

5 December 2014

# Army Public Health Weekly Update

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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

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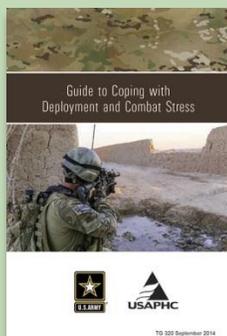
### INFLUENZA

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- Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary
- CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report
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- Flu News Europe

## TG 320 Update

**TG 320 – Guide to Coping with Deployment and Combat Stress** has been updated and includes an increased focus on the importance of sleep. Order from the **Health Information Products eCatalog**.



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- Animal health body calls for more spending on disease detection
- Bugs in Manhattan compete with rats for food refuse
- FDA investigates multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* Enteritidis linked to mung bean sprouts
- Out of Africa ... HIV, Ebola, ??

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- Cardiovascular screening may be worthwhile for middle-aged athletes
- Herbal berberine boosts brown fat activity
- Male circumcision benefits outweigh risks, U.S. CDC says
- Mediterranean diet has marked impact on aging
- Prescribing vegetables, not pills
- Study finds most with H.I.V. don't take medicine
- Suicide risk falls substantially after talk therapy

### USAFRICOM

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- Madagascar: WHO - plague in Madagascar could spread
- Somalia: In some hard-to-reach areas, immunization coverage is only at 15 per cent
- South Africa: HIV second highest killer of South African youth

### USCENTCOM

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- Afghanistan: There's almost no help for Afghanistan's 1.6 million drug addicts
- Saudi Arabia: Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

### USEUCOM

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- Europe: Growing up in the unhappy shadow of the economic crisis
- Spain: Trends in HIV testing, prevalence among first-time testers, and incidence in most-at-risk populations
- United Kingdom: British regulator urges home births over hospitals for uncomplicated pregnancies

### USNORTHCOM

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- U.S.: AIDS activists cite a milestone, but the most vulnerable patients are left behind
- U.S.: CDC health advisory regarding the potential for circulation of drifted influenza A (H3N2) viruses
- U.S., CDC: Link between polio-like illness and EV-D68 looks likely
- U.S. FDA issues new drug label rules to better inform pregnant women
- U.S.: FDA panel says newer HIV tests effective
- U.S.: Gun shops, public health officials find common ground
- U.S.: Hospitals make fewer serious errors; 50,000 lives saved
- U.S.: New York City plans focus on mental health in justice system
- U.S.: Over half of U.S. infants still sleep in hazardous situations
- U.S.: Respiratory syncytial virus, July 2012–June 2014

## Hand Drying at Medical Treatment Facilities

This Technical Information Paper discusses hand drying methods within the military treatment facility. Jet air dryers are clearly more sustainable and can be used in areas such as administration, warehousing, and maintenance. But because paper towels remove microorganisms from the hands more effectively, they should be used in food preparation, child care, and direct patient care areas.

- U.S.: Vaccine injury compensation: most claims took multiple years and many were settled through negotiation

### USPACOM

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- Mosquito-borne chikungunya now spreading rapidly through South Pacific
- India: Disabled women in India 'locked up, abused'
- India: 'Superbugs' kill India's babies and pose an overseas threat
- Singapore reports 5th dengue fever fatality as case count exceeds 17,000 for 2014

### USSOUTHCOM

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- Chikungunya in Central America
- Cholera cases increase in Haiti and Dominican Republic

### U.S. MILITARY

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## Injured heroes, broken promises

22 November - ... [Hundreds] of current or former soldiers based in Texas have registered complaints over the past five years about the Army's WTUs, set up to support soldiers wounded on combat deployments, as well as those who become seriously ill or are injured in noncombat situations. ... The documents focus on three WTUs based in Texas: Fort Hood in Killeen, Fort Bliss in El Paso and Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio. They offer a window into a unique program that tries to combine an often challenging regimen of medical treatment and a military culture of order and discipline. Some soldiers expressed satisfaction with their experience in the WTUs, but many others said they were frustrated and angry over their treatment. Words like "harass," "belittle," "treated unfairly" and "insulting" come up frequently over the five-year period covered by the documents. ... Soldiers also complained of being required to show up for early morning formations, pull night shifts or drive when heavily medicated. [Dallas Morning News](#)

## Number of U.S. troops filing reports of sexual assault rises 8% in past year

3 December - The number of military service members who reported that they had been sexually assaulted rose by 8 percent over the past year, according to a new Defense Department report. ... Despite the climb, the Pentagon cited progress on a number of fronts. ... For instance, on the basis of an anonymous biannual survey of service members, the military estimated that 19,000 troops were victims of "unwanted sexual contact," a definition that includes a wide variety of offenses. That figure was down sharply from an estimated 26,000 two years ago, but back at roughly the same level that was reported in 2010. While most sexual-assault victims are apparently still unwilling to come forward, the report found improvement there as well, estimating that 24 percent of victims filed reports with a military authority during the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, up from 11 percent two years earlier. [Washington Post](#)

**Controlled  
Monitoring Site  
Waste Management**

This Technical Information Paper provides guidance for collecting and managing waste generated at controlled monitoring sites (CMS) at DoD-owned facilities.

## Seroconversion for infectious pathogens among UK military personnel deployed to Afghanistan, 2008–2011

December 2014 - ... We conducted seroprevalence testing of 467 UK military personnel deployed to Helmand Province, Afghanistan, during 2008–2011 and found that up to 3.1% showed seroconversion for infection with *Rickettsia spp.*, *Coxiella burnetii*, sandfly fever virus, or hantavirus; none showed seroconversion for infection with Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever virus. Most seroconversions occurred in personnel who did not report illness, except for those with hantavirus (70% symptomatic). These results indicate that many exposures to infectious pathogens, and potentially infections resulting from those exposures, may go unreported. [Emerging Infectious Diseases](#)

## Transfusion-transmissible infections among U.S. military recipients of emergently transfused blood products, June 2006–December 2012

