

6 April 2012

Army Public Health Weekly Update

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U.S. Army Public Health Command



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**Sexual Assault
Awareness and
Prevention Month:
Hurts one. Affects all.**

April is Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. Preventing sexual assault is everyone's duty. This year's campaign focuses on the effects sexual assault has on the military's mission readiness. A sexual assault can reverberate throughout a unit and beyond, degrading readiness by harming the life of the victim, and the military's ability to work effectively as a team.



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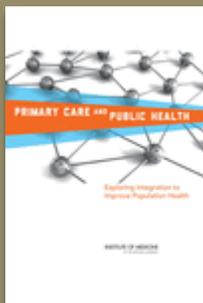
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U.S. MILITARY

Primary Care and Public Health: Exploring Integration to Improve Population Health

The interactions between primary care and public health are so varied that it is not possible to prescribe a specific model or template for how integration should look. Instead, the Institute of Medicine identifies a set of core principles derived from successful integration efforts – including a common goal of improving population health, as well as involving the community in defining and addressing its needs.

The principles provided in this report can serve as a roadmap to move the nation toward a more efficient health system.



Army program aims to predict soldiers' resiliency

3 April - ...The Army STARRS (Study To Assess Risk and Resilience in Servicemembers) initiative, done in partnership with the National Institute of Mental Health, is gathering details about the lives and mental health of 55,000 soldiers. Participants are chosen at random to attend a session about the study at Army basic training sites, and they are not required to participate.) The goal of the study, which was launched in 2009 and is the largest-ever of its kind, is to provide the military and public health community with information about why some individuals remain resilient to challenges and trauma while others are deeply affected. The project is specifically looking at what might place soldiers at an increased risk for suicide and which factors make them more resilient to that risk... A study released earlier this month by the U.S. Army Public Health Command found that the number of active-duty soldiers who committed suicide increased 80 percent between 2004 and 2008. [MSNBC](#)

Deployment's toll on families goes under U microscope



31 March - For the next four years, hundreds of military families in Minnesota will submit to wearing heart sensors to monitor the stresses they exert on each other and allow video cameras to record their interactions as part of a first-in-the-nation look at the toll exacted by deployments to war zones. The research, which is being conducted by the University of Minnesota, is aimed especially at gauging the impact on families of Guard and Reserve members, who have made up nearly half of the U.S. forces sent to Iraq and Afghanistan over the past decade. That number is unprecedented in modern American warfare and is likely to have a ripple effect on family life for years as soldiers return home and resume their civilian lives. "This is an important window. Minnesota has an opportunity to really share incredible knowledge that will help the next generation of reserve component families," said Abigail Gewirtz, an associate professor of family social science at the University of Minnesota and the project's principal investigator. [Star Tribune](#)

Lawyer to examine Bales' medications at time of Afghan killings

2 April - John Henry Browne, the attorney for the U.S. soldier charged with killing 17 Afghan civilians on March 11, told the NewsHour in a telephone interview that he was interested in learning what medications his client, Staff Sgt. Robert Bales, was taking at the time of the shootings. "We have to order his medical records, and they haven't given them to us yet," he said on Thursday. "He was taking medications, but we don't know whether it was aspirin, heart medicines. We don't know what it was." Browne said that in some previous legal cases, he has cited the side effects of a prescribed drug in a client's defense. "There are a lot of medicines that can backfire," Browne said. He pointed, in particular, to recent reports about

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Lariam, an anti-malarial medication... The NewsHour reported on March 26 that, according to an internal Pentagon document, investigators discovered suspected steroids were hidden in Bales' living quarters. Anabolic steroids, when taken in high doses, are widely believed capable of triggering irritability and aggression, though any role in this particular case remains uncertain... [PBS News Hour](#)

Surveillance snapshot: Adenovirus among U.S. military recruits

March 2012 - In 1996, the sole manufacturer of the adenovirus vaccine permanently ceased production. Stocks of vaccine were exhausted in 1999. During the 12 years in which trainees were not vaccinated, the proportion of febrile respiratory illness (FRI) that was due to adenovirus was 68 percent (range: 63-76% per year). Type 4 adenovirus was predominant throughout this period, but re-emergence of group B adenoviruses (e.g., serotype 14) was seen in 2006 and persisted at varying levels through 2011. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

