

7 February 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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## NOTICE

There will be no Army Public Health Weekly Update next week. Publication will resume on 21 February.

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## Caffeine!!

### Bite Sci-zed

How does caffeine turn a morning zombie into a functioning member of society? This lesson will get you thinking about the science behind an everyday drug.



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## 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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## U.S. MILITARY

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### Afghan farmers now feeding U.S. troops

5 February - U.S. troops in Afghanistan are now eating vegetables grown by local Afghan farmers. Under a program that began in September, Afghan farmers have been supplying broccoli and cauliflower at all of the dining facilities at U.S. military bases in Afghanistan, said Army Brig. Gen. Steven Shapiro, the Defense Logistics Agency Troop Support commander. DLA also expects to purchase the following fruits and vegetables from Afghan farmers by this summer: Green beans, Danish and red cabbage, cantaloupe, carrots, celery, cucumbers, honeydew, iceberg and romaine lettuce, green onions, sweet Spanish onions, parsley, baking and white potatoes, pumpkins, radishes, spinach, tomatoes and watermelon, said Stacey Hajdak, a spokeswoman for DLA troop support. DLA has no plans to also buy meat from local vendors, Shapiro told Military Times on Wednesday. [Army Times](#)

### At last, suicides among military family members could be tracked

6 February - ...Though the military tracks suicides among service members, suicides among their family members -- spouses, siblings and parents -- go uncounted. But CNN learned Wednesday that the Pentagon's Defense Suicide Prevention Office has sent a report to Congress detailing for the first time a proposal for tracking those deaths... The report, obtained by CNN Wednesday, says the Defense Department does not currently have the ability to investigate, monitor or receive notification of military family member deaths and details how that might be done and what it would cost. It would take 18 to 24 months for the Pentagon to analyze data it could buy from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics, which tracks deaths in the general U.S. population, the report says. That data -- names and locations of deaths -- could then be compared against data the Defense Department has on family members enrolled in an ID card program. [CNN](#)

## Defense officials work to foster a healthy force

31 January - The Army's [Performance Triad](#) initiative launched last fall to foster a healthy and fit force is expanding to more actively engage family members and retirees... In September 2013, the U.S. Army Medical Command launched a pilot program for Army Medicine's Performance Triad of sleep, activity and nutrition focused on squad leader and unit training at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. and Fort Bliss, Texas, with a third site added in October at Fort Bragg, N.C... Meanwhile, the U.S. Army Public Health Command plans to launch a similar education campaign for family members and retirees in March, said System for Health Training, Education, and Communication lead Barbara Ryan. [Health.mil](#)

## Here's what's troubling American troops in one chart

4 February - This Army graph makes crystal clear what many U.S. troops, and their loved ones, have long suspected: the more combat events they experience, the more mental-health problems they will suffer. In fact, according to this illustration from a new Army report, there is a direct linear relationship between combat exposure and resulting mental maladies. While that notion is hardly surprising, this chart confirms what troops have long believed. "As would be expected, there is a dose-dependent relationship between levels of combat experiences and well-being indices," the Army's just-released ninth Mental Health Advisory Team report says. "This relationship is clearly demonstrated for the percentage of Soldiers meeting screening criteria for any psychological problem." [TIME](#)

## Study: Less war improves mental health of soldiers

3 February - The imminent end of the U.S. war in Afghanistan has triggered some of the highest morale and lowest levels of mental illness among deployed U.S. soldiers in years, according to an Army mental health study released Monday. The findings by Army scientists working in the combat zone last year dovetails with the 19% drop in active-duty Army suicides in 2013 announced by the service Friday. The study, which interviewed war-zone troops anonymously, also notes fewer soldiers deployed to Afghanistan contemplated suicide. Some 8.5% did, down from 13% in 2010... Despite the improvements, the stigma against seeking mental health help remains, the study shows. Nearly half of the surveyed soldiers who need therapy said the perception of weakness discouraged them from seeking help. That rate has remained unchanged for years despite military efforts to reduce it, the report said. [USA Today](#)

## Suicide rate among active-duty soldiers falls sharply

31 January - Suicides among soldiers on active duty dropped steeply last year but went up among those in the National Guard and reserves, according to Army data, suggesting discrepancies in efforts to stem the epidemic of soldiers taking their own lives. About 150 active-duty soldiers committed suicide last year, down from 185 in 2012, the highest annual number on record, according to statistics provided Friday by the Army. But 151 members of the National Guard and Army Reserves not on active duty also took their own lives in 2013,

up from 140 the previous year. Overall, the total number of suicides fell to 301 last year from 325 the year before, the first decline in over a decade. [Los Angeles Times](#)

## Update: Malaria, U.S. Armed Forces, 2013

January 2014 – The numbers of cases [of malaria] among service members in 2012 (n=40) and 2013 (n=30) were the lowest reported during the past ten years. In 2013 over one-third of cases were attributed to service in Afghanistan (n=11) and six cases were linked to Africa. Nine cases were caused by *Plasmodium vivax*; eight cases were caused by *P. falciparum*; and one-third were reported as “unspecified” malaria... The relatively low numbers of cases in 2012 and 2013 could reflect a decrease in the number of troops who served in endemic areas, improved or increased use of chemoprophylaxis and personal protective equipment, and changes in environmental factors that may influence the numbers and distribution of infected mosquitoes. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

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### GLOBAL

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## An artificial arm gives one man the chance to feel again

5 February - ... "The goal of our project was to provide sensory information to an amputee in real time in order to increase the usability of the prosthesis—to give back as much as possible natural sensory information," says [Silvestro Micera](#), director of the Translational Neural Engineering Laboratory at the Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne in Switzerland, who helped develop the prosthesis. The researchers added sensors to each finger of the hand. Surgeons then inserted tiny electrodes into Sorensen's arm that connected the sensors to nerves in his arm. "These are the nerves which connect the hand to the brain," Micera says. "They are the natural ones conveying the sensory information from our natural sensors in the fingers in the hand back up to the brain." Almost immediately, Sorensen was able to feel all kinds of things... Even when he was blindfolded and wearing ear plugs, Sorensen could tell the difference between a Mandarin orange and a baseball, between a short bottle and a tall bottle and even between a hard wooden block and a piece of soft fabric. [NPR](#)

## Antibiotic “smart bomb” targets specific strains of bacteria

31 January – Researchers from North Carolina State University have developed a de facto antibiotic “smart bomb” that can identify specific strains of bacteria and sever their DNA, eliminating the infection. The technique offers a potential approach to treat infections by multi-drug resistant bacteria. “Conventional antibiotic treatments kill both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ bacteria, leading to unintended consequences, such as opportunistic infections,” says Dr.