November 2014 - In austere deployment environments, transfusion of freshly collected blood products from volunteer donors is sometimes necessary to save wounded service members' lives. ... This study evaluates the frequency of transfusion-transmissible infections (TTIs) in U.S. service member (SM) recipients of non-FDA-compliant blood products from 1 June 2006 through 31 December 2012. ... A single, previously reported incident case of human T-lymphotropic virus (rate of 1.3 per 1,000 persons) was the only TTI identified during the study period. Screening of recipients identified two (rate of 1.9 per 1,000 persons) prevalent (pre-transfusion) cases of chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection, 16 (rate of 15.5 per 1,000 persons) prevalent cases of naturally acquired immunity to HBV and seven (rate of 6.8 per 1,000 persons) prevalent cases of hepatitis C virus infection. No cases of infection with human immunodeficiency virus, syphilis, *Trypanosoma cruzi*, or West Nile virus were identified. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

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### GLOBAL

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## Anthropologists study why some parents hesitant about vaccinating kids

3 December - Anthropology is the latest weapon in the fight against the anti-vaccine movement. Public health officials are hoping anthropologists can help them better understand why — despite solid evidence that they are safe and they work — growing numbers of parents are hesitating to have their children vaccinated. [Ottawa Citizen](#)

**Effectiveness and  
Safety of Ultraviolet  
Germicidal  
Irradiation Lamps  
Used for  
Disinfecting  
Surfaces  
Contaminated with  
the Ebola Virus**

This Technical Information Paper provides information on the usefulness and limitations of Ultraviolet Germicidal Irradiation (UVGI) lamps for disinfecting surfaces contaminated with the Ebola virus, and to provide guidance on the safe use of these lamps.

## Big data offer new strategy for public health campaigns

3 December - Chicago health officials ... have long been trying to attack breast cancer among minorities with a program offering uninsured women free mammograms at Roseland Hospital in the predominantly black South Side. But black women -- who are far more likely than white women to die of breast cancer -- weren't getting screened. Because traditional public health outreach didn't seem to be working, the city's Department of Public Health decided to do something new: It turned to a Chicago-based data mining company, Civis Analytics, for help. ... The Civis team sorted through material from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey to uncover how characteristics such as gender, race, and income correlate to insurance status. ... Civis then used its own survey findings to build an algorithm to predict, with confidence, where, by neighborhood, the uninsured are most likely to cluster. ... From that point, the team was also able to locate women who were likely to lack insurance and who fell into the appropriate age range. The city then used this information to mail fliers to about 5,000 women. ... The mailings "generated quite a bit of buzz," said Nikisha Coleman, a Roseland spokeswoman. For instance, she said, the hospital usually provides fewer than 10 free mammograms per month. But in October, the month the city sent out the mailers, 31 women came in for the free service. [MedPage Today](#)

## Can PTSD symptoms be traced to concussion-induced pituitary damage?

1 December - Concussions from bomb blasts and post-traumatic stress disorder — the two signature wounds of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq — can be difficult to distinguish from each other. Cognitive problems, sleep trouble and irritability are common symptoms of both. Up to 44% of veterans who suffered concussions involving a loss of consciousness also meet criteria for PTSD, military researchers have found. But a new study raises the possibility that at least some of the veterans may not actually have the stress disorder but instead hormonal irregularities due to pituitary gland damage incurred during their concussions. Researchers at the University of St. Louis analyzed brain scans from dozens of military and civilian patients. Comparing patients with concussions to patients with both concussions and PTSD, the scientists found significant differences in the metabolic activity in their pituitary glands. [Los Angeles Times](#)

## Chronic diseases are killing more in poorer countries

4 December - Chronic diseases like cancer and heart disease are rising fast in low- and middle-income countries, striking far younger populations than in rich countries and causing much worse outcomes, according to a new report. Deaths from chronic diseases have risen by more than 50 percent in low- and middle-income countries over the past two decades, according to the report, by the Council on Foreign Relations. The increase is part of a shift in global mortality patterns in which infectious diseases, such as malaria and tuberculosis, have declined substantially and are no longer the leading cause of death in the developing world. [New York Times](#)

## Soldier Medical Readiness Campaign

The next Soldier Medical Readiness Campaign (SMR-CP) Injury Prevention/Human Performance Optimization Education Series presentation will cover Risky Business: Population Screening and the Limitations of Risk Assessment and Perceived Barriers to Sleep, Activity, and Nutrition among U.S. Army Soldiers.

Date: 8 December 2014

Time: 1300-1400 ET

[DCO Link](#)

Phone: 210-249-4234

Access code 70491#

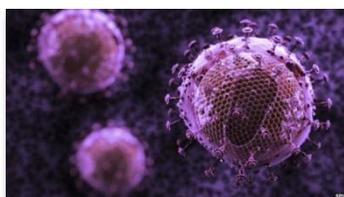
[More information](#)



## Drug can repair spinal cord injuries, study shows

3 December - A drug that can encourage nerves in the spinal cord to grow and repair injuries has been developed by US scientists. The study on rats, published in the journal *Nature*, showed some degree of movement and bladder control could be restored. ... [Scar] tissue that formed after an injury prevented spinal cord repair. Sugary proteins are released by the scar tissue which act like glue. The long spindly part of the nerve - the axon - gets trapped in the glue if it tries to cross the site of the injury. The research team injected a chemical under the skin which crossed into the spinal cord and disrupted the activity of the glue. ... In the tests, 21 out of 26 rats showed some degree of recovery either in their ability to move or in bladder function. [BBC News](#)

## HIV evolving 'into milder form'



1 December - HIV is evolving to become less deadly and less infectious, according to a major scientific study. The team at the University of Oxford shows the virus is being "watered down" as it adapts to our immune systems. It said it was taking longer for HIV infection to cause Aids and that the changes in the virus may help efforts to

contain the pandemic. Some virologists suggest the virus may eventually become "almost harmless" as it continues to evolve. [BBC News](#)

## Powdered measles vaccine found safe in early clinical trials

25 November - A measles vaccine made of fine dry powder and delivered with a puff of air triggered no adverse side effects in early human testing and it is likely effective, according to a paper to be published November 28 in the journal *Vaccine*. The paper is now available online. In 2013, measles killed 145,700 people, most of them children, according to the World Health Organization. That's despite the fact that the conventional injectable vaccine against the measles virus is effective. [A] team innovated a dry delivery technique for the measles vaccine to eliminate the need for injections, liquid storage, and other challenges, such as vaccine contamination. [EurekAlert](#)

