

5 October 2012

Army Public Health Weekly Update

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

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Contents

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U.S. MILITARY

- Alarming breast cancer rates among troops
- Army will purge soldiers who can't pass PT test
- Injuries due to firearms and air guns among U.S. military members not participating in overseas combat operations, 2002-2011
- Navy urges better nutrition and less smoking

GLOBAL

- Bacterium targets HIV-positive people
- Black mamba venom is 'better painkiller' than morphine
- Epilepsy burdens developing countries
- Novel coronavirus infection, WHO update: Revised interim case definition
- Stumped by bed nets, mosquitoes turn midnight snack into breakfast
- UN warns over impact of rapidly ageing populations
- U.S.-acquired human rabies with symptom onset and diagnosis abroad, 2012
- When new diseases emerge, experts are faster on the uptake

INFLUENZA

- Americans urged to get vaccinated as flu season nears
- CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview
- Google.org: Flu Trends
- Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

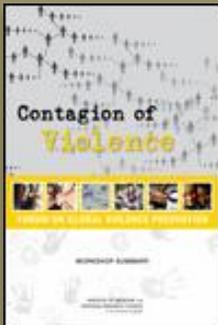
VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

- U.S. explores possible salmon role in *Salmonella* cases
- U.S.: FDA lists problems at cantaloupe farm tied to *Salmonella* outbreak

Contagion of Violence

Researchers have recognized the tendency for violent acts to cluster, to spread from place to place, and to mutate from one type to another – similar to the infectious disease model.

The IOM Forum on Global Violence Prevention focused on the epidemiology of the contagion, possible processes and mechanisms by which violence is transmitted, how contextual factors mitigate or exacerbate the issue, and ways in which the contagion of violence might be interrupted.



WELLNESS

- Addicted to painkillers, unready for help
- Diet, physical activity and clear communication key to reversing premature disease, death
- HPV vaccine found safe in large study
- New DNA test can spot gene diseases in babies
- Quick survey may pick up ovarian cancer warnings, study

USAFRICOM

- Africa: New virus looks like rabies, acts like Ebola
- Democratic Republic of Congo: Ebola outbreak, WHO update
- Eritrea: Community hygiene playing role in combating diseases
- Kenya: Major measles vaccine campaign planned
- Nigeria: Reporting on lead poisoning
- Nigeria: Polio surges
- Sudan: Health conditions deteriorating in Darfur camps
- Uganda: End of Ebola outbreak

USCENTCOM

- Egypt: Mumps vaccine shortage
- Syrian conflict a public health disaster
- Yemen: Chikungunya

USEUCOM

- Germany resumes ritual circumcisions after bitter dispute
- United Kingdom ovarian cancer treatment 'lagging'
- United Kingdom: Overseas 'health tourists' costing NHS at least £40m

USNORTHCOM

- U.S.: Common pesticide linked to birth defect, study suggests
- U.S.: Meningitis cases are linked to steroid injections in spine
- U.S.: Teen drinking and driving rate cut in half in 20 years

USPACOM

- Cipla malaria drug aimed at Asia gets WHO nod
- Japan: Typhoon Jelawat slams Okinawa, and mainland Japan
- Philippines defies church to push family planning
- Scientific research benefits Cambodia
- South Korea tries new approach to reduce suicides

USSOUTHCOM

- Haiti takes on dreaded disease elephantiasis one mouth at a time

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.

Links

[A-Z Index](#)

[About USAPHC](#)

[Army Public Health and Health Information Weekly Update Archives](#)

[Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

[Medical Threat Briefings \(AKO\)](#)

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[USAPHC Library](#)

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[USAPHC Training](#)

[Contact USAPHC](#)

U.S. MILITARY

Alarming breast cancer rates among troops

1 October - ...“Military people in general, and in some cases very specifically, are at a significantly greater risk for contracting breast cancer,” says Dr. Richard Clapp, a top cancer expert at Boston University. Clapp, who works for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on military breast cancer issues, says life in the military can mean exposure to a witch’s brew of risk factors directly linked to greater chances of getting breast cancer. Indeed, in a 2009 study, doctors at Walter Reed Army Medical Center found that breast cancer rates among military women are “significantly higher” — that military women are 20 percent to 40 percent more likely to get the disease than other women in the same age groups. Researchers point to a higher use of oral contraception — also linked to breast cancer — among military women as a possible culprit. “Military women are also more likely to be engaged in industrial jobs than females in the general population and hence potentially more likely to be exposed to chemicals that may be related to breast cancer,” researchers wrote in the study. [Army Times](#)

