

31 January 2014

Army Public Health Weekly Update

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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**United States
Military Tropical
Medicine:
Extraordinary
Legacy, Uncertain
Future**

Throughout the 20th century and into this new millennium, American troops in combat have been devastated by tropical infections. In response, the United States military has assembled an essential scientific and public health capability to combat these diseases. But the legacy of military tropical medicine now benefiting many aspects of global health is under threat. Coreen M. Beaumier and colleagues explore this topic in their editorial.



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USEUCOM

- Europe: Childhood obesity - action plan for population-based prevention
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USNORTHCOM

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USPACOM

- Cambodia: Localizing treatment for emotional trauma
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USSOUTHCOM

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**Sexual
Harassment/Assault
Response &
Prevention Summit**

The U.S. Army's 7th I. A.M. Strong Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Summit is designed to help Army commanding generals and command sergeants major learn about the latest victim care and response best practices, provide status updates on command efforts and examine lessons learned.

STAND-TO!
THE OFFICIAL FOCUS OF THE U.S. ARMY

U.S. MILITARY

Agent Orange linked to skin cancer

28 January - Vietnam War veterans with prior exposure to the herbicide Agent Orange may be at higher risk for certain types of skin cancer... The study adds to previous evidence that risk of non-melanotic invasive skin cancer (NMISC) is increased even four decades after Agent Orange exposure, with at least some exposed veterans having unusually aggressive non-melanoma skin cancers... During the Vietnam War, Agent Orange was widely used as herbicide and jungle defoliant. It has been linked to a wide range of cancers and other diseases, caused by the highly toxic dioxin contaminant TCDD. "TCDD is among the most carcinogenic compounds ever to undergo widespread use in the environment," according to Dr. Clemens and coauthors. Veterans Affairs recognizes and provides benefits for certain cancers and health problems associated with prior dioxin exposure during military service, however skin cancer is currently not one of them. [EurekAlert!](#)

Congress wants answers on health impacts of Japan disaster relief

27 January - Congress has instructed the Defense Department to launch an inquiry into potential health impacts on Navy first-responders from Japan's March 2011 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster. The request, made in the explanatory statement from the House that accompanied the fiscal 2014 budget bill that passed Congress this month, comes as a growing number of sailors and Marines have joined a lawsuit against Tokyo Electric Power Co... The statement gives Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Dr. Jonathan Woodson until April 15 to submit a report to the congressional defense committees that includes the number of sailors serving on the USS Ronald Reagan during Operation Tomodachi who were potentially exposed to increased levels of radiation; adverse medical conditions experienced by Reagan sailors since the operation; and actions taken before, during and after the operation to ensure sailors' safety. [Stars and Stripes](#)

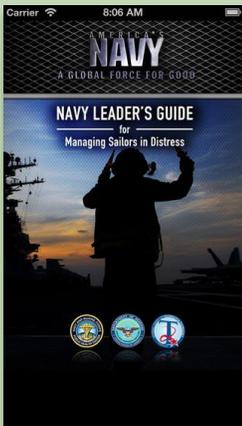
Deaths attributed to underlying cardiovascular diseases, active and reserve components, U.S. Armed Forces, 1998-2012

December 2013 - Between 1998 and 2012, there were a total of 1,639 deaths in service members on active duty whose underlying cause of death was attributed to cardiovascular disease. Of these deaths, 516 occurred in members of the reserve component (who died while on active duty) and 1,123 deaths occurred in active component members. Death rates in active component members declined over the 15-year period from 7.0 per 100,000 person-years (p-yrs) in 1998 to 5.1 per 100,000 p-yrs in 2012; the lowest cardiovascular death rate was in 2010 (4.1 per 100,000 p-yrs)... The strongest demographic correlate of increased risk of CVD death was older age. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

Navy Leader's Guide

The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC) release a smartphone application for the Navy Leader's Guide, an online handbook to help Navy leaders recognize and help Sailors displaying distressed behaviors.

NMCPHC designed the original online version of the Navy Leader's Guide for Managing Sailors in Distress and has partnered with the Defense Department's National Center for Telehealth and Technology (T2) to develop a mobile app edition for the Navy Leader's Guide.



Lighting up in uniform

29 January - Using data obtained as part of the Neurocognition Deployment Health Study, [researchers] examined the prevalence and quantity of cigarette smoking among 1,082 US Army regular active duty soldiers and activated National Guard soldiers serving between April 2003 and September 2006. Iraq-deployed and non-deployed soldiers were assessed. Army soldiers show the highest rate of tobacco use within the greater US military service... Soldiers who started smoking while in war zone areas were more likely to hold a junior rank and consume more alcohol. Highly stressful war zone events after or even outside of direct combat made soldiers reach for a pack of cigarettes more readily. On the other hand, better support by one's unit, especially in the first phase of deployment, helped more soldiers to quit smoking, probably because of the buffering effect that emotional and practical support has against operational stressors. Their compatriots who quit smoking generally experienced lower levels of non-combat war zone stress, were female, and did not consume large amounts of alcohol. [Springer](#)

