

19 August 2016

Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center

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 Command.

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USAFRICOM | USCENTCOM | USEUCOM | USNORTHCOM | USPACOM | USSOUTHCOM

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Contents

U.S. MILITARY

- Army refutes claims of massive parasite outbreak at Fort Knox
- JBLM soldier falls to his death; 'unprecedented' manufacturing error blamed
- Knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis among US Air Force health care providers
- Malaria drug causes brain damage that mimics PTSD: case study
- McCain: New suicide prevention initiative for veterans can be model for nationwide effort
- Pentagon taps Olympic inventor, Lululemon for chem-warfare suit challenge
- Use of complementary health approaches at military treatment facilities, active component, U.S. Armed Forces, 2010–2015
- VA provides service dog benefits to veterans with mental health disorders
- Watchdog: Company sold 'defective' combat helmets to Pentagon

GLOBAL

- A better (smelly) mosquito trap, but with caveats
- CDC study identifies patients with mild traumatic brain injury at increased risk of PTSD
- Could yellow fever become the next pandemic?
- Genetic analysis yield new clues in 1979 Soviet anthrax accident
- Melting glaciers pose threat beyond water scarcity: floods
- Study finds camel link to a human cold coronavirus
- Study reveals better Ebola survival in patients with malaria co-infections
- U.N. admits role in cholera epidemic in Haiti
- Viruses 'more dangerous in the morning'
- ZIKA VIRUS
- Mosquito guns and heavy fines: how Cuba kept Zika at bay for so long
- New research: Zika could also affect adult brain
- U.S. declares health emergency in Puerto Rico due to Zika
- Zika case counts in the U.S.
- Zika found to remain in sperm for record six months

INFLUENZA

- CDC: Flu View - Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report
- NHRC: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update
- Study says FluMist vaccine does indeed work, contradicting CDC
- USAFSAM: DoD Global, Laboratory-Based, Influenza Surveillance Program

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

- Army to remove horses from Louisiana's Fort Polk
- FDA issues final rule on food ingredients that may be generally recognized as safe (GRAS)
- Imported scallops linked to hepatitis A in Hawaii
- Unsafe shrimp and the question of seafood farming

WELLNESS

- Death by medical error: adding context to scary headlines
- FDA updates draft guidance on premarket safety notifications for dietary supplement industry
- Kunsan bans three hemp-laced GNC supplements
- Lead levels below EPA limits can still impact your health
- Their hair fell out. Should the F.D.A. have the power to act?

USAFRICOM

- Africa: Vaccine shortage could spread African yellow fever outbreak abroad, charity warns
- Central African Republic: Aid agencies race to contain cholera outbreak
- Nigeria: Mass polio vaccination begins in Nigeria after 2 cases detected
- Uganda: Officials scramble to contain cholera at refugee center in Uganda

USCENTCOM

- Yemen: Air strike on MSF hospital in Yemen kills at least 11 – aid group

USEUCOM

- The Netherlands: First human case of tick-borne encephalitis virus infection acquired in the Netherlands, July 2016
- United Kingdom: Britain launches soft drinks sugar tax to fight obesity
- United Kingdom: London reports nearly six out of 10 syphilis cases in England

USNORTHCOM

- Canada/U.S.: Cyclospora cases reported in Texas, Canada
- U.S.: At least 8 dead, 40,000 homes affected in devastating Louisiana floods
- U.S.: Heat stroke admissions during heat waves in 1,916 U.S. counties
- U.S.: More than 80,000 ordered evacuated from massive, uncontrolled Southern California wildfire
- U.S., Ohio: *Crypto* cases top 200 in Columbus and surrounding counties

USPACOM

- China: China faces a surge in cardiovascular disease, study finds
- China: Coal burning causes the most air pollution deaths in China, study finds
- China: Human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus
- China: The looming public health crises threatening to take down China's health care system
- India: Suicide deaths in India increasing at alarming rate
- India: What is killing India's babies?

USSOUTHCOM

- Colombia: Malaria caused by the *falciparum* parasite spreading throughout country
- Peru: Shallow quake in Peru kills at least 4, including U.S. tourist
- Steep chikungunya rise in Americas reflects Brazil rise
- Venezuela: Hard times in Venezuela breed malaria as desperate flock to mines

**DHA Immunization
Healthcare Branch:
Town Hall on
Immunizations**

Where? Via DHA IHB's Facebook page. Log on to Facebook and like the [DHA Immunization Healthcare Branch page](#). This will allow you to ask your questions by posting on the IHB page's wall in advance or on the day of the event.

When? Wednesday, August 31 @ 1 p.m. EDT / 10 a.m. PDT.

What? The DHA Immunization Healthcare Branch develops and promotes programs and services that enhance immunization effectiveness, safety, and acceptability. It also provides evidence-based solutions that improve immunization healthcare through policy implementation guidance, strategic communication, education, training, and clinical services worldwide.

How? Subject-matter experts will select questions to answer during the event and will answer as many as possible during the hour. You can submit questions now by posting them on the event's wall.