## Trauma patient simulator allows medics to practice lifesaving skills

1 December - ... In the noise and confusion of the battlefield, the combat medic has to bring his A game. The trauma patient simulator called Caesar gives trainees an experience that mimics the distractions of the hostile environment and allows them to practice point-of-injury care, said Cleveland Wiltz, spokesman for CAE Healthcare, which has a wide range of patient simulators for various types of medical training. ... The simulator is wireless and resistant to water, dust, dirt, humidity, heat and "rough handling," according to information

**What You REALLY  
Need to Know  
about Ebola**

A new video from the CDC. Find out what you really need to know about Ebola. Mosquitoes are the deadliest animals in the world, but did you know that they don't spread Ebola? Did you know that Ebola is only spread once someone has symptoms? Find out everything else you need to know.



from CAE. It demonstrates high-pressure bleeding, with a supply of 1.4 liters of blood and sensors at four tourniquet locations on the body. [Defense News](#)

## EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE

### 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa - Case counts

4 December - Case counts updated in conjunction with the [World Health Organization](#) updates and are based on information reported by the Ministries of Health. [CDC](#)

#### Countries with Widespread Transmission

Country	Total Cases	Laboratory-Confirmed Cases	Total Deaths
Guinea	2186	1949	1349
Liberia	7650	2805	3155
Sierra Leone	7420	6039	1609
Total	17256	10793	6113

### Ebola spreading intensely in Sierra Leone, global toll rises: WHO

3 December - The death toll from the Ebola epidemic has risen to 6,070 out of 17,145 cases as of Nov. 30, and the virus continues to spread intensely across Sierra Leone, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Wednesday. Sierra Leone recorded 537 new Ebola cases in the week to Nov. 30, against 385 the previous week, the WHO said in its latest update. [Reuters](#)

### Ebola virus disease in the Democratic Republic of Congo

27 November - The seventh reported outbreak of Ebola virus disease (EVD) in the equatorial African country of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) began on July 26, 2014 ... A total of 69 suspected, probable, or confirmed cases were reported between July 26 and October 7, 2014, including 8 cases among health care workers, with 49 deaths. As of October 7, there have been approximately six generations of cases of EVD since the outbreak began. The reported weekly case incidence peaked in the weeks of August 17 and 24 and has since fallen sharply. Genome sequencing revealed Ebola virus (EBOV, Zaire species) as the cause of this outbreak. [New England Journal of Medicine](#)

### Ebola virus disease in West Africa — clinical manifestations and management

27 November - ... Early symptoms of EVD include high fever (temperature of up to 40°C), malaise, fatigue, and body aches. The fever persists, and by day 3 to 5 of illness,

## 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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gastrointestinal symptoms typically begin, with epigastric pain, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Patients routinely presented to our facility after 2 or 3 days of severe vomiting or diarrhea, during which they posed a substantial risk to their communities ... [Recurrent] episodes of emesis resulted in an inability to tolerate oral intake. Large volumes of watery diarrhea ... presented suddenly, persisted for up to 7 days or (rarely) longer, and gradually tapered off. ... Most deaths occurred between days 7 and 12 of illness. ... Symptoms began to improve in approximately 40% of patients around day 10 of illness. ... Nearly all patients who survived to day 13 ultimately lived. ... Particularly vulnerable patient populations included children less than 5 years of age, the elderly, and pregnant women. [New England Journal of Medicine](#)

## Five million children out of school in West Africa due to Ebola

3 December - Some five million children are out of school in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone because of the deadly Ebola outbreak, according to a report by the Global Business Coalition for Education. Schools and other public buildings have been closed because they are believed to increase the spread of the virus. Many are now used as holding centers for Ebola patients. The report, co-written with A World at School, said being out of school can have a crippling impact on vulnerable children, especially girls, who are more likely to face high-risk situations as a result, including early marriage and pregnancy. [Reuters](#)

## Information on the survivability of the Ebola virus in medical waste

21 November - For the purposes of this document, any waste generated in the care of patients with known or suspected Ebola is considered a Category A infectious substance. For the purposes of this document, any waste generated in the care of patients with known or suspected Ebola is considered a Category A infectious substance. ... Ebola virus can also be killed by many common chemical agents. Chemical agents that will kill the virus include bleach, detergents, solvents, alcohols, ammonia, aldehydes, halogens, peracetic acid, peroxides, phenolics, and quaternary ammonium compounds. [CDC](#)

## New concerns over response to Ebola crisis

2 December - Doctors Without Borders, the medical charity that was among the first to react early and aggressively to the Ebola crisis in West Africa, expressed new concern on Tuesday about what it called a slow and uneven international response that portends further setbacks. The tone of the warning, by Dr. Joanne Liu, the group's international president, was pessimistic compared with an appraisal made on Monday by the World Health Organization, which said significant progress had been made in reversing the upward trajectory of the disease. Dr. Liu acknowledged an outpouring of financial and construction help from abroad in the past few months. ... But Dr. Liu said most of the work of tracking, isolating and treating patients, burying the dead and raising awareness to minimize contagion had fallen to the three poor countries at the heart of the outbreak: Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. [New York Times](#)

## Pentagon seeks protective bubble for Ebola patients

25 November - To avoid problems caused by faulty biohazard suits used in tropical climates, the Pentagon is rushing to develop by January a portable "Care Cube" that would envelope patients infected with the Ebola virus while allowing caregivers to work without wearing the bulky suits, according to a newly released military document. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) wants to spur the development of the cube, which it calls a "long-term version of the present bubble isolation devices used to transport patients in airplanes to the west." "Unlike current devices, the Care Cube is meant to provide for a patient's needs for up to 10 days, including the gelling, disinfection and containment of all waste," said the DARPA document. [USA Today](#)

## Some Ebola outbreak goals met, but threat still looms



1 December - Strong international support is still needed to bolster the remaining portions of West Africa's Ebola response, such as treatment units and putting contact tracing teams in place, a top World Health Organization (WHO) official said today, warning against a false sense of optimism and complacency. Bruce Aylward, MD, MPH, the WHO's assistant director-general in charge of Ebola outbreak response, told reporters in Geneva today that Ebola transmission in West Africa is still intense enough to pose a threat of international spread and though response efforts are making a difference—especially more treatment beds and safer burials—behaviors play a key role. He said one badly done burial, for example, could spark another spike in cases. [CIDRAP](#)