Chase Beisel, an assistant professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering at NC State and senior author of a paper describing the work. "What we've shown in this new work is that it is possible to selectively remove specific strains of bacteria without affecting populations of good bacteria." [Homeland Security News Wire](#)

## Cancer 'tidal wave' on horizon, warns WHO

4 February - The globe is facing a "tidal wave" of cancer, and restrictions on alcohol and sugar need to be considered, say World Health Organization scientists. It predicts the number of cancer cases will reach 24 million a year by 2035, but half could be prevented. The WHO said there was now a "real need" to focus on cancer prevention by tackling smoking, obesity and drinking. The World Cancer Research Fund said there was an "alarming" level of naivety about diet's role in cancer. Fourteen million people a year are diagnosed with cancer, but that is predicted to increase to 19 million by 2025, 22 million by 2030 and 24 million by 2035. The developing world will bear the brunt of the extra cases. [BBC News](#)

## HHS funds drug to fight bioterror agents, drug-resistant infections

5 February - The federal government will provide up to \$90 million to develop a new drug to treat two potential bioterror threats and possibly to combat antibiotic-resistant infections, the US Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS's) Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) announced today. The ASPR's Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) will support the development of the drug Carbavance... The drug has shown promise against both melioidosis and glanders, diseases caused by different types of *Burkholderia* bacteria. Both diseases are considered category B bioterrorism agents, meaning they are moderately easy to disseminate and can cause moderate rates of morbidity. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

## Inexpensive aquarium bubbler saves preemies' lives

3 February - ...Earlier this year, I reported on some students at Rice University who had designed a low-cost medical device to help premature infants breathe. The key to making the medical instrument affordable was an unlikely component: a simple aquarium pump that you could pick up at a pet store. Turns out the innovative instrument — aquarium pump and all — not only works in the lab but also saves babies lives out in the real world. The breathing system boosted the survival rate of newborns with respiratory problems by 60 percent at a rural hospital in Malawi, bioengineer Rebecca Richards-Kortum and her team reported Wednesday in the journal *PLOS ONE*. [NPR](#)

## Research uncovers how pesticides increase risk for Parkinson's disease

3 February - Previous studies have shown that certain pesticides can increase the risk for developing Parkinson's disease. Now, UCLA researchers have now found that the strength

of that risk depends on an individual's genetic makeup, which in the most pesticide-exposed populations could increase the chances of developing the debilitating disease by two- to six-fold. In a previous study [researchers found that the pesticide] benomyl inhibited an enzyme called aldehyde dehydrogenase (ALDH), which converts aldehydes highly toxic to dopamine cells into less toxic agents, and therefore contributed to the development of Parkinson's. In this study, UCLA researchers tested a number of other pesticides and found 11 that also inhibit ALDH and increase the risk of Parkinson's, and at much lower levels than those at which they are currently being used. [Medical Xpress](#)

## Temporary blindness 'boosts hearing'

6 February - A study, published in the journal *Neuron*, showed keeping mice in the dark for a week changed their brains and enhanced hearing. The effect lasted for several weeks after they were returned to the light. Experts said it was a "fascinating" finding, but making more permanent brain alterations would be key to any new treatments for hearing loss. The US team at John Hopkins University and the University of Maryland compared the hearing of mice that had been kept in complete darkness for a week with that of others getting natural light. Those kept in the dark could hear softer sounds and there were changes in the structure of the auditory cortex in the brain... One thought was that part of the brain being used for vision was being repurposed, but it seemed the sections dedicated to hearing were being beefed-up. [BBC News](#)

## Thousands of unvaccinated adults die each year from preventable diseases

4 February - While adults make up 95 percent of those who die annually from vaccine preventable diseases, a new study from the University of Colorado School of Medicine shows their vaccination rates remain stubbornly low, representing a growing public health concern. The study, published recently in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, is the first to examine several important aspects of adult vaccination. Every year, 30,000 people on average die of vaccine preventable illnesses, almost all of them adult. "Our study suggests that missed opportunities for adult vaccination are common because vaccination status is not being assessed at every (physician's) visit, which is admittedly an ambitious goal," said Laura Hurley, MD, MPH lead author of the study and an assistant professor of medicine at the CU School of Medicine. "Also, most physicians are not stocking all recommended vaccines." [EurekAlert!](#)

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## INFLUENZA

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

- During week 04, Influenza-like-illness (ILI) and Pneumonia and Influenza (P&I) decreased in NORTHCOM, EUCOM and PACOM.
- EUCOM has seen an increase in H3N2 cases. In general, influenza levels for EUCOM are similar to previous years.
- Among training centers in week 04, there were 7 cases of H1N1. In general, influenza levels are comparable to previous seasons for recruit centers.
- The influenza vaccination coverage for the DoD (active duty component only) is 95%.  
[AFHSC DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary](#)

### CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 4 (January 19-25, 2014), influenza activity remained high in the United States.

