

16 November 2012

Army Public Health Weekly Update

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

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Because of the Thanksgiving holiday, there will be no APH Weekly Update next week. Publication will resume on 30 November.

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**The Cigar Trap:
Maryland Leads the
Way to Address the
Hidden Epidemic of
Youth Cigar Use**

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, the Midatlantic Public Health Training Center, and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene present Public Health Practice Grand Rounds.

Presenters:

Dawn Berkowitz, MPH, CHES
Chief, Division of Tobacco Control Initiatives,
Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Carlo C. DiClemente, Ph.D.
UMBC Presidential Research Professor,
Director MDQUIT Resource Center

28 November 2012
Noon – 1:30 p.m.

Live webcast on the [JHSPH website](#).

For more information, contact the Mid-Atlantic Public Health Training Center at 443-287-7833.

No registration is necessary!

Archived webcast will be available in 10 days on the [JHSPH website](#).

U.S. MILITARY

Military doctors fight to defeat fungal infections

14 November - Military doctors are fighting to defeat a fungal infection that has killed a handful of direly wounded troops in Afghanistan and infected scores of others, often requiring that more of their limbs be cut away to get above diseased areas. Out of about 100 troops diagnosed with the organism in the past three years, six have died either from the fungus or other causes, says Navy Cmdr. Carlos Rodriguez, who has led investigations into the infection. The victims are mostly soldiers or Marines who suffer the worst wounds of the war, multiple amputations from roadside bombs. The fungi exist in the soil, and appear to be prevalent in two hard-fought southern Afghanistan provinces of Helmand and Kandahar... Making matters worse, the two of the most common fungal organisms infecting troops — Mucor and Aspergillus terreus — can take days or weeks to positively identify.

[USA Today](#)

Thyroid disorders among active component military members, U.S. Armed Forces, 2002-2011

October 2012 - During 2002-2011, among active component U.S. military members, the rates of idiopathic hypothyroidism were 39.7 and 7.8 per 10,000 person-years among females and males, respectively. Unadjusted rates of idiopathic hypothyroidism and chronic thyroiditis (e.g., Hashimoto's disease) were at least twice as high among white, non-Hispanic as black, non-Hispanic service members. However, black, non-Hispanic service members had higher rates of goiter and thyrotoxicosis. Increasing rates of thyroid disorders during the period were accompanied by increases in numbers of screening tests for thyroid function recorded during outpatient visits. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

Undiagnosed eye problems plague some U.S. veterans



12 November - Undiagnosed, chronic vision problems are common in U.S. veterans with traumatic brain injury or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), two new studies show. One study looked at 31 veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars with mild blast-related traumatic brain injury and found that 67 percent had chronic vision disorders. Even though none had suffered direct eye wounds, they still had vision problems more than a year after the incident that caused their traumatic brain injury. [Medline Plus](#)

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Reducing Tobacco-Related Cancer Incidence and Mortality

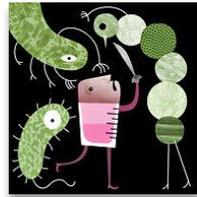
Despite the widespread agreement on the dangers of tobacco use and considerable success in reducing the smoking rate by half since the first U.S. Surgeon General's report on smoking in 1964, progress in reducing tobacco use has slowed in recent years.

The IOM examined current challenges in tobacco control and explored potential policy, outreach, and treatment strategies that could reduce tobacco-related cancer incidence and death.



GLOBAL

Antibiotics are a gift to be handled with care



12 November - ...Antibiotics represent a huge gift in the struggle against infant and child mortality, a triumph (or actually, many triumphs) of human ingenuity and science over disease and death, since the antibiotic era began back in the fourth and fifth decades of the 20th century. But new research is looking at questions about the complex effects of antibiotics — on bacteria, on individual children and on populations — building on a greatly increased awareness of how powerful antibiotics can be, and how important it is to use them judiciously. [New York Times](#)