Widow says Army stress, apathy led to husband's suicide

30 March - Army Capt. Michael McCaddon, M.D.,... 37, killed himself on March 21 at Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, where he delivered babies and cared for women brought to the hospital. His widow, Leslie McCaddon, 36, says her husband fell victim to the heavy stress the military inflicts on all soldiers -- no matter their mission -- and a tough-guy military culture that discourages them from seeking assistance for mental health issues. She said her husband had been "severely depressed" for seven years, became verbally abusive and that eventually it became too much for her to bear. So she returned with their three children -- ages 10, 8 and 6 -- to her hometown of Rockport, Mass., five months ago. But before departing Honolulu, she said, she asked the Army to reach out to her husband -- only to be told he could only be forced to get help if she was in physical danger. [Bluefield Daily Telegraph](#)

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GLOBAL

Drug-resistant malaria is spreading, and it could be a public health disaster



6 April - ...Health officials have known for a while that some malaria parasites in the Southeast Asian nation of Cambodia have begun to develop resistance to artemisinin, but they hoped the resistance wasn't spreading. Now researchers in the region have shown that artemisinin is becoming dramatically less potent in malaria cases in western Thailand, and they know it's due to growing drug resistance in the malaria parasites themselves. If resistance to artemisinin were to spread to

sub-Saharan Africa, the result could be a “public health disaster,” in the words of lead Lancet author Standwell Nkhoma of the Texas Biomedical Research Institute. [TIME](#)

HIV vaccine trial yields clues to protection

6 April - A specific antibody response to a candidate HIV vaccine may have been part of the reason it showed modest efficacy in a major clinical trial, researchers reported. But another antibody response appears to be responsible for minimizing the protective effect of the first, according to Barton Haynes, MD, of Duke University School of Medicine, and colleagues. The complex interplay may be the first step in teasing out why the vaccine in the [RV144 trial showed a benefit](#), unlike all previous HIV vaccine candidates, Haynes and colleagues reported in the April 5 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*. [MedPage Today](#)

Study says DNA’s power to predict illness is limited

2 April – If every aspect of a person’s DNA is known, would it be possible to predict the diseases in that person’s future? And could that knowledge be used to forestall the otherwise inevitable? The answer, according to a new study of [twins](#), is, for the most part, “no.” While sequencing the entire DNA of individuals is proving fantastically useful in understanding diseases and finding new treatments, it is not a method that will, for the most part, predict a person’s medical future. [New York Times](#)

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INFLUENZA

Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center: DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary

4 April:

- The influenza activity increased slightly within the MHS compared to the previous week; influenza activity remains low to moderate in overseas DoD laboratory surveillance networks.
- The influenza vaccination rate (final update of the season, as of 29 March 2012) for the DoD (Active Duty component only) was 97%. [AFHSC DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary](#)

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 12 (18-24 March), influenza activity was elevated in some areas of the United States, but remained relatively low nationally. [FluView](#)

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

During week 13 (26 March – 1 April 2012), low intensity was reported by 17 countries and medium intensity by eight countries, while none reported high intensity. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For the week ending 31 March 2012:

Influenza

There was an increase in influenza cases among basic training and DoD dependent surveillance populations in March 2012

Adenovirus

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](#)

PANDEMIC AND AVIAN INFLUENZA

Bird flu studies OK to publish - U.S. biosecurity expert

2 April - A U.S. biosecurity panel's recommendation that two controversial papers on bird flu be published in full is not a reversal of the stand it took last year out of concerns over terrorism, the head of the group said on Monday in London. "We had new information, confidential information, about benefits of this research, and we also had confidential information about the risks involved," said Paul Keim of Northern Arizona University, who is the acting chairman of the panel. "And the balance began to change." Explaining its decision, announced last Friday, the National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity (NSABB) said in a statement that "the data described in the revised manuscripts do not appear to provide information that would immediately enable misuse of the research in ways that would endanger public health or national security." [Reuters](#)