U.S. MILITARY

Army refutes claims of massive parasite outbreak at Fort Knox

17 August - Army officials are refuting social media rumors suggesting that potentially hundreds of soldiers have contracted pinworms while training in Kentucky. Several soldiers, all members of the Indiana National Guard's 76th Brigade Combat Team, have reported finding worms in their stool, Kyle Hodges, a Fort Knox spokesman, told Army Times on Wednesday. However, "we've been testing these soldiers at Ireland Army Community Hospital, and they have not confirmed a single diagnosis." [Army Times](#)

JBLM soldier falls to his death; 'unprecedented' manufacturing error blamed

11 August - Capt. James Ahn stepped onto a small plane on the Olympic Peninsula with his Special Forces team almost a year ago and incorrectly rigged his parachute, setting him up for a challenging jump. But that isn't what killed the Joint Base Lewis-McChord soldier. An "unprecedented" manufacturing defect in his pack's reserve parachute — the line he would pull if he needed a backup — had gone unnoticed during four years of use. ... It also prompted an investigation that concluded in a 409-page report that the defect that killed him went unnoticed by six professional inspectors from the company that manufactured the chute and at least 22 Army riggers. The error was so obscure ... that experts from the Army Safety Center took four days to identify it. ... After the Safety Center pinpointed the defect, the Defense Department suspended use of its 10,000 MC-4 parachutes. [The News Tribune](#)

Knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis among US Air Force health care providers

August 2016 - ... Primary care providers (PCP) and infectious disease physicians (ID) in the US Air Force (USAF) participated in a cross-sectional survey regarding knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs toward HIV PrEP. ... Among 403 (40% of 1015 providers) participants, 9% (PCP 383, ID 20) ever prescribed PrEP. ... In multivariate analysis, providers who had ever prescribed antiretrovirals to prevent HIV (AOR: 2.37, 95% CI: 1.27–4.42) had greater odds of high PrEP knowledge. Despite concerns about medication side effects (overall 67%: PCP 68%, ID 85%) and prescribing PrEP without clear evidence (overall 60%: PCP 65%, ID 62%), 64% (PCP 65%, ID 85%) of participants indicated PrEP should be offered in the Military Health System and 68% (PCP 70%, ID 100%) disagreed with the statement that their patient population was not at risk for HIV infection. [Medicine](#)

Soldier Protective Equipment

Program Executive Office Soldier develops advanced Soldier personal protection products, including comfortable uniforms and environmental clothing. It also develops improved parachute systems.

The Army manages all lifecycle aspects of personal protective equipment.

Recent initiatives are:

- Improved Outer Tactical Vest Gen III
- IOTV Gen IV
- Female IOTV Gen III
- Enhanced Combat Helmet
- Pelvic Protection System



Malaria drug causes brain damage that mimics PTSD: case study

12 August - The case of a service member diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder but found instead to have brain damage caused by a malaria drug raises questions about the origin of similar symptoms in other post-9/11 veterans. According to the case study ... a U.S. military member sought treatment at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, for uncontrolled anger, insomnia, nightmares and memory loss. ... Physicians diagnosed the service member with anxiety, PTSD and a thiamine deficiency. But after months of treatment, including medication, behavioral therapy and daily doses of vitamins, little changed. ... It wasn't until physicians took a hard look at his medical history, which included vertigo that began two months after his Africa deployment, that they suspected mefloquine poisoning: The medication once used widely by the U.S. armed forces to prevent and treat malaria has been linked to brain stem lesions and psychiatric symptoms. While no test is available to prove the sailor suffered what is called "mefloquine toxicity," he scored high enough on an adverse drug reaction probability survey to tie his symptoms to the drug, also known as Lariam. [Military Times](#)

McCain: New suicide prevention initiative for veterans can be model for nationwide effort

17 August - ... Of the almost two dozen military veterans who commit suicide each day on average, two-thirds of them will never have walked through the doors of a VA facility to receive the care they need. In Arizona alone, the VA cannot find or offer any treatment to roughly 450,000 veterans living throughout the state. That is why the *Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act* and the Arizona Clay Hunt Mental Health Pilot Program are so important and can serve as a model for the rest of the country. This pilot program puts into action the legislation's intended collaborative partnership between the local VA and the surrounding community to ensure that effective mental health care resources are made available to at-risk veterans wherever they live and work. [Military Times](#)

Pentagon taps Olympic inventor, Lululemon for chem-warfare suit challenge

16 August - The Pentagon wants a sleeker, more advanced suit to protect warfighters against chemical, radiological and biological threats – and is counting on the commercial industry and individual inventors to come up with a solution. ... [The] panel in charge of doling out the cash rewards features individuals from athletic and leisurewear companies like Under Armor and Lululemon. [Defense News](#)

Classified Version of the Weekly Update

An Army Public Health Weekly Update is available with articles classified up to the **SECRET** level from the USAPHC SIPRNet site:

<http://phc.army.smil.mil>

Look under Hot Topics & Current Issues.