Call for global crackdown on fake medicines

13 November - A global treaty to crack down on the deadly trade of fake medicines is urgently needed, say experts. Currently, there are more sanctions around the use of illegal tobacco than counterfeit drugs. Writing in the *British Medical Journal*, experts urge the World Health Organization to set up a framework akin to its one tobacco control to safeguard the public. WHO says more than one in every 10 drug products in poorer nations are fake. A third of malaria drugs are counterfeit, research suggests. In richer countries, medicine safety is better, but substandard and falsified drugs still cause thousands of adverse reactions and some deaths. [BBC News](#)

DNA sequencing of MRSA used to stop outbreak

13 November - An outbreak of the hospital superbug MRSA has been brought to an end by UK doctors cracking the bacterium's genetic code. It led to them finding one member of staff at Rosie Hospital, in Cambridge, who may have unwittingly carried and spread the infection. They say it is the first time rapid genetic testing has been used to track and then stop an outbreak. One expert said this would soon become "standard practice" in hospitals. [BBC News](#)

Experimental malaria vaccine falls short

9 November - The world's first experimental malaria vaccine produced disappointing results in a large-scale test among African infants, raising questions about its potential for fighting the disease. The vaccine, promoted as a new weapon in the malaria fight, reduced the risk of malaria by only 30 percent. The study involved more than 6,500 babies aged six to 12 weeks. The results, released Friday, showed the vaccine providing less than half the protection it did in a previous smaller trial involving infants. [VOA](#)

Gene variations linked to lung cancer susceptibility in Asian women

13 November - An international group of scientists has identified three genetic regions that predispose Asian women who have never smoked to lung cancer. The finding provides

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.

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further evidence that risk of lung cancer among never-smokers, especially Asian women, may be associated with certain unique inherited genetic characteristics that distinguishes it from lung cancer in smokers. Lung cancer in never-smokers is the seventh leading cause of cancer deaths worldwide, and the majority of lung cancers diagnosed historically among women in Eastern Asia have been in women who never smoked. [NIH](#)

Household bio-reactors have powerful future (video)

12 November - Researchers at the Argonne National Laboratory are developing a mobile reactor they say will one day play a crucial role in helping people after natural disasters like Hurricane Sandy. The reactor can convert kitchen and bathroom waste into a high energy fuel that can be made at home and used to power generators during a power outage.

[Reuters](#)

New infection, not relapse, brings back Lyme symptoms, study says

14 November - When people who have been treated for Lyme disease recover but later come down with its symptoms again, is the illness a relapse or a new infection? The question has lingered for years. Now, a new study finds that repeat symptoms are from new infections, not from relapses... The conclusion that new symptoms come from new infections is based on genetically fingerprinting the Lyme bacteria in people who have had the illness more than once, and finding that the fingerprints do not match. The result means that different episodes of Lyme in each patient were caused by different strains of the bacteria, and could not have been relapses. [New York Times](#)

Scientists question the designation of some emerging diseases

9 November - The Ebola, Marburg and Lassa viruses are commonly referred to as emerging diseases, but leading scientists say these life-threatening viruses have been around for centuries. In a perspective in the Nov. 9 issue of the journal *Science*, researchers including a professor at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) say it would be more appropriate to refer to these viruses as emerging diagnoses. [UTHealth](#)

UN calls for action on pneumonia in children



11 November - ... U.N. and other health agencies say the world has the means to save hundreds of thousands of children's lives from this preventable disease. Pneumonia kills more children than any other disease in the world. The U.N. Children's Fund reports every 25 seconds a child dies from pneumonia. It kills 3,400 children a day or 1.3 million a year. By this calculation, pneumonia accounts for 18 percent of the 6.9 million child deaths a year. [VOA](#)

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INFLUENZA

Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center: DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary

For the week ending 15 November 2012,

- Overall, Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) incidence rates continued to decrease in the MHS except EUCOM unvaccinated.
- Influenza activity is at moderate levels across the overseas DoD laboratory surveillance network except in Europe where the activity is low; circulating subtypes include influenza A/H1, A/H3 and influenza B.
- The influenza vaccination coverage for the DoD (Active Duty component only) is 85%. [AFHSC DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary](#)

Australia reports deadly bird flu in New South Wales

15 November - Australia has reported its first case of a highly pathogenic bird flu virus in 15 years at an egg farm in the New South Wales region, the World animal health body OIE said on Thursday. So far 5,000 poultry have died in the infected farm in Maitland, 160 km (100 miles) north of Sydney, but 50,000 are at risk, a report by the Australian agriculture ministry to the Paris-based OIE said. The virus, detected last week, is different from the deadly H5N1 strain, which was first detected in 1997 in Hong Kong and has since devastated duck and chicken and caused hundreds of deaths. It is of the "H7" strain but the exact type of H7 had not yet been determined, the ministry said. [Reuters](#)

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 44 (October 28-November 3, 2012), influenza activity increased in some areas, but overall was similar to activity last week in the United States.