Army will purge soldiers who can’t pass PT test

3 October - The Army is trimming the fat. Beginning Nov. 1, soldiers attending Professional Military Education must pass the Army Physical Fitness Test and meet height/weight standards. Those who fail will be given a second chance within seven to 24 days... [Army Times](#)

Injuries due to firearms and air guns among U.S. military members not participating in overseas combat operations, 2002-2011

September 2012 - During 2002-2011, active component U.S. service members sustained 4,657 firearm-related injuries in circumstances other than deployment to the wars in Iraq/Afghanistan; 35 percent of the injuries were fatal. The highest firearm-related injury rates affected service members in law enforcement/security and combat occupations. Of fatal injuries, 28 percent and 24 percent were suicides and homicides, respectively; among service members 30 and older, 84 percent of noncombat firearm-related deaths were suicides and 14 percent were homicides. In circumstances other than war, rates of both fatal and non-fatal firearm-related injuries are much lower among military members than civilian males aged 18-44. During the period, rates of nonfatal firearm-related injuries among non-deployed military members increased sharply, peaking in 2008. The trend reflects that among U.S. civilian males aged 18-44. However, firearm-related fatality rates were stable among civilians but increased among military members. The increase in rates of firearm-related fatalities among non-deployed military members reflects the increase in rates of suicides by firearms. Rates of injuries due to BB, pellet or paintball guns also increased during the period. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

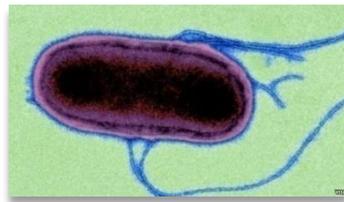
Navy urges better nutrition and less smoking

3 October - Taking a cue from first lady Michelle Obama and her efforts to whip the nation's children into shape, the Navy has launched a campaign to get sailors to eat healthier, exercise more often and quit smoking. U.S. Surgeon General Regina Benjamin and top Navy and Marine Corps leaders came to Norfolk Naval Station on Tuesday to announce the initiative, which promotes healthy life choices through educational videos, brochures and seminars. The program was modeled after the National Prevention Strategy, an educational campaign mandated under the federal health care overhaul and championed by the first lady and her husband. The program seeks to help Americans stay healthy at every stage of life. [Pilot Online](#)

[top of page...](#)

GLOBAL

Bacterium targets HIV-positive people



1 October - Researchers are warning of an emerging form of intestinal disease in sub-Saharan Africa. It's targeting mostly HIV-infected people, who are not on treatment. The disease kills up to 45 percent of those infected. The disease can be found in all corners of sub-Saharan Africa, according to Chinyere Okoro of Britain's Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute. "It's an invasive disease. It's a disease that is found in the bloodstream and can invade other internal organs of the patient. It's caused by a bacterium known as Salmonella Typhimurium. Incidentally, Salmonella Typhimurium in healthy individuals usually results in gastroenteritis, which one of the symptoms will be diarrhea. So, most people would not need extensive treatment or hospitalization of any of that," she said. But Salmonella Typhimurium, she said, causes an illness much less like gastroenteritis and more like typhoid in those with compromised immune systems. [VOA](#)

Black mamba venom is 'better painkiller' than morphine

3 October - A painkiller as powerful as morphine, but without most of the side-effects, has been found in the deadly venom of the black mamba, say French scientists. The predator, which uses neurotoxins to paralyse and kill small animals, is one of the fastest and most dangerous snakes in Africa. However, tests on mice, reported in the journal Nature, showed its venom also contained a potent painkiller. They admit to being completely baffled about why the **mamba** would produce it. The researchers looked at venom from 50 species before they found the black mamba's pain-killing proteins - called mambalgins. Dr Eric Lingueglia, from the Institute of Molecular and Cellular Pharmacology near Nice, told the BBC: "When it was tested in mice, the analgesia was as strong as morphine, but you don't have most of the side-effects." [BBC News](#)

Epilepsy burdens developing countries

2 October - Developing countries are seeing rising rates of noncommunicable diseases such as diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease. But researchers say those countries already have a disproportionate number of epilepsy cases compared to richer nations. Researchers say despite epilepsy being "one of the most cost-effective disorders to treat," developing nations carry a "heavy burden." Twice as many people with epilepsy live in low- and middle-income countries. The findings appear in *The Lancet* medical journal. The lead author, Oxford University Psychiatry Professor Charles Newton, spends much of his time in Kenya and Tanzania in the Wellcome Trust programs. [VOA](#)

