of malaria. In some cases, countries decide to combine indoor residual

spraying and sleeping under long-lasting insecticidal mosquito nets." The government and NGOs like Tallah's coalition distributed more than eight million long-lasting insecticidal nets nationwide. [VOA](#)

Democratic Republic of Congo: Ebola outbreak kills 10, says medical charity

22 August - Ten people have died after contracting a strain of the deadly ebola virus in the Democratic Republic of Congo, medical charity MSF said. The charity said there were a further six confirmed or probable cases in the town of Isiro. The outbreak, involving the Bundibugyo strain, was first reported last week after one person had died. Last month an outbreak of a more deadly Ebola strain in neighbouring Uganda killed 16 people. The DR Congo outbreak occurred in Oriental province, which shares a border with Uganda. Medicins sans Frontieres (MSF) has said that the two outbreaks may not be related. It is not clear when exactly the deaths in Isiro occurred. [BBC News](#)

Liberia steps up fight against leprosy

28 August - In an effort to combat the spread of leprosy, Liberia's Health Ministry has set up its first-ever TB & Leprosy Treatment Center in the northeastern town of Ganta in Nimba County - where dozens of people have contracted the diseases. The treatment center is trying to battle not only the disease but also the belief that lepers have been cursed by their ancestors. The Ganta Leprosy Center treats some 300 men, women and children living with leprosy. John Saah Brimah, who runs the center, says one priority is to educate the community on how to prevent the transmission of leprosy. [VOA](#)

Sierra Leone: Red Cross fears cholera crisis, appeals for funds

23 August - Sierra Leone's worst recorded outbreak of cholera risks sparking a wider health crisis unless its causes can be tackled more aggressively, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) said on Thursday. The IFRC, which launched an emergency appeal for \$1.14 million earlier this month, said the number of cholera cases was continuing to rise and that the number of fatal cases now topped 200. The water-borne bacteria is a regular blight in West Africa where toilet facilities are poor and whose urban slums face flooding every year with the rainy season. Neighbouring Guinea has also seen around 100 deaths so far this year. [Reuters](#)

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Kuwait: Hepatitis A, B, and C

28 August - The Director of the Public Health Department at the Ministry of Health Yusuf Mindkar disclosed 2050 cases of hepatitis among citizens. Some of the domestic workers were discovered in Kuwait in 2011, reports the Al-Seyassah daily news paper. Mindkar said these cases include 245 cases of hepatitis A, 766 hepatitis B, and 1039 hepatitis C. [ProMED-mail](#)

Pakistan: 2 minor girls die of measles, dozens infected in North Waziristan

29 August - The epidemic of measles in North Waziristan Agency claimed the lives of two minor girls in Danada Derpakhel area on Wednesday while dozens of infected children are being brought to the Miranshah Headquarters Hospital for treatment. Talking to INP, Agency Surgeon Dr Mohammad Sadiq said that dozens of measles infected children have been admitted to the Miranshah Headquarters Hospital for treatment, adding that measles vaccine is not available in the tribal region to control the infection. "Around 40 children are infected by measles in three weeks that are brought to the hospital for treatment and two minor girls fell prey to the infection in Danda Derpakhel area of the tribal region," Dr Mohammad Sadiq said. [Pakistan Today](#)

Pakistan: Preparedness doubts as monsoon claims first victims



28 August - The first heavy rains of the 2012 monsoon, which have claimed at least 26 lives in northern Pakistan over the past four days, with torrents sweeping away houses and inundating villages, is raising questions about the effectiveness of preparedness measures. "This year we had handed over responsibility for disaster management chiefly to the provinces, so that things could be handled quickly and efficiently at the local level. Funds were also released and some 300 persons trained to deal with various situations," Ahmed Kamal, spokesman for the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), told IRIN. A consultant who helped draw up the disaster management plan for the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) in Punjab (who preferred anonymity) said an elaborate system had been put in place to manage any crisis, but that implementation was "the task of local administrations and officials". The worst affected areas were Khyber-Pakhtoonkhwa Province (KP), Kashmir, and some parts of Punjab Province. [IRIN](#)

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Gaza's water could be undrinkable by 2016