- Viral Surveillance: Of 3,277 specimens tested and reported by U.S. World Health Organization (WHO) and National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS) collaborating laboratories during week 44, 227 (6.9%) were positive for influenza.
- Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality: The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was slightly above the epidemic threshold. [FluView](#)

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

In week 44/2012, all 26 reporting countries experienced low intensity of clinical influenza activity.

- Of 279 sentinel specimens tested across 19 countries, only two were positive for influenza virus.

- No hospitalised laboratory-confirmed influenza cases were reported.

Five weeks into the surveillance season for influenza, there has been no evidence of sustained influenza virus transmission in EU/EEA countries. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

Flu during pregnancy linked to autism in children

13 November - In the last ten years, rates of children born with autism have started to increase, creeping from roughly 1 in 150 kids in 2000, to 1 in 88 in 2008... A massive study of almost 97,000 children from Denmark may have a few answers... During the study, which followed roughly 30 percent of the child-bearing women in Denmark from 1997 to 2003, researchers found that women who had the flu during pregnancy were about twice as likely to have children with autism as those who did not have the flu. For those who were especially sick, the risk was even greater: A flu or fever that lasted for a week led to a tripled risk of having a child with autism. [KSL.com](#)

Google.org: Flu Trends

14 November – Estimates of flu activity based on Internet search queries indicate that the level of flu activity in the Canada, Europe, and Japan is minimal to low while the level in the U.S., Mexico and Russia is moderate. In the southern hemisphere levels are predominantly minimal with low levels in Chile. [Google.org Flu Trends](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For the week ending 10 November 2012:

Influenza

- Cluster of influenza A/H1N1(09) cases at MCRD Parris Island in October
- Cases of influenza A/H3 at MCRD San Diego in late October

[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](#)

USAPHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report

3 November – During the week ending 3 November 2012 (Week 44), although some areas are beginning to see increases in influenza activity, overall influenza and influenzalike illness (ILI) activity remains low in US Army and civilian populations.

- ILI Activity: Army outpatient visits for incident ILI are 19% lower than the same time last year.
- Influenza cases: Five hospitalized influenza cases have been reported in DRSi this influenza season.
- Acute Respiratory Disease at BCT sites: ARDS rates remain lower at all Army BCT sites compared to the same period last year.

- Viral specimens: During week 44, 83 of 451 (18%) clinical specimens tested were positive for respiratory pathogens. Influenza A was identified in 44 (53%) of these positive samples. Most of the Army influenza positive specimens were reported by SRMC (48%), primarily at Ft. Stewart (65%) and Ft. Gordon (25%). [USAPHC U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Brazil: Leishmaniasis, canine

11 November – The risk of an outbreak of leishmaniasis in Arcos, in the mid-west of the state, has the population worried. Dogs are the main hosts of the parasite [*Leishmania chagasi*], which is dangerous to humans, and the disease is transmitted by a vector. Leishmaniasis is considered by the World Health Organization to be one of the 6 largest parasitic epidemics in the world. In Minas Gerais last year [2011], there were 19 677 cases of the disease. To prevent further contamination, agents of the Control Center for Zoonoses (CCZ) will test all residences for leishmaniasis by withdrawing a drop of blood from the animal's ear, and the result of the test will be available in about 10 minutes. [ProMED-mail](#)

