

9 November 2012

# Army Public Health Weekly Update

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U.S. Army Public Health Command



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## Disaster Information

The National Library of Medicine Disaster Information Management Research Center has compiled a list of health information resources onto one "SuperStorm" Sandy webpage. On this page you will find links to overviews, state specific pages, cleanup and recovery information, mental health information, multi-language resources, social media information, apps and widgets, and more.



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- Cuba: UN-sponsored aid arrives in Cuba in wake of Hurricane Sandy

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Department of Defense  
Photo Essay



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- [Dominican Republic: Cholera cases reach 330](#)
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## U.S. MILITARY

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### Agent: Afghan massacre suspect took steroids

7 November - A U.S. agent who investigated a massacre at two Afghan villages last March says the soldier charged in the killings had taken steroids. Special Agent Matthew Hoffman of the Army's Criminal Investigation Division testified at a hearing Wednesday that Staff Sgt. Robert Bales tested positive for steroids three days after the killings. [Seattle Times](#)

### Army: No health risk from secret St. Louis testing

2 November - An Army investigation into secret chemical testing in impoverished areas of St. Louis during the Cold War era has corroborated three previous studies that the testing posed no health risk to those who lived in the areas, according to a letter from a top Army official. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Army used motorized blowers atop a low-income housing high-rise, on schools and in other locations to spray zinc cadmium sulfide, a fine fluorescent powder, into the air. The testing was part of a biological weapons program and St. Louis was chosen because it bore some resemblance to Russian cities that the U.S. might attack... Army investigators reviewed several assessments and studies compiled over the past nearly two decades and found no health risk from the zinc cadmium sulfide (ZnCdS) sprayed in St. Louis. [Army Times](#)

### Brain anatomy may play role in post-traumatic stress disorder

6 November - In combat veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, the area of the brain that controls fear and anxiety responses is much smaller than normal, according to a new study. The finding is the first to provide evidence that a smaller amygdala is associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), but it's not clear whether this smaller size is caused by PTSD or whether people with a smaller amygdala are more likely to develop PTSD, the researchers said. [Medline Plus](#)

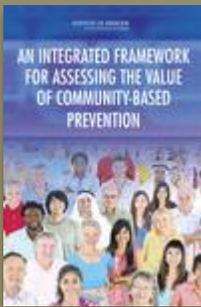
### Pentagon officials provide storm response update

7 November - The Department of Defense is a fully integrated partner in the federal, state, and local response to Hurricane Sandy and is appropriately postured to provide additional assistance to civilian authorities as a result of the northeaster currently sweeping through the mid-Atlantic and northeastern United States, defense officials reported today. To address potential issues that may result from the northeaster, DOD has kept significant capacity in the region to provide emergency, temporary power and pumping capability and to distribute fuel, food, cold-weather clothing and other comfort items as requested by civil authorities, officials said. [Defense.gov](#)

## Assessing the Value of Community-Based Prevention

Despite their importance to preventing illness, determining the value of community-based interventions has proven difficult. Preventing illness requires immediate investments with benefits that might not be realized for many years.

This report proposes a framework to assess the value of community-based, non-clinical prevention policies and wellness strategies. The framework represents a valuable step toward realizing the elusive goal of appropriately and comprehensively valuing community-based prevention.



## Report calls for Tricare and military retirement cuts

6 November - On October 31, the Center for American Progress, an influential think tank, released a report titled '[Rebalancing Our National Security](#).' The report calls for freezing future military pay raises, forcing working age military retirees to use employer-provided health care plans, and changing the current 20-year retirement plan to a 401K style pension program... The report also recommends changing Tricare for Life coverage by making older retiree's cover their first \$500 expenses out-of-pocket and only cover 50 percent of the next \$5,000 in Medicare cost-sharing. [Military.com](#)