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GLOBAL

DDT: Pesticide linked to Alzheimer's

27 January - A study, published in JAMA Neurology, showed patients with Alzheimer's had four times as much DDT lingering in the body as healthy people. Some countries still use the pesticide to control malaria. Alzheimer's Research UK said more evidence was needed to prove DDT had a role in dementia... The team at Rutgers University and Emory University tested levels of DDE in the blood of 86 people with Alzheimer's disease and compared the results with 79 healthy people of a similar age and background. The results showed those with Alzheimer's had 3.8 times the level of DDE. However, the picture is not clear-cut. Some healthy people had high levels of DDE while some with Alzheimer's had low levels. Alzheimer's also predates the use of DDT. [BBC News](#)

Driving to an early grave



25 January - Every 30 seconds someone, somewhere, dies in a road crash, and ten are seriously injured. The toll is rising: the World Health Organisation (WHO) expects the number of deaths globally to reach nearly 2m a year by 2030, up from 1.3m now. But the pain will fall far from equally. Rich countries are making roads safer and cutting casualties to rates not seen for decades, despite higher car use. Poor and middle-income ones will see crashes match HIV/AIDS as a cause of death by 2030. In the very poorest, the WHO expects deaths almost to triple. [The Economist](#)

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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Health care spending by high-income countries, 1980–2011

This [interactive graphic](#) shows the per capita levels of health care spending, over time, by both public and private sectors in the United States and in the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. It documents the changing levels of spending for inpatient care, outpatient care, prescription medicines, and public health services in various countries; the amounts spent on health administration and insurance; and out-of-pocket spending by patients in each country. [New England Journal of Medicine](#)

How vaccine fears fueled the resurgence of preventable diseases



25 January - ...As an [interactive map](#) from the Council on Foreign Relations illustrates, several diseases that are easily prevented with vaccines have made a comeback in the past few years. Their resurgence coincides with changes in perceptions about vaccine safety. Since 2008 folks at the think tank CFR have been plotting all the cases of measles, mumps, rubella, polio and whooping cough around the world. Each circle on the map represents a local outbreak of a particular disease, while the size of the circle indicates the number of people infected in the outbreak. As you flip through the various maps over the years, two trends clearly emerge: Measles has surged back in Europe, while whooping cough is has become a problem here in the U.S. [NPR](#)

HPV test awareness, knowledge still low

24 January - Americans are more aware that there is a test for the human papilloma virus (HPV) than counterparts in the UK and Australia, according to a new study, but few people knew much more than that... Of the 2,409 men and women who answered the survey, about 61 percent had heard of HPV, Waller's team reports in the journal *Sexually Transmitted Infections*. Among those who had heard of the virus, only half were aware of the HPV test. Awareness of the HPV test was higher in the U.S. than in the UK and Australia. The participants who had heard of HPV testing, on average, answered less than half of questions about details of testing correctly. Overall, women knew more than men. [Reuters](#)

No longer leading killer, plague still raises fears



27 January - Bubonic plague, caused by the rodent-borne bacterium *Yersinia pestis*, has killed a large fraction of the earth's population at least twice — most famously in the medieval Black Death, but before that in the Plague of Justinian, which began in A.D. 541. That pandemic, named for the Byzantine emperor, may have killed half of Europe and Asia; it hastened the collapse of the Roman Empire's

remnants and ushered in the Dark Ages. Plague is no longer a leading killer, but it is still with us. There are 155 known strains in circulation, said Hendrik N. Poinar, an evolutionary geneticist at McMaster University in Ontario. A recent outbreak in Madagascar killed 20 residents of one village in a week... Although most modern human cases can be cured with antibiotics and the Black Death strain has been shown to be susceptible to tetracycline, new antibiotic-resistant strains have emerged recently. [New York Times](#)

Rapidly building global health security capacity — Uganda demonstration project, 2013

31 January - ... CDC provided technical support to [the Uganda Ministry of Health] to increase [global health security] capacity for preventing, detecting, and responding to public health threats in Uganda. Learning from this experience, CDC is now collaborating with other parts of the U.S. government and national and international health agencies to determine the most efficient and sustainable approach to enhance capacity building in three health-system areas: detection of health threats through laboratory and other systems, coordination of information and response including through EOCs, and prevention of avoidable health threats. Realizing these areas are interconnected, a holistic approach was taken to enhance the specimen referral, testing, and informatics networks to improve case identification, notification, confirmation, and response to disease outbreaks. This model could be replicated in countries with similar health systems. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

Relieving pain and suffering for millions

29 January - Millions of people around the world with serious illnesses do not get palliative care. That is, medical care that could relieve their pain and suffering. It's estimated that 80 percent of those in need of palliative care are in low and middle income countries. Only about one in ten people who need palliative care are getting it. That's according to a new publication from the World Health Organization and the Worldwide Palliative Care Alliance. [VOA](#)