To access this version, you will need a **SECRET** clearance and a SIPRNet account.

Links

[A-Z Index](#)

[About APHC](#)

[Army Public Health Weekly Update Archives](#)

[Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

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

[Request APHC Services](#)

[APHC Resource Materials](#)

[APHC Homepage](#)

[APHC Training](#)

[Contact APHC](#)

Use of complementary health approaches at military treatment facilities, active component, U.S. Armed Forces, 2010–2015

July 2016 - ... This report summarizes the use of three [complementary and alternative medicine (CAM)] procedures (chiropractic/osteopathic manipulation, acupuncture, and biofeedback) among active component service members from 2010 through 2015. Findings document a marked increase in the use of chiropractic/osteopathic manipulation and acupuncture procedures since 2010. The majority of the 240 military installations in this analysis provided chiropractic/osteopathic manipulation; more than three-quarters provided acupuncture; and approximately one third provided biofeedback procedures. "Other and unspecified disorders of the back" was the most frequent condition for which chiropractic/osteopathic manipulation and acupuncture were used. "Non-allopathic lesions not elsewhere classified" was the second most frequent diagnosis during chiropractic/osteopathic manipulation-related visits. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

VA provides service dog benefits to veterans with mental health disorders

18 August - The Department of Veterans Affairs announced Thursday that it is piloting a program that will provide service dogs for veterans with mobility issues associated with mental health disorders. ... VA has been providing veterinary benefits to veterans diagnosed as having visual, hearing or substantial mobility impairments who need guide or service dogs. The pilot will extend those benefits to veterans with a mental health disorder that substantially limits mobility if a service dog is the best way for the veteran to manage the mobility impairment and live independently. [News4JAX](#)

Watchdog: Company sold 'defective' combat helmets to Pentagon

17 August - A government investigation found "endemic manufacturing problems" at a company that led to the sale of millions of dollars' worth of defective combat helmets. The Justice Department's inspector general on Wednesday released a scathing report on practices at Federal Prison Industries, a government-operated group that employed inmates to manufacture nearly 150,000 military helmets. The helmets produced contained serious "deformities," according to the report, including "ballistic failures," "blisters" and "expired paint." They were also manufactured with "unauthorized methods." "A surprise inspection by the [inspector general's office] and military personnel uncovered inmates ... openly using improvised tools on the helmets, which damaged the helmets' ballistic material." ... The inspector general also discovered "testing and quality control" problems, as FPI "pre-selected helmets for inspection." ... The military recalled the helmets in 2010 and production stopped at that time. [The Hill](#)

[top of page...](#)

GLOBAL

A better (smelly) mosquito trap, but with caveats

15 August - A new type of mosquito trap running on solar electricity and using human odor as bait has cut mosquito populations by 70 percent in a test on a malaria-ridden island in Kenya, according to a new study. The study ... also found 30 percent fewer malaria victims in houses that had traps than in those that did not. The total number of malaria cases was so small during the three-year testing period, however, that the researchers did not conclude that the traps were only 30 percent effective. ... [The] traps [also] had some significant drawbacks. Because they need power from rooftop solar panels, they are relatively expensive. ... Also, the traps ... lured in *Anopheles funestus* mosquitoes ... [but] they did not attract *Anopheles gambiae* or *Anopheles arabiensis*, which are much more important malaria vectors in most of Africa. [The New York Times](#)

CDC study identifies patients with mild traumatic brain injury at increased risk of PTSD

16 August - A new study identified risk factors for the development of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) following a mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI), making it possible to screen for PTSD symptoms among at-risk populations. ... [The] current study focused on civilian emergency services providers. ... The study ... found that about 27% of the patients with mTBI who returned for follow-up care at 6 months post-injury and underwent screening were positive for PTSD. ... [Researchers] evaluated factors including functional disability, psychiatric symptoms, satisfaction with life, and performance on measures of visual processing and mental flexibility. They also assessed the predictive value of pre-injury education, psychiatric history, and cause of the TBI. [Medical Xpress](#)

Could yellow fever become the next pandemic?

15 August - ... [Yellow] fever could be on the verge of exploding out of central Africa and spreading to Asia, which has never before suffered a major outbreak. The most likely route of transmission: any one of the thousands of unvaccinated Chinese expatriates who are building roads, dams and other big projects in the region. Health authorities already know of at least a dozen workers who returned to China earlier this year and turned out to be sick with yellow fever. ... The World Health Organization is rushing to play catch-up, planning to send millions more doses of vaccine, extra supplies and even a mobile lab to test samples in distant parts of the DRC. But there are no guarantees that all the extra equipment, even if it arrives quickly, will halt the spread of yellow fever before October and the traditional start of the rainy season. [Scientific American](#)