Novel coronavirus infection, WHO update: Revised interim case definition

29 September - WHO has continued to monitor the situation. No additional confirmed cases have been reported and there is no evidence so far of person to person transmission of the novel coronavirus. In order to ensure an appropriate and effective identification and investigation of patients who may be infected with the virus, without overburdening health care systems with unnecessary testing, a revised interim case definition has been issued by WHO (see related links to right of this page). It should be noted that this case definition was developed based on data from two confirmed cases and as such some degree of clinical judgment is required where individual cases are concerned. WHO has been cooperating closely with the laboratories which were responsible for the confirmation of the presence of the novel coronavirus in the two confirmed cases. These laboratories have been working on the development of diagnostic reagents and protocols which can be provided to laboratories that are not in a position to develop their own, and these are now available. WHO is now seeking to broaden the number of laboratories that will be able to assist Member States with the detection or confirmation of this novel virus. [WHO](#)

Stumped by bed nets, mosquitoes turn midnight snack into breakfast

3 October - One of the most effective methods for the control of spread of malaria is the use of bed nets infused with insecticides. Most species of mosquitoes (the *Anopheles* genus) that carry the malarial parasite (*Plasmodium falciparum*) are considered to be strictly nocturnal – they are active only during the night... A [new study published](#) in September 21 in the *Journal of Infectious Diseases* documents a behavioral change in a local mosquito population that effectively works around the safety protection of bed nets. What do they do that's new? They changed the time of day when they bite! Malaria-carrying mosquitoes are thought to all be strictly nocturnal. Recently, this dogma has started to be questioned, mainly because the rates of malaria did not significantly diminish in areas where bed nets have been implemented. [Scientific American](#)

UN warns over impact of rapidly ageing populations



1 October - The world needs to do more to prepare for the impact of a rapidly ageing population, the UN has warned - particularly in developing countries. Within 10 years the number of people aged over 60 will pass one billion, [a report by the UN Population Fund said](#). The demographic

shift will present huge challenges to countries' welfare, pension and healthcare systems. The UN agency also said more had to be done to tackle "abuse, neglect and violence against older persons". The number of older people worldwide is growing faster than any other age group. [BBC News](#)

U.S.-acquired human rabies with symptom onset and diagnosis abroad, 2012

5 October - On July 8, 2012, a U.S. resident was admitted to a hospital in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, for evaluation of right arm spasticity, anxiety, and malaise. By the next day, the patient had become comatose following a period of agitation. On July 31, he died. Investigators from CDC, state, and local health departments determined that the patient acquired rabies from contact in March with a bat in California. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

When new diseases emerge, experts are faster on the uptake

3 October - Scientists have recently discovered three new human viruses. One, from the Arabian Peninsula, causes severe pneumonia and kidney failure. Another sent two Missouri farmers to the hospital with severe fatigue and low blood platelets. The third, in central Africa, causes a new kind of hemorrhagic fever. The most striking thing about all three new viruses is that they were found on the basis of just two or three human cases. That's a long way from where the world was 10 years ago, when another new virus popped up in Asia and quickly went global. The mysterious new disease would become known as SARS – Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. Before it was stopped, it would strike 8,000 people around the world and kill more than 900 (amazingly, none in the U.S.)... "Ten years after SARS, I think it's very difficult to imagine ... an important public health event where that information isn't getting out in some form – via text messages, tweets, Facebook posts, blogs, chat rooms," [Dr. John Brownstein of Children's Hospital in Boston] told Shots. "I think there's very few places on Earth where we're not able to get citizen reporting and information." [NPR](#)

[top of page...](#)

INFLUENZA

Americans urged to get vaccinated as flu season nears



1 October - U.S. health officials are urging more Americans to get vaccinated against influenza for the upcoming flu season, adding that there is plenty of vaccine on hand. More than 85 million doses of the vaccine had been distributed as of Sept. 14, and a total of about 135 million doses will be available, the nonprofit National Foundation for Infectious Diseases said. The flu season can begin as early as October and last as late as May, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Howard Koh, assistant health secretary at the Department of Health and Human Services, said there was no guarantee that the 2012-13 flu season would be mild, as the last one was. "When it comes to flu, we can't look to the past to predict the future," Koh said at a news conference. [Washington Post](#)

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 38 (week ending 22 September 2012), 6.2% of all deaths reported through the 122-Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to P&I. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 6.5% for week 38. [FluView](#)

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

28 September - During weeks 37-38, all reporting countries experienced low-intensity influenza-like illness. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

Google.org: Flu Trends

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

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For the week ending 29 September 2012:

Adenovirus

- Vaccination against types 4 and 7 adenovirus was instituted at all basic training centers by mid-November 2011 (week 45).
- FRI rates and the proportion of FRI cases positive for adenovirus have decreased markedly since vaccine was reintroduced.
- Type 14 adenovirus is present at MCRD Parris Island.