Researchers discover phage that attacks anthrax bacterium

29 January - An international team of researchers has discovered a new giant virus called a phage that infects *Bacillus anthracis*, the bacterium that causes anthrax, according to a new study in PLoS One... The team found that the virus was a voracious predator of *B. anthracis*, said Holly Ganz, PhD, of UC-Davis's Genome Center and first author of the study. They discovered in addition that it also infects some closely related bacteria, including strains of *B. cereus*, which can cause foodborne disease. Through gene sequencing the researchers identified the gene for lysin, an enzyme the phage uses to kill bacterial cells. They noted that the gene has potential for use as an antibiotic or disinfecting agent. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

Stem cell 'major discovery' claimed

29 January - Stem cell researchers are heralding a "major scientific discovery", with the potential to start a new age of personalised medicine. Scientists in Japan showed stem cells can now be made quickly just by dipping blood cells into acid. Stem cells can transform into any tissue and are already being trialled for healing the eye, heart and brain. The latest development, published in the journal *Nature*, could make the technology cheaper, faster and safer... Embryos are one, ethically charged, source of stem cells. Nobel prize winning research also showed that skin cells could be "genetically reprogrammed" to become stem cells (termed induced pluripotent stem cells). Now a study shows that shocking blood cells with acid could also trigger the transformation into stem cells - this time termed STAP (stimulus-triggered acquisition of pluripotency) cells. [BBC News](#)

Study notes benefits of 2-dose varicella vaccination

29 January - Two doses of a combined measles-mumps-rubella-varicella vaccine (MMRV) were more efficacious at preventing moderate to severe varicella infection (chickenpox) than one dose of monovalent varicella vaccine and markedly more effective against varicella of any severity, according to a study today in *The Lancet*... The investigators found the efficacy of two-dose MMRV against all varicella to be 94.9% and against moderate to severe varicella to be 99.5%. In comparison, the efficacy of one-dose varicella vaccine against all varicella was 65.4% and against moderate to severe varicella, 90.7%. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

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INFLUENZA

Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center: DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary

- During week 03 (12 January - 18 January 2014), Influenza-like-illness (ILI) and Pneumonia and Influenza (P&I) activity increased in EUCOM and decreased in NORTHCOM and PACOM.
- Among training centers in week 03, there were 4 cases of H1N1.
- The influenza vaccination coverage for the DoD (active duty component only) is 95% (as of 22 January 2014). [AFHSC DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary](#)

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 3 (January 12-18, 2014), influenza activity remained high in the United States.

- Viral Surveillance: Of 12,108 specimens tested and reported during week 3 by

collaborating laboratories, 2,793 (23.1%) were positive for influenza.

- Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality: The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was above the epidemic threshold.
- Influenza-Associated Pediatric Deaths: Eight influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported.
- Influenza-associated Hospitalizations: A season-cumulative rate of 17.0 laboratory-confirmed influenza-associated hospitalizations per 100,000 population was reported.
- Outpatient Illness Surveillance: The proportion of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) was 3.4%, above the national baseline of 2.0%. [FluView](#)

DoD Global Laboratory-Based Influenza Surveillance Program

- During Weeks 2 & 3 (5 - 18 January 2014), 536 specimens were collected and received from 56 locations. Results were finalized for 268 specimens from 46 locations.
 - For specimens collected during Week 2, 63.3% were positive for influenza (131 influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, one influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 & parainfluenza, and one influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 & RSV).
 - For specimens collected during Week 3, 91.8% were positive for influenza (54 influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, one influenza A(H3N2), and one influenza B/unknown lineage). This percentage is expected to decrease as more results are finalized.
- Vaccination percentages for active duty service members are as follows: Army - 96%, Air Force - 98%, Marines - 91%, Navy - 92%, and Coast Guard - 97%. [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

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

In week 3/2014:

- Of the 29 reporting countries, four (Bulgaria, Greece, Portugal and Spain) reported medium-intensity influenza and Portugal, Spain and the UK (England) reported geographically widespread activity.
- Of 1 401 sentinel specimens tested across 27 countries, 447 (32%) were positive for influenza virus.
- Dominant viruses were reported by Bulgaria, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the UK (Scotland) (A(H1)pdm09 virus) and Slovenia (A(H3)).
- Since week 40/2013, France and Spain have reported 33 fatal cases related to influenza virus infection, 19 (58%) of them being infected with influenza A(H1)pdm09 virus.