Genetic analysis yield new clues in 1979 Soviet anthrax accident

17 August - Deep genome sequencing of two autopsy specimens from people who died in a 1979 accident at a Soviet anthrax production facility revealed that the *Bacillus anthracis* is similar to a wild type strain from Russia and shows no evidence of genetic manipulation for drug resistance or other characteristics. ... In one of the largest known human anthrax outbreaks, a problem with an air filter at the Soviet defense ministry's lab in Sverdlovsk led to the release of a plume of anthrax spores that spread downwind, killing at least 66 people within about 2 miles and animals as far as 30 miles away. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

Melting glaciers pose threat beyond water scarcity: floods

16 August - The tropical glaciers of South America are dying from soot and rising temperatures, threatening water supplies to communities that have depended on them for centuries. But experts say that the slow process measured in inches of glacial retreat per year also can lead to a sudden, dramatic tragedy. The melting of glaciers like Peru's Pastoruri has put cities like Huaraz, located downslope from the glacier about 35 miles (55 kilometers) away, at risk from what scientists call a "glof" — glacial lake outburst flood. A glof occurs when the weak walls of a mountain valley collapse under the weight of meltwater from a glacier. Recent examples include the rapid draining in 2013 of a lake at Chile's Ventisquero glacier in the Bernardo O'Higgins National Park, six years after another, nearby lake essentially disappeared there. [Yahoo! Finance](#)

Study finds camel link to a human cold coronavirus

16 August - Tests on dromedary camels in Saudi Arabia and Kenya found a close relative of one of the common human coronaviruses frequently linked to common colds, shedding light on a possible camel source for the human virus and offering a reminder of the pandemic potential of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV). The study ... is based on viruses found on nasal swabs collected from 1,033 camels during 2014 and 2015. ... The coronavirus related to a human cold virus (HCoV-229E) was found in 5.6% of camels tested. Genetic analysis suggested that the human version probably became established in humans after it jumped from camels. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (fourth item)

Study reveals better Ebola survival in patients with malaria co-infections

16 August - Patients infected with the Ebola virus were 20% more likely to survive if they were co-infected with malaria, according to a study of Liberians who received care at a treatment center in Monrovia in 2014 and 2015 during West Africa's outbreak. ... Of 1,868 blood samples tested at the treatment center, 1,182 were positive for Ebola. Lab workers also tested 956 of the samples for malaria, of which 185 were positive. The researchers found that 58% of those with co-infections survived, compared with 46% of those infected only with Ebola. The investigators also found a positive correlation between greater

numbers of *Plasmodium* parasites and increased Ebola survival.

[CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

U.N. admits role in cholera epidemic in Haiti

17 August - For the first time since a cholera epidemic believed to be imported by United Nations peacekeepers began killing thousands of Haitians nearly six years ago, the office of Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has acknowledged that the United Nations played a role in the initial outbreak and that a "significant new set of U.N. actions" will be needed to respond to the crisis. The deputy spokesman for the secretary general, Farhan Haq, said in an email this week that "over the past year, the U.N. has become convinced that it needs to do much more regarding its own involvement in the initial outbreak and the suffering of those affected by cholera." He added that a "new response will be presented publicly within the next two months, once it has been fully elaborated, agreed with the Haitian authorities and discussed with member states." [The New York Times](#)

Viruses 'more dangerous in the morning'

16 August - Viruses are more dangerous when they infect their victims in the morning, a University of Cambridge study suggests. The findings, published in PNAS, showed viruses were 10 times more successful if the infection started in the morning. And the animal studies found that a disrupted body clock - caused by shift-work or jet lag - was always vulnerable to infection. The researchers say the findings could lead to new ways of stopping pandemics. ... Prof Reddy said: "In a pandemic, staying in during the daytime could be quite important and save people's lives, it could have a big impact if trials bear it out." [BBC News](#)

ZIKA VIRUS

Mosquito guns and heavy fines: how Cuba kept Zika at bay for so long

17 August - ... It's not uncommon to see clouds of pesticide wafting through Cuba's houses and neighbourhoods. It is largely because of such intensive measures by ordinary citizens that the country has been among the last in the Caribbean to succumb to local transmission of Zika. As of 11 August, Cuba has recorded three people who were infected by local mosquitoes rather than contracting the illness abroad, compared with 8,766 confirmed cases in nearby Puerto Rico. ... That success was the result of its excellent health-care system and an extensive surveillance programme for vector-borne diseases that the government set up 35 years ago, says Ileana Morales, director of science and technology at Cuba's public-health ministry. [Nature](#)

New research: Zika could also affect adult brain

18 August - The Zika virus, which U.S. health officials have determined threaten fetal brain

development, also could pose risks to adult brains. ... New research ... suggests the virus may damage cells that affect adults' memory and learning. In experiments with mice, researchers ... focused on neural progenitor cells. These cells, developing early in gestation, eventually specialize and become neural cells. "With the capability to replenish the brain's neurons throughout its lifetime, these are the stem cells of the brain," the university explained. ... The researchers had a hunch that if Zika affects the brains of developing infants, it also could affect adults. They tested their theory on mice whose brains had been engineered to mimic Zika infection in humans. In mice, progenitor cells concentrate in two areas of the brain. Researchers found that more cells in those areas were dying and fewer cells were being regenerated. [VOA](#)

U.S. declares health emergency in Puerto Rico due to Zika

15 August – The U.S. government on Friday declared a public health emergency in Puerto Rico as a result of a Zika epidemic. The declaration allows the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to award grants, access emergency funds and temporarily appoint personnel where needed, among other things. ... The announcement came hours after Puerto Rico reported 1,914 new cases in the past week, for a total of 10,690 since the first one was reported in December. The mosquito-borne virus has infected 1,035 pregnant women. [Fox News](#)

Zika case counts in the U.S.