[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](#)

[top of page...](#)

VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

U.S. explores possible salmon role in *Salmonella* cases

3 October - US federal and state public health officials are exploring a possible link between recalled smoked salmon imported from the Netherlands and as many as 85 *Salmonella* Thompson infections that have been reported in the United States. Yesterday Dutch authorities warned consumers not to eat Foppen salmon, which sickened at least 200 people in the Netherlands and 100 in the United States, according to media reports. Reports also said the product is sold in the United States through Costco stores. Lola Russell, a spokeswoman for the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told CIDRAP News that federal and state health officials have been investigating a *Salmonella* Thompson outbreak that began in early September, but so far no food source has been identified. The CDC has identified 85 cases in 27 states that have the same pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) pattern since July 1, Russell said. [CIDRAP](#)

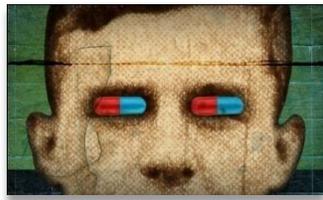
U.S.: FDA lists problems at cantaloupe farm tied to *Salmonella* outbreak

3 October - US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) inspectors found widespread contamination at Chamberlain Farms Inc., the Indiana farm implicated in the recent outbreak of *Salmonella* Newport and *Salmonella* Typhimurium from contaminated cantaloupe, according to an FDA report. The report, covering inspections from Aug 14 through Aug 31, states that *Salmonella* was found in cantaloupes collected in fields and in a cardboard bin and in environmental swabs collected from various locations and surfaces in the farm's packing shed. The inspector described "a buildup of black, green, and brown buildup" on rollers and belts of the conveyor system used during processing as well as debris and standing water with what appeared to be algae beneath the conveyer belt. In addition, the water used for washing the fruit was coming from nozzles that looked rusty, and there was no monitoring of levels of chlorine in the sanitizer tank. Finally, garbage receptacles were overflowing, potentially providing a setting for pests to congregate and breed. The inspection form states that the findings were observations and do not constitute a final agency determination regarding compliance with food safety regulations. The latest Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) update on the outbreak, issued Sep 13, shows 270 cases from 26 states, with 101 hospitalizations and three deaths. [CIDRAP News Scan](#)

[top of page...](#)

WELLNESS

Addicted to painkillers, unready for help



1 October - ...Prescription drug abuse is America's fastest-growing drug problem. Every 19 minutes, someone dies from a prescription drug overdose in the United States, triple the rate in 1990. And according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, prescription painkillers (like oxycodone) are largely to blame. More people die from ingesting these drugs than from cocaine and heroin combined... The requirements for involuntary substance treatment vary widely across the nation, from posing a serious danger to oneself, others or property, to impaired decision-making or even something as vague as losing control of oneself. States approach compulsory treatment for mental illness with far greater uniformity. All allow it, and almost all restrict it to instances in which a patient poses an immediate danger to himself or another. This common standard stems from a series of federal court cases that set procedural and substantive requirements for mental health commitments. But involuntary commitment for addiction treatment, while certainly not new, has received considerably less judicial attention. [New York Times](#)

Diet, physical activity and clear communication key to reversing premature disease, death

3 October - ...Since seminal [research](#) published in 1993 by Mike McGinnis and Bill Foege on causes of death — that turned conventional thinking on its head about disease as a health effect, not the actual cause of death — the evidence has continued to mount showing that our behavior and the environment in which we live are primarily responsible for premature death. "What we have in essence is a repetitive drum beat — over 20 years — of a short list of factors that all of us can control," Katz said, referring to our choices of what we eat and whether we exercise. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, if trends continue, 42 percent of Americans could be obese by 2030 and one in three U.S. adults will have diabetes by 2050. While these statistics are critical to understanding the magnitude of the challenge, the stark numbers neither put a face on nor create an emotional connection to the problem. And that's where health communicators and others in the field come in... [Public Health Newswire](#)

HPV vaccine found safe in large study

1 October - A study of nearly 190,000 young women injected with Merck & Co's human papillomavirus vaccine Gardasil found no new safety concerns. Researchers said the only side effects they observed - rare cases of skin infections and fainting - were benign and expected. "This analysis was very reassuring," said lead researcher Dr. Nicola Klein of the Kaiser Permanente Vaccine Study Center in Oakland, California, whose work was funded by Merck. HPV vaccination is recommended for both boys and girls to shield them from the sexually transmitted infection, which may cause various types of cancer. [Reuters](#)