## U.S. designates 35 hospitals as Ebola treatment centers

2 December - U.S. health officials have designated 35 hospitals nationwide as Ebola treatment centers and expect to name more in coming weeks deemed capable of treating patients while minimizing risk to staff, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said on Tuesday. The list includes those that have already treated patients with the virus, such as Emory University Hospital in Atlanta, and other prominent hospitals, including Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, Mayo Clinic Hospital in Minnesota, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and New York-Presbyterian. More than 80 percent of returning travelers from Ebola-stricken countries in West Africa live within 200 miles (320 km) of a designated Ebola treatment center, the CDC said. [Reuters](#)

## WHO: Male Ebola survivors should abstain from sex for 3 months after symptom onset

1 December - Men who have survived Ebola virus infection should abstain from sex, including oral sex, for 3 months after they first developed symptoms, the World Health Organization advised last week. Although sexual transmission of Ebola virus has not been documented, studies have shown that male survivors can shed live virus in seminal fluid up

to 82 days after symptom onset. If men cannot abstain, the WHO said, they should use condoms. They should also take precautions after masturbation. [NEJM Journal Watch](#)

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## INFLUENZA

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

For Week 47:

- In NORTHCOM influenza activity remained low among service members, dependents, and recruits.
- In EUCOM, influenza activity was minimal and ILI and P&I decreased and was just at baseline.
- In PACOM influenza activity is low among service members and dependents. ILI and P&I activity among service members increased to baseline.
- CENTCOM and AFRICOM data is not available this week due to issues with the Theatre Medical Data Store data.
- Among local nationals in SOUTHCOM, influenza activity remains low. Most ILI activity circulating is due to RSV. [AFHSC DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary](#)

### CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 47 (November 16-22, 2014), influenza activity increased slightly in the United States.

Viral Surveillance: Of 9,710 specimens tested during week 47, 1,228 (12.6%) were positive for influenza.

Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality: The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was below the epidemic threshold.

Influenza-associated Pediatric Deaths: Four influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported. [FluView](#)

### DoD Global, Laboratory-Based, Influenza Surveillance Program

- During 2-15 November 2014 (Surveillance Weeks 45 & 46), a total of 141 specimens were collected and received from 40 locations. Results were finalized for 88 specimens from 34 locations. During Week 45, five influenza A(H3N2), three A/not subtyped and

four influenza B were identified. During Week 46, two influenza A/not subtyped were identified.

- On 6 November 2014, German authorities reported an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza A(H5N8) at a turkey holding. This is the first time that avian influenza A(H5N8) has been detected in Europe, and risk of transmission of this virus to the general public is considered extremely low according to the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control. [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

## Flu News Europe

Week 47/2014

- In week 47/2014, influenza activity remained low across the WHO European Region.
- Sixteen countries reported sporadic influenza activity and six reported increasing trends in consultations for influenza-like illness (ILI) and acute respiratory infection (ARI).
- Of the 760 sentinel ILI and ARI specimens tested across 33 countries, only 20 (3%) from eight countries tested positive for influenza virus. Currently circulating viruses include A(H1N1)pdm09, A(H3N2) and influenza B viruses.
- The number of hospitalized laboratory-confirmed cases remained low and stable, with two countries reporting four such cases for week 47/2014. Three of the four were admitted to intensive care units.

Season

- Although sporadic influenza virus detections are being reported in an increasing number of countries, there is no indication that the influenza season has started in the Region, which is normal for this time of year.
- No indications of increased mortality due to influenza have been reported through the European monitoring of excess mortality for public health action project. [Flu News Europe](#)

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

For week 48 (through 29 November 2014):

- Influenza: One case of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza (A/H3) among US military basic trainees.
- FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates were at or below expected values. [NHRC Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)

## Study adds more data on effects of consecutive-year flu shots

26 November - A new study from the University of Michigan has yielded more evidence that getting a flu shot 2 years in a row may result in lower vaccine effectiveness (VE) in the

second year, and also that the effects of a flu shot may last more than one season. The researchers, who followed 321 households through the 2012-13 flu season, found that individuals who were vaccinated only in that season enjoyed better protection than those who were vaccinated in both the 2011-12 and 2012-13 seasons, according to their report in the *Journal of Infectious Diseases*. In addition, the investigators found some serologic evidence that was consistent with the flu VE findings: those who were vaccinated only in the current season had higher antibody titers against influenza A/H3N2 than those vaccinated in both seasons. [CIDRAP](#)

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

For the week ending 15 November 2014 (Week 46)

Overall activity remains low in both Army and civilian populations, but is expected to increase over the coming weeks.

- ILI Activity: Army incident ILI outpatient visits in week 46 were 24% lower than for the same week last year.
- Influenza cases: No hospitalized influenza cases were reported to USAPHC through DRSi in week 46. To date, no cases have been reported during this influenza season.
- Viral specimens: During week 46, 92 of 582 (16%) laboratory specimens tested positive for respiratory pathogens; 30 of 465 (6.5%) specimens tested for influenza A were positive. SRMC reported the most influenza A-positive specimens (60%), followed by WRMC (27%), NRMC (10%), and PRMC (3%). RSV accounted for 48% of positive specimens. [USAPHC U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report](#)

## WHO Influenza Update

1 December - Globally, influenza activity remained low, with the exception of some Pacific Islands.

- In North America, influenza activity continued to increase.
- In Europe overall influenza activity increased slightly but remained low.
- In tropical countries of the Americas, influenza detections remained low with respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) causing most influenza-like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI).
- In Africa and western Asia, influenza activity was low.
- In eastern Asia, influenza activity in most countries remained low.
- In tropical Asia, influenza activity was low with influenza B predominant in Viet Nam.
- In the southern hemisphere, influenza activity remained low except in several Pacific Islands where ILI activity remained high.
- The review of the southern hemisphere influenza season has been published at the WHO website see link below

- The WHO GISRS laboratories tested more than 34 452 specimens. 2572 were positive for influenza viruses, of which 2123 (82.5%) were typed as influenza A and 449 (17.5%) as influenza B. Of the sub-typed influenza A viruses, 27 (2.9%) were influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, 917 (97.0%) were influenza A(H3N2) and 1 (0.1%) was influenza A(H5). Of the characterized B viruses, 34 (94.4%) belonged to the B-Yamagata lineage and 2 (5.6%) to the B-Victoria lineage. [WHO](#)