A growing number of countries are reporting an increasing proportion of specimens testing

positive for influenza virus. Increasing numbers of hospitalised laboratory-confirmed and fatal influenza cases have been reported in the last few weeks. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

Google.org: Flu Trends

28 January – Estimates of flu activity based on certain Internet search queries indicate that the level of flu activity in the northern hemisphere is high in Spain, Bulgaria, and throughout North America, and intense in Japan. In the southern hemisphere levels range from minimal to low (Chile). [Google.org Flu Trends](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For the week ending 18 January 2014:

Influenza

- Four cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza (A/H1N1) among US military basic trainees.
- Increased flu activity at MCRD San Diego and southern California civilian population

FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated elevated FRI rates at Fort Benning. [NHRC Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)

New evidence: Diabetes does up risk for flu-related illness

27 January - Adults with diabetes show a significantly greater risk for serious illness related to influenza compared with those without diabetes, justifying existing guidelines that call for influenza vaccination in the adult diabetic population, according to new research published online January 24 in *Diabetologia*. Working-age adults (under 65 years of age) with diabetes are included in most guidelines for influenza vaccination, including those of the American Diabetes Association and the Canadian Diabetes Association. But research supporting this recommendation is surprisingly limited, and this new study is 1 of only 2 to have followed people with and without diabetes and compared influenza-related outcomes, the researchers explain. In fact, they say their new study "is the strongest available evidence for targeting diabetes as an indication for influenza vaccination, irrespective of age. [Medscape](#)

Study: Ferrets given seasonal flu shot had worse H1N1 illness

28 January - In a study designed to shed light on a phenomenon seen in Canada of increased risk of pandemic 2009 H1N1 flu in those who received a flu vaccine the year before, ferrets given a seasonal flu shot had worse H1N1 disease than those who had not received the vaccine... The authors conclude, "While they cannot be considered conclusive

to explain human observations, these ferret findings are consistent with direct, adverse effect of prior 2008-09 TIV receipt on A(H1N1)pdm09 illness." [CIDRAP Flu Scan](#) (first item)

USAPHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report

For the week ending 18 January 2014 (Week 3)

During week three, influenza-like illness activity remained elevated in most of the country. Key indicators reflecting severity, such as hospitalizations, also remained elevated though cases have decreased since the peak in week one. Dependents were the most severely affected.

- **ILI Activity:** Army incident ILI outpatient visits in week three were 25% lower than for the same week last year.
- **Influenza cases:** Eight hospitalized influenza cases have been reported to USAPHC through DRSi in week three. To date, 57 cases have been reported during this influenza season: eight in Active Duty (AD) Service Members (SMs) and 49 in non-AD beneficiaries.
- **Viral specimens:** During week three, 577 of 1,904 (30%) laboratory specimens tested positive for respiratory pathogens. Most of the influenza A positive specimens have been from SRMC (56%), while NRMCC and WRMC accounted for 25% and 13%, respectively. [USAPHC U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report](#)

World Health Organization: Influenza update

27 January:

- In North America influenza activity remained high in recent weeks with A(H1N1)pdm09 predominant.
- In Europe, a slight increase in influenza activity has been observed, which may indicate the start of the influenza season.
- In China influenza activity continued to increase with influenza (H1N1)pdm09, A(H3N2) and influenza B co-circulating.
- In the southern hemisphere influenza activity remained low.
- In countries of tropical areas, variable influenza activity was reported. [WHO](#)

PANDEMIC AND AVIAN INFLUENZA

Analysis of new H7N9 wave warns of coinfection threat

28 January - Though ongoing H7N9 influenza activity in China—with eight new cases reported today—is mainly a zoonotic event, its parallel rise with seasonal flu poses a virus

reassortment threat, according to a new assessment today from European health officials... The ECDC said the outbreak in China remains localized, with the virus mainly transmitted sporadically to humans who have close contact with the animal reservoir, presumably live poultry. Though the H7N9 virus doesn't appear to have the capacity for efficient human-to-human spread, new reassortants with seasonal flu strains could arm it with the ability to transmit more easily. [CIDRAP](#)

China reports second case of new bird flu strain

25 January - Chinese authorities have confirmed the second human case of the new H10N8 strain of bird flu, contracted by a woman who is in critical condition in hospital in the east of the country, state news agency Xinhua has reported. The 55-year-old woman was admitted to hospital in Nanchang, the capital of Jiangxi province, on January 15, complaining of a sore throat and dizziness, Xinhua said late on Saturday. "An investigation showed that she once had exposure to an agricultural market," the report said. In December, China confirmed its first death from the H10N8 strain, also in Nanchang. [Reuters](#)

Human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus – update

30 January - On 29 January 2014, the National Health and Family Planning Commission of China notified WHO of 15 additional laboratory-confirmed cases of human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus. Of these 15 cases, 10 are females. The age range among the cases is 31 to 81 years old. The cases are reported from Guangdong (4), Jiangsu (1), Shanghai (1) and Zhejiang Province (9). Thirteen of the cases are currently in a critical or serious condition. Fourteen of the cases are reported to have had exposure to poultry or a live poultry market/environment. So far, there is no evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission. [WHO](#)