Cambodia: Avian influenza situation, WHO update

5 April - The Ministry of Health (MoH) of the Kingdom of Cambodia has announced a confirmed case of human infection with avian influenza A (H5N1) virus. The 6 year-old female from Kampong Chhnang Province developed symptoms on 22 March 2012. After initial treatment at the village, she was later admitted to hospital in Phnom Penh on 28 March. She died on 30 March. Infection with avian influenza A (H5N1) virus was confirmed by Institut Pasteur du Cambodge on 30 March. It was reported that the patient had contact

with sick or dead poultry prior to onset of illness. The National and local Rapid Response Teams (RRT) are conducting outbreak investigation and response following the national protocol. In addition, a public health education campaign is being conducted to inform families on how to protect themselves from contracting avian influenza. To date, of the 20 cases reported in Cambodia since 2005, 18 have been fatal. [WHO](#)

Egypt: Avian influenza situation, WHO update

2 April - The Ministry of Health and Population of Egypt has notified WHO of two new cases of human infection with avian influenza A (H5N1) virus. The first case is a 2 year-old female from Demiatta Governorate. She developed symptoms on 19 March 2012 and was admitted to a hospital on 20 March 2012 where she received oseltamivir. She is still under treatment and in good medical condition. The case was laboratory confirmed by the Central Public Health Laboratories (NIC) on 22 of March 2012. Epidemiological investigations into the source of infection indicate that the case had exposure to dead backyard poultry. The second case is a 15 year-old female from Giza Governorate. She developed symptoms on 25 March 2012 and was admitted to a hospital in critical condition on 29 March 2012. She received oseltamivir on admission. She died on 31 March 2012. The case was laboratory confirmed by the Central Public Health Laboratories (NIC) on 31 March 2012. Epidemiological investigation into the source of infection is ongoing. Of the 166 cases confirmed to date in Egypt, 59 have been fatal. [WHO](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Foot-and-mouth disease hits Egypt

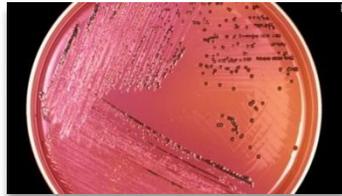
29 March - Authorities in Egypt say foot-and-mouth disease has hit nearly 100,000 head of cattle and could threaten the entire Middle East and North Africa region. The head of Egypt's central quarantine service said 9,022 of the affected cows had died since the outbreak started in February, Middle East Online reported Wednesday. Essam Abdel Shakur said the highest rate of infection is in the Nile Delta region. The U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization said it was working with the Egyptian government to contain the disease, which could seriously threaten food security in the region. Although foot-and-mouth disease has been present in Egypt for many years, "this is an entirely new introduction of a virus strain known as SAT2, and livestock have no immune protection against it," the FAO reported. [UPI](#)

German state finds dioxin in eggs, sees no danger

4 April – German authorities said on Wednesday the highly poisonous chemical dioxin had been discovered above permitted levels in eggs from a German farm but they see no danger to the public. Dioxin content of three to six times permitted levels were discovered by routine tests on a farm in the central German state of North Rhine Westphalia, the state agriculture ministry said. The farm has been sealed off and is not permitted to sell more

eggs, the state ministry said. How the dioxin came into the eggs is unclear and intensive investigations are underway, the ministry added. Tests had shown no contamination of animal feed at the farm. In January 2011, an EU-wide health alert was issued when German officials said animal feed tainted with highly poisonous dioxin had been fed to hens and pigs, contaminating eggs, poultry meat and pork at the affected farms. [Germany](#) then introduced a series of new measures including tough restrictions on animal feed ingredients. Dioxin presents a danger to health if consumed over long periods. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: Officials seek source of salmonella outbreak



4 April - Federal and state health officials are investigating a salmonella outbreak in 19 states and the District of Columbia, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC reports 93 people in 19 states and the District of Columbia have been sickened by an unusual strain of the bacteria called salmonella Bareilly. So far 10 people have been hospitalized, but no deaths have been reported, according to health officials. The first case of this particular food-borne illness was reported on January 28. The most recent case was reported Monday... [CDC spokeswoman Lola Russell] said in "initial interviews, many of the ill persons reported consuming sushi, sashimi, or similar foods in a variety of locations in the week before becoming ill." However, it is still early in the investigation. [CNN](#)