Thailand: Koh Lanta officials blame turtle soup for 'strange' outbreak

12 November - Officials on Koh Lanta believe a sick hawksbill sea turtle was the cause of a mass poisoning that may have contributed to the death of a 61-year-old man and resulted in 43 other villagers being admitted to hospital. "Many people in the Urak Lawoi sea gypsy village on Koh Lanta Yai fell ill with an affliction that produced symptoms similar to hand, foot and mouth disease," Koh Lanta District Chief Suriyan Narongkul told the Phuket Gazette. The villagers were admitted to Koh Lanta Hospital for suffering from sore throats, nausea and diarrhea, he added. [Phuket Gazette](#)

U.S., North Carolina: Confirmed - outbreak began with livestock

13 November - The petting zoo at the Cleveland County Fair has been officially determined as the initial source of exposure behind the E. coli outbreak that plagued area counties in recent weeks, public health investigators from the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services announced Friday. Officials, who presented their findings during a press conference in Shelby, also said their investigation found that weather may have played a role in the widespread contamination of the area surrounding the petting zoo exhibit, according to a DHHS press release. The outbreak has resulted in 106 illnesses, including 14 in Lincoln County, and the death of a Gaston County child. [Lincoln-Times News](#)

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WELLNESS

20 percent of youth with HIV didn't know they were infected at first sexual experience

9 November - Roughly 20 percent of youth who have had HIV since birth did not know their HIV status when they first became sexually active, according to a study by a National Institutes of Health-supported research network. The study also found that, of those youth who knew they had HIV and who were asked about disclosure of their HIV status to their first sexual partners, most reported that they had not told their partner prior to sexual activity. Moreover, most of these sexually active youth reported some sexual activity without condom use. [NIH](#)

Booze calories nearly equal soda's for US adults

15 November - Americans get too many calories from soda. But what about alcohol? It turns out adults get almost as many empty calories from booze as from soft drinks, a government study found. Soda and other sweetened drinks - the focus of obesity-fighting public health campaigns - are the source of about 6 percent of the calories adults consume, on average. Alcoholic beverages account for about 5 percent, the new study found. [Seattle Times](#)

Diabetes cases hit record and half go undiagnosed

14 November - Diabetes is running at record levels worldwide and half the people estimated to have the disease are, as yet, undiagnosed, according to a report on Wednesday. The number of people living with diabetes is now put at 371 million, up from 366 million a year ago, with numbers expected to reach 552 million by 2030, the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) said. Diabetes is often viewed as a western problem, since the vast majority of people have type 2 disease which is linked to obesity and lack of exercise. But the disease is also spreading rapidly in poorer countries, alongside urbanization, and four out of five diabetics now live in low and middle-income countries, opening up new opportunities and challenges for the drug industry. [Reuters](#)

For cholesterol tests, fasting may not be required

12 November - Most people getting their cholesterol checked may not need to fast beforehand, a new Canadian study suggests. Researchers found the blood tests showed similar average total cholesterol and "good" HDL cholesterol readings, in particular, regardless of whether patients had eaten recently or avoided food for more than eight hours, as is typically recommended. [Reuters](#)

Graphic photos on cigarette packages prevents smoking



13 November - The more graphic the better is the conclusion of a new study of warnings on cigarette packages. A team at the University of South Carolina in the United States analyzed what kind of warning labels deter adults from smoking. "Smokers rated warning labels with pictures and text to be stronger in terms of their believability, their relevance to smokers themselves and in terms of their effectiveness than the warnings that only contain text," said the lead investigator. [VOA](#)

Legal drugs, deadly outcomes

11 November - ... Prescription drug overdoses now claim more lives than heroin and cocaine combined, fueling a doubling of drug-related deaths in the United States over the last decade... Authorities have failed to recognize how often people overdose on medications prescribed for them by their doctors. A Los Angeles Times investigation has found that in nearly half of the accidental deaths from prescription drugs in four Southern California counties, the deceased had a doctor's prescription for at least one drug that caused or contributed to the death. [Los Angeles Times](#)

Migraine-associated brain changes not related to impaired cognition

13 November - Women with migraines did not appear to experience a decline in cognitive ability over time compared to those who didn't have them, according to a nine-year follow up study funded by the National Institutes of Health. The study also showed that women with migraine had a higher likelihood of having brain changes that appeared as bright spots on magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), a type of imaging commonly used to evaluate tissues of the body... Standardized measures of cognitive abilities such as memory, concentration, and attention did not show significant losses among people with migraine-associated lesions compared to those without migraine. [NIH](#)