## Study: Energy drinks cause sleep problems in U.S. combat troops

8 November - A new U.S. Army study warns service members to consume energy drinks in moderation, citing them as a cause of sleep problems among those on combat deployment. Researchers looked at service members deployed in Afghanistan in 2010. A random survey of U.S. Army and Marine combat troops there revealed that 45 percent consumed one or more energy drinks per day and 14 percent consumed three or more... According to the study, 38 percent of service members consuming three or more energy drinks per day averaged four hours or less of sleep each night -- as opposed to 18 percent of those drinking one to two per day and 24 percent for those consuming no energy drinks. [Fox News](#)

## Update: Cold weather injuries, active and reserve components, U.S. Armed Forces, July 2007-June 2012

From July 2011 through June 2012, the number of active and reserve component service members treated for cold injuries (n=499) was lower than the number in each of the four previous one year periods. Over the last five years, frostbite was the most common type of cold injury in all the Services except for the Marine Corps, in which hypothermia was slightly more frequent. Service members who were female, less than 20 years old, or of black, non-Hispanic race/ethnicity tended to have higher cold injury rates than their respective counterparts. Army personnel accounted for the majority of cold injuries. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

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## GLOBAL

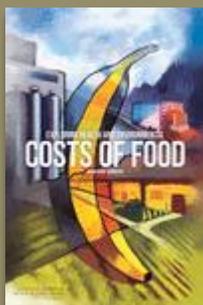
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## Cheap colour test picks up HIV

28 October - A cheap test which could detect even low levels of viruses and some cancers has been developed by UK researchers. The colour of a liquid changes to give either a positive or negative result. The designers from Imperial College London say the device

## Exploring Health and Environmental Costs of Food - Workshop Summary

One of the many benefits of the U.S. food system is a safe, nutritious, and consistent food supply. However, the same system also creates significant environmental, public health, and other costs that generally are not captured in the retail price of food. These include greenhouse gas emissions, soil erosion, air pollution, the transfer of antibiotic resistance from food animals to humans, diet-related chronic disease risk, and other environmental and human health consequences.



could lead to more widespread testing for HIV and other diseases in parts of the world where other methods are unaffordable. The prototype, which needs wider testing, is described in the journal [Nature Nanotechnology](#). [BBC](#)

## Climate information can protect public health

29 October - Climate information and weather forecasts can help prevent or prepare ways to offset disease epidemics and improve health, according to a new U.N. report. The World Meteorological Organization and World Health Organization have published the first [Atlas of Health and Climate](#). The World Meteorological Organization says climate change is altering the magnitude, frequency and duration of extreme weather events. As the world's climate continues to change, it warns hazards to human health are increasing. [VOA](#)

## Experimental device uses heartbeat to power pacemaker

6 November - Patients whose hearts need a bit of help keeping the beat are often given a pacemaker, which delivers electrical pulses to regulate heartbeats. The tiny electronic devices, surgically implanted beneath the skin on the chest, must be replaced every five to seven years when their batteries run out. But an experimental device that converts energy from the heartbeat itself could provide enough electricity to operate the pacemaker indefinitely. [VOA](#)

## One test may 'find many cancers'

6 November - Targeting just one chemical inside cancerous cells could one day lead to a single test for a broad range of cancers, researchers say. The same system could then be used to deliver precision radiotherapy. Scientists told the National Cancer Research Institute conference they had been able to find breast cancer in mice weeks before a lump had been detected. The same target chemical was also present in cancers of the lung, skin, kidney and bladder, they said. [BBC News](#)

## Safety lessons from the morgue



26 October – [Susan P. Baker of the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore] has had a hand in more than 250 such research papers, as well as her nearly 40 monographs and textbook chapters and 5 books. She has endlessly lobbied, in person and in print, for gun control and air bags, motorcycle helmets and home sprinkler systems.