## AVIAN INFLUENZA

### Canada: Bird flu kills thousands of birds on two Canadian farms

2 December - Avian influenza, known as bird flu, has killed thousands of turkeys and chickens on two farms in the province of British Columbia, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) said on Tuesday. The government agency said it has placed the farms under quarantine as it conducts tests over the coming days to determine the virus's precise subtype, and its pathogenicity, or severity. It has so far identified the virus type as H5, which has previously been reported in Canada. [Reuters](#)

### Egypt: Egyptian dies of H5N1 bird flu, bringing total to seven: health ministry

3 December - Another Egyptian has died of H5N1 bird flu, bringing the total number of deaths in Egypt from the virus to seven this year out of 14 identified cases, the health ministry said on Wednesday. [Reuters](#)

### India: Poultry, people under observation for bird flu in Kerala

2 December - Bird flu is reported to be under control in the state of Kerala, with 180,000 poultry culled and around 300,000 people under observation. The government in Kerala has said the avian influenza which had hit the duck-rearing Central Kerala's Kuttanad region has been brought under control, reports Indian Express. So far, it says, 180,000 ducks have been culled and the operation was scheduled to be wound up yesterday, 1 December, with the culling of another batch of 50,000 poultry. Health Minister V.S. Shivakumar said the virus which was identified as H5N1 has not hit humans so far. [The Poultry Site](#)

### Netherlands: Dutch poultry industry hit by new bird flu outbreak

30 November - Bird flu was found at a fourth poultry farm in the Netherlands, officials said, in a fresh blow for the Dutch agricultural export sector. The latest infestation was found at a

poultry farm in the western municipality of Zoeterwoude, not far from the sites of previous outbreaks. The farm's 28,000 laying hens were ordered destroyed. [Reuters](#)

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## VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

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### Animal health body calls for more spending on disease detection

3 December - More money needs to be spent on detecting disease in domestic and wild animals, an intergovernmental group said on Wednesday, following a series of bird flu outbreaks and previous mutations of animal viruses into ones that can be passed between humans. The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) said governments had cut funding after previous health crises had abated, and needed to reconsider that decision in that light of recent outbreaks. ... Germany, the Netherlands and Britain have reported cases in recent weeks of the highly pathogenic bird flu virus H5N8, which is similar to one found in Asia earlier this year that led in South Korea to a massive culling of poultry flocks. [Reuters](#)

### Bugs in Manhattan compete with rats for food refuse

2 December - ... [Scientists] placed a supply of enticing comestibles — well, all right, junk food — at each site: Ruffles potato chips, Nabisco Nilla Wafers and Oscar Mayer Extra Lean Franks, all carefully weighed. They put some of the food in a cage that allowed insects in but kept out rats, squirrels and other vertebrates. The rest was placed where any animal could eat it, covered only with a shelter to keep it dry. After about 24 hours, they returned to each site to see what had been consumed. On a third of the street medians, insects ate 100 percent of the caged food. Where all animals had access, about twice as much food was removed, suggesting that vertebrates and insects have more or less the same diet. ... The city's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene had a practical take on the results. The study, said a spokesman, Levi Fishman, "confirms that street litter, particularly discarded food, is a major source of food for rats and other pests, which is why we encourage the public to dispose of garbage in one of the many trash receptacles throughout the city." [New York Times](#)

### FDA investigates multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* Enteritidis linked to mung bean sprouts

26 November - The FDA, CDC, and state and local officials are investigating a multi-state outbreak of *Salmonella* Enteritidis illnesses linked to mung bean sprouts produced by Wonton Foods, Inc. of Brooklyn, New York. The CDC reports that 68 people have been infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Enteritidis in 10 states since September 30,

2014. No deaths have been reported. ... Traceback from the restaurants that patient cases reported eating at indicated that mung bean sprouts from Wonton Foods, Inc. of Brooklyn, New York are a likely source of the outbreak. [FDA](#)

## Out of Africa ... HIV, Ebola, ??

20 November – [Africa] is fertile ground for novel zoonoses, animal-borne diseases like Ebola and HIV that can make the jump to humans, according to [Benhur Lee, MD](#), of Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City. First of all, the equatorial regions of Africa are rich in potential disease reservoirs: "That's where the biodiversity is," he told *MedPage Today*. Second, a growing population is encroaching more and more on the places where those species live, bringing people and potential pathogens into ever-closer contact. And finally, the medical and public health systems that might identify novel diseases before they can wreak havoc are weak everywhere, and nonexistent in some places. [Medpage Today](#)

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### WELLNESS

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## Cardiovascular screening may be worthwhile for middle-aged athletes

2 December - Cardiovascular screenings are a cost-effective way to identify middle-aged athletes who may risk heart attacks or strokes by participating in high-intensity sports, a new study suggests. ... To see if widespread screening could detect hidden symptoms and risks for heart disease at a reasonable price, Menafoglio and colleagues at three hospitals in Switzerland evaluated 785 athletes between the ages of 35 and 65. ... Overall, the cost of screening averaged \$199 per athlete (about 160 euros), because most athletes didn't need any testing beyond the initial evaluation. About one in seven athletes needed additional screening. Extra tests found some cases of previously unimagined diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, and mild heart valve disease. Overall, the screenings caught previously undetected cardiovascular abnormalities in about 3 percent of participants and a high cardiovascular risk profile in about 4 percent. Just three athletes had abnormalities that made it too dangerous for them to continue their exercise routines. [Reuters](#)

## Herbal berberine boosts brown fat activity

29 November - The naturally occurring plant alkaloid berberine, used in many Chinese herbal medicines, was found to increase energy expenditures in rodents by increasing brown fat activity. Genetically obese mice injected daily with the compound for 4 weeks showed evidence of increased energy expenditures, and they also generated more heat when exposed to cold. ... Berberine (BBR) administration was found to limit weight gain,

improve cold tolerance, and enhance brown adipose tissue (BAT) activity in obese db/db mice, and the alkaloid was found to induce the development of brown-like adipocytes in inguinal, but not epididymal, adipose deposits. [MedPage Today](#)

## Male circumcision benefits outweigh risks, U.S. CDC says

2 December - The benefits of male circumcision outweigh the risks, according a long awaited draft of federal guidelines from U.S. health officials released on Tuesday, which indicate that scientific evidence supports recommending the procedure. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that medically performed male circumcision could help decrease the risk of contracting HIV and several other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) as well as other health problems. [Reuters](#)