30 August - Polluted water in the Gaza Strip is seriously affecting people's health and the situation looks set to get worse, the [UN warns in a new report](#). Gaza's rapidly growing population of about 1.64 million - expected to increase by 500,000 by 2020 - could soon lose its main source of fresh water, the underground coastal aquifer, which could become unusable by 2016, with the damage irreversible by 2020, it says. Clean water is limited for most Gazans to an average of 70-90 litres per person per day, compared to the minimum global World Health Organization (WHO) standard of 100 litres a day, according to Mahmud Daher, officer-in-charge of the WHO in Gaza. "We have respiratory diseases, skin diseases, eye diseases, gastroenteritis, which can all be linked to polluted water," said Mohamed al-Kashef, general director of the international cooperation department in the Gaza health ministry. [IRIN](#)

Ireland: Call for All-Ireland children's heart surgery provision

30 August - Campaigners have called for an all-Ireland network to secure the future of paediatric heart surgery in Belfast. Earlier this year a UK-wide review said that although the service at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children is safe, it is not sustainable. It could mean that children would have to travel to England for treatment. But the BBC understands cross-border discussions are ongoing about the possibility of developing an all-Ireland service. [BBC News](#)

Ireland cuts elderly care, overtime to plug health overspend

30 August - Ireland's health service will cut back on care for the elderly and overtime pay to find 130 million euros (\$163 million) of new savings aimed at halting a spending overrun heavily criticized by one of the country's lenders this week. Ireland has diligently adhered to the terms of its 85 billion euro EU/IMF bailout and is set to meet its deficit reduction targets for this year, mainly thanks to better-than-expected revenue growth. However, the social protection and health departments have spent more than anticipated and in a draft document seen by Reuters on Wednesday, the European Commission gave an unusually frank assessment of the performance of the health ministry. It said that while stubbornly high unemployment had led to larger-than-budgeted demand for free healthcare, the inability to deliver savings "pointed to weaknesses in budget management and accountability". [Reuters](#)

Swiss "healer" accused of intentionally infecting 16 people with HIV using acupuncture needles

30 August - An unlicensed acupuncturist in Switzerland has been accused of intentionally infecting 16 people with the HIV virus for over a decade, authorities announced Thursday. The unidentified man was indicted by a five-judge panel in Bern-Mitelland regional court on charges of intentionally spreading human disease and causing serious bodily harm, offenses that carry maximum penalties of five to 10 years respectively, said the regional prosecutor's office in Bern, the Swiss capital. The office said in a statement that most of the victims attended a music school that the man operated. [CBS News](#)

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USNORTHCOM

Benefits of circumcision outweigh risks, U.S. pediatrics group says

27 August - The American Academy of Pediatrics has issued new guidelines saying the health benefits of infant circumcision outweigh the risks of the surgery, but the influential physician's group has fallen short of a universal recommendation of the procedure for all infants, saying that parents should make the final call. The change was prompted by scientific evidence that suggests circumcision can reduce the risk of urinary tract infections in infants and cut the risk of penile cancer and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and the human papillomavirus or HPV, which causes cervical and other cancers. Although the AAP's 1999 statement was fairly neutral, the new statement, published on Monday in the journal Pediatrics, comes down in favor of the procedure, saying the health benefits of newborn male circumcision "justify access to this procedure for families who choose it."

[Reuters](#)

Canada: Eight dead in Legionnaires' outbreak

27 August - Canadian health officials say eight people have died in a rare outbreak of Legionnaires' disease in the province of Quebec, having identified more than 100 cases of the dangerous strain of pneumonia since July. Aiming to stop the outbreak, public health workers have inspected and disinfected about 89 cooling towers in Quebec City, the provincial government said in a release on Sunday. All told, 104 cases have been identified so far. [Reuters](#)

U.S., Chicago: 2 dead in Legionnaire's outbreak tied to downtown hotel

28 August - Two people have died after contracting Legionnaires' disease in an outbreak linked to a downtown Marriott hotel this summer, Chicago Department of Public Health officials said Monday. The two dead are among eight people who came down with Legionnaires' after staying in the JW Marriott at 151 W. Adams St. between mid-July and mid-August. None of the eight people who contracted the disease are from the Chicago area or are being treated here, but city officials declined to provide any further information about them, citing privacy laws. The conditions of the six surviving people who caught Legionnaires' are not known. [Chicago Tribune](#)

U.S.: Epidemic pertussis in 2012 — the resurgence of a vaccine-preventable disease