She has fought to put the discipline of injury prevention on the nation's public-health agenda, leading to the creation of the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control and nearly a dozen injury-research centers at universities and hospitals around the country. [New York Times](#)

## Why doctors prescribe opioids to known opioid abusers

25 October - Prescription opioid abuse is an epidemic in the United States. In 2010, there were reportedly as many as 2.4 million opioid abusers in this country, and the number of new abusers had increased by 225% between 1992 and 2000. Sixty percent of the opioids

## 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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that are abused are obtained directly or indirectly through a physician's prescription. In many instances, doctors are fully aware that their patients are abusing these medications or diverting them to others for nonmedical use, but they prescribe them anyway. Why? Recent changes in medicine's philosophy of pain treatment, cultural trends in Americans' attitudes toward suffering, and financial disincentives for treating addiction have contributed to this problem. [New England Journal of Medicine](#)

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## INFLUENZA

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

8 November - Overall, influenza activity remains low in the MHS and varies from low to moderate levels in the overseas DoD laboratory surveillance network; circulating subtypes include influenza A/H1, A/H3 and influenza B. The influenza vaccination coverage for the DoD (Active Duty component only) is 82%. [AFHSC DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary](#)

### CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 43 (October 21-27, 2012), influenza activity remained low in the United States.

- Viral Surveillance: Of 3,036 specimens tested during week 43, 188 (6.2%) 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: No influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported. [FluView](#)

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

During week 43 (22-28 October 2012), influenza activity of low-intensity was notified by all 18 countries reporting, with the majority of them indicating sporadic spread or no activity.

[Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

### Flu transmission stays low in US, Europe

2 November - ... The percentage of deaths attributed to flu and pneumonia climbed above the epidemic threshold to 6.5%, and the number of states reporting local geographic spread increased from three last week to five: Alaska, Iowa, New York, North Dakota, and Wyoming. No pediatric deaths or novel flu virus infections were reported. [CIDRAP News Scan](#)

## Google.org: Flu Trends

7 November – Estimates of flu activity based on Internet search queries indicate that the level of flu activity in the Canada, Europe, and Japan is low while the level in the U.S. 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 3 November 2012:

Influenza: Cluster of influenza A/H1N1(09) cases at MCRD Parris Island, continuing into mid-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

27 October – Although MTFs are beginning to see an increase in influenza-positive specimens, overall influenza and influenza-like illness (ILI) activity remains low in US Army and civilian populations.

- ILI Activity: Army outpatient visits for incident ILI are 14% lower this year than the same time last year.
- Influenza cases: No hospitalized influenza cases have been reported in DRSi this influenza season.
- Acute Respiratory Disease at BCT sites: ARDS rates are lower at all Army BCT sites for 2012 compared to 2011.
- Viral specimens: During week 43, 90 of 430 (21%) clinical specimens tested were positive for respiratory pathogens. Influenza A was identified in 39 (43%) of these positive samples. Most of the Army influenza positive specimens were reported by SRMC (56%), primarily at Ft Gordon and Ft Stewart (56%). [USAPHC U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report](#)

## Scientists move closer to a lasting flu vaccine

29 October - As this year's flu season gathers steam, doctors and pharmacists have a fresh stock of vaccines to offer their patients. The vaccines usually provide strong protection against the virus, but only for a while. Vaccines for other diseases typically work for years or decades. With the flu, though, next fall it will be time to get another dose... But a flurry of recent studies on the virus has brought some hope for a change. Dr. Nabel and other flu experts foresee a time when seasonal flu shots are a thing of the past, replaced by long-lasting vaccines... With current technology, scientists would not have a vaccine for a new pandemic strain until the outbreak was well under way. An effective universal flu vaccine would already be able to fight it. [New York Times](#)

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## Asia: Orang-utans infected by mystery Ebola-like virus

6 November - They are already the most endangered great apes. Now orang-utans may face an additional threat: Ebola virus, or something a lot like it. Bornean orang-utans have antibodies that recognise not just the Asian species of Ebola virus, but all four African Ebola viruses and a similar African virus called Marburg. None of the African viruses has ever been seen outside Africa before. [New Scientist](#)

## Australia, Queensland: Hendra virus, equine

4 November - A horse euthanased on a far north Queensland property this week has been confirmed as having Hendra virus, authorities say. Test results on Friday [2 Nov 2012] night confirmed the latest case, the 8th Hendra virus incident in Queensland this year [2012] and the 2nd in Ingham, north of Townsville. [ProMED-mail](#)