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WELLNESS

Common antibiotics tied to eye emergencies, study

3 April – A common class of antibiotics was linked to a higher risk of so-called retinal detachment -- when the light-sensitive tissue in the eye separates from gel that fills the eyeball, in a new Canadian study. People treated by ophthalmologists for the emergency condition were five times more likely to be taking drugs known as fluoroquinolones, which include ciprofloxacin (marketed under names including Zoxan, Proquin and Cipro) and levofloxacin (Levaquin, Cravit), than those who didn't have retinal detachment. "We know that these drugs are toxic to connective tissue and cartilage," said Mahyar Etminan, the study's lead author, noting past studies linking fluoroquinolones with damage to Achilles and shoulder tendons. "We wanted to see whether this damage also may translate in the eye, because there's lots of connective tissue in the eye," Etminan, from the Child and Family Research Institute of British Columbia in Vancouver, told Reuters Health. [Medline Plus](#)

Forty-five procedures doctors don't think doctors should do

4 April - Doctors have many difficult conversations, whether they're delivering a poor diagnosis or hashing out the best course of treatment. But one of the most challenging discussions, according to physician Lawrence Kosinski, is telling a patient "no." There's a growing consensus that patients and their doctors need to have that conversation more frequently. Wasteful medicine costs the health care system an estimated \$700 billion each year, and each unnecessary procedure comes with its own set of health risks. It was those factors that got Dr. Kosinski, who works with the American Gastroenterologists Association, involved in a new initiative called Choosing Wisely, which has partnered with nine medical specialty groups to identify procedures that doctors should not be doing. Each group was tasked with coming up with five specific items they would deem unnecessary... Today, the nine specialty groups that represent more than 375,000 physicians unveiled their **recommendations**: 45 procedures that, given certain circumstances, doctors should not perform. [Washington Post](#)

More evidence long-term estrogen therapy raises breast cancer risk

3 April - New research reveals that women who take any type of hormone replacement therapy for longer than 10 years may increase their risk of breast cancer. Some women still use hormone replacement therapy to help ease unpleasant symptoms of menopause, which can include hot flashes, night sweats and memory problems. Estrogen plus progesterone is prescribed for women who still have a uterus because research has shown that progesterone decreases the risk for cancer in the uterus lining. Women who no longer have a uterus because they've had a hysterectomy are treated with estrogen-only therapy. Over the past decade research has gone back and forth about these drugs, raising concerns about their impact on breast cancer and heart disease. A study published just last month suggested estrogen might be good for you in the short term, but a new study presented at the [American Association for Cancer Research](#) conference in Chicago this week is the first study to examine the effects of hormone replacement therapy for longer than 10 years.

[CNN](#)

U.S.: Obesity rate may be worse than we think



3 April - Doctors and health officials have relied for decades on body mass index (BMI), a ratio of height to weight, to categorize people as overweight and obese. A new study, however, suggests the use of BMI may be leading us to underestimate the already sky-high obesity rate. BMI, the researchers say, is an overly simplistic measure that often misrepresents physical fitness and overall health, especially among older women. Nearly 4 in 10 adults whose BMI places them in the overweight category would be considered obese if their body fat percentage were taken into account, according to the study. "Some people call it the

'baloney mass index,'" says lead author Eric Braverman, M.D., president of the Path Foundation, a nonprofit organization in New York City dedicated to brain research. Bodybuilders can be classified as obese based on their BMI, he says, while "a 55-year-old woman who looks great in a dress could have very little muscle and mostly body fat, and a whole lot of health risks because of that -- but still have a normal BMI." Based on their findings, Braverman and his coauthor, New York State Commissioner of Health Nirav Shah, M.D., say the BMI threshold for obesity, which now stands at 30, should be lowered to 24 for women and 28 for men. [CNN](#)

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USAFRICOM

Africa: Rising temperatures, rising health problems



4 April - Scientists say the effects of climate change could actually make breathing more difficult for many people. They expect rising temperatures to bring an increase in cases of asthma and allergies, as well as infectious and cardiovascular diseases. Study co-author, professor Kent Pinkerton, Lun said rising temperatures bring a host of conditions that can adversely affect people's health. For example, ozone levels may rise in urban areas. There may be more wildfires emitting smoke and soot. Desertification could increase and create more dust. There may also be a lot more pollen. And disease carrying insects and animals may be more prevalent. "Our greatest concern really centered around the fact that many of the pulmonary physicians and respiratory professionals are really not very well aware of the fact that climate change has an important impact on their patients," he said. [Voice of America](#)