- Viral Surveillance: Of 9,514 specimens tested and reported during week 4, 2,006 (21.1%) were positive for influenza.
- Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality: The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was above the epidemic threshold.
- Influenza-Associated Pediatric Deaths: Nine influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported.
- Outpatient Illness Surveillance: The proportion of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) was 3.3%, above the national baseline of 2.0%. All 10 regions reported ILI above region-specific baseline levels. [FluView](#)

### DoD Global Laboratory-Based Influenza Surveillance Program

- During Weeks 3 & 4, 485 specimens were collected and received from 53 locations. Results were finalized for 244 specimens from 42 locations. For specimens collected during Week 3, 73.5% were positive for influenza (125 influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, one influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 & parainfluenza, three influenza A(H3N2), five influenza A/not subtyped, and one influenza B & parainfluenza. For specimens collected during Week 4, 96.8% were positive for influenza (57 influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, one influenza A(H3N2), three influenza A/not subtyped).
- Cumulative results were finalized for 1,631 specimens from 75 locations. There were 618 specimens positive for influenza A (582 A(H1N1)pdm09, 18 A(H3N2), four A(H1N1)pdm09 & parainfluenza, one A(H1N1)pdm09 & RSV, two A(H1N1)pdm09 & rhinovirus/enterovirus, and 11 A/not subtyped). There were eight specimens positive for

influenza B (six B/unknown lineage, one B/Yamagata, and one B & parainfluenza). Other respiratory pathogens identified were 31 adenovirus, 21 Chlamydomphila pneumoniae, 42 coronavirus, 19 human metapneumovirus, 35 Mycoplasma pneumoniae, 58 parainfluenza, 77 RSV, and 200 rhinovirus/enterovirus. To date, 64 non-influenza co-infections have been identified.

- Vaccination percentages for active duty service members are as follows: Army - 96%, Air Force - 98%, Marines - 91%, Navy - 92%, and Coast Guard - 97%. [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

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

For week 4/2014:

- Influenza activity continued to increase in most reporting countries throughout the EU/EEA region. ILI rates were similar or higher than those for 2013 in Bulgaria, Greece, Portugal and Spain.
- Proportions of sentinel A(H1)pdm09 and A(H3) viruses varied substantially between countries. Very few influenza B viruses were detected.
- In five reporting countries, 87% of hospitalised laboratory-confirmed influenza cases were related to infection with A(H1)pdm09 virus.

Influenza activity has continued to increase in almost all EU/EEA countries, with varying proportions of A(H1)pdm09 and A(H3) among countries. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

## Google.org: Flu Trends

4 February – Estimates of flu activity based on certain Internet search queries indicate that the level of flu activity in the northern hemisphere ranges from low to intense (Japan) and in the southern hemisphere ranges from minimal to low. [Google.org Flu Trends](#)

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

For the week ending 25 January 2014:

### Influenza

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

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

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

During week four, civilian influenza-like illness activity continued to decrease, although it remains above baseline. Activity is starting to shift westward as evidenced by trends in percent positive influenza lab samples.

- **ILI Activity:** Army incident ILI outpatient visits in week four were 13% higher than for the same week last year.
- **Influenza cases:** Eleven hospitalized influenza cases (eight Active Duty [AD]) have been reported in week four. Investigation into the AD cases revealed no epidemiological links.
- **Viral specimens:** During week four, 476 of 1,694 (28%) laboratory specimens tested positive for respiratory pathogens. Most of the influenza A positive specimens have been from SRMC (42%), while WRMC and NRMC accounted for 26% and 23%, respectively. [USAPHC U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report](#)

## PANDEMIC AND AVIAN INFLUENZA

### China details first human fatality linked to novel H10N8 influenza

5 February - Chinese health officials are reporting the first fatality associated with a novel reassortant avian H10N8 influenza virus. The study, published in the *Lancet*, details the case of a 73-year-old woman with several comorbidities who became ill 4 days after visiting a poultry market in Jiangxi province. A novel avian H10N8 virus was identified in a tracheal aspirate specimen obtained from the patient a week after illness onset. A field investigation failed to find an identical virus circulating in poultry from the market. The patient developed pneumonia and multiple organ failure and died 9 days after symptom onset. No human contacts were infected. Researchers noted that the novel H10N8 virus contains mutations that could increase virulence in mammalian hosts. The authors conclude: "The pandemic potential of this novel virus should not be underestimated." [NEJM Journal Watch](#)

### Egypt: Swine flu deaths rise to 24, 195 patients held in hospital

4 February – Egypt's health ministry has announced that 24 people died from the swine flu during this winter, scientifically known as the H1N1 virus. The ministry has monitored at least 273 cases since October, 195 were diagnosed with the virus since December, Health Minister Maha al-Rabat said in a press conference on Tuesday. Rabat said that there were no cases of bird flu since April 2013. She told a state newspaper that the deceased do not include doctors. Rabat added that only two doctors were diagnosed, one has recovered and

the other is under treatment and in a stable condition. The World Health Organization has confirmed the news, explaining that it is working with the Egyptian authorities to monitor the situation. [allAfrica](#)

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

5 February - On 4 February 2014, the National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFPC) of China notified WHO of eight additional laboratory-confirmed cases of human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus, including two deaths... So far, there is no evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission. [WHO](#)

## Study: H7N9 patients much older than H5N1, H1N1 patients

3 February - An international team that compared patients hospitalized with H7N9 avian flu, H5N1, or 2009 H1N1 flu found that H7N9 patients were much older and much more likely to be male, according to a new study in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. The study also found that heart disease was associated with an increased risk of hospitalization with H7N9 flu. The researchers analyzed data from 123 H7N9 patients hospitalized last spring, 119 H5N1 patients from China and Vietnam, and 3,486 patients in China who had 2009 H1N1. They noted that the median age of H7N9 patients was 63 years, compared with 26 for H5N1 and 25 for 2009 H1N1. The proportion of male H7N9 patients was 71%, compared with 56% for both H5N1 and 2009 H1N1 patients. The authors also noted marked differences in clinical presentation among the three groups, with H7N9 patients having the highest prevalence of chronic medical conditions traditionally associated with severe cases of seasonal flu. [CIDRAP Flu Scan](#) (second item)

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### **VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY**

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## FDA proposes rule to prevent food contamination during transport

31 January - Food transportation companies will be required to adhere to certain sanitation standards to prevent food from becoming contaminated during transit under a new rule proposed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The rule would require shippers and carriers to properly refrigerate food, clean vehicles between loads and protect food during transportation. The rule is the seventh and final plank of the 2011 Food Safety Modernization Act, a sweeping initiative designed to reduce food-borne illnesses by giving the FDA greater powers to intervene before an outbreak occurs. [Reuters](#)