## Canada: More problems as Canadian beef producer resumes operations

5 November - Canadian food safety inspectors have flagged additional problems at XL Foods, Inc., since it resumed operations on Oct 29 after being shuttered for several weeks in the wake of a massive beef recall in Canada and the United States, according to a Nov 3 statement from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The company's contaminated beef has been linked to an *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 outbreak in Canada that has now sickened 17 people, according to a Nov 1 update from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). [CIDRAP](#)

## Europe, Northern Ireland: Schmallenberg virus, first case

2 November - DARD [Department of Agriculture and Rural Development] has confirmed that tests conducted on a malformed calf in Co [County] Down by the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) have identified the presence of Schmallenberg virus (SBV). Another calf from the same herd, while testing negative for SBV, displayed signs consistent with those associated with the disease. This is the 1st case of the disease detected in Northern Ireland. [ProMED-mail](#)

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## WELLNESS

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### Daily multivitamin use does not reduce cardiovascular disease risk in men

5 November - Approximately one-third of Americans take a daily multivitamin, but little is known about a multivitamin's long-term affect on chronic diseases. Now, new research from Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH) finds that daily multivitamin use does not reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease in men. A similar BWH study, announced last month, found daily multivitamin use can reduce a man's risk of cancer by 8 percent. [Brigham and Women's Hospital](#)

### Eating in restaurants tied to higher calorie intake

5 November - In study findings that may not surprise many people, kids and teens ate more calories - including more fat and more sugar - on days when they had a meal from a fast-food or sit-down restaurant. "Parents (should) realize that restaurant consumption is not a straight-off substitute for eating at home. Restaurant consumption and fast-food consumption should not be the norm," said lead researcher Lisa Powell from the University of Illinois at Chicago. [Reuters](#)

### Human enhancements at work pose ethical dilemmas

7 November - Retinal implants to help pilots see at night, stimulant drugs to keep surgeons alert and steady handed, cognitive enhancers to focus the minds of executives for a big speech or presentation. Medical and scientific advances are bringing human enhancements into work but with them, according to a report by British experts, come not only the potential to help society and boost productivity, but also a range of ethical dilemmas. [Reuters](#)

### Ivermectin hair lotion found effective against lice

31 October - A single 10-minute hair application of a drug used in oral form since the 1980s to control river blindness and other parasitic diseases eliminated head lice in nearly three of four children in a new study. The lotion contains ivermectin and is sold under the brand name Sklice by Sanofi Pasteur, which paid for the study. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration used the results to approve topical ivermectin lotion in February. [Reuters](#)

### Studies show maternal smoking triggers asthma in grandchildren

1 November - ... Researchers at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles, California, have found evidence of a generational effect of tobacco-smoking on lung development. The scientists gave a group of pregnant rats injections of nicotine, the amount an average smoker would receive, exposing the animals' unborn pups to the chemical. Nicotine is one of more than 4,000 chemicals in tobacco smoke known to adversely affect lung

development. As predicted, the injections caused changes in the fetal animals' upper and lower airway development consistent with asthma...After they were born, the rat pups were never again exposed to nicotine. Nor were their offspring. Nevertheless, researchers found that these second-generation rat pups showed the same physical signs of asthma. [VOA](#)

## The nearer the bar, the greater the chances of risky drinking



2 November - Does living near a bar encourage people to overindulge, or do heavy drinkers move to neighborhoods with easy access to alcohol? A new study suggests it may be the former for some people. Researchers in Finland found that of nearly 55,000 Finnish adults followed for seven years, those who moved closer to bars were somewhat more likely to increase their drinking. When a person moved one kilometer (0.6 mile) closer to a bar, the odds of becoming a heavy drinker rose 17 percent. [Reuters](#)

## Vitamins and nutritional supplements may contain unexpected hazards

5 November - The more than 50 percent of American adults who take vitamins, herbs or other nutritional supplements may be surprised by some of the hazards that Consumer Reports recently identified. Its findings were distilled from interviews with experts, published research and its own analysis of reports of serious adverse events submitted to the Food and Drug Administration, obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request... More than 6,300 reports — describing more than 10,300 serious outcomes, including 115 deaths and more than 2,100 hospitalizations, 1,000 serious injuries or illnesses, 900 emergency room visits, and 4,000 other important medical events — streamed into the FDA from supplement companies, consumers, health-care providers and others between 2007 and mid-April 2012. [Washington Post](#)