30 August - According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the United States is currently experiencing what may turn out to be the largest outbreak of reported pertussis (whooping cough) in 50 years. Why has this theoretically vaccine-preventable disease been on the upswing? The past 45 years have seen concern about the safety of the diphtheria–tetanus–pertussis (DTP) vaccine, epidemics stemming from the vaccine's decreased use, and the development of new vaccines using acellular pertussis components (DTaP). In the prevaccine era, the number of reported cases of pertussis reached epidemic proportions every 2 to 5 years. Pertussis immunization in the United States reduced the average incidence from 157 per 100,000 population in the early 1940s to less than 1 per 100,000 in 1973. Nevertheless, the cycles of outbreaks continued to occur, because neither infection nor immunization produces lifelong immunity to pertussis, as they do for diseases such as measles; as measles was being brought under control, the period between epidemics lengthened, and there was less clinical disease and less circulation of the virus. Since cycles of pertussis continue to occur today, we know that *Bordetella pertussis* is continuing to circulate in a manner similar to that of the prevaccine era. Around 1982, the incidence of pertussis started to gradually increase; in 2005 and 2010, substantial epidemics occurred, and another epidemic is now under way. [New England Journal of Medicine](#)

U.S.: Isaac drenches Gulf Coast and high water cuts off many

29 August - Seven years to the day that [Hurricane Katrina](#) and levee failures unleashed a deluge of devastation on the Gulf Coast, [Hurricane Isaac](#) brought its own distinctive mode of destruction on Wednesday, drenching the coast not with a quick blow but with an unremitting smothering. It pummeled the Mississippi Coast with relentless roundhouse jabs, while pinning southern Louisiana under a saturating rainfall. On its crawl up from the coast, Isaac dumped more than a foot of rain in some places and shoved before it a violent storm surge that would soon bring back the terrible old images of 2005: people marooned on rooftops, rescue workers breaking into attics with axes and the rescued clutching what little they had left. The worst-hit part of the coast was Plaquemines Parish, La., the finger of land

that follows the Mississippi River from Orleans Parish out into the Gulf of Mexico, and the place where both Isaac and Katrina first made landfall. [New York Times](#)

U.S.: Mysterious new 'Heartland virus' discovered in Missouri

29 August - Two Missouri farmers have been infected with a brand-new tick-borne virus that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is calling the Heartland virus. The men recovered but suffered serious illness that required hospital care and weeks of convalescence. Symptoms included fever, severe fatigue, headache and nausea. Their platelet counts plummeted, but even though platelets are necessary for blood clotting, the men didn't suffer abnormal bleeding. A report on the new virus is in the current issue of the New England Journal of Medicine. So far, the Missouri men are the only known cases of Heartland virus in the world. But experts are sure they'll find more. After all, the men lived 60 miles apart and got infected independently. [NPR](#)

U.S.: Cases of West Nile virus set record, deaths rise

29 August - A total of 1,590 cases of West Nile virus, including 66 deaths, were reported through late August this year in the United States, the highest human toll by that point in the calendar since the mosquito-borne disease was first detected in the country in 1999, health officials said on Wednesday. The toll is increasing quickly. "We think the numbers will continue to rise," said Dr. Lyle Petersen, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Vector-Borne Infectious Diseases. Through last week, 1,118 cases and 41 deaths had been reported. The updated figures represent a 40 percent increase in the number of cases and a 61 percent spike in the number of deaths, but are short of the all-time record for a full year: 9,862 cases and 264 deaths in 2003. In hard-hit Texas, the number of confirmed cases soared to 894, with 34 people dead, this year as of Wednesday, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services. Over half of the deaths occurred in the north of the state. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: West Nile cases rise 40 percent in 1 week, CDC

29 August - West Nile virus cases are up 40 percent since last week and may rival the record years of 2002 and 2003, federal health officials said Wednesday. So far this year, 1,590 cases of the mosquito-borne disease have been reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and 66 deaths. About half of the cases are serious illnesses, and the CDC considers those the best indicator of West Nile activity because many mild cases do not get reported and their symptoms may not even be recognized. [CBS News](#)

U.S.: Yosemite closes part of popular campground over hantavirus outbreak

29 August - Yosemite National Park has closed part of a popular campground over a deadly rodent-borne lung disease that has already killed two visitors to the California park, and officials said on Wednesday more cases could emerge. Two park visitors who stayed in the cabins in June in Curry Village, a popular camping area tucked below the park's sheer

granite walls, have died after being infected by the illness known as hantavirus, while a third visitor was sickened but is recovering. A fourth person who visited the park this summer was found to be suffering from the illness, which is carried by wild rodents, but investigators were still trying to confirm the source of that infection. Officials said more cases could emerge... The National Park Service has already sent emails to nearly 3,000 people who slept in the tent cabins this summer, warning them that they may have been exposed to the virus, Wong said. [Reuters](#)

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Asia: UN warns gender imbalances growing