## Iowa research lab identifies new strain of deadly pig virus

3 February – A new strain of Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus, or PEDv, has been identified in samples taken from Illinois and Missouri, a top veterinarian at Iowa State University said on Monday. "We found that there is a variant out there that appears to be quite different than the original," Rodger Main, the head veterinarian of Iowa State University's veterinary diagnostic lab, told Reuters on Monday. More research needs to be completed, however, to determine if the new variant is a mutation or a different introduction of the original virus... PEDv, a highly contagious and potentially fatal pig virus, causes diarrhea, vomiting and severe dehydration. It is transmitted orally and through pig feces. The virus does not affect humans, however, and U.S. federal officials have determined meat from pigs that survive the virus is safe to eat. [Reuters](#)

## New Zealand: First case of neurological equine herpes virus

5 February – New Zealand has its 1st confirmed case of the neurological form of equine herpes virus 1 (EHV-1). The country's Ministry for Primary Industries said the case was reported on a stud farm. It has not disclosed the location at this time, but it is understood to be in the North Island. EHV-1 is a common virus in New Zealand and many horses are infected as foals, normally showing no clinical signs of disease... The neurological form, known as myeloencephalopathy, has been known to occur in North America, Europe, and Australia. It often results in the euthanizing of the infected animal, once it is unable to stand. The ministry said it was confident all affected horses were contained and the situation was under control. It said no other properties had been affected. It stressed that EHV-1 cannot be transmitted to people or other animals, and does not pose a risk to human health.

[ProMED-mail](#)

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### WELLNESS

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## Excess sugar linked with heart disease death

3 February - A new study links consumption of more sugary foods with a higher risk of death from heart disease. The assessment is the latest addition to a growing body of evidence that "too much sugar does not just make us fat, it can also make us sick," according to health policy professor Laura Schmidt at the University of California, San Francisco. Schmidt wrote a commentary accompanying the new [study](#) in the journal *JAMA Internal Medicine*. The study focuses on sugar added to foods as opposed to those occurring naturally in fruits and vegetables. [VOA](#)

## Get some sleep, and wake up the G.D.P.

1 February - ...A survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that one in 25 people admitted to having fallen asleep while driving during the previous month. To put that in perspective, mathematical models based on this data imply that an estimated 15 to 33 percent of all fatal crashes in the United States might involve a drowsy driver... There may be more sleepy workers than drivers. In one month in 2008, a poll showed that 29 percent of workers had fallen asleep or had been very sleepy at work. The effects can add up: one study in Australia calculated the cost of sleeplessness at 0.8 percent of the country's gross domestic product. Yet even that number, which emphasizes the physical and medical consequences of inadequate sleep, omits the biggest potential impact on the G.D.P. Most of today's workers rely on their mental and social skills. And if those workers don't get enough sleep, their lethargy, crankiness and poor decision-making will hurt the economy in assorted and significant ways. [New York Times](#)

## How Twitter knows when you're depressed

27 January - With its 230 million regular users, Twitter has become such a broad stream of personal expression that researchers are beginning to use it as a tool to dig into public health problems... Eric Horvitz, co-director of [Microsoft](#) Research Redmond has helped pioneer research on Twitter and depression... Horvitz and a team of researchers helped develop a model that can scan tweets and predict depression in Twitter users, with an accuracy they claim to be 70%. Researchers say the system is still far from perfect. When the model scans your tweets, it misses some signals and doesn't diagnose many people—about 30%—who really will get depression. And the system has a “false positive” issue, Horvitz said, causing it to incorrectly predict that healthy Twitter users will get depression in about 10% of cases. [Time](#)

## In texting era, crisis hotlines put help at youths' fingertips

4 February – ...While counseling by phone remains far more prevalent, texting has become such a fundamental way to communicate, particularly among people under 20, that crisis groups have begun to adopt it as an alternative way of providing emergency services and counseling. Texting provides privacy that can be crucial if a person feels threatened by someone near them, counselors say. It also looks more natural if the teenager is in public. “They can still look ‘cool’ to their peers or friends while receiving assistance that they are in desperate need of,” said Jerry Weichman, a clinical psychologist in Newport Beach, Calif., who deals with adolescent issues. [New York Times](#)

## Israeli researcher links sleep fragmentation to higher cancer risk

5 February - Poor sleep can speed cancer growth and increase tumor aggressiveness, according to a new study led by an Israeli researcher. The tumors could grow in a shorter

amount of time compared to cancer in patients who get a good night's sleep, the research shows... [Researchers] studied two different sets of rats. One group was allowed an uninterrupted night's sleep while the others were disrupted various times during the night for one week. "After a week of these sleeping patterns, we injected both groups with cancer cells and observed their growth over a period of four weeks," Dr. Hakim told Xinhua. "We continued with the same sleep configuration during the four weeks and we observed afterwards that those mice in the sleep-deprived group had grown tumors twice as big as the other group," he said. The tumors grew not only bigger in the sleep-deprived group but also much more malignant, as they penetrated much deeper into the tissue and at a much faster rate than cancer in those rodents that had a normal sleep, according to the research.