## Why even healthy people should watch their salt intake

5 November - [Salt](#) is a ubiquitous part of the American diet, but even healthy people should be cutting back to avoid high blood pressure and life-threatening heart disease and stroke. That's the message from the American Heart Association (AHA) in its latest advisory. [TIME](#)

## Young doctors: fewer hours means they're less tired, less prepared

4 November - Orthopedic surgeons-in-training said they were tired less often after rules regulating how much they could work went into place, according to a U.S. survey. But the results published in the *Annals of Surgery* found the trainee doctors didn't actually get any more sleep under the limited work hours policy, and also said they felt less prepared as doctors and were less satisfied with their education. [Reuters](#)

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## Mauritania: Rift Valley fever

1 November - The Ministry of Health (MoH) in Mauritania declared an outbreak of Rift Valley Fever (RVF) on 4 October 2012. From 16 September 2012 (the date of onset of the index case) to 30 October 2012, a total of 34 cases, including 17 deaths have been reported from 6 regions. The last case was notified on the 27 October 2012 from Magta Lahjar in the Brakna region. The 6 regions include Assaba, Brakna, Hodh Chargui, Hodh Gharbi, Tagant and Trarza. All the cases had history of contact with animals. [WHO](#)

## Mozambique: Clear connection between HIV and malaria deaths

5 November - Researchers from Mahidol University in Bangkok, working on data from the central Mozambican city of Beira, have shown that people infected with the HIV virus that causes AIDS are more likely to suffer from complications and die as a result of malaria. It has been commonly accepted that malarial deaths often go hand in hand with HIV. However, the researchers point out that whilst co-infection is common in settings with a high prevalence of both diseases, "there is little information on whether HIV affects the clinical presentation and outcome of severe malaria". Writing in the academic journal "Clinical Infectious Diseases", the authors state that "HIV transmission and progression may be accelerated by malaria. [All Africa](#)

## Nigeria tackles maternal mortality

28 October - For many women in Nigeria, a country with one of the highest maternal death rates in the world, the prospect of giving birth can be scary. According to the U.N. children's organization, UNICEF, more than 150 women die every day in pregnancy-related cases in Nigeria, an average of one death every 10 minutes. [VOA](#)

## Northern Mali: Child malnutrition is major problem



2 November - Aid workers say child malnutrition is reaching emergency levels in northern Mali which has been under the control of armed militant groups since April. Brussels-based aid organization, Medecins du Monde, or Doctors of the World, says malnutrition rates among children under the age of five in occupied northern Mali are reaching "alarming levels." The NGO says it found that 13.5 percent of those children in the far northern Kidal region are suffering from acute malnutrition. That's double last year's rate and well over the World Health Organization's 10 percent alert threshold. [VOA](#)

## Sudan: Yellow fever

6 November - Sudan's Federal Health Ministry announced that the number of yellow fever cases in Darfur has increased to more than 143, including 63 deaths, Radio Dabanga has learned on Sunday 4 Nov 2011. The Ministry confirmed the emergence of new cases among the population in the southern regions west of El-Geneina [sic; must mean east -- see map in Comment] in West Darfur and the adjacent areas in Central Darfur... At the same time, the State Health Ministry of South Darfur disclosed their urgent need for approximately 9 million doses of [yellow fever] vaccine for the people of Darfur in the battle against the 'epidemic disease', adding it could take more than 2 weeks for the vaccines to arrive.