Africa: Study notes strategies to lower HIV risk for sex workers

4 April - Female sex workers in low- and middle-income countries are nearly 14 times more likely to become infected with HIV than other women in these countries, according to a literature review by US scientists. The review was carried out by researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and published in The Lancet Infectious Diseases journal (15 March). The authors analysed 102 previous studies representing almost 100,000 female sex workers in 50 developing countries. They found that in Asia, sex workers were 29 per cent more likely to be infected than other women in the region. In Africa and Latin America, sex workers were 12 times more likely to be infected than other women - and India, the female sex worker community was at a massive 50-fold higher risk of HIV infection than the rest of the country's female population. India, along with Kenya and Brazil have, however, made some inroads into reducing infection levels among sex workers. "We believe that these examples represent countries adopting necessary approaches," said Stefan Baral, the study's lead author. [All Africa](#)

Nigeria: Lassa fever

4 April - At the beginning of 2012, WHO was notified by the Federal Ministry of Health in Nigeria of an outbreak of Lassa fever. As of March 22, 2012, 623 suspected cases, including 70 deaths have been recorded from 19 of the 36 States since the beginning of the year. Laboratory analysis undertaken at the Irrua Specialist Teaching Hospital, Irrua Edo State has confirmed the presence of Lassa virus infection in 108 patients. Three doctors and four nurses were reported to be among the fatalities. This information is provisional and subject to change when laboratory results for Lassa fever in suspected cases become available. The Federal and State governments are responding to the outbreak by enhancing the disease surveillance for early detection, reinforcing treatment of patients, and conducting awareness campaigns among the affected population. [WHO](#)

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USCENTCOM

Afghanistan sees rise in 'dancing boys' exploitation



4 April - ...A growing number of Afghan children are being coerced into a life of sexual abuse. The practice of wealthy or prominent Afghans exploiting underage boys as sexual partners who are often dressed up as women to dance at gatherings is on the rise in post-Taliban Afghanistan, according to Afghan

human rights researchers, Western officials and men who participate in the abuse. "Like it or not, there was better rule of law under the Taliban," said Dee Brillenburg Wurth, a child-protection expert at the [U.N. mission in Afghanistan](#), who has sought to persuade the government to address the problem. "They saw it as a sin, and they stopped a lot of it." Over the past decade, the phenomenon has flourished in Pashtun areas in the south, in several northern provinces and even in the capital, according to Afghans who engage in the practice or have studied it. Although issues such as [women's rights](#) and moral crimes have attracted a flood of donor aid and activism in recent years, bacha bazi remains poorly understood. [Washington Post](#)

Syria refugee crisis lands on Turkey's doorstep

31 March - Turkey is grappling with a refugee crisis stemming from the Damascus regime's military offensive against opponents as the country braces for a new influx of people fleeing the violence. More than 17,000 Syrians have fled across the border into Turkey to escape President Bashar al-Assad's brutal crackdown on anti-government protests since the uprising erupted in mid-March last year. The traumatised refugees are welcomed in camps described by local officials as "social life centres," which unlike those in Afghanistan and Somalia are aimed at boosting morale... Turkish camps provide humanitarian aid including three meals a day, health services, clean water, and prayer rooms. Gendarmes are deployed

at the camps in charge of security, but refugees are allowed to go outside to do shopping and visit their relatives in nearby Turkish towns. [France24](#)

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USEUCOM

Netherlands: Push for the right to die grows

2 April - ...Founded in 1973, Right to Die-NL has been at the forefront of the movement to make euthanasia widely available in the Netherlands, even as the practice remains highly controversial elsewhere. Polls find that an overwhelming majority of the Dutch believe euthanasia should be available to suffering patients who want it, and thousands formally request euthanasia every year...Under the Netherlands' 2002 Termination of Life on Request and Assisted Suicide Act, doctors may grant patients' requests to die without fear of prosecution as long as they observe certain guidelines. The request must be made voluntarily by an informed patient who is undergoing suffering that is both lasting and unbearable. Doctors must also obtain the written affirmation of a second, independent physician that the case meets the requirements and report all such deaths to the authorities for review. [New York Times](#)

United Kingdom: London 2012 - 'Flu risk increase' at Olympics



The Olympics will increase the already "extreme" risk of a flu pandemic spreading in the UK, a report has said. Britain has been ranked by analysts Maplecroft as second only to Singapore for the speed at which influenza could spread, because of its dense cities and status as a global travel hub.