## Mediterranean diet has marked impact on aging

2 December – ... [Researchers] at Harvard-affiliated Brigham and Women’s Hospital (BWH) found that greater adherence to the Mediterranean diet correlated with longer telomeres. ... Shorter telomeres have been associated with decreased life expectancy and increased risk of aging-related disease, while longer telomeres have been linked to longevity. ... The researchers analyzed 4,676 disease-free women from the Nurses’ Health Study who had completed the food-frequency questionnaire and whose telomere lengths had been measured. They found that a greater adherence to the Mediterranean diet was associated with longer telomeres, and that even small changes in diet made a difference. [Harvard Gazette](#)

## Prescribing vegetables, not pills

1 December - ... The Browns are among 50 low-income families with overweight or obese children enrolled in the Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program, or FVRx, at Harlem Hospital Center. Three other hospitals in New York also have been testing the program. ... Instead of drugs or admonishments to lose weight, which typically fall on deaf ears, doctors provide families in the FVRx program with a “prescription” to eat fruits and vegetables. The families also are given nutritional education, recipes and, most important of all, so-called Health Bucks that are redeemable for produce at a local farmers’ market — at twice the amount that the families could purchase with food stamps alone. [This] and similar programs at community health centers in 30 states strongly suggest that providing access to fresh fruits and vegetables, with the means to purchase them and the motivation to do so, can make a meaningful dent in the problem. [New York Times](#)

## Study finds most with H.I.V. don’t take medicine

25 November - Just 30 percent of Americans with H.I.V. have the virus in check, putting others at risk of infection, health officials said Tuesday. A report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that 840,000 of the 1.2 million people infected with H.I.V. in 2011 were not consistently taking drugs that suppress the virus. Of that number, 66 percent had been given an H.I.V. diagnosis but were not getting regular care; 20 percent did not

know they were infected; 10 percent were prescribed antiretroviral medicines but were still not able to get the virus under control; and 4 percent were under physician care but were not prescribed antiretroviral medicines. [New York Times](#)

## Suicide risk falls substantially after talk therapy

24 November - Repeat suicide attempts and deaths by suicide were roughly 25 percent lower among a group of Danish people who underwent voluntary short-term psychosocial counseling after a suicide attempt, new Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health-led research suggests. The findings are believed to be the first to show that talk therapy-focused suicide prevention actually works, averting future suicide attempts in this very high-risk population. Although just six-to-10 talk therapy sessions were provided, researchers found long-term benefits: Five years after the counseling ended, there were 26 percent fewer suicides in the group that received treatment as compared to a group that did not. [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News](#)

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### USAFRICOM

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## Madagascar: WHO - plague in Madagascar could spread

3 December - ... Last week, the World Health Organization reported on cases of plague in the island nation of Madagascar. WHO officials warned the disease could spread throughout the country. Madagascar's health ministry reported in November that the plague has killed nearly 50 people. And it said over 130 people are thought to be infected. ... The plague is not new to Madagascar. It seems to reappear in the country every year. However, the WHO's Christian Lindmeier says the U.N. health agency is very concerned about this outbreak. He says the number of cases of plague appears to be higher than in recent years. [VOA](#)

## Somalia: In some hard-to-reach areas, immunization coverage is only at 15 per cent

1 December - About 9,000 cases of suspected measles have been reported in Somalia this year, a doubling compared to last year, according to the latest statistics released by the humanitarian agencies working in the country. The situation is alarming against the backdrop of a large number of unvaccinated children in hard-to-reach areas in southern and central Somalia and the lack of a functional immunization system. In some parts of southern and central Somalia where insecurity prevented vaccinations of over half a million young children for the last five years, measles immunization coverage is as low as 15 per cent. Increased population movement and overcrowding in sites where internally displaced people reside further increase the risk of infection. [Raxanreeb Online](#)

## South Africa: HIV second highest killer of South African youth

2 December - HIV was the third leading cause of natural deaths in South Africa in 2013, up three places from the previous year, and the second highest killer of young people, a survey by the national statistics agency showed on Tuesday. The survey, based on 458,933 deaths that occurred in 2013, showed that HIV was responsible for 11 percent of deaths in the 15 to 44 age group, Statistics South Africa said. Despite having one of the most extensive HIV/AIDS treatment programs in the world, including rolling out free anti-retroviral drugs a decade ago, the rate of new infections in South Africa has increased. Over six million South Africans, or 18 percent of the population, are currently infected with the disease, according to the United Nations. [Reuters](#)

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### USCENTCOM

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## Afghanistan: There's almost no help for Afghanistan's 1.6 million drug addicts

4 December - ... Estimates say that about 1.6 million Afghans are drug addicts; the Afghan government has space for only about 2,300 of them in its drug treatment facilities around the country. There are almost 100 of them, are mostly funded by international aid. Jangalak, the only functioning government-run clinic in Kabul, has space for 300 addicts. "Since we established this hospital three years ago, we have treated more than 6,000 drug addicts," says Dr. Ahmadzai Soltani, who heads the clinic. ... But relapses are a major problem: the Ministry of Public Health says there's a 40 percent relapse rate for addicts treated at Jangalak. Although the government tries to follow up with recovering addicts after treatment, resources are scarce. And most of Afghanistan's addicts aren't getting help at all. The Afghan government has said it plans to establish more treatment centers, but at the moment, it's facing severe revenue shortages. [Public Radio International](#)

## Saudi Arabia: Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

2 December - Between 3 and 19 November 2014, the National IHR Focal Point for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) notified WHO of 18 additional cases of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) infection, including 4 deaths. ... Contact tracing of household contacts and healthcare contacts is ongoing for these cases. The National IHR Focal Point for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia also notified WHO of the death of 3 previously reported MERS-CoV cases. Globally, the WHO has been notified of 927

laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV, including at least 338 related deaths. [WHO](#)

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## **USEUCOM**

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### **Europe: Growing up in the unhappy shadow of the economic crisis**

November 2014 – ... The report shows how political choices, made within a framework of fiscal consolidation on many socio-economic determinants of people's health, have had negative impacts on citizens' mental health and well-being. The determinants include, for instance, employment status, household income and ability to provide adequate living conditions fundamental to optimal and sustainable human development. Children, as a particularly vulnerable group, are disproportionately affected by declining living standards. The restrictive atmosphere of the crisis, where political and financial choices of many national governments is to cut, rather than invest in early years, means that living standards and social and labour environments for families have been adversely affected. [European Public Health Alliance](#)