South Korea expands poultry cull on bird flu fears

26 January - South Korea is expanding a poultry cull in a bid to contain the spread of bird flu that has been found on an increasing number of farms around the country and in migratory birds. The country's agriculture ministry said the H5N8 strain of bird flu had been detected on six poultry farms and that there had been 13 cases in migratory birds since the first outbreak earlier this month. No human infection has been reported, while the ministry is looking into four additional reports from poultry farms and more than 50 other suspected cases in migratory birds, it said in a statement on Monday. [Reuters](#)

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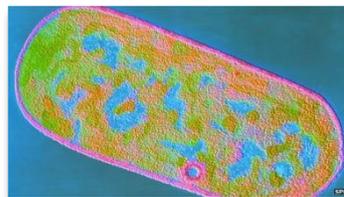
A faster way to flag bacteria-tainted food -- and prevent illness

29 January - The regular appearance of food poisoning in the news, including a recent event that led to the recall of more than 33,000 pounds of chicken, drives home the need for better bacterial detection long before meats and produce make it to the dinner table. On the horizon is a new approach for pathogen screening that is far faster than current commercial methods... Sibani Lisa Biswal and colleagues... used an array of tiny "nanomechanical cantilevers," anchored at one end, kind of like little diving boards. The cantilevers have peptides attached to them that bind to Salmonella. When the bacteria bind to the peptides, the cantilever arm bends, creating a signal. The screening system rapidly distinguished Salmonella from other types of bacteria in a sample. One of the peptides was even more specific than an antibody, which is considered the gold standard. [EurekAlert!](#)

Drug critic slams FDA over antibiotic oversight in meat production

27 January - The Food and Drug Administration allowed 18 animal drugs to stay on the market even after an agency review found the drugs posed a "high risk" of exposing humans to antibiotic-resistant bacteria through the food supply, according to a study released Monday by the Natural Resources Defense Council. The study by the NRDC, a non-governmental group that criticizes the widespread use of drugs in the meat industry, is the latest salvo in the national debate over the long-standing practice of antibiotic use in meat production... The FDA stirred the debate late last year when it unveiled guidelines for drug makers and agricultural companies to voluntarily phase out antibiotic use as a growth enhancer in livestock... But the NRDC's study found the FDA took no action to remove 30 antibiotic-based livestock feed products from the market even after federal investigators determined many of those antibiotics fell short of current regulatory standards for protecting human health. [Reuters](#)

Multiple sclerosis 'linked to food bug'



28 January - A food poisoning bacterium may be implicated in MS, say US researchers. Lab tests in mice by the team from Weill Cornell Medical College revealed a toxin made by a rare strain of Clostridium perfringens caused MS-like damage in the brain. And earlier work by the same team, published in PLoS ONE, identified the

toxin-producing strain of C. perfringens in a young woman with MS. But experts urge caution, saying more work is needed to explore the link. [BBC News](#)

Piglet-killing PED virus spreads to second Canada farm

27 January - The piglet-killing Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus (PEDv) has spread to a second Canadian farm, government officials said on Monday. A laboratory test confirmed the virus in a barn near Chatham-Kent, Ontario, and another possible case is under investigation in the same area, said Greg Douglas, the Canadian province's chief veterinary officer... Last week, the Ontario government said the virus, which has killed at least 1 million pigs in the United States, was found on a hog farm in southern Ontario's Middlesex County, marking the first confirmed case of the virus on a Canadian farm. Virtually all of that farm's several hundred two- to five-day-old piglets have died, Douglas said. [Reuters](#)

Russia reports suspected foot-and-mouth outbreak in Siberia

28 January - Russian authorities on Tuesday reported a suspected outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in eastern Siberian region of Zabaikalsk, which borders China and Mongolia. The Veterinary and Phyto-Sanitary Surveillance Service (VPSS) said clinical signs of the disease were identified in samples of cattle at a private farm, adding measures to contain it were being taken. Samples have been sent for diagnosis. [Reuters](#)

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WELLNESS

Army Wellness Center undergoes transformation

29 January - Fort Hood's Army Wellness Center will undergo a transformation in the next few months. As part of the Army's effort to standardize centers across all installations, the Fort Hood facility will remain open, but add preventive health programs to meet requirements... So far 19 centers have been standardized, with the first at installations in Germany. The one at Fort Bragg, N.C., has become so popular, [MAJ Zack] Solomon said another one was added. Of the 11 open to the public in 2013, there were about 40,000 visits overall, he said... Each Army Wellness Center houses six core programs to target primary prevention programs and services that promote enhanced and sustained healthy lifestyles to improve the overall well-being of soldiers and family members. They are health assessment review, physical fitness, healthy nutrition, stress management, general wellness education and tobacco education. [Fort Hood Herald](#)

Kids' vitamins often surpass daily recommendations

27 January - Vitamin supplements marketed for infants and children often contain more than the recommended amount of individual vitamins, according to a new study. Researchers found that in all but one case, the average vitamin content of those

supplements exceeded what's recommended... They reviewed the labels of 21 supplements intended for use among infants younger than 12 months old and 172 supplements intended for use among kids between 12 months and four years old. Overall, the researchers looked at nine individual vitamins in the supplements intended for infants and 14 vitamins in the supplements intended for older kids. They found vitamin D was the only vitamin that wasn't listed in amounts above the RDA in products made for both age groups.