[Xinhua](#)

## Lack of regulation of fast food fueling obesity epidemic, study says

3 February - ... A study published in the Bulletin of the World Health Organization (WHO) suggested that if governments took firmer action, they could start to prevent people becoming overweight and obese - conditions with serious long-term consequences such as diabetes, heart diseases and cancer... Suggested policies include economic incentives for growers to sell healthy, fresh foods; disincentives for industries to sell ultra-processed foods and soft drinks; cutting subsidies to growers and companies who use large amounts of fertilizers, pesticides, chemicals and antibiotics; and tighter regulation of fast-food advertising, especially to children. The research analyzed... "fast food transactions" - in other words, the number of times people bought fast food... They found that, as the average number of annual fast food transactions increased from 26.61 to 32.76 per person, average BMI increased from 25.8 to 26.4. [Fox News](#)

## Parents often underestimate children's weight: study

4 February - Half of parents with an overweight or obese child think their kids are slimmer than they actually are, according to a new review of past studies. In 69 studies of more than 15,000 children, researchers found many parents with an overweight child thought their son or daughter was at a healthy weight or below. Others with an obese kid thought the child was normal or just a bit heavy. "We know that parents play a very crucial role in preventing childhood obesity, and interventions are most successful if they involve parents," said Alyssa Lundahl. She led the study at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. But, Lundahl said, if parents don't recognize their child is overweight or aren't concerned, they aren't going to take steps to address it. [Reuters](#)

## Shopping cart injuries remain common

30 January - Shopping carts might not seem like a particularly dangerous place for a child, but from 1990 to 2011, an average of 66 children a day wound up in emergency rooms after injuries sustained in and near them. Researchers studied children under 15 and made estimates of injuries based on a sample of emergency room visits in 100 hospitals

nationwide. Most of the injured were children under 4 who fell out of a cart, and more than 90 percent of their wounds were to the head. Carts tipping over, running into or falling over the cart, and entrapment of extremities accounted for the rest of the damage. [New York Times](#)

## Stool test spots most colon cancers: study

3 February - An at-home test that reacts to blood in a person's stool can identify most colon cancers, according to a fresh look at some previous studies. Researchers found the fecal immunochemical test (FIT) is able to detect 79 percent of colorectal cancers without making people change their diets or stop taking their medications, as some other screening tests require. "It's more user friendly for the patient," Dr. Jeffrey Lee told Reuters Health. [Reuters](#)

## Telemedicine service may expand access to acute medical care, study finds

3 February - People who are younger, more affluent and do not have established health care relationships are more likely to use a telemedicine program that allows patients to get medical help—including prescriptions—by talking to a doctor over the telephone, according to a new RAND Corporation study. Patients who used the service suffered from a wide assortment of acute medical problems such as respiratory illnesses and skin problems, and researchers found little evidence of misdiagnosis or treatment failure among those who used the service. The findings, published in the February edition of the journal Health Affairs, are from the first assessment of a telemedicine program offered to a large, diverse group of patients across the United States. [Medical Xpress](#)

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### **USAFRICOM**

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## Botswana: Health official warns against "HIV prevention" soap

5 February - A senior health official in Botswana warned the public against falling for internet scam claiming there is a so called miracle soap that can prevent HIV infection better than a condom. According to local radio GabzFM on Wednesday, the Health Ministry's spokesperson Doreen Motshegwa said the government is extremely alarmed by the alleged misleading claims on the internet and has urged the public to ignore them. Recently an "HIV-prevention" soap, brand named "Mo-Gae" -- a reference to Botswana's former president, Festus Mogae, who has been a champion in the fight against HIV/Aids, hit on the internet and claims to be 100 percent effective against HIV infection. [Xinhua](#)

## Kenya: About 30% of cancers caused by HIV

4 February - About 30 percent of all cancers cases in Kenya are caused by HIV, the country Aids control body said on Tuesday. National Aids Control Council Deputy Director Sobbie Mulindi told Xinhua that the government is now scaling up interventions to reduce sexually transmitted diseases. "Cervical cancer, penile cancer and other forms of cancer are related to HIV infections," Mulindi said on the sidelines of a ceremony where Kenyan corporations signed declarations against cancer. He said that medical male circumcision reduces HIV transmissions and in turn the onset of some forms of cancer. He added that Kenya is currently facing double burden of HIV and cancer. Mulindi said that the Human Papillomavirus, which is sexually transmitted, causes cervical cancer. According to the deputy director, other forms of cancer are associated with the use of Anti-retroviral drugs.

[Xinhua](#)

## Liberia: FGM persists despite dangers

6 February - Thursday marks the U.N.-sponsored International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Despite international campaigns, the United Nations says millions of girls in Africa remain at risk. In Liberia, there is no law against it and FGM is still common practice. It is around this time of year in Margibi County that village women take girls into the forest to induct them into the secret female society known as Sande. As part of the initiation, they cut off the girls' clitorises... "We spend more than six months there and we teach them about other traditional practices. To be frank, some die in the process. Some get sick, but we use traditional herbs to cure them. We do not have any [other] option. This is our tradition," said one woman. [VOA](#)

## Nigeria: Cholera kills 25 in Benue state

4 February – About 25 people have died following the outbreak of Cholera in different parts of Benue State, Daily Trust gathered... At the Jolua hospital, Wadata in Makurdi, Dr. Adole Edoh, who said two deaths had been recorded in his institution, added that 80 per cent of the cases treated in the past two weeks were cholera related. "We started noticing more admissions in the past two weeks and 80 per cent of the cases were cholera related. Two persons have died so far," Edoh said. Similarly, the Hope Hospital, Wadata, said the disease claimed two lives in the early hours of yesterday while many others are lying down in the wards. The hospital's matron, Agata Zack Nyitgher, said their personnel were currently handling over 20 cases of cholera. [allAfrica](#)

## South Africa: Record number of malaria cases

2 February – According to the Department of Health in Limpopo, a record number of 765 malaria cases were recorded over the past 3 months, with 217 cases reported in October 2013, 347 in November 2013 and 201 in December 2013. The Donald Fraser, Malamulele, and Musina hospitals are the hospitals that recorded the highest number of malaria cases in Mopane. [ProMED-mail](#)

## Tanzania: Flash floods – Jan 2014

1 February – During the night of 21 Jan 2014, heavy rains caused flash floods in Dumila/Dakawa area in Tanzania's Morogoro region, which displaced over 10,000 people and destroyed or damaged houses, roads, bridges, public buildings and crops. The majority of the displaced people live on safer/higher open grounds along the road, making emergency shelter a critical need. Most of the affected villages have their boreholes contaminated with flood/muddy water. The water has started to recede in some areas, but many vulnerable households will remain in need of emergency assistance for some months to come. [ReliefWeb](#)

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### USCENTCOM

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## Iran: Its great lake shriveled, Iran confronts crisis of water supply