Plan to become an ex-smoker for good

12 November - ...Today, 19 percent of American adults smoke, down from more than 42 percent half a century ago... Ever-increasing restrictions on where people can smoke have helped to swell the ranks of former smokers. Now, however, as we approach the American Cancer Society's 37th Great American Smokeout on Thursday, the decline in adult smoking has stalled despite the economic downturn and the soaring price of cigarettes... People ages 18 to 25 now have the nation's highest smoking rate: 40 percent. [New York Times](#)

Probiotics could be an effective and safe approach to prevent C. diff: study

13 November - The therapeutic use of probiotics in hospitalized patients could be an effective and safe prophylaxis against new cases of Clostridium difficile-associated diarrhea

(CDAD)... The McMaster University-led research team compiled findings from 3,818 patients in 20 randomized-controlled trials. The trials tracked rates of probiotic use among in-patients and out-patients on antibiotics, and analyzed the rates of diarrheal illness associated with *C. difficile*. They found the use of probiotics reduced *C. diff*-associated diarrhea among patients taking antibiotics by 66 per cent, according to the study.

[Examiner.com](#)

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USAFRICOM

Africa: Aiming to eliminate preventable child deaths



12 November - The world is winning the fight to keep children alive, and preventable child deaths may, at some point in the near future, be a thing of the past, according to Carolyn Miles, president and CEO of Save the Children. "The tide is turning on child survival," said Miles as she opened the

61st annual meeting of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in Atlanta. "In 2011, for the first time, annual deaths of children under five years old fell below seven million – that's a reduction of 41 percent in 20 years, and progress is accelerating... I believe we can see near zero preventable child deaths in our lifetime." [All Africa](#)

Nigeria: Exxon Mobil cleaning up oil spill on Nigerian coast

12 November - Exxon Mobil Corp. (CVX)'s Nigerian unit said it began cleaning up part of the nation's southeast coast after a pipeline from an offshore facility spilled at least 200 barrels of crude at the end of last week. Exxon Mobil shut the pipeline on Nov. 10 and is investigating the cause of the spill in the state of Akwa Ibom, the company said late yesterday in a statement from Lagos, the commercial capital. [Bloomberg Businessweek](#)

Nigeria: MSF urges Nigeria president to act on deadly lead poisoning

15 November - Medical charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said Nigeria had failed to deliver on promises to tackle a deadly lead poisoning epidemic and called on president Goodluck Jonathan to intervene. Lead contamination from an artisanal gold mine in the Bagega area of northern Zamfara state has killed at least 400 children and poisoned around 4,000, according to medical officials. [Reuters](#)

Sudan: Yellow fever kills nearly 100 in Sudan's Darfur, WHO

13 November - A yellow fever outbreak has killed nearly 100 people over the last seven weeks in Sudan's Darfur, the World Health Organization said, a region where fighting has undermined access to healthcare. The mosquito-borne disease has spread throughout the remote western territory, but the reported cases have been concentrated in central Darfur, the WHO and Sudan's health ministry said in a joint statement... Healthcare is provided almost entirely by aid agencies in some parts of Darfur. The statement said 329 suspected yellow fever cases and 97 deaths had been reported since the last week of September.

[Reuters](#)

Uganda says three dead in new Ebola outbreak near Kampala

15 November - Uganda said on Thursday three people had died from an outbreak of the Ebola virus in its central region, near the capital Kampala, the latest bout of deadly haemorrhagic fevers to strike the east African nation in recent months. Health Minister Christine Ondo said two of the dead were from one family in Luwero district, about 75 kilometers north of Kampala. The new outbreak comes about a month after Uganda declared itself free of Ebola which struck in July. [Reuters](#)

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USCENTCOM

Iran aims for baby boom, but are Iranians in the mood?