As of August 17, 2016 (5 am EST) [CDC](#)

U.S. States	U.S. Territories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locally acquired mosquito-borne cases reported: 14 Travel-associated cases reported: 2,245 Laboratory acquired cases reported: 1 Total: 2,260 Sexually transmitted: 22 Guillain-Barré syndrome: 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locally acquired cases reported: 8,000 Travel-associated cases reported: 35 Total: 8,035* Guillain-Barré syndrome: 25 <p>*Sexually transmitted cases are not reported for US territories because with local transmission of Zika virus it is not possible to determine whether infection occurred due to mosquito-borne or sexual transmission.</p>

Zika found to remain in sperm for record six months

12 August - The Zika virus has been found in the sperm of an Italian man six months after his first symptoms, twice as long as in previously reported cases. Doctors at the Spallanzani Institute for Infectious Diseases in Rome said it pointed to the possibility that the virus was reproducing itself in the male genital tract. [BBC News](#)

[top of page...](#)

INFLUENZA

CDC: Flu View - Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report

Pneumonia and Influenza (P&I) Mortality Surveillance for 2015-2016 Influenza Season Week 31 ending August 6, 2016:

- Novel Influenza A Viruses: Four human infections with novel influenza A viruses were detected in two states (Michigan [2] and Ohio [2]). All four persons were infected with influenza A (H3N2) variant (H3N2v) viruses and reported direct contact with swine in fair settings during the week preceding illness onset. ... Public health and agriculture officials are investigating the extent of disease among humans and swine, but no increases in influenza-like illness in the communities have been reported.
- NCHS Mortality Surveillance Data: Based on NCHS mortality surveillance data available on August 11, 2016, 5.0% of the deaths occurring during the week ending July 23, 2016 (week 29) were due to P&I. This percentage is below the epidemic threshold of 6.1% for week 29.
- 122 Cities Mortality Reporting System: During week 31, 5.0% of all deaths reported through the 122 Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to P&I. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 5.7% for week 31. [CDC](#)

NHRC: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For the week ending 2 January 2016:

- Influenza: No new cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza among US military basic trainees.
- FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates were elevated at Ft. Benning, MCRD San Diego, and CGTC Cape May.

[Naval Health Research Center](#)

Study says FluMist vaccine does indeed work, contradicting CDC



15 August - It came as a surprise this June when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended against using the nasal flu vaccine for the 2016-2017 flu season, citing a lack of evidence that it works. Now, findings from a Canadian study appear at first blush to contradict the research that led the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices to recommend against that live attenuated vaccine. ... Loeb's study focused on 52

Hutterite communities in rural Canada, because their relative isolation makes for an environment with fewer confounding factors. ... CDC data consistently showed the live nasal vaccine to be very effective in children until 2013, when the vaccine went from including three strains (trivalent) to including four strains (quadrivalent). And therein lies the rub: The new Canadian study used the trivalent vaccine, while ACIP analyzed data using the quadrivalent vaccine, and among U.S. children. [NPR](#)

USAFSAM: DoD Global, Laboratory-Based, Influenza Surveillance Program

During 3 July - 6 August 2016, a total of 48 specimens were collected and received from 23 locations. Results were finalized for 47 specimens from 23 locations. During Week 27, one influenza B virus was identified. One influenza A(H3N2) was identified in Week 29. Approximately 8% of specimens tested positive for influenza during Week 27. The percent positive for Week 29 decreased to approximately 7% as fewer specimens were received. The percent positive for Weeks 28, 30, and 31 was 0%. The influenza percent positive for the season is currently 25%. [US Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

[top of page...](#)

VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Army to remove horses from Louisiana's Fort Polk

17 August - The Army plans to remove hundreds of horses from Fort Polk in Louisiana. An estimated 700 to 750 wild horses roam training lands on and around Fort Polk in the west central part of the state. ... Army officials say the animals represent a safety hazard. Advocates have argued they should be left alone. The Town Talk reports the Army will catch and corral 10-30 horses at a time. The plan calls for the horses first to be offered to animal welfare groups for their adoption program. If animal welfare groups do not take the horses, the Army will offer them to any citizen, and if that fails, the horses will be transported to a livestock auction for sale. [ABC News](#)

FDA issues final rule on food ingredients that may be generally recognized as safe (GRAS)