30 January - ...Iran is facing a water shortage potentially so serious that officials are making contingency plans for rationing in the greater Tehran area, home to 22 million, and other major cities around the country. President Hassan Rouhani has identified water as a national security issue, and in public speeches in areas struck hardest by the shortage he is promising to "bring the water back." Experts cite climate change, wasteful irrigation practices and the depletion of groundwater supplies as leading factors in the growing water shortage... Major rivers near Isfahan, in central Iran, and Ahvaz, near the Persian Gulf, have gone dry, as has Hamoun Lake, in the Afghanistan border region. Dust from the dry riverbeds has added to already dangerously high air pollution levels in Iran, home to four of the 10 most polluted cities in the world, the United Nations says. [New York Times](#)

## Jordan: Jordan to enforce smoking ban despite public fury

25 January – In Jordan, a country where smoking is so popular that motorists can be seen puffing away on miniature water pipes in traffic, the kingdom's government now wants to enforce a Western-style smoking ban in restaurants, cafes and other public places. The ban, coming from a law passed in 2008 but not full enforced, also would see the government revoke the licenses of all 6,000 coffee shops that serve shisha by the end of this year. But business owners and smokers are criticizing the push, saying it goes against the culture of a country where smoking is seen as an attractive sign of manhood. [AP](#)

## Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) – WHO update

4 February - On 28 January 2014, the Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia announced an additional laboratory-confirmed case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) infection...WHO has also been informed by the United Arab Emirates of the death on 16 January of a previously reported case of a 33 year-old male healthcare worker from Dubai (see Disease Outbreak News update from 3 January 2014). Globally, from September 2012 to date, WHO has been informed of a total of 181 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV, including 79 deaths. [WHO](#)

## Pakistan: Leishmaniasis

3 February - Officials at the Agency Headquarters Hospital in Landikotal said on Sunday [2 Feb 2014] that they had diagnosed over 254 patients with leishmaniasis. However, they claimed to have initiated an awareness campaign against the disease in the entire Khyber Agency. Agency Surgeon Dr Abdur Rehman told The News that health officials had detected 254 patients in Landikotal tehsil [a tehsil is an administrative division] in January 2014, which comprised mostly women and children. [ProMED-mail](#)

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### USEUCOM

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## Europe: First case of laboratory-confirmed Zika virus infection imported into Europe, November 2013

30 January - In November 2013, an acute Zika virus (ZIKV) infection was diagnosed in a German traveller returning from Thailand. The patient reported a clinical picture resembling dengue fever. Serological investigations revealed anti-ZIKV-IgM and -IgG, as well as ZIKV-specific neutralising antibodies in the patient's blood. In Europe, viraemic travellers may become a source of local transmission of ZIKV, because *Aedes albopictus* (Skuse) and *Ae. aegypti* (Linnaeus) are invasive mosquitoes and competent vectors for ZIKV. [Eurosurveillance](#)

## Europe: Trends in European antimicrobial use hold generally steady

4 February - Antimicrobial use in Europe has stayed steady or increased slightly from 2010 to 2011, varying considerably by country and showing a north-to-south gradient, according to the second annual report of the European Surveillance of Antimicrobial Consumption Network (ESAC-Net), released today by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). The report covers community and hospital use of antimicrobials in 2011

from 27 European Union (EU) member states plus two EEA non-EU countries, Iceland and Norway. Included in the report is systemic use of antibacterials, antimycotics and antifungals, and antivirals. The largest proportion of antimicrobial consumption occurs in the community setting, notes the report. Among the data presented, median community consumption of antibacterials was 19.5 defined daily doses (DDD) per 1,000 inhabitants per day in 2011, which was slightly higher (an increase of 1 DDD) than in 2010. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (fourth item)

## Italy: A mafia legacy taints the earth in southern Italy

29 January –The Italian state arrived in the heartland of the Camorra mafia this month bearing a backhoe... Two jailed mafia informants had identified the field as one of the secret sites where the Camorra had buried toxic waste, near a region north of Naples known as the Triangle of Death because of the emergence of clusters of cancer cases. One environmental group estimates that 10 million tons of toxic garbage has been illegally buried here since the early 1990s, earning billions of dollars for the mafia even as toxic substances leached into the soil and the water table. [New York Times](#)

## Russia: Love of vodka is killing Russian men

31 January - A quarter of all Russian men die before they reach their mid-fifties and their passion for alcohol - particularly vodka - is largely to blame, according to research published on Friday. A study of more than 150,000 people found extraordinarily high premature death rates among male Russians, some of whom reported drinking three or more bottles a week of the potent clear spirit. Perhaps unsurprisingly, deaths among heavy drinkers were mainly due to alcohol poisoning, accidents, violence and suicide, as well as diseases such as throat and liver cancer, tuberculosis, pneumonia, pancreatitis and liver disease. "Russian death rates have fluctuated wildly over the past 30 years as alcohol restrictions and social stability varied under presidents Gorbachev, Yeltsin and Putin, and the main thing driving these wild fluctuations was vodka," said Richard Peto of Britain's Oxford University, who worked on the study. [New York Daily News](#)

## United Kingdom: 2 out of 3 adults in England overweight or obese

4 February - More than 60 percent of adults in England are overweight or obese, according to new figures by the national public health agency. The figures were released Tuesday. Experts have previously predicted England's increasing obesity epidemic could mean half its population will be obese by 2030. People who are heavy have a higher risk of Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. [Washington Post](#)

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## U.S.: Abortions declining in U.S., study finds

2 February - The abortion rate among American women declined to its lowest level in more than three decades in 2011, according to a new report released Monday that is widely considered the country's most definitive examination of abortion trends. The 1.1 million abortions reported in 2011 represented a rate of 16.9 per thousand women of childbearing age, down from 2008, when a similar study estimated that 1.21 million abortions were performed at a rate of 19.4 per thousand women... The decline in abortions from 2008 to 2011 was mirrored by a decline in pregnancy rates. The report did not include a detailed analysis of the reasons for these trends, which pose complicated research issues. But the decline in abortions, the researchers said, appears in part to reflect the growing use, especially among younger women, of nearly foolproof long-term contraceptives like intrauterine devices. [New York Times](#)