New DNA test can spot gene diseases in babies



4 October - Scientists have discovered a way to decode DNA in babies in just days instead of weeks, preventing unknown genetic diseases that could cause death. The idea is to combine faster gene-analyzing machinery with new computer software that uses a baby's symptoms to narrow

down suspicious mutations with just a push of a few buttons. The hope is to start treatment earlier or avoid futile care for lethal illnesses. Researchers at Children's Mercy Hospital in Missouri mapped the DNA of five children, but the study wasn't completed in time to help most of them. However, the hospital finds the results promising enough that by the year's end, it will begin routine gene-mapping in its neonatal intensive care unit. In addition, the hospital may offer testing elsewhere while further studies continue. [Fox News Latino](#)

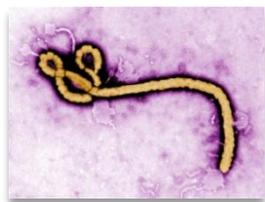
Quick survey may pick up ovarian cancer warnings, study

28 September - A simple three-question survey might identify women who have symptoms that may indicate ovarian cancer, according to a new study. The two-minute paper-and-pencil questionnaire can be given in a doctor's office and checks for six warning signs that may improve early detection of ovarian cancer, according to researchers at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle. The survey asks women if they are experiencing one or more of the following symptoms: abdominal and/or pelvic pain; feeling full quickly and/or unable to eat normally; abdominal bloating and/or increased abdomen size. It also asks about the frequency and duration of these symptoms. The study included 1,200 women, ages 40 to 87, who completed the questionnaire. Five percent had a positive symptom score that indicated the need for further tests. Of this group of about 60 women, one was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Of the 95 percent of women who had a negative symptom score, none developed ovarian cancer during one year of follow-up. The study was published online in the September issue of the *Open Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*. [Medline Plus](#)

[top of page...](#)

USAFRICOM

Africa: New virus looks like rabies, acts like Ebola



28 September - A virus that killed two teenagers in Congo in 2009 is a completely new type, related to rabies but causing the bleeding and rapid death that makes Ebola infection so terrifying, scientists reported on Thursday. They're searching for the source of the virus, which may be transmitted by insects or bats. The new

virus is being named Bas-Congo virus, for the area where it was found. Researchers are finding more and more of these new viruses, in part because new tests make it possible, but also in the hope of better understanding them so they can prevent pandemics of deadly disease. [NBC News](#)

Democratic Republic of Congo: Ebola outbreak, WHO update

27 September - As of 24 September 2012, 51 cases (19 laboratory confirmed, 32 probable) with Ebola haemorrhagic fever (EHF) have been reported in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Of these, 20 have been fatal (7 confirmed, 13 probable). The cases reported are from Isiro and Viadana health zones in Haut-Uélé district in Province Orientale. To date, 28 suspected cases have been reported and are being investigated. The Ministry of Health (MoH) continues to work with partners, under the National Task Force which includes: WHO; Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF); the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC); US Agency for International Development (USAID); US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to identify all possible chains of transmission of the illness and ensure that appropriate measures are taken to interrupt transmission and stop the outbreak. [WHO](#)

Eritrea: Community hygiene playing role in combating diseases

3 October - The Ministry of Health said that community-based environmental hygiene is playing vital role in the prevention of communicable diseases. Dr. Kesete Araya, head of environmental health department, explained that impressive accomplishments have been registered to this end over the past 3 years, and that use of latrines has visibly grown in remote areas. Accordingly, 480 villages are currently engaged in promoting construction of latrines at household level, while 200 other are fully resorting to such practice. Pointing out that the sustainability of such popular initiative in an integrated manner can lead to attaining 80% control on communicable diseases, Dr. Kesete indicated that the Ministry would step up endeavors as regards promoting use of latrines and waste disposal. He also lauded the community participation being demonstrated in endeavors towards ensuring environmental hygiene. [All Africa](#)

Kenya: Major measles vaccine campaign planned



4 October - The Kenyan government is set to conduct a "mop-up" vaccination campaign against measles following an outbreak of the disease in several areas of the country. Director of Public Health and Sanitation Shahnaaz Sharif said the number of confirmed cases of measles in the country had grown from 665 in 2011 to 767 by 25 September 2012. At least 32 children under age five have died of the disease since the outbreak began in January of last year. The first case was reported at a refugee camp in northern Kenya; the disease soon spread to the country's Eastern Province, where it has been reported in 45 out of 47 counties. [IRIN](#)

Nigeria: Reporting on lead poisoning

30 September - If you want to witness the health consequences of unsafe gold mining in northwestern Nigeria, the first thing you have to do is get to the mines. There's a crisis of severe lead poisoning near the mines that's killed hundreds of children and made thousands more sick. The gold deposits are in a remote part of the country, near the border with Niger... In this part of Nigeria, the gold ore under the ground is mixed with lead. When the ore is dug up, crushed and processed, the lead escapes into the air. "The problem is that children eat dirt," says Ivan Gayton, the head of mission for Doctors Without Borders in Nigeria. "And when they have dirt that's contaminated with lead from mine tailings, they eat that and absorb it." The group has been trying to treat the kids who are most affected by lead. The lead also is absorbed by adults, but it has more of an effect on growing children... Over the last two years at least 400 kids here have died from lead poisoning and thousands more have been sickened. [NPR](#)