The report said the "large influx of visitors" at Games time would raise the "already significant" risk of spread. But the Health Protection Agency (HPA) disagreed, saying the risk was low. "We have done our own review and we don't believe that there is a risk," Dr Brian McCloskey from the HPA told the BBC. "We have sporting events and music festivals all around England and we had the swine flu pandemic at Glastonbury. We also looked at research from the Vancouver Games - neither produced any significant problems." Dr McCloskey said that at Glastonbury in 2009, hundreds of thousands of people were densely packed in fields together for days at a time during the outbreak of influenza strain H1N1. Whereas he said at London 2012 visitors would only be at the Olympic Park for four or five hours, so the risk was reduced. [BBC News](#)

United Kingdom: GPs losing faith, BBC poll suggests



4 April - The number of GPs who believe that the government's health reforms in England will improve patient care is falling, a BBC poll suggests. Just 12% agreed that putting GP-led groups in charge of the budget would mean patients saw a "noticeable" improvement. That figure was 23% when a similar poll was carried out in September 2010. A majority of the 814 GPs polled also believed there would be more rationing of care because of financial pressures. In total, 83% said there would be an increase in rationing in their area. Ministers have cited the financial challenges facing the health service as one of the reasons they have pushed ahead with the changes in the face of mounting opposition. While 12% of family doctors agreed that GP-led commissioning - the buying and planning of services on a local level - would improve care, some 55% said they disagreed and 33% said they did not know whether or not it would. The polling also asked about another controversial aspect of the reforms - the role of the private sector. [BBC News](#)

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USNORTHCOM

Canada: Climate change linked to waterborne diseases in Inuit communities



5 April - As global warming triggers heavier rainfall and faster snowmelt in the Arctic, Inuit communities in Canada are reporting more cases of illness attributed to pathogens that have washed into surface water and groundwater, according to a new study. The findings corroborate past research that suggests indigenous people worldwide are being disproportionately affected by climate change. This is because many of them live in regions where the effects are felt first and most strongly, and they might come into closer contact with the natural environment on a daily basis. For example, some indigenous communities lack access to treated water because they are far from urban areas. [National Geographic](#)

U.S.: Doctors call for end to five cancer tests, treatments

4 April - In a move that threatens to further inflame concerns about the rationing of medical care, the nation's leading association of cancer physicians issued a list on Wednesday of five common tests and treatments that doctors should stop offering to cancer patients. The list emerged from a two-year effort, similar to a project other medical specialties are undertaking, to identify procedures that do not help patients live longer or better or that may even be harmful, yet are routinely prescribed. As much as 30 percent of health-care

spending goes to procedures, tests, and hospital stays that do not improve a patient's health, according to a 2008 analysis by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget office. "Our goal was to improve care and improve the value of the care we deliver," said Dr. Lowell Schnipper, a cancer physician at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center who led the task force assembled by the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO). The group of more than 200 oncologists released the list from a report in its Journal of Clinical Oncology.

[Reuters](#)

U.S., Oklahoma: Outbreak of meningococcal disease associated with an elementary School, March 2010

6 April - During March 10–31, 2010, the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) investigated an outbreak of meningococcal (*Neisseria meningitidis*) disease involving a consolidated school district of 1,850 students in rural northeastern Oklahoma. An OSDH field investigation team and the Rogers County Health Department (RCHD) established operations at the affected elementary school as soon as the outbreak was recognized. Five cases of meningococcal disease (including one probable case) were identified among four elementary school students and one high school student. Two students died; two recovered fully, and one survivor required amputation of all four limbs and facial reconstruction. All *N. meningitidis* isolates were serogroup C with the same multilocus sequence type and an indistinguishable pulsed-field gel electrophoresis pattern. To interrupt the outbreak, mass vaccination and chemoprophylaxis clinics were conducted in the population at risk; 1,459 vaccinations and 1,063 courses of antibiotics were administered. Children eligible for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program received 1,092 of the vaccine doses, demonstrating that VFC is a feasible funding source for vaccine during an outbreak response. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