[ProMED-mail](#)

## Uganda: Marburg haemorrhagic fever – WHO update

31 October - As of 28 October 2012, a total of 18 cases and 9 deaths, including a health worker, have been reported from 5 districts namely Kabale district, in south-western Uganda, Kampala (the capital city), Ibanda, Mbarara and Kabarole. The case fatality rate is 50%. The outbreak was declared by the Ministry of Health in Uganda on 19 October 2012. Blood samples from 9 cases have been confirmed for Marburg virus at the Uganda Virus Research Institute (UVRI). Currently, 13 patients have been admitted to hospital (2 in Kampala, 8 in Kabale, 3 in Ibanda) and their contacts are listed for daily follow up. [WHO](#)

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**USCENTCOM**

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## Afghanistan: Disease outbreaks prompt action



1 November - Afghanistan is taking steps to improve its routine immunization coverage, after a drop in coverage led to a sharp increase in measles outbreaks last year, killing more than 300 children. Since the start of the last Afghan winter, in November 2011, 9,000 measles cases were reported across almost every province in the country, as compared to 3,000 cases over the same period the year before. Aid workers described the increase as an emergency situation that should serve as a "ringing alarm bell". It was the culmination of several years of decreasing vaccination coverage due to rising insecurity, decreased access, difficult terrain and harsh winters that cut off thousands of villages. [IRIN](#)

## Bahrain: Sickle cell claims 1 life per week

3 November - Bahrain is on the verge of a sickle cell crisis with the disease claiming the life of a person almost once a week, campaigners were quoted as saying... Forty-one sickle cell anaemia patients have now died since the start of the year, compared to 32 last year, 35 in 2010, 28 in 2009 and 23 in 2008. [Trade Arabia](#)

## Saudi Arabia: Novel coronavirus, new case

4 November - In accordance with Ministry of Health's (MoH) responsibilities for disease prevention and control, and in keeping with our practice to inform the public and the media about significant findings that result from MoH disease surveillance activities, we are announcing today [4 Nov 2012] that one of our hospitalized citizens has been confirmed to have pneumonia caused by novel Coronavirus (nCoV). This case had no epidemiological links to the 2 documented novel coronavirus cases to date. [ProMED-mail](#)

## Syria: Humanitarian aid not getting through

8 November - Conditions in Syria have worsened to the extent that aid workers on the ground are unable to cope with the growing needs of civilians, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said on Thursday. "We are in a situation where the humanitarian situation due to the conflict is getting worse. And despite the fact that the scope of the operation is increasing, we can't cope with the worsening of the situation," ICRC president Peter Maurer said in Geneva. [Swissinfo.ch](#)

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### USEUCOM

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## United Kingdom: An unusual transmission event of *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup W135 type 2a in a healthcare setting, 2012

1 November - We report an outbreak of *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup W135, associated with a transient transmission event between asymptomatic individuals in a healthcare setting. Two elderly persons subsequently developed invasive meningococcal disease. The duration and type of close contact for those directly involved in the probable transmission incident would not have warranted chemoprophylaxis according to current guidelines. Meningococcal infection in older persons usually presents with pneumonia rather than meningitis or septicaemia with purpura. [Eurosurveillance](#)

## United Kingdom: Anthrax, human

2 November - The Health Protection Agency (HPA) is aware that a person who injected heroin has been diagnosed with anthrax infection in Oxford. The patient is recovering. This case has occurred after 2 people who injected drugs died from confirmed anthrax infection in Blackpool within a month of each other in August and September this year [2012]. There is an ongoing outbreak of anthrax among people who inject drugs in a number of countries in Europe with 12 cases now identified since early June [2012]. The latest case in Oxford brings the total number affected in the UK to 5 -- 3 in England (2 fatal, one recovering), one in Scotland, and one in Wales (both recovering). The source is presumed to be contaminated heroin. [ProMED-mail](#)

## United Kingdom: Heart disease deaths halve –but only if you live in the South

5 November - In one of the most dramatic improvements in the nation's health, deaths from heart disease have halved since the 1980s – but the gains have not been shared equally and the "health gap" between the wealthiest and poorest communities has widened among older people, researchers say. A map charting the death rate from heart disease and stroke across England by electoral wards shows the stark difference between communities and between the healthy and wealthy South and the poor and sickly North. Death rates are 20 per cent above average in the poorest wards and 20 per cent below average in the wealthiest wards, among men over 65. A similar disparity is seen for women over 65.