Nigeria: Polio surges



28 September - Polio is again on the rise in Nigeria and doctors said the entire region should be on alert. An alarming number of new cases have been found in the north, where authorities are already dealing with the unrest caused by the militant group Boko Haram. Health officials warn that even a few cases of polio can lead to a devastating outbreak. "I believe that getting polio eradication is one of the smartest allocations of resources that the world can make," said billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates. "The world is coming together to do something truly amazing -- protect every single child everywhere from this crippling virus." [VOA](#)

Sudan: Health conditions deteriorating in Darfur camps

3 October - Displaced persons from camps in Central and West Darfur have complained to Radio Dabanga about diseases, such as malaria, diarrhea and abdominal pain spreading rapidly. In addition, they complained about the lack of available medication as well as the rising prices of medicines. A number of displaced from El-Geneina, Mornei and Bindedsey camps told Radio Dabanga that the rapidly spreading diseases caused the death of several children and elderly so far. Camp Bindedsey leadership disclosed the death of six children between Sunday September 23 and Monday October 1. In addition, a number of camp residents reported there is hardly any house without a malaria patient. The residents pointed out that the price of malaria treatment ranges between 50 and 60 Sudanese Pounds (SDG). The displaced appealed to the health authorities to intervene and act accordingly to stop the diseases from spreading further. [All Africa](#)

Uganda: End of Ebola outbreak

4 October - The Ministry of Health (MoH), Uganda has declared today, the end of the Ebola haemorrhagic fever (EHF) outbreak in Kibaale district. The last case was confirmed on 3 August 2012 and was discharged from the hospital on 24 August 2012. This is double the maximum incubation period (21 days) for Ebola as recommended by WHO. In the outbreak,

a total of 24 probable and confirmed cases were recorded, of which 11 were laboratory confirmed by the Uganda Virus Research Institute (UVRI) in Entebbe. A total of 17 deaths were reported in this outbreak. [WHO](#)

[top of page...](#)

USCENTCOM

Egypt: Mumps vaccine shortage

2 October - More than 100 children have been affected by a mumps outbreak in Marashda [official name Al Marāshidah located in Qina governorate], Egypt, with 43 cases and 70 infections reported. Officials at the Ministry of Health insist that this is not a serious outbreak. However, many children are not attending school out of fear of infection. Mumps is caused by mumps virus and is spread when a person comes into contact with infected droplets of saliva or mucus, usually through coughing, sneezing, or sharing dishes. Symptoms of the disease include fever, headache, and fatigue, along with serious complications such as inflammation of the brain and deafness. Egyptian officials are working to provide treatment for infected youth. However, vaccination is considered the best strategy for avoiding mumps infection. The vaccination for mumps is a combination vaccine for measles, mumps, and rubella, (MMR). It is recommended that children receive 2 doses: one at age 12-15 months and another at age 4-6 years. The 1st MMR vaccine became available in 1967 and has reduced mumps prevalence by 99 percent. This outbreak has occurred alongside news that Egypt is facing a nationwide vaccine shortage. [ProMED-mail](#)

Syrian conflict a public health disaster



28 September - The United Nations estimates the civil war raging in Syria has left more than 2.5 million people in dire need of food, water, drugs and medical supplies. After 18 months of fighting, thousands are dead and thousands more wounded. If past wars are any indication, the health and well-being of Syrians will likely be affected long after the last guns are fired. Before the uprising started, Syria boasted nearly [500 hospitals and 70 licensed pharmaceutical manufacturers](#) that supplied 90 percent of the nation's drugs. All that has changed. Tarik Jasarevic is a spokesman for the World Health Organization (WHO), which recently sent a team of observers into the embattled city of Homs. He says many hospitals and health centers in Homs have been badly damaged by shelling. Only six of 12 public hospitals remain open, and eight out of 32 private hospitals are still in operation-- at greatly reduced capacity. [VOA](#)