[Reuters](#)

New concern about testosterone and heart risks

29 January - A large new study found that prescription testosterone raised the risk of heart attacks in older men and in middle-aged men with a history of heart disease, prompting some experts on Wednesday to call for more extensive warning labels on the drugs... The study looked specifically at their rate of heart attacks in the year before receiving their new prescriptions, and in the three months after. Men 65 and older had double the rate of heart attacks in the months after starting the drug, as did those younger than 65 with a previous diagnosis of heart disease. There was no evidence of greater risk in the younger men without a history of heart problems. [New York Times](#)

Peanut allergy treatment 'a success'

29 January - Doctors say a potential treatment for peanut allergy has transformed the lives of children taking part in a large clinical trial. The 85 children had to eat peanut protein every day - initially in small doses, but ramped up during the study. The findings, published in the *Lancet*, suggest 84% of allergic children could eat the equivalent of five peanuts a day after six months. Experts have warned that the therapy is not yet ready for widespread use. Peanuts are the most common cause of fatal allergic reactions to food. [BBC News](#)

Public housing residents bear disproportionate burden of poor oral health

14 January- Residents of publicly supported housing – public housing developments and rental assistance units – were less likely to have had routine preventive dental care and more likely to have experienced serious oral health issues resulting in tooth loss compared to other residents... The study... discloses a serious gap in oral health care for an already vulnerable population, especially seniors living in public housing... The researchers found that, despite being as likely to have had a dental visit in the last year, both public housing and rental assistance residents were significantly less likely than others to have had a cleaning in the last year. Additionally, residents of rental assistance units were more than twice as likely to have had six or more teeth removed than nonpublic housing residents. The findings were even more significant for the elderly: [Boston University School of Health](#)

You'd think we'd have baby-making all figured out, but no

27 January - ...So last March [Dr. Jessica Illuzzi, an obstetrician and gynecologist at the Yale University School of Medicine and] her team gave 1,000 women an online survey to assess their knowledge about reproductive health. The survey included women across various races, ethnic groups and socioeconomic levels around the country. "We didn't find very big differences in knowledge across socioeconomic groups," Illuzzi says. More educated women were only slightly more informed, the survey found. In general, all women had big gaps in knowledge, Illuzzi says, especially in terms of risk factors for infertility and birth defects. More than half the women surveyed didn't know that folic acid supplements need to be taken at least a month before conception to prevent neural tube defects. And although most women realize that getting pregnant becomes harder and harder as you get older, many didn't realize that aging raises the risk of miscarriages and chromosomal abnormalities, such as Down syndrome. [NPR](#)

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USAFRICOM

Guinea rushes to curb measles outbreak

27 January - Health authorities in Guinea are scrambling to contain a measles outbreak that has killed one child, infected 37 others and spread to half of the country's 33 districts. More than 400 suspected cases, nearly all of them in children under 10 years old, have been registered. A vaccination campaign targeting over 1.6 million children is to be launched in the coming weeks. [IRIN](#)

Liberia: Counterfeit drug war

29 January - Liberia's Ministry of Health is launching a major crackdown on counterfeit drug sellers throughout the country, but Liberians say they have no choice but to buy such drugs, given their low cost and availability even in rural areas... Most sellers peddle on the streets from black bags or open bags, both in towns and villages. The medicines they sell - the bulk of them to treat malaria - are either past their expiration date or are counterfeit drugs coming from Guinea and Nigeria. [IRIN](#)

South Sudan: Growing disease burden in conflict

27 January 2014 (IRIN) - Disease burden is growing among people who fled their homes following the outbreak of conflict in South Sudan. The mid-December eruption of fighting between army forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and those supporting former vice-president Riek Machar has adversely impacted the already weak health system... "Disease

outbreaks in the camps [for the displaced] are of serious concern. In many areas, the healthcare system has collapsed due to the conflict - the clinics have not be re-supplied and the medical staff have fled, leaving women without a safe place to give birth [and] sick children with nowhere to turn," Gorgeu said. [IRIN](#)

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USCENTCOM

Afghanistan: Half of Afghan children suffer irreversible harm from malnutrition

26 January - Afghanistan is raising a stunted generation whose hobbled development could spell disaster for the country's feeble economy and undermine the impact of billions of dollars in aid poured into health, education and other areas. More than half of Afghan girls and boys suffer damage to their minds and bodies that cannot be undone because they are poorly nourished in the crucial first two years of life, doctors and other experts say. The finding raises serious questions about the legacy of more than 10 years of western involvement in Afghanistan. "After the age of two years, stunting is largely irreversible, and has an impact on growth and development and cognitive function," says Carrie Morrison from the World Food Programme. "Over the longer term, it can have a very damaging effect on the national economy. Young people are not able to attain what they should be able to attain. Women who marry young and are stunted themselves give birth to a small infant and the cycle goes on." [The Guardian](#)