14 November - ... Like many countries, Iran is concerned that its low population growth rate, estimated at 1 percent by the United Nations in 2011, will foster an aging population with potentially disastrous consequences for its workforce, public health infrastructure and social security network. The government is trying to reverse the trend. But it faces unique headwinds. In addition to worries about money and employment they share with millions of young people around the world in an economic downturn, Iranians must contend with high inflation, a plummeting currency and the possibility of war if Israel follows through on threats to strike Iran's nuclear sites. [Reuters](#)

Iraq eyes hiring of up to 2,000 Pinoy doctors, nurses

13 November - Despite the existing deployment ban, the Iraqi government wants to hire Filipino doctors and nurses. Health Secretary Enrique Ona said yesterday that Iraqi Ambassador Wadee Al-Batti had paid him a visit, asking permission to hire some 1,000 to 2,000 Filipino nurses and doctors... "They want as many nurses as we can give them. But the problem is the hostile situation there. There is a ban there and the only thing we want also

to be sure of is the safety of workers. We want to make sure that they are safe," he said. Except for the Kurdistan region, a deployment ban is in effect in Iraq. [ABS-CBN News](#)

Pakistan: Polio cases slowing spur hope for elimination

13 November - Polio cases caused by one of two circulating strains of poliomyelitis virus weren't reported in Pakistan in six months, speeding global eradication of the crippling disease. Type-3 polio is close to being eliminated in Pakistan, one of three countries in the world where transmission has never been interrupted, researchers said in presentations today at a medical meeting in Atlanta. Globally, 177 polio cases were identified from January to October 2012, compared with 502 during the same period last year. [Bloomberg](#)

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USEUCOM

Did wild birds cause the 2010 West Nile virus outbreak in Greece?

13 November - In 2010, 35 people in Greece died from a West Nile virus (WNV) outbreak, with a further 262 laboratory-confirmed human cases. [A new article](#) published in BioMedCentral's open access journal Virology Journal examines whether wild or migratory birds could have been responsible for importing and amplifying the deadly virus... [T]he authors found 53 avian samples with WNV neutralizing antibodies. Importantly, 14 positive serum samples were obtained from birds up to 8 months prior to the human outbreak, and genetic determinants of increased virulence were present in these samples. These results provide evidence that wild birds could have allowed WNV maintenance and amplification before and during the 2010 virus outbreak. [Infection Control Today](#)

Ireland abortion policy under scrutiny after woman's death

14 November - Ireland's near-total ban on abortion has come under renewed scrutiny amid an outcry over the death of a woman who was denied a termination. Savita Halappanavar, a 31-year-old dentist, died of blood poisoning at Galway University hospital. She had turned up at the hospital a week earlier, but was denied a medical termination and, according to her husband, was told: "This is a Catholic country." The death intensified pressure on Ireland's Fine Gael-Labour coalition to legislate and create specific guidelines for medical staff on when abortions can be carried out. At present, abortions are permitted only if there is a "real and substantive" threat to a woman's life. [Guardian](#)

United Kingdom: Afghanistan soldiers offered support from Yorkshire and Humber Veterans' Outreach Service

13 November – Soldiers traumatised by war in Afghanistan will be offered help to tackle their inner demons. The Yorkshire and Humber Veterans' Outreach Service, funded by the Department of Health, will launch officially in January. Its principle aim will be to ensure servicemen and women who show early signs of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are identified and helped. Soldiers of 1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment (1 Yorks), who recently returned from a six-month tour of Helmand, have welcomed the move. [This is Hull and East Striding](#)

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USNORTHCOM

U.S.: Good news, bad news on antibiotic use and resistance

13 November - Research groups offered a mix of bad news and good news today on antibiotic usage and resistant microbes, including big geographic differences within the United States, as a large coalition of health and medical groups vowed to increase efforts to conserve the nation's arsenal of effective antibiotics. The developments are part of "Get Smart About Antibiotics Week," an observance promoted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other medical groups. [CIDRAP](#)

U.S.: Infant deaths - searching for answers in Mississippi



13 November - For every 1,000 Mississippi babies born in 2011, 9.4 died before their first birthday, according to the state's health office. That makes Mississippi's infant mortality rate more comparable to countries such as Costa Rica (9.2), Sri Lanka (9.5) and Botswana (10.5) than the United States (6.0), according to [latest estimates](#) in the CIA World Factbook. Mississippi is 50th out of 50 states when it comes to infant mortality, and it's been that way for a long time, says state health officer Mary Currier. There's not one clear explanation. Experts cite a multitude of factors that are also seen in other parts of the country and around the world. [CNN](#)