Yemen: Chikungunya

2 October - The Governor has directed the implementation of a joint campaign of the Office of Health and Optimization and localities to combat (dengue/chikungunya) in the Villages of Sharhab, Alrona, Taiz (Governorate) who have complained of the disease "almkrvs" said

the Director of Health: recorded 36 cases were recorded up to Thursday [27 Sep 2012]. [In Yemen, they use the word "almkrvs," bone-breaker, as the local expression for chikungunya virus infections. The term for dengue is actually "damal Dank." - Corr.SB]. Local residents said that dozens of families have been hit by chikungunya disease "almkrvs," (bone-breaker) in the Directorate Sharhab Alrona in Taiz, demanding the governor of Taiz give guidance to the Office of Health and Epidemiological Surveillance and to rapidly disembark field and medical teams to treat the injured. The population call chikungunya virus infections "almkrvs," which spread 2 weeks ago in a lot of villages which lack government health centers. [ProMED-mail](#)

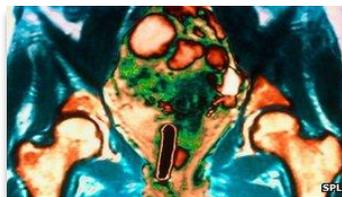
[top of page...](#)

USEUCOM

Germany resumes ritual circumcisions after bitter dispute

1 October - Shopkeeper Nevzat Cavan is rushing to meet orders for the white, fur-trimmed costumes worn by Muslim boys for their circumcision, relieved that Berlin's city government has allowed the operations to resume. For three months, the elaborate suits, capes and oriental slippers languished unsold due to a shock court ruling that raised the possibility of criminal charges being brought against families who had their sons circumcised. "There were days when we didn't even open the till, but now the phone never stops ringing," Turkish-born Cavan said. The Cologne court ruling in June outraged Germany's Muslims and Jews, and triggered an anguished national debate, by stating that ritual circumcision of under-aged boys amounted to "bodily harm" and parents should wait for their son to make his own decision. The ruling applied only to the Cologne area but Jews and Muslims across [Germany](#) feared it would create a legal precedent, and doctors fearing prosecution stopped performing operations. [Reuters](#)

United Kingdom ovarian cancer treatment 'lagging'



3 October - Women in the UK are dying unnecessarily of ovarian cancer because of a lack of access to the best treatment, say experts. The fifth most common cancer in UK women affects more than 6,500 a year. Researchers funded by the Department of Health compared the survival rates of 20,000 patients in five countries - Australia, Canada, Denmark, Norway and the UK. The UK ranked worst. Its record of managing advanced stages of the disease was particularly poor. [BBC News](#)

United Kingdom: Overseas 'health tourists' costing NHS at least £40m

3 October - The NHS has lost at least £40m in four years by failing to identify so-called "health tourists" accessing hospital care, a BBC investigation has found. Health Minister

Anna Soubry admitted the system for identifying people who are not entitled to free care is complex and at times "flawed". Hospitals in England and Wales are obliged to ensure NHS patients have lived in the UK for the past 12 months. "It seems very strange...to open the door...to the citizens of the world to walk in and have free medical care." But 45 out of 133 hospital trusts which gave details said they do not check. In responding to Freedom of Information requests from the BBC's Panorama programme, those hospitals that had identified overseas visitors who had received treatment on the NHS had written off more than £40m in losses. That is a figure that one MP described as "the tip of the iceberg" of overall costs of treating visitors who should not be given free access to the health care system. [BBC News](#)

[top of page...](#)

USNORTHCOM

U.S.: Common pesticide linked to birth defect, study suggests



Photo: U.S. Department of Agriculture

28 September - A common herbicide called atrazine may be associated with a rare birth defect of the nasal cavity, a new study suggests. Atrazine -- the most widely used herbicide in the United States, particularly in corn crops -- is believed to be an endocrine disruptor, which means that it may interfere with the hormone system in humans. The new study looked at the link between atrazine and choanal atresia, a birth defect in which tissue formed during fetal development blocks the back of the nasal passage. The condition affects a baby's ability to breathe. Surgery is the typical treatment. Although few risk factors for choanal atresia have been identified, it's believed that chemicals that disrupt a mother's hormone system may be associated with the risk, according to study author Philip Lupo, an assistant professor of pediatrics -- hematology/oncology at Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Cancer Center.

[Medline Plus](#)

U.S.: Meningitis cases are linked to steroid injections in spine

2 October - ...[Dr. April Pettit, an infectious diseases specialist at Vanderbilt University] is now credited with being the clinician who recognized the "index case" in what has become a frightening outbreak of meningitis that has killed two people and sickened 12 others who also received steroid injections in their spines for pain. Doctors suspect that the steroid medicine was contaminated with the fungus. The meningitis does not spread from person to person. Officials said it was not possible to predict the extent of the outbreak yet. Thirteen of the patients have been in Tennessee, and one in North Carolina. Two of the cases were new as of Tuesday, and health officials have said that there could be more cases and that other states could be affected. [New York Times](#)