28 August - A U.N. report on gender imbalances says the continuing preference for boy children, especially in India and China, is leading increasing numbers of families to use prenatal sex selection. Researchers warn that the phenomenon is gaining favor in more countries. The new [United Nations Population Fund report](#) says gender selection practices are showing signs of increase in Southeast Asia, as well as Bangladesh and Afghanistan and Eastern European states of Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and Montenegro. The report, released to coincide with an Asia Population Conference, says practices of sex selection have resulted in an alarming trend of "demographic masculinization" in regions and will adversely impact communities for at least five decades. The selection of boy children has been driven by local cultures, access to medical ultrasound technology and official government policies limiting numbers of children to families. [VOA](#)

India: Malaria

28 August - The death of 4 malaria patients at Bankura Medical College has prompted the health department to initiate an internal probe to find out the lacunae in the referral system for treating malaria patients. "Bankura Medical College is the highest referral centre at Bankura District [West Bengal]. 4 patients dying in quick succession at that facility is really a reason for introspection," said a senior official in-charge of the malaria section. "Our officials of the public health department and vector borne disease surveillance section have gone to the hospitals to gather a clear picture of the treatment procedure," said a senior official. Officials spent the whole day studying bed tickets to figure out the treatment given to the patients who had died from malaria, said hospital sources. "Senior officials from health secretariat had come for a routine inquiry and they spent the whole day talking to the doctors and nurses of the department. They also collected information about the when these patients had come and in what stage," said a senior administrative official of the hospital. Health department sources further revealed that the situation of malaria deaths in Bankura and Purulia has improved quite a lot in 2012. "The main purpose is to find out the

fault and where it occurred. A patient dying of malaria at the medical college is not acceptable. [ProMED-mail](#)

India: Rabies vaccine withdrawn

29 August - Following the death of a 6-year-old boy after being administered an anti-rabies vaccine (ARV) here on Wednesday [29 Aug 2012], the Haryana health department has alerted all civil hospitals to temporarily discontinue using the vaccine. The incident took place at Karnal Civil Hospital, and doctors termed it a case of vaccine reaction. Karnal civil surgeon Dr Shiv Kumar said that the vaccine, AbhyaRab, manufactured by Human Biological Institute, Tamil Nadu, has been withdrawn. The vaccine is available at all government hospitals, and following suspicion about its quality, its use has been suspended with immediate effect. [ProMED-mail](#)

Nepal: Undiagnosed illness

28 August - The only community hospital in Okhaldhunga district has been flooded with viral fever and typhoid patients in the last few days. Doctors have said viral fever and typhoid cases have been rising due to the contamination of drinking water in the rainy season. The inflow of patients has been so high that the hospital has not been able to cope this number. Some of the patients have been kept in the training hall and even on corridors for lack of beds. The hospital has only 32 beds whereas the number of patients admitted is in the range of 45-50 daily, said a doctor at the hospital. More than 150 patients a day have been coming for treatment at the OPD [outpatient department] alone. More than 3200 patients came for treatment in July 2012 alone. Meanwhile, 2 schools at Mainaghat of Nawalparasi district have been closed after the spread of viral fever in the area. The schools had to be closed since most of the students have been affected by the disease. The people are worried that the viral fever might take epidemic proportion as there is lack of health workers at the local health posts and primary health centre. [ProMED-mail](#)

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Cuba declares cholera outbreak over

29 August - Cuban officials have declared that its cholera outbreak, which began in early July, is over after sickening 417 people, 3 fatally, the *Miami Herald* reported yesterday. The country's Public Health Ministry said the overwhelming majority of cases were in the city of Manzanillo in eastern Granma province. The agency said no new cases have been reported in more than 10 days. The 417 cases are far more than the government's last official report, which cited 158 cases on Jul 13, and the last report by Granma health officials, who confirmed 263 cases 2 weeks ago. [CIDRAP News Scan](#)

Haiti: Death toll from Isaac rises

29 August - As flood waters receded, leaving a sea of mud and misery, the body count from Tropical Storm Isaac rose to 19 in Haiti where officials warned the number could increase, and efforts continued to assess damage to homes and crops. The deaths included a young woman who was crushed by a falling wall, a man who died in a camp when a tree branch fell on him, another young man who was killed by mudslides in the southeast and several killed by electrocution. A number of people were still reported missing. Haitian and humanitarian officials were still trying to assess Isaac's impact as the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations flew reconnaissance flights around Haiti's capital and some of its hardest hit regions. The southern region, where mountain hamlets remained cut off, posed an added challenge to some assessment teams trying to tally the loss of homes and crops.

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