U.S.: Reported decline in pneumonia deaths may be false, study



3 April - Recent reports showing a big dip in U.S. pneumonia cases and related deaths may be the result of a glitch in the way hospitals code for pneumonia and associated illnesses, rather than a treatment breakthrough, a new study suggests. "We had observed that over a very brief period of time, between 2003 and 2009, the number of admissions to hospitals for pneumonia was decreasing rather dramatically and, at the same time, the mortality rate for patients hospitalized for pneumonia was also decreasing rather dramatically," said study author Dr. Peter Lindenauer, director of the Center for Quality of Care Research at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, Mass. "We don't have a new drug that might suggest the drop, so one of the things we thought we needed to investigate were changes in diagnostic coding choices," said Lindenauer, also an associate professor of medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston. Pneumonia, one of the nation's top killers, causes more than a million hospitalizations a year in the United States. For the study, published April 4 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Lindenauer and colleagues analyzed trends in

hospital admissions and survival in patients with pneumonia, and in patients diagnosed with sepsis or respiratory failure, two related illnesses, combined with pneumonia. Sepsis is a life-threatening bacterial infection. [Medline Plus](#)

U.S., Washington: Whooping cough cases reach epidemic levels in much of Washington

3 April - Today Secretary of Health Mary Selecky announced that whooping cough disease has reached epidemic levels in Washington. So far in 2012, 640 cases have been reported in 23 counties as of March 31. This compares to 94 cases during this same time period last year, putting Washington on-par to have the highest number of reported cases in decades. "We're very concerned about the continued rapid increase in reported cases," said Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. "This disease can be very serious for young babies, who often get whooping cough from adults and other family members. We want all teens and adults who haven't had Tdap to be vaccinated to help protect babies that are too young for the vaccine." [Washington State Department of Health](#)

U.S.: Whooping cough vaccine fades in pre-teens, study

3 April - During a whooping cough outbreak in California in 2010, immunized children between eight and 12 years old were more likely to catch the bacterial disease than kids of other ages, suggesting that the childhood vaccine wears off as kids get older, according to new research. "We have a real belief that the durability (of the vaccine) is not what was imagined," said Dr. David Witt, an infectious disease specialist at Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in San Rafael, California, and senior author of the study. [Reuters](#)

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USPACOM

Fiji surveys aftermath of deadly storms

3 April - At least five people are dead after a week of heavy rains and severe flooding swamped the Pacific island nation of Fiji. As many as 11,000 people in Fiji's main island of Viti Levu were forced from their homes into evacuation shelters to escape the impact of Tropical Cyclone Daphne as it passed by the island. Roads and bridges are washed out and thousands of residents are without power. Airlines canceled flights in and out of Fiji, leaving thousands of tourists temporarily stranded. [Voice of America](#)

India: Malaria

5 April - Mosquitoes are back with their menace in Ahmedabad [Gujarat state] as the number of patients suffering from the disease [malaria] has doubled this year [2012]. The city has reported 630 cases of the disease in January-March 2012, up from 300 during same time last year [2011]. Civic body officials attribute this increase to re-occurrence of the

disease and increase in areas under their surveillance. However, there is hardly any difference in number of *Plasmodium falciparum* (Pf) but there is almost a 100 percent increase in cases of *Plasmodium vivax* (Pv) strain of malaria. According to IK Patel, deputy municipal commissioner, AMC [Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation] health department, re-occurrence of malaria in the last couple of months of 2011 is the reason for a surge in number of cases reported in January-March, 2012. "We have asked health officials to submit exact data of re-occurrence so that necessary action can be taken," said Patel. Meanwhile, AMC has chalked out an action plan to combat the increased incidences of Pv malaria in the city. Around 500 people have been recruited by the civic body to conduct door-to-door survey to get a definite number of malaria cases in the city. This will increase area under surveillance of AMC from 40 percent to almost 100 percent. There will also be a substantial increase in number of patients screened from the current 30 percent after this surveillance, said sources in AMC's health department. [ProMED-mail](#)

Northern Mariana Islands: Saipan cleanup of toxic soil on hold after a US army unit runs out of funds

29 March - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has temporarily suspended its clean up in I-Denni on Capital Hill in Saipan in the Northern Marianas because it has temporarily run out of money. The area is being cleared of polychlorinated biphenyls or PCBs, and lead-contaminated soil. The affected area covers five times what was originally estimated. The pit in I-Denni was used by the U.S. military during and after World War II as a waste repository.