Case series highlights severe disease with MERS

28 January - In addition to severe respiratory failure, nonrespiratory illnesses like shock and kidney injury were common in 12 intensive care unit (ICU) patients in Saudi Arabia who had Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) infections, according to a study today in *Annals of Internal Medicine*. The study also noted a low rate of MERS-CoV infection among healthcare workers (HCWs) who had contact with MERS patients... All 12 patients had underlying conditions and presented with acute respiratory failure. Eleven (92%) had extrapulmonary manifestations, including shock, acute kidney injury, and thrombocytopenia (deficiency of blood platelets). Only five patients (42%) were alive 90 days after hospitalization. Of 520 exposed HCWs, 4 (0.8%) tested positive for MERS-CoV. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

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

27 January - WHO has been notified of two additional laboratory-confirmed cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV).

Details of the cases are as follows:

- WHO was notified of one case by the Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia. The case is a 54 year old man from Riyadh... The patient was a health care worker. He had a history of chronic disease and had no history of contacts with animals or contact with known cases of MERS-CoV. In addition, he had no travel history.
- WHO was notified of one case by the Ministry of Health of Jordan... The case is a 48 year old man... The patient had underlying health conditions and he had travelled to the United Kingdom from 12 November to 25 December 2013 seeking treatment for his underlying conditions. The patient had no history of animal contact and is believed to have not attended any large social events in the last 30 days. It is reported that he had received 2 guests from Kuwait between 25 December and 31 December, 2013.

Globally, from September 2012 to date, WHO has been informed of a total of 180 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV, including 77 deaths. [WHO](#)

Pakistan: 4 polio cases in FATA are the first in 2014

24 January - Four cases of wild poliovirus type 1, the first polio cases of the new year, have been reported in Pakistan, the only polio-endemic country in the world that saw an increase in cases last year, according to a Jan 22 report from the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI). The new Pakistani cases all occurred in children in the North Waziristan district of the violence-prone Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), where vaccination was suspended by local officials in June 2012. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

Syria talks: Civilians to be allowed out of Homs old city

26 January - Syria will allow women and children to leave the besieged area of Homs "from now", the UN mediator at the Geneva peace talks, Lakhdar Brahimi, has said. Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad said women and children were free to leave... Hundreds of people are reportedly trapped in besieged parts of the city, including some who are very ill. [BBC News](#)

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USEUCOM

Europe: Childhood obesity - action plan for population-based prevention

27 January - Childhood obesity has developed into a major public health concern in the WHO European Region... In close collaboration with the Member States, WHO/Europe has developed several initiatives to address this issue, both in monitoring and policy making, such as the Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (COSI) and several other activities,

including the "Multisectoral country workshop for the development of an action plan for population-based prevention of childhood obesity"... Beyond reviewing countries' data on childhood obesity, diet, physical activity and chronic disease, these workshops defined population-based strategies and high-priority fields of action towards the prevention of childhood obesity. WHO has developed the tool "[Prioritizing areas for action in the field of population-based prevention of childhood obesity](#)" (accompanied by a WHO guide to population-based approaches to childhood obesity) that determines and defines priority areas of action. [WHO](#)

United Kingdom: E-cigarettes to be stubbed out for under-18s



26 January - Under-18s in England are to be banned from buying electronic cigarettes, the government has announced. Experts say it is not yet known what harm the tobacco-free devices could inflict and that their contents could be damaging young people's health. An estimated 1.3m people in the UK use e-cigarettes which were

designed to help smokers quit. Ministers also plan to make it illegal for adults to buy traditional cigarettes for anyone under 18. While smoking rates have fallen to their lowest ever level, experts fear the electronic substitutes could be encouraging teenagers to take up the habit. [BBC News](#)

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USNORTHCOM

U.S.: Incidence of childhood obesity in the United States

30 January - Although the increased prevalence of childhood obesity in the United States has been documented, little is known about its incidence... When the children entered kindergarten (mean age, 5.6 years), 12.4% were obese and another 14.9% were overweight; in eighth grade (mean age, 14.1 years), 20.8% were obese and 17.0% were overweight. The annual incidence of obesity decreased from 5.4% during kindergarten to 1.7% between fifth and eighth grade. Overweight 5-year-olds were four times as likely as normal-weight children to become obese (9-year cumulative incidence, 31.8% vs. 7.9%), with rates of 91.5 versus 17.2 per 1000 person-years. Among children who became obese between the ages of 5 and 14 years, nearly half had been overweight and 75% had been above the 70th percentile for body-mass index at baseline. [New England Journal of Medicine](#)