17 August - The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued this [final rule](#) detailing the criteria for concluding that the use of a substance in human or animal food is "generally recognized as safe" (GRAS). ... [If] an ingredient is GRAS, food additive petition is not required and FDA does not have to approve the ingredient before it can be used in foods. ... FDA's new regulation provides the information FDA believes a company should have to make a GRAS determination or conclusion. Manufacturers remain free to conduct their own

GRAS evaluations and then proceed to incorporate the substance into food. FDA's final rule changes what had been a voluntary GRAS affirmation process into a voluntary "notification" process. Under this new process, if a company decides to use the notification process, the company conducts the requisite safety assessment and then prepares a notification submission to the FDA. ... Once the voluntary notification had been submitted to FDA, the agency is supposed to respond within 180 days ... before the substance can be included in a food. [The National Law Review](#)

Imported scallops linked to hepatitis A in Hawaii

16 August - A 2-month investigation into a hepatitis A outbreak in Hawaii that has sickened 168 people strongly suggests that frozen imported scallops served raw at sushi restaurants is the source, the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) said in a statement today. The DOH said the scallops were served at at Genki Sushi restaurants. The chain of sushi restaurants will be closed until further notice. Virginia Pressler, MD, the DOH's director, said officials have ordered an embargo on the frozen scallops and ordered the restaurants to temporarily close. ... Of the 168 people sickened in the outbreak, 46 were hospitalized. Illness onsets range from Jun 12 to Aug 1. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

Unsafe shrimp and the question of seafood farming

13 August - In the United States, 90 percent of all shrimp eaten is imported. However, only a fraction of those imports is inspected for harmful additives. Overlooking an unsafe shipment can have serious health consequences. Many shrimp farms use antibiotics to keep their shrimp alive, and harmful residues can end up in the mouths of consumers. ... FDA inspectors select a sample for inspection based on a calculated risk score. The risk score takes into account company history, country of origin and other shipment information to determine how likely it is that the given shipment is violating US health standards. A selected sample is then transported to a lab where it is analysed for harmful residues. Despite this selection process, critics question whether the FDA is doing enough to protect consumers from harmful residues. [Al Jazeera](#)

[top of page...](#)

WELLNESS

Death by medical error: adding context to scary headlines

15 August - ... In May of this year, researchers looked at studies published since the 1999 [preventable medical errors] report and extrapolated to 2013. Their conclusion: 251,454 hospitalized patients died from medical errors each year. They further stated that they believed this was an underestimate. ... [Others] disagree. Some of these disagreements are

compelling. For instance, there are about 2.5 million deaths each year in the United States, about 700,000 of which are hospitalized patients. This means that medical errors — in hospitals — would have to account for up to 10 percent of all deaths, or up to more than a third of hospitalized patients. ... The researchers who engage in this type of work do their absolute best to tease apart these factors. ... But even with the best methods available, it's very, very hard to prove what events cause death and which are correlated with it.

[The New York Times](#)

FDA updates draft guidance on premarket safety notifications for dietary supplement industry

11 August - The U.S. Food and Drug Administration today issued a revised draft guidance to improve dietary supplement companies' new dietary ingredient (NDI) premarket safety notifications to the agency. These notifications help the agency identify safety concerns before products reach consumers. Under the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA), the manufacturer or distributor must notify the FDA at least 75 days before beginning to market a dietary supplement that contains a new dietary ingredient (one that was not marketed in the United States before Oct. 15, 1994), unless the NDI is used in the food supply without chemical alteration. Dietary supplements are considered adulterated if they contain an NDI not used in the food supply and the required notification has not been submitted to the FDA 75 days before marketing. [FDA](#)

Kunsan bans three hemp-laced GNC supplements



15 August - Kunsan Air Base in South Korea has taken three GNC supplements containing hemp off the shelves of its base exchange, and has warned service members not to use them. The three products — Sunwarrior Warrior Blend Plant-Based Protein, GNC SuperFoods 25 Protein Plus Probiotic, and GNC SuperFoods Ultra Mega Green Active — contain organic hemp

protein or hemp flour, Kunsan officials said in an Aug. 12 release. Because of those ingredients, Kunsan said they may not be used by service members. Service members who bought them from the BX's GNC should return them for a full refund. [Air Force Times](#)

Lead levels below EPA limits can still impact your health

13 August - ... [The] EPA action level – 15 parts per billion of lead in the water – is not a threshold for public health, so a reading below that number doesn't mean the water is safe. Public officials and school administrators often reference that level to assuage fears about lead in the water. ... The EPA's action level isn't based on medical research. No amount of lead is known to be safe. "It was never designed to identify a safe level of lead in drinking water," Cohen told NPR. He said the number was simply what water utilities told the EPA they could manage with treatment back in the late 1980s, when the EPA's Lead and Copper Rule was drafted. ... The EPA is working on revisions to the rule. But an agency

spokesperson was unable to say whether the action level will be a part of those revisions, or when the agency will go public with its proposed changes. [NPR](#)

Their hair fell out. Should the F.D.A. have the power to act?