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**USNORTHCOM**

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## U.S.: 7 health risks in the wake of Superstorm Sandy



2 November - In the wake of Superstorm Sandy, cold weather could put people returning to their homes at risk. Here is a bit about some of the health risks victims of the storm may face: 1) carbon monoxide exposure, 2) infections and injuries from floodwaters, 3) mold, 4)

hypothermia, 5) contaminated drinking water, 6) spoiled food, and 7) exacerbation of health conditions. [CNN](#)

## U.S.: Extra MMR vaccine helped prevent mumps in outbreak

5 November - Giving kids and teens in a New York community a third dose of the measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine likely helped halt a mumps outbreak in late 2009 and early 2010, according to a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. U.S. guidelines call for kids to get two doses of the MMR vaccine, one at age 12-15 months and the other at 4-6 years. But as evidence from the Orange County, New York, community shows, mumps can spread in very close quarters even when most young people have received both recommended doses. The study covers a mumps outbreak in the Orthodox Jewish community, which researchers say began at a religious camp in the Catskill Mountains and was spread by a method of schooling involving close one-on-one contact between study partners, known as chavrusas (see Reuters Health story of October 31, 2012).

[Reuters](#)

## U.S.: Hurricane Sandy death toll climbs above 110, N.Y. hardest hit

3 November - The number of lives lost and families shattered from Hurricane Sandy continued to climb Saturday, with the death toll now at more than 110. The number of lives claimed in New York from the super storm was reduced by one to 48, after medical examiners determined two deaths initially linked to the storm were not, and another body was found during the recovery effort. Hardest-hit parts of the state are still buried in rubble and tunnels in metropolitan New York still flooded, leaving officials to wearily expect that the number could keep climbing. [Los Angeles Times](#)

## U.S.: Increase seen in suicide rate since recession

4 November - The rate of suicide in the United States rose sharply during the first few years since the start of the recession, a new analysis has found. In the report, which appeared Sunday on the Web site of The Lancet, a medical journal, researchers found that the rate between 2008 and 2010 increased four times faster than it did in the eight years before the recession. The rate had been increasing by an average of 0.12 deaths per 100,000 people from 1999 through 2007. In 2008, the rate began increasing by an average of 0.51 deaths per 100,000 people a year. Without the increase in the rate, the total deaths from suicide each year in the United States would have been lower by about 1,500, the study said. [New York Times](#)

## U.S.: Meningitis death toll rises to 29 with fatality in Virginia



31 October - Another patient has died in Virginia after contracting fungal meningitis from potentially tainted steroid injections supplied by a Massachusetts company, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said on Wednesday, bringing the death toll from the outbreak to 29 nationwide. The latest death

brings to three the number of fatalities reported in Virginia. Tennessee has reported the most deaths at 11, followed by Michigan with seven. The number of cases of fungal meningitis reported across the United States rose to 368 on Wednesday, up 12 from Tuesday, the CDC said. [Reuters](#)

## U.S.: Superbug MRSA identified in wastewater treatment plants

5 November - A team led by researchers at the University of Maryland School of Public Health has found that the "superbug" methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is prevalent at several U.S. wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs). MRSA is well known for causing difficult-to-treat and potentially fatal bacterial infections in hospital patients, but since the late 1990s it has also been infecting otherwise healthy people in community settings. [University of Maryland School of Public Health](#)

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## Asia-Pacific region has 30 million malaria cases yearly

2 November - Countries in the Asia-Pacific region carry the biggest malaria burden outside of Africa, reporting about 30 million malaria cases each year, along with 42,000 deaths from the disease, according to a report unveiled today by the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Partnership... Twenty countries in the Asia-Pacific region are malaria-endemic. Robert Newman, MD, MPH, who directs the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Malaria Program, said in the statement that one of the area's greatest challenges for controlling malaria is antimalarial drug resistance. [CIDRAP News Scan](#)

## China fights to go beyond organs harvested from executed prisoners

7 November - A senior official with the Chinese Ministry of Health says the country must end its dependence on organs taken from executed prisoners even as it struggles to establish "an ethical and sustainable organ donation system." The official, Wang Haibo, said there is now a "consensus among China's transplant community that the new system will relinquish the reliance on organs from executed convicts." Between 2003 and 2009, only 130 people in China signed up as organ donors, academic researchers found. As a result, two-thirds of all organs for transplant are still taken from executed prisoners." [International Herald Tribune](#)