[Radio New Zealand International](#)

Papua New Guinea: Tetanus vaccination campaign underway

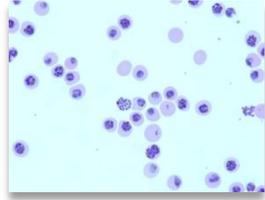
2 April - The Papua New Guinea (PNG) Health Ministry and international aid agencies have launched a mass vaccination of 1.8 million women and girls aged 15-45 against maternal and neonatal tetanus (MNT). The tetanus toxoid vaccine will be administered from 2 April to 15 May at public health facilities and schools in all 20 of the country's provinces. While the Ministry of Health has carried out supplementary vaccination programmes to protect against polio and measles, this is the first large-scale MNT vaccination. [IRIN](#)

Sampling the Pacific for signs of Fukushima

2 April - An international research team is reporting the results of a research cruise they organized to study the amount, spread, and impacts of radiation released into the ocean from the tsunami-crippled reactors in Fukushima, Japan. The group of 17 researchers and technicians from eight institutions spent 15 days at sea in June 2011 studying ocean currents, and sampling water and marine organisms up to the edge of the exclusion zone around the reactors. Led by Ken Buesseler, a senior scientist and marine chemist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI), the team found that the concentration of several key radioactive substances, or radionuclides, were elevated but varied widely across the study area, reflecting the complex nature of the marine environment. In addition, although levels of radioactivity in marine life sampled during the cruise were well below

levels of concern for humans and the organisms themselves, the researchers leave open the question of whether radioactive materials are accumulating on the seafloor sediments and, if so, whether these might pose a long-term threat to the marine ecosystem. The results appear in the April 2 online edition of the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*. [Science Daily](#)

Thai-Burmese border: New type of resistant malaria appears



5 April - Malaria experts have been holding their breath and hoping it wouldn't happen. But it has. Malaria parasites resistant to the last, best drug treatment, called [artemisinin combination therapy, or ACT](#), are infecting people along the border of Thailand and Myanmar. This is 500 miles away from the first focus of ACT-resistant malaria in [Cambodia](#). And it's a different form of resistant malaria, which means it arose independently of the Cambodian type rather than spreading from there. We're talking here about [Plasmodium falciparum](#), the deadliest and most common form of malaria. The discovery ruins the World Health Organization's hope that resistance to ACT might be stamped out for good in Cambodia. Now it's a two-front war. An international team of researchers is [publishing](#) the news in *The Lancet*. [NPR](#)

Vietnam: Red Cross issued an emergency appeal to fight disease

3 April – The Vietnam Red Cross has launched a public education campaign to fight the spread of hand, foot and mouth disease in Vietnam. The organization issued an emergency appeal Tuesday for nearly \$1 million in international donations to help fund a campaign aimed at more than 750,000 people in 13 provinces. [The Red Cross](#) says there have been more than 15,000 cases of hand, foot and mouth disease reported in Vietnam so far this year - seven times higher than during the same period in 2011 - and a more virulent strain of the disease has killed 11 children. [VOA News](#)

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Paraguay: At least seven people killed by dengue fever

30 March - The number of people killed by dengue fever in Paraguay this year rose to seven with the death of two elderly on Friday, the Health Ministry said. The deaths of another 15 people are under investigation to establish if the cause was the same. One of the two deaths today, a woman, was registered in the capital, the worst-hit area, where 2,000 people have been reported as infected so far this year. Central Paraguay, home to Asuncion, is the worst hit area with a larger presence of the vector, the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito. [Prensa Latina](#)

World fund helps Cuba control TB

4 April - Cuba's TB Control Program works with the World Fund to further reduce today's infection rates (6.9 per 100,000 people). Through Project Ronda 7, The Global Fund against TB, AIDS/HIV and Malaria, through the UNDP are working at areas in need and already show significant results. It has trained 7,220 workers who will inform on the disease and educate vulnerable groups like 3,448 AIDS/HIV patients about TB in their condition, in producing educational audiovisual materials. More than 5.7 million people from the risk group have been screened (that includes those in contact with the diseased, with physically impaired and mentally ill, immune-depressed and health care staff) and improved 343 labs to diagnose the disease. [Prensa Latina](#)

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