U.S.: New study details gun injuries suffered by children

27 January - Every day in the United States, about 20 children are injured by firearms and require hospitalization, according to [new research](#). The research said that in 2009, there were 7,391 hospitalizations of victims under the age of 20 and that six percent of those admitted die as a result of their injuries. "This study is a stark reminder of the devastating effects of gun violence," said Adam Winkler, a law professor at UCLA and author of the book *Gunfight*. "Too often, we focus only on the number of people who die from gun violence. But so many who escape death also suffer lifelong injuries." The study says assaults accounted for the majority of hospitalizations, while the fewest were suicide attempts. Suicide attempts were the most likely to result in death. [VOA](#)

U.S.: Oropharyngeal cancer on the rise in young adults

29 January - A new study reveals an alarming increase in oropharyngeal cancers among young adults. While the exact cause for this phenomenon is unknown, the human papillomavirus (HPV) may be to blame. According to researchers from Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit there was an overall 60 percent increase from 1973 and 2009 in cancers of the base of tongue, tonsils, soft palate and pharynx in people younger than age 45. Among Caucasians, there was a 113 percent increase, while among African-Americans the rate of these cancers declined by 52 percent during that period of time. But compared to Caucasians and other races, the five-year survival rate remains worse for African Americans. [EurekAlert!](#)

U.S.: Study reveals infection control practices not adequately implemented at many hospital ICUs

29 January - U.S. hospital intensive care units (ICUs) show uneven compliance with infection prevention policies, according to a study in the February issue of the *American Journal of Infection Control*. In the largest study of its kind, researchers from Columbia University collaborated with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to undertake a nationwide survey of 1,534 ICUs at 975 hospitals... The survey inquired about the implementation of 16 prescribed infection prevention measures at point-of-care, and clinician adherence to these policies for the prevention of central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI), ventilator-associated pneumonia (VAP), and catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTI)... "Evidence-based practices related to CAUTI prevention measures have not been well implemented," state the authors. [Infection Control Today](#)

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Cambodia: Localizing treatment for emotional trauma

24 January - More than three decades after an estimated two million Cambodians died in a genocide perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge, post-traumatic stress disorder and other forms of emotional trauma continue to prey on the peace of mind of survivors and their descendants, say mental health experts who are advocating culturally adaptive trauma treatment. "There are differences in human responses to trauma, and it is important to address the idioms of distress and cultural narratives in the response," said Sandra Mattar, an associate professor of trauma at St. Mary's College of California.... "We should not assume that treatments developed for PTSD in the West are helpful or useful in non-Western contexts," said Mattar, who wrote a report on training traumatologists in culturally adaptive methods in 2010. Trauma therapy based solely on talking and medication runs the risk of "eclipsing the mechanisms that [the] culture has around resilience and coping," she said. [IRIN](#)

India and China, besieged by air pollution



27 January - The United States space agency published a map in September that showed how rates of premature deaths from air pollution vary around the world. It indicated that northern China has one of the worst rates, attributed to the density of a deadly fine particulate matter, known as PM 2.5, that often results from coal burning... The map also showed that the rate

in northern China — what appears to be about 1,000 or more deaths each year per 1,000 square kilometers, or 386 square miles — is matched by that of northern India, in a diagonal belt stretching from New Delhi southeast to Calcutta... Various recent studies and data suggest that air quality in Delhi is worse than in Beijing, though India's air pollution problems do not get nearly as much attention on the world stage as those of Beijing.

[New York Times](#)

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Chikungunya outbreak in Caribbean continues to expand, latest numbers released

24 January - "Epidemiological data indicate that the outbreak that started in Saint Martin (FR) is expanding. An increasing number of cases has been observed from most of the affected areas." This above statement is from the European Centre for Disease Prevention

and Control's (ECDC) latest Communicable Diseases Threat Report released Jan. 23 for Week 4, Jan. 19-25, which also reported the latest case numbers from the Caribbean outbreak. According to the report, the following islands have reported chikungunya cases: Virgin Islands (UK), 3 confirmed cases; Saint Martin (FR), 393 confirmed cases; Saint Martin (NL), 9 confirmed cases (previously reported as 10 confirmed case in the Philipsburg website, The Daily Herald); Martinique, 267 confirmed cases and probable cases; Saint Barthélemy, 45 confirmed cases and probable cases; Guadeloupe, 68 confirmed and probable cases; Dominica, 1 confirmed case and French Guyana, 2 confirmed case that were imported. [Global Dispatch](#)

Royal Caribbean cruise cut short after more than 600 are sickened

27 January - A 10-day Royal return two days early after an illness, the cruise line said Bernadette Burden, a Centers for Disease Control 600 people on the ship have



Caribbean cruise ship will outbreak of gastrointestinal Sunday. According to spokeswoman with the and Prevention, more than become ill. Passengers and crew members reported vomiting and diarrhea. "After consultation between our medical team and representatives of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, we think the right thing to do is to bring our guests home early, and use the extra time to sanitize the ship even more thoroughly," the company said. [CNN](#)

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