U.S.: Teen drinking and driving rate cut in half in 20 years

2 October - The percentage of U.S. high school students who drink and drive has dropped by more than half in two decades, in part due to tougher laws against driving under the influence of alcohol, federal health officials said on Tuesday. In 2011, 10.3 percent of high school students 16 and older reported drinking and driving in the previous 30 days, compared to 22.3 percent in 1991, according to a new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study. The CDC credited the nearly 54 percent decline to stricter laws against drunken driving and restrictions on teen driving privileges, such as limits on the hours teenagers may legally drive at night. [Reuters](#)

[top of page...](#)

USPACOM

Cipla malaria drug aimed at Asia gets WHO nod

3 October - A malaria drug made by India's Cipla has been pre-qualified by the World Health Organization (WHO), an important step towards its roll-out across Asia, where millions of people are infected with the mosquito-borne disease every year. The drug, which has already been used to treat 18,000 adults in India, is intended as the first-line treatment in a number of South East Asian countries, Cipla and the Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative said in a joint statement on Wednesday. [Reuters](#)

Japan: Typhoon Jelawat slams Okinawa, and mainland Japan



1 October - With sustained winds to 87 mph and gusts to 137 mph, typhoon Jelawat raked Okinawa Saturday. It knocked out power to about half the island (331,500 homes), injured more than 50 people and killed a man according to the Pacific Storm Tracker blog. On Sunday night, it then struck mainland Japan causing tens of thousands of additional power outages and another 145 injuries the Associated Press reported. Jelawat was the third typhoon to strike Okinawa in a month. A CNN iReporter said Jelawat seemed like "the worst of the three." [Washington Post](#)

Philippines defies church to push family planning

2 October - Philippine President Benigno Aquino is squaring off against his country's powerful Catholic church in a bid to give people free access to the means to limit the size of their families. The predominately Catholic country has one of Asia's fastest-growing populations together with significant levels of chronic poverty. While neighbors have

accelerated towards prosperity, the Philippines has lagged. Economists say high population growth is a primary factor for that, but the church disagrees. It says population growth is not a cause of poverty and that people need jobs, not contraception. Aquino, a Catholic like 80 percent of the population, has thrown his support behind a reproductive health bill that will, if passed by the two houses of Congress, guarantee access to free birth control and promote sex education. [Reuters](#)

Scientific research benefits Cambodia



1 October - Just recently [the U.S. Navy Medicine's Naval Medical Research Unit-2 (NAMRU-2)] began enrolling new participants in a study that will help identify the reasons for serious respiratory and diarrheal diseases in areas surrounding cities and in rural parts of Cambodia. Once we better understand the cause of such diseases, we can develop better methods of prevention and treatment... The enrollment process for the new study involves going door-to-door in the villages in the study areas. The field volunteers explain to the residents of each house how the study will work and ask the villagers if they are interested in participating. Given that NAMRU-2 hopes to have four villages and a total of 5,000 people participating in the study, the enrollment process takes a lot of person-to-person contact, but it is important that the participants understand the study and are comfortable with taking part in it. [DoD Live](#)

South Korea tries new approach to reduce suicides

2 October - South Korea has one of the highest rates of suicide in the developed world. Now the government is trying a new approach to prevent people from taking their own lives. It only took a single generation for the country to go from an impoverished nation to one of the world's top economies. It is a fast-paced society, where people have a hard time slowing down. Some observers say this rapid development is leaving many South Koreans feeling isolated and depressed. Kim Hyun-chung, a psychiatrist at the National Medical Center in Seoul, says more than half of her patients have suicidal thoughts. "We're just growing just too fast and people don't have time to adjust to it," she explains. "We are an Asian cultural society but now we are more globalized. It's westernized and I don't think people have had the time to adjust to the big changes." [VOA](#)

[top of page...](#)

Haiti takes on dreaded disease elephantiasis one mouth at a time



30 September - ...That is the goal [Haiti](#) set this year in its campaign against a parasitic infection called lymphatic filariasis that is present in 80 percent of the country. Spread by mosquitoes, in severe cases it leads to permanent swelling of an arm or leg. That condition, called "elephantiasis," can be grotesque and life-changing. In men, the worms can cause a swelling of the scrotum that is even more stigmatizing. Lymphatic filariasis is a "neglected tropical disease," the name for a group of maladies that have disappeared from industrialized countries or never existed there. Others include onchocerciasis ("river blindness"), schistosomiasis ("snail fever"), soil-based intestinal worms, and the eye infection trachoma. For 1.9 billion people, most of them poor, they are still threats. Eliminating the [diseases](#) has been an object of intense effort and [research](#) over the past decade. The work is largely unknown outside the global health community, overshadowed by higher-profile campaigns against [AIDS](#), malaria and tuberculosis. [Washington Post](#)

[top of page...](#)

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