## U.S.: CVS to become first major U.S. drugstore chain to drop cigarettes

5 February – CVS Caremark Corp said on Wednesday that it would stop selling tobacco products at its 7,600 stores by October, becoming the first national drugstore chain in the United States to take cigarettes off the shelf. Public health experts called the decision by the No. 2 U.S. drugstore chain a precedent-setting step that could pressure other retailers to follow suit. President Barack Obama, a former smoker, praised the move, saying CVS had set a powerful example. "Today's decision will help advance my Administration's efforts to reduce tobacco-related deaths, cancer, and heart disease, as well as bring down healthcare costs," Obama said in a statement. ...Although some U.S. cities, including Boston and San Francisco, already ban the sale of tobacco products in pharmacies, advocates hope the voluntary move by CVS will have a ripple effect across other drugstore chains. [Reuters](#)

## U.S.: E.P.A. staff struggling to create pollution rule



4 February - In marathon meetings and tense all-day drafting sessions, dozens of lawyers, economists and engineers at the Environmental Protection Agency are struggling to create what is certain to be a divisive but potentially historic centerpiece of President Obama's climate change legacy. If the authors succeed in writing a lawsuit-proof regulation that is effective in cutting carbon emissions from America's 1,500 power plants — the largest source of the nation's greenhouse gas pollution — the result could be the most significant action taken by the United States to curb climate change. But if the language in the regulation is too loose, there could be little environmental impact. And if it is too stringent, it could lead to the shutdown of coal plants before there is enough alternative power to replace them and, ultimately, to soaring electric bills, power blackouts and years of legal battles. [New York Times](#)

## U.S.: NIH, drugmakers, foundations partner to find meds

4 February - The U.S. National Institutes of Health, 10 drugmakers and several disease foundations are starting an unusual project to find and bring new medicines, particularly for complex, expensive chronic diseases, to patients more quickly and for less money. The Accelerating Medicines Partnership aims to do that by sharing expertise and even research findings and by focusing on the earliest part of drug discovery - learning more about how a disease begins and progresses - to find a vulnerable spot to attack it. The partnership announced Tuesday will seek to identify biological targets present in a disease... The public-private partnership will work to develop new diagnostic tests and therapies focused on such biologic targets, but more quickly and at a lower cost than today's typical drug development... The partnership will start with three- to five-year pilot projects on Alzheimer's disease, type 2 diabetes and the autoimmune disorders rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. It could later expand into other diseases. [Fox 6 WBRC](#)

## U.S., Oregon: Oregon man infected with the plague leaves ICU

3 February – Paul Gaylord, a welder from Prineville in rural Oregon, who last month contracted bubonic plague from a stray cat, is no longer in critical condition. After admission to the hospital, Gaylord lapsed into a coma for twenty-seven days, until last Friday. While in a coma, his hands and legs swelled and turned black. The doctors told him that tests showed he was infected with the bubonic plague, and that his fingers will have to be amputated. [Homeland Security News Wire](#)

## U.S., Pennsylvania: The brutal business of heroin brings wave of overdoses

2 February - According to state and local authorities, 22 people in Western Pennsylvania have died of heroin overdose in less than two weeks. The wave of deaths is due to the appearance of an especially potent batch of heroin, mixed with the painkiller Fentanyl. NPR's Arun Rath speaks with Dr. Neil Capretto, medical director of the Gateway Rehabilitation Center in Pittsburgh... CAPRETTO: Well, first of all, we have an epidemic of heroin in Western Pennsylvania. And this is true in a lot of cities throughout the country. There's more heroin being used than at any time in our history. I mean, historically, heroin used to be thought of as mainly an inner city drug. That has dramatically changed, particularly over the last 10 years. Heroin now, at least in our area, is in every town community. It's become more of a drug of middle, upper middle-class Caucasian families. And a lot of this has been fueled by the prescription medicine epidemic. I call this the perfect storm. We started in the late '90s with a big emphasis on better treatment of pain, which we absolutely have to treat. But that fueled physicians starting to write much larger amounts of pain medicines. I've treated - myself - thousands of people addicted to OxyContin and similar drugs. [NPR](#)

## U.S.: Progress Along the continuum of HIV care among blacks with diagnosed HIV— United States, 2010

7 February - ...The results of the analysis described in this report indicate that, in 2010, among blacks with HIV diagnoses of all age groups and both sexes, 74.9% were linked to care, 48.0% were retained in care, 46.2% were prescribed ART, and 35.2% had achieved viral suppression... Blacks with HIV might not seek, receive, or adhere to HIV care or achieve viral suppression for reasons including lack of health insurance, poverty, and stigma. HIV programs that focus on care and treatment for blacks might strengthen efforts to link and retain HIV-infected persons in care and promote adherence to medication to achieve optimal health outcomes. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

## U.S.: Wanna smoke? It could cost you a tooth, the FDA warns teens

4 February - When it comes to convincing teenagers not to smoke, you gotta think short-term, the Food and Drug Administration says. "While most teens understand the serious health risks associated with tobacco use, they often don't believe the long-term consequences will ever apply to them," FDA Commissioner Dr. Margaret Hamburg told reporters Monday before unveiling the agency's first-ever anti-smoking campaign. Instead, the ads focus on how smoking affects teenagers' appearance by ruining their skin and messing up their teeth. One graphic TV ad shows a teenager buying a pack of cigarettes at a convenience store and literally pulling out a tooth with a set of pliers to pay for them. "What's a pack of smokes cost? Your teeth," the narrator says. "Smoking can cause serious gum disease that makes you more likely to lose them." [NPR](#)