U.S.: Meningitis outbreak: 438 cases, 32 deaths

12 November - The number of people afflicted in the continuing fungal meningitis outbreak continues to climb – reaching 438 cases in 19 states -- but the pace is slowing, judging by numbers reported by the CDC on Friday. Since the last report Wednesday, 15 new cases

have been reported, as well as an additional death, bringing that total to 32. Most of the new cases and the new fatality occurred in Michigan, the state hardest hit by the outbreak. In contrast, the Wednesday-to-Friday increase a month ago -- Oct. 10 to 12 -- was 48 cases, according to the agency's records. The slowdown was predictable -- the infections are linked to a contaminated steroid that was recalled Sept. 26 and people infected are not contagious. But officials have said extended vigilance will be needed because the incubation period for the disease is unclear. [ABC News](#)

U.S.: Tick-borne illnesses move beyond Lyme disease

12 November - A tick-borne disease that causes symptoms similar to malaria is becoming more widespread in the northeastern United States, researchers say. Babesiosis invades red blood cells and is carried by deer ticks, which also carry Lyme disease. Between 2000 and 2008, towns in Connecticut reporting cases of babesiosis increased from 30 to 85, according to the researchers. Since babesiosis was first reported in Connecticut in 1991, cases in the state have risen from three to about 100 a year. Symptoms include fever, chills, fatigue, sweats, headache and muscle pain. The study's findings were scheduled to be presented Monday at the annual meeting of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, in Atlanta. [Medline Plus](#)

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USPACOM

Cambodia: Dengue fever kills 170 kids in 10 months, up 154%

15 November - Cambodia reported at least 39,290 dengue fever cases in the first ten months of this year, a 163 percent rise from 14,918 cases a year earlier, a report of the National Center for Parasitology, Entomology and Malaria Control showed Tuesday. The report recorded that from January to October this year, the disease killed 170 Cambodian children, up 154 percent from 67 deaths during the same period last year. Dr. Char Meng Chuor, director of the center, said that there were more deaths this year because parents had sent their sick children to private clinics first, and when the treatment was ineffective and the disease became more severe, they turned to public hospitals, but it was too late for the children to be cured. [Vietnam.net Bridge](#)

India, Bengaluru: Hospitals see rise in typhoid, GE cases

12 November - The stench of garbage permeating the city is causing all sorts of health problems for the city's residents. There is an increase of 10-20% in the number of gastroenteritis and typhoid cases admitted to hospitals in the past 10-12 days, and children are among the most affected... Dr. Shankar Prasad, medical superintendent at St. Philomena Hospital told Deccan Chronicle: "For the past two weeks we are witnessing an increase in

the inflow of viral fever, gastroenteritis and typhoid cases by about 10%. On a daily basis we are getting about 8-10 cases of suspected dengue fever too." [Deccan Chronicle](#)

Welfare in India - Money where your mouth is



10 November - ... During 2011 Mrs Shahjaha was enrolled in a pilot project in the area, testing how cash transfers could replace public distribution of rations for "below poverty line" families. She got a monthly stipend of 1,000 rupees (\$20) direct into her bank account instead of a right to use the ration shop. The results were broadly encouraging. In all, 100 families got the monthly money. The women's group overseeing the scheme found a "marked increase" in nutrition among families who got the cash, as they enjoyed a richer diet and better quality food. Strikingly, the quality of food in the ration shop also improved, perhaps as it saw customers opting to go elsewhere. [Economist](#)

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USSOUTHCOM

Costa Rica: Authorities warn of surge in dengue infection in Guanacaste

15 November - The emergence of 200 cases of dengue fever in the past three weeks in Guanacaste has the Ministry of Health asking residents to be on alert, especially in the areas of Liberia, Santa Cruz, Abangares, Nicoya and Carillo, where most of the infections have occurred. Mary Ethel Trejos, Director of Health Surveillance, said that the highest number of cases were in Santa Cruz, where three weeks ago there were 55 cases, and just last week, 75 more were detected. [Inside Costa Rica](#)

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