15 August - ... More than 21,000 complaints have been lodged against his Wen Hair Care, and [Chaz Dean] ... has found himself at the center of a fierce debate over the government's power to ensure the safety of a cosmetics industry with about \$50 billion in annual sales. The Santa Monica, Calif.-based national distributor of Mr. Dean's hair care line is part of a beauty care trade association that has been aggressively lobbying Congress to block the passage of tough new legislation that would give the Food and Drug Administration the authority to test ingredients used in cosmetics and issue mandatory recalls for products found to be unsafe. The fight has pitted smaller independent players against the giants of the beauty products industry, which back the proposed regulations. ... "People don't realize there is effectively no regulation of cosmetics," said Representative Frank Pallone Jr., Democrat of New Jersey. [The New York Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

USAFRICOM

Africa: Vaccine shortage could spread African yellow fever outbreak abroad, charity warns

16 August - A deadly yellow fever epidemic that has afflicted southern and central Africa this year could soon spread worldwide, exacerbated by a severe vaccine shortage, the charity Save the Children warned on Tuesday. ... Because of the vaccine shortage, just seven million emergency doses are available for the campaign, Save the Children said in its statement: "too few to even fully cover Kinshasa, let alone the whole of the D.R.C." As an emergency measure, on the advice of the World Health Organization, the doses will be severely diluted to treat five people instead of one, Save the Children said. The diluted doses provide a stopgap immunity of about one year, as opposed to lifetime immunity from a full dose. [The New York Times](#)

Central African Republic: Aid agencies race to contain cholera outbreak

18 August - Aid agencies in the Central African Republic said on Thursday they were racing to prevent the first outbreak of cholera in five years from spreading across the conflict-stricken country. The outbreak, which was declared last week, started in the southern Kemo prefecture before spreading to the capital Bangui, and has infected more than 150 people

and killed at least 18 people to date, according to the latest government figures. [Reuters](#)

Nigeria: Mass polio vaccination begins in Nigeria after 2 cases detected

17 August - Nigerian health officials launched a polio vaccination campaign in the northern state of Borno on Aug 15, targeting 999,956 children under the age of 5 years. Last week the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that two children in Borno were paralyzed after contracting polio. These were the first cases of polio reported in Nigeria in more than 2 years. Much of Borno is under the rule of the terrorist organization Boko Haram, making routine vaccination and surveillance a challenge. ... On the first day of the campaign, health workers in 5 local government areas (LGAs) of Borno had vaccinated 201,290 children, with 662 receiving their zero or first time oral polio vaccine polio (OPV) dose, the WHO said today in an update. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

Uganda: Officials scramble to contain cholera at refugee center in Uganda

18 August - Officials in northern Uganda say dozens of cholera cases have been reported at a reception center for South Sudanese refugees. Cholera is an infectious disease usually spread through contaminated water that causes severe diarrhea and dehydration. Left untreated it can lead to death. ... Over the weekend, officials confirmed that 45 cases of cholera were discovered in the Pagirinya refugee reception center in northern Uganda. Although officials say most have been quarantined and treated, it comes at a time when resources are already strained and overcrowding in refugee settlements is a massive concern. [VOA](#)

[top of page...](#)

USCENTCOM

Yemen: Air strike on MSF hospital in Yemen kills at least 11 – aid group

16 August - A Saudi-led coalition air strike hit a hospital operated by Medecins Sans Frontieres in northern Yemen on Monday, killing at least 11 people and wounding 19, the aid group said. A Reuters witness at the scene of the attack in the Abs district of Hajja province said medics could not immediately evacuate the wounded because war planes continued to fly over the area and emergency workers feared more bombings. "The location of the hospital was well known, and the hospital's GPS coordinates were repeatedly shared with all parties to the conflict, including the Saudi-led coalition," the aid group also known as Doctors Without Borders, said in a statement. It said one of its staff members was among

those killed when an aerial bomb hit the hospital compound, also killing 10 patients. "This is the fourth attack against an MSF facility in less than 12 months," the statement said. [Reuters](#)

[top of page...](#)

USEUCOM

The Netherlands: First human case of tick-borne encephalitis virus infection acquired in the Netherlands, July 2016

18 August- In July 2016, the first autochthonous case of tick-borne encephalitis was diagnosed in the Netherlands, five days after a report that tick-borne encephalitis virus (TBEV) had been found in Dutch ticks. A person in their 60s without recent travel history suffered from neurological symptoms after a tick bite. TBEV serology was positive and the tick was positive in TBEV qRT-PCR. [Eurosurveillance](#)

United Kingdom: Britain launches soft drinks sugar tax to fight obesity

18 August - Britain on Thursday said it would tax companies which sell sugary soft drinks and invest that money in health programs for school children, part of a long-awaited strategy to curb childhood obesity that critics say is too weak. Drinks companies were also angered by the plan which urges industry to cut sugar in products aimed at children, saying nearly a third of those aged 2 to 15 are already overweight or obese. [Reuters](#)