## China: Most women exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke

6 November - Nearly two-thirds of women of reproductive age in [China](#) are exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke at home and over half are exposed in the workplace, which raises the risk of complications in pregnancy, including stillbirths and infant death. The findings, released by the World Health Organisation on Tuesday, are from a tobacco survey conducted in [China](#) in 2010 by the centers for disease control and prevention in China, the United States and the WHO. [Reuters](#)

## India: As dengue fever sweeps India, a slow response stirs experts' fears



6 November - An epidemic of dengue fever in India is fostering a growing sense of alarm even as government officials here have publicly refused to acknowledge the scope of a problem that experts say is threatening hundreds of millions of people, not just in India but around the world.

India has become the focal point for a mosquito-borne plague that is sweeping the globe. Reported in just a handful of countries in the 1950s, dengue (pronounced DEN-gay) is now endemic in half the world's nations. [New York Times](#)

## Thailand, Myanmar: Malaria, artemisinin resistance

3 November - The number of artemisinin/mafloquine-resistant cases is on the rise along the Thai-Myanmar border, according to Kanchanaburi health workers...Artemisinin is usually used in combination with other anti-malarial drugs, such as mafloquine. The number of artemisinin/mafloquine-resistant cases is on the rise along the Thai-Myanmar border, according to Kanchanaburi health workers. "This year, 41 out of 207 cases of malaria proved resistant to artemisinin/mafloquine treatment," said Wittaya Saiphromsud, head of the Vector Borne Disease Centre in Sai Yok district, Kanchanaburi... By refusing follow-up treatment, malaria carriers increase the risk of transmitting via mosquitoes their drug-resistant malaria parasites to others. [ProMED-mail](#)

## Vietnam: HFMD outbreak surges past 100000, CDC issues travel notice

8 November - The Vietnamese Ministry of Health (MoH) is reporting a large-scale outbreak, rivaling last year's numbers. This has prompted federal health officials in the United States to issue recommendations for travelers to the Southeast Asian country, according to a [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) travel notice](#) Nov. 7. According to the MoH, there were approximately 116,418 people in 63 provinces confirmed with hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD) from January 1 to October 7 2012; 42 people in 15 provinces have died. [Examiner.com](#)

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## Cuba: UN-sponsored aid arrives in Cuba in wake of Hurricane Sandy

8 November 2012 – Multiple United Nations agencies using emergency funding are the main sponsors behind delivery today of more than 40 tons of humanitarian assistance for Cuba's second largest urban centre, Santiago de Cuba, where Hurricane Sandy wrought widespread damage as it swept through the Caribbean two weeks ago before striking the eastern United States... Comprising basic commodities for living, the shipment will be followed by a second 40-ton shipment of similar supplies Saturday, while USC said it was "working with the international community in order to bring into the country additional support." "They (meet the) immediate needs of (the) population," the UN Resident Coordinator in Cuba, Barbara Pesce Monteiro, said of the flight's contents, which included waterproofed canvas, water storage tanks, water purification tablets and hygiene, cooking and school kits. [UN.org](#)

## Dominican Republic: Cholera cases reach 330

6 November - The number of people with cholera symptoms, treated in the northern Dominican province of Espaillat increased today to 330, authorities reported, still alert to the incidence of the disease. Until yesterday, the number of affected was 250 while 24 remained hospitalized, said Domingo Perez, Health director for the province. [Prensa Latina](#)

## Haiti, U.N. seek \$74 million to help agriculture after Sandy

7 November - The Haitian government and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations are seeking \$74 million to help poor farmers and boost agriculture after Hurricane Sandy. The storm washed out crops and livestock, and has left up to two million Haitians in danger of malnutrition, the United Nations has said. It was the third disaster to hit Haiti in months, leaving many worried of a worsening food crisis. [Miami Herald](#)

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