## U.S., West Virginia: 3 weeks later, many West Virginians still not drinking tap water

5 February – Three weeks after a leak at a chemical storage facility left more than 300,000 West Virginians without access to potable water, many residents continue to avoid drinking from their taps. A "Do Not Use" order has been lifted since January 17. ...The company that operates this facility, Freedom Industries, initially claimed the only leaked substance was 4-methylcyclohexane methanol (MCHM), an organic solvent used to wash the impurities out of coal before it is burned. It has since disclosed, however, that a second, proprietary chemical, "PPH, stripped," (a mixture primarily of propylene glycol phenyl ether and dipropylene glycol phenyl ether, according to the Centers for Disease Control) was also present in the leaked mixture. ...The changing narrative has left many residents affected by the leak skeptical of the safety of their water. "Who is to say there isn't a third chemical they aren't telling us about? They haven't been forthcoming about it, and that's why many of us still won't drink the water," says Mouaz Haffar, a lifelong Charleston resident. "They've broken the public trust," he adds. [Scientific American](#)

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## Australian Medical Association calls for national summit on alcohol

Emergency doctors who spend their weekends dealing with victims of drunken violence have called on the Federal Government to follow NSW's momentum in tackling alcohol-related harm... The AMA has welcomed proposed measures put forward by the NSW government on Tuesday, including earlier lockouts in party hot spots and harsher penalties for alcohol and drug related crimes. But the association believes it does not go far enough. It wants to see the federal government convene a national summit to come up with solutions to the alcohol misuse epidemic. The summit would bring together government, councils, police, health experts, teachers, victims and industry... According to the AMA, at 2am in an emergency department, about 20 per cent of people are there because of alcohol-related trauma... The effect of alcohol misuse also extends to children, with tens of thousands of cases each year of alcohol-related child mistreatment, the AMA says.

[News.com.au](http://News.com.au)

## India: Multi-drug resistant tuberculosis cases on the rise in Mumbai

1 February – The tuberculosis [TB] scourge in Mumbai [India] shows no sign of respite, with the number of multi-drug resistant [MDR] cases rising across the city. Of 16,825 suspected patients tested for TB with a diagnostic tool, GeneXpert, 5994 patients were detected with TB from January 2013 till 27 Jan 2014, this year. The latest data from Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation state that 2310 cases – 38 per cent of the ailing population – are multi-drug resistant. A senior civic TB officer said this means that patients don't respond to the 1st-line drugs isoniazid [INH] and rifampicin [also called rifampin]... Further, Mumbai has up to 122 extensively resistant TB (XDR-TB) cases. [ProMED-mail](#)

## Indonesia: Indonesian eruption displaces people, buries crops

3 February – Thousands of people displaced by steadily falling ash from an active Mount Sinabung thought they would be able to return to their homes and resume their livelihoods, but those hopes have been dashed by a deadly eruption on 1 February. ...At least 16 people were killed when the 2,600m volcano in Karo District, in the north of Indonesia's Sumatra Island, unexpectedly erupted on Saturday after months of rumbling, and spewing hot gas and rocks... Since Sinabung began its latest round of eruptions in September 2013, more than 30,000 people have been displaced and are now living in 42 shelters set up in government buildings, schools and mosques, and other centres across Karo District, outside the 7km exclusion zone established by the government in January. Since September, the Red Cross has distributed three million litres of clean water, food, blankets and tarpaulins, as well as 200,000 face masks to prevent the fine volcanic ash from being inhaled, and has also provided psychological counselling for displaced residents. [IRIN](#)

## Japan: Two cases of Zika fever imported from French Polynesia to Japan, December 2013 to January 2014

30 January – We report two cases of Zika fever in Japan, which were imported from French Polynesia, where on 6 November 2013 public health authorities reported an outbreak of subfebrile illness with rash due to Zika virus (ZIKV). The epidemic started spreading across the archipelago beginning in week 41 of 2013. During weeks 42 to 52, the syndromic surveillance network reported 6,630 suspected ZIKV infection cases to the Bureau de Veille Sanitaire. About 500 of these cases were tested at the Institute Louis Malarde laboratory in Papeete for confirmation; 333 were confirmed by real-time reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) as ZIKV infections. The outbreak is currently ongoing and as of 13 January 2014, 361 laboratory-confirmed cases have been reported. Symptoms of most ZIKV infection cases are mild and self-limited (mean duration of symptoms is 3–6 days). No hospitalisations for acute infection have been reported. [Eurosurveillance](#)

## Papua New Guinea: Papua New Guinea's battle over betel nut

31 January – Health officials in Papua New Guinea (PNG) are concerned over rising levels of oral cancer in betel nut chewers amid a controversial ban on its usage in the capital, Port Moresby. Upwards of 25,000 people die annually from mouth cancer, many more than the 15,000 just a few years earlier, according to the Department of Health. "It's a huge problem, and one that's getting worse," Sibauk Bieb, executive manager of public health in the Ministry of Health, told IRIN. ...The World Health Organization (WHO) cites the nation as having the highest incidence of mouth cancer - 32.3 cases per 100,000 men and 26 cases per 100,000 women - in the world. "It's the biggest cancer killer of men in Papua New Guinea today," William Adu-Crow, the WHO country representative, confirmed. [IRIN](#)

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### USSOUTHCOM

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## Costa Rica in a tough battle against dengue

4 February - The Costa Rican Ministry of Health announced in late December it will increase its dengue prevention measures nationwide in 2014. In 2013, 52,247 cases of dengue were registered, 27,000 cases more than in 2012, costing the country about \$416 million colones (US\$816,000) in disability payments, according to the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS). "The increase in cases may be due to the re-entry into the country of serotype 3 of the virus, which had not been detected here for a decade," said Catalina Ramírez, an official with the CCSS Epidemiological Surveillance Unit... Last year, the country registered 149 cases of dengue hemorrhagic, with one death. In 2012, 67 cases of dengue hemorrhagic fever were registered, with no deaths. [InfoSurHoy](#)

## South America: Heavy rains and floods in South America cause severe damages

1 February – Heavy rains that caused overflowing of rivers flooding in several countries in South America (Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay, among others), have also caused various emergency situations that have exacted a heavy toll in people and infrastructure. According to official reports, dozens of people have died, several are still missing and the number of affected people is around several thousand... In the face of these emergencies, the health risks of the affected population increase. Therefore, the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) recommends taking preventive measures; heeding the recommendations of authorities regarding the consumption of safe water and extreme measures of hygiene and proper storage of food and medicine. [ReliefWeb](#)

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