### **Spain: Trends in HIV testing, prevalence among first-time testers, and incidence in most-at-risk populations**

27 November - During 2000 to 2009, data on people undergoing HIV testing and on those newly diagnosed with HIV were collected in a network of 20 Spanish clinics specialising in sexually transmitted infections and/or HIV testing and counselling. The number of tests performed, overall and disaggregated by different variables, was obtained. HIV prevalence among first-time testers and HIV incidence among repeat testers were calculated. ... Overall HIV prevalence among persons seeking HIV testing was 2.5% (95% CI: 2.4 to 2.6). Prevalence was highest in male sex workers who had sex with other men (19.0% (95% CI: 16.7 to 21.4)) and was lowest in female sex workers (0.8% (95% CI: 0.7 to 0.9)). [Eurosurveillance](#)

### **United Kingdom: British regulator urges home births over hospitals for uncomplicated pregnancies**

3 December - Reversing a generation of guidance on childbirth, Britain's national health service on Wednesday advised healthy women that it was safer to have their babies at home, or in a birth center, than in a hospital. Women with uncomplicated pregnancies — about 45 percent of the total — were better off in the hands of midwives than hospital doctors during birth, according to new guidelines by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. For these low-risk mothers-to-be, giving birth in a traditional maternity

ward increased the chances of surgical intervention and therefore infection, the regulator said. ... The risk of death or serious complications for babies was the same in all three settings, with one exception: In the case of first-time mothers, home birth slightly increased that risk. Nine in 1,000 cases would experience serious complications, compared with five in 1,000 for babies born in a hospital. [New York Times](#)

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## **USNORTHCOM**

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### **U.S.: AIDS activists cite a milestone, but the most vulnerable patients are left behind**

1 December - ... Here in the United States, the progress fighting the virus has been mixed recently. The HIV diagnosis rate dropped about 33 percent over a decade, from 24.1 per 100,000 population in 2002 to 16.1 per 100,000 in 2011. That's according to a recent analysis from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which found significant decreases in diagnosis rates for most demographics, with the largest seen among women, people ages 35-44 and people of multiple races. However, diagnoses attributable to male-to-male sexual contact saw increases for nearly every group, with those 13-24 years old recording the largest increase (133 percent) of any group. [Washington Post](#)

### **U.S.: CDC health advisory regarding the potential for circulation of drifted influenza A (H3N2) viruses**

3 December - ... Influenza viral characterization data indicates that 48% of the influenza A (H3N2) viruses collected and analyzed in the United States from October 1 through November 22, 2014 were antigenically "like" the 2014-2015 influenza A (H3N2) vaccine component, but that 52% were antigenically different (drifted) from the H3N2 vaccine virus. In past seasons during which predominant circulating influenza viruses have been antigenically drifted, decreased vaccine effectiveness has been observed. ... Because of the detection of these drifted influenza A (H3N2) viruses, this CDC Health Advisory is being issued to re-emphasize the importance of the use of neuraminidase inhibitor antiviral medications when indicated for treatment and prevention of influenza, as an adjunct to vaccination. [CDC](#)

### **U.S., CDC: Link between polio-like illness and EV-D68 looks likely**

2 December - With the recent outbreaks of enterovirus D68 (EV-D68) respiratory infections and mysterious polio-like illnesses in US children fading, it seems increasingly likely that the two are related, says an expert with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The CDC has reported 1,121 EV-D68 cases in 47 states since August, a number that has not increased since Nov 20, with nearly all cases in children. Meanwhile, the total for the unexplained polio-like cases, involving sudden onset of weakness in one or more limbs, reached 90 on Nov 28, which was 2 more than a week earlier. Two reported cases were still being verified. [CIDRAP](#)

## U.S. FDA issues new drug label rules to better inform pregnant women

3 December - A new labeling system should give women and their doctors clearer information on the risks and benefits of prescription medicines when taken during pregnancy and breast-feeding, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said Wednesday. The agency "wants pregnant and breast-feeding women and their health care providers to benefit from the most useful and latest information about their prescription medicines," Dr. Sandra Kweder, deputy director of the FDA's Office of New Drugs, explained in an agency news release. "The new labeling rule provides for explanations, based on available information, about the potential benefits and risks for the mother, the fetus and the breast-feeding child," she added. [Medline Plus](#)

## U.S.: FDA panel says newer HIV tests effective

2 December - Newer methods to test donated blood samples for HIV infections are effective, a panel of experts at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration concluded, in a move that could limit the ban on donations by men who have had sex with other men (MSM). The FDA's ban, in place for about three decades, disallows donations from men who have had sex with even one man since 1977, as they are recognized to be at a higher risk of acquiring HIV. While the FDA's Blood Products Advisory Committee on Tuesday discussed the new methods to test samples donated by MSMs for HIV, it did not make a recommendation on limiting the ban. [Reuters](#)

## U.S.: Gun shops, public health officials find common ground

4 December – [The New Hampshire Firearm Safety Coalition] members talked about how to prevent sales to potentially suicidal customers. "We contacted NAMI (the National Alliance on Mental Illness, a mental health education, advocacy and support organization) and asked if there were warning signs that a customer might be suicidal. ... They came up with a tip sheet for retailers to help reduce the odds that a gun purchased in their store would soon be used in a suicide. Does the customer display no knowledge of guns, and no interest in learning? Is the customer vague when asked what the gun will be used for? Do they mention a crisis, like a divorce or a job loss? Do they appear distraught? ... The effort to include suicide prevention messages in gun literature is spreading, with efforts under way in Tennessee, Nevada, and Shasta County, California. "There's a guy in Wyoming who, totally on his own, started giving out free gun locks from his shop," says Barber. [U.S. News and World Report](#)

## U.S.: Hospitals make fewer serious errors; 50,000 lives saved



2 December - About 50,000 people are alive today because U.S. hospitals committed 17 percent fewer medical errors in 2013 than in 2010, government health officials said on Tuesday. The lower rate of fatalities from poor care and mistakes was one of several "historic improvements" in hospital quality and safety measured by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

They included a 9 percent decline in the rate of hospital-acquired conditions such as infections, bedsores and pneumonia from 2012 to 2013. [Reuters](#)

## U.S.: New York City plans focus on mental health in justice system

1 December - In an effort to reduce the growing number of inmates with mental health and substance abuse problems in New York City's jails, the administration of Mayor Bill de Blasio announced plans on Monday to significantly expand public health services at almost every step of the criminal justice process. City officials, who are allocating \$130 million over four years to the project, said their goal was to break the revolving door of arrest, incarceration and release that has trapped many troubled individuals in the system for relatively minor, quality-of-life offenses. The new plan will shift emphasis from punishment for minor crimes to treatment. The changes include tripling the size of both pretrial diversion programs and the amount of resources devoted to easing the transition from jail back into society. This would represent a significantly different approach to criminal justice in the city, experts said. [New York Times](#)

## U.S.: Over half of U.S. infants still sleep in hazardous situations

2 December - Over half of U.S. infants sleep with blankets, pillows, or other potentially dangerous bedding despite long-standing recommendations against this practice, a *Pediatrics* study finds. Between 1993 and 2010, nearly 19,000 caregivers completed a survey about infant sleep practices, including whether bedding was regularly used in the sleep environment. The prevalence of infant bedding use declined but remained high over the study period — from 86% to 55%. Infants most at risk for dangerous sleeping conditions included those born to non-college educated women, teenagers, and women of non-white race/ethnicity. [NEJM Journal Watch](#)

## U.S.: Respiratory syncytial virus, July 2012–June 2014

5 December - Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) causes lower respiratory infection among infants and young children worldwide. Annually in the United States, RSV infection has been associated with an estimated 57,527 hospitalizations and 2.1 million outpatient visits among

children aged <5 years. Knowing the start of the RSV season in any given locality is important to health care providers and public health officials who use RSV seasonality data to guide diagnostic testing and the timing of RSV immunoprophylaxis for children at high risk for severe respiratory infection. ... For 2012–13, the RSV season onset ranged from late October to late December, and season offset ranged from late December to late April, excluding Florida. For 2013–14, the RSV season onset ranged from late October to late January, and season offset from late January to early April, excluding Florida. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

## U.S.: Vaccine injury compensation: most claims took multiple years and many were settled through negotiation

November 2014 - Most of more than 9,800 claims filed with the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) since fiscal year 1999 have taken multiple years to adjudicate. More than 1,000 (11 percent) of claims filed since fiscal year 1999 were still in process (pending) as of March 31, 2014; most of these were pending for 2 years or less. A greater percentage of the claims filed since fiscal year 2009 were resolved within 1 or 2 years. ... Since 2006, about 80 percent of compensated claims have been resolved through a negotiated settlement. [GAO](#)

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### USPACOM

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## Mosquito-borne chikungunya now spreading rapidly through South Pacific

2 December – Chikungunya, a debilitating mosquito-borne viral disease, has taken hold in French Polynesia, spreading rapidly and threatening neighboring Pacific nations, regional health authorities said on Wednesday. The disease, typically found in low levels in Africa and Asia, this year has infected almost a million people in Latin America and the Caribbean, according to the World Health Organization. French Polynesia, with a population of more than 268,000, said four people had died and more than 18,000 people had sought treatment for the disease since October, the first outbreak in the archipelago. ... Samoa has reported more than 2,500 cases since July, while American Samoa and Tokelau had also suffered outbreaks, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), based in New Caledonia, said. [Reuters](#)

## India: Disabled women in India 'locked up, abused'

3 December - ... Women and girls with disabilities in India are routinely locked away in mental hospitals and institutions where they face abuse, overcrowding, filthy conditions and

medical treatment against their will, [Human Rights Watch,] the human rights watchdog said on Wednesday. "Women and girls with disabilities are dumped in institutions by their family members or police in part because the government is failing to provide appropriate support and services," HRW researcher Kriti Sharma said in a statement. ... At least 70 million Indians live with psychosocial disabilities like schizophrenia or bipolar disorder and more than 1.5 million have intellectual disabilities such as Downs Syndrome. Yet only 0.06 percent of the country's federal health budget is spent on mental health. [Reuters](#)

## India: 'Superbugs' kill India's babies and pose an overseas threat

3 December - A deadly epidemic that could have global implications is quietly sweeping India, and among its many victims are tens of thousands of newborns dying because once-miraculous cures no longer work. These infants are born with bacterial infections that are resistant to most known antibiotics, and more than 58,000 died last year as a result, a recent study found. While that is still a fraction of the nearly 800,000 newborns who die annually in India, Indian pediatricians say that the rising toll of resistant infections could soon swamp efforts to improve India's abysmal infant death rate. Nearly a third of the world's newborn deaths occur in India. [New York Times](#)

## Singapore reports 5th dengue fever fatality as case count exceeds 17,000 for 2014

27 November - ... Singapore is reporting a dengue fever fatality in a man who lived at Chuan Terrace, according to the health ministry today. ... This is the second dengue fever death reported in November and the 5th of the year. ... According to the National Environmental Agency (NEA), as of Nov. 27, there have been 17,330 dengue fever cases reported in 2014. In 2013, Singapore recorded a record 22,318 cases, smashing the previous record of about 14,000 cases in 2005. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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### USSOUTHCOM

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## Chikungunya in Central America

3 December - In June 2014, El Salvador reported locally transmitted cases for the first time in Central America. Local transmission means that mosquitoes in the area have been infected with chikungunya and are spreading it to people. Local transmission of chikungunya is now being reported in other countries in Central America. As of November 24, 2014, the following Central American countries have reported cases of chikungunya:

Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama

CDC recommends that travelers to the Central America protect themselves from mosquito bites. Some travelers may be more likely to get chikungunya, have severe disease, or be at higher risk for other reasons. CDC advises travelers in high-risk groups to discuss their travel plans with their health care provider. [CDC](#)

## Cholera cases increase in Haiti and Dominican Republic

3 December - Haiti and the Dominican Republic have reported increases in cholera cases over the last several months, and Mexico has reported 14 cases since mid-2014, according to a report yesterday from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). The Dominican provinces of San Juan and Azua reported their first cholera cases of 2014, with 8 suspected cases in Azua and 112 suspected cases and 2 deaths in San Juan. During 2014, the Dominican Republic reported 231 suspected cholera cases and 5 deaths, a lower incidence than was reported in previous years. According to PAHO, cholera cases in Haiti increased sharply from September to mid-November, with an average of 918 cases reported per week. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

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The *Army Public Health Weekly Update* is published by the Health Information Operations Program, Deputy Chief of Staff for Communication, United States Army Public Health Command.