United Kingdom: London reports nearly six out of 10 syphilis cases in England

17 August - Health officials in England say the rate of syphilis diagnoses is 3 times higher in London than anywhere else in England. In 2015, nearly 3,000 cases were diagnosed in the capital, accounting for 56% of all cases in England (5,042), [according to a new report published today](#). Syphilis has been diagnosed in all 33 London local authorities and in 2015 most saw an increase in numbers. Cases of syphilis have been reported among heterosexuals and men who have sex with men (MSM). However, MSM are disproportionately affected by the infection. Despite representing around 2% of the London population, in 2015 MSM made up 90% of all syphilis cases. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Canada/U.S.: Cyclospora cases reported in Texas, Canada

12 August - Texas recently issued an advisory to health providers about a rise in *Cyclospora* cases, and Canada yesterday said it was investigating 51 cases in four provinces. In a related development, an increase in *Cyclospora* infections in United Kingdom residents who traveled to Mexico prompted a warning on Aug 10 from Public Health England (PHE). ... In the Texas advisory, state health officials said 55 cases were reported over the previous month. ... The case count has since grown to 78, a TDSHS official told CIDRAP News today. ... The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) said yesterday that 51 cases have been reported from four provinces, most of them from Ontario. The affected provinces are Ontario (44 cases), Quebec (4), Alberta (2), and British Columbia (1). Illness onsets range from May through July. [CIDRAP](#)

U.S.: At least 8 dead, 40,000 homes affected in devastating Louisiana floods

16 August - At least 40,000 homes were damaged and eight people killed in the historic Louisiana floods, the governor said Tuesday, giving a stark assessment of the widespread disaster. Gov. John Bel Edwards spoke at a news conference alongside FEMA administrator Craig Fugate, saying "well over" 20,000 people have been rescued since the flooding began Friday. His office later increased the figure to more than 30,000 rescues. Beginning Friday, a torrent of about 2 feet of rain inundated the southern part of the state over a 48-hour period, and days later many homes and businesses were still underwater. While some areas were entering recovery mode, the governor warned new places downstream could see flooding and that officials are still in search and rescue mode. [Fox News](#)

U.S.: Heat stroke admissions during heat waves in 1,916 U.S. counties

8 August - ... We conducted a large-scale national study among 23.5 million Medicare fee-for-service beneficiaries per year residing in 1,916 US counties during 1999–2010. ... The [relative risk (RR)] declined substantially from 71.0 (21.3–236.2) in 1999 to 3.5 (1.9–6.5) in 2010, and was highest in the northeast and lowest in the west north central regions of the US. We found a lower RR among counties with higher central air conditioning (AC) prevalence. More severe and longer-lasting heat waves had higher RRs. ... Heat stroke hospitalizations associated with heat waves declined dramatically over time, indicating increased resilience to extreme heat among older adults. [BioMed Central](#)

U.S.: More than 80,000 ordered evacuated from massive, uncontrolled Southern California wildfire

17 August - California's newest huge wildfire advanced on thousands of homes Wednesday, feeding on drought-stricken vegetation and destroying an untold number of structures as it expanded to nearly 47 square miles. CBS Los Angeles reports the fire sweeping San Bernardino County is zero percent contained. Flames from what has been dubbed the Blue Cut Fire climbed the flanks of the San Gabriel Mountains toward the town of Wrightwood, where authorities said that only half of the community's 4,500 residents have complied with evacuation orders. Officials estimated that more than 34,000 homes and some 82,000 people were under evacuation warnings. [CBS News](#)

U.S., Ohio: *Crypto* cases top 200 in Columbus and surrounding counties

18 August - In a follow-up to a report last week when an outbreak of *Cryptosporidium* was declared in Central Ohio, the number of cases of the protozoan parasitic infection has more than doubled with health officials now reporting 202 cases in Columbus, Franklin and Delaware counties. According to health officials in the three counties, the number of reported cases so far this year is more than the last 4 years combined. The outbreak is not tied to any one location as a large number of cases include people with multiple exposures at various local recreational water facilities. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

USPACOM

China: China faces a surge in cardiovascular disease, study finds

15 August - High blood pressure and obesity are becoming increasingly common in China, contributing to an epidemic of cardiovascular disease that will probably worsen over the next two decades, according to a study published on Monday. The study ... suggested that changes in lifestyle brought on by China's fast-paced economic growth over the past three decades had contributed to a sharp rise in cardiovascular diseases, such as heart attacks and strokes. In 1979, for example, when the Chinese government began opening up its economy, roughly 8 percent of Chinese adults had high blood pressure. By 2010, the rate had increased to 34 percent. ... China's embrace of Western foods, like red meat and soda, has exacerbated the problem, the researchers found. ... Decreasing levels of physical activity were also a significant factor, the study found. ... Smoking is also widespread, despite efforts by the government to discourage the habit. More than half of Chinese men still smoke. [The New York Times](#)

China: Coal burning causes the most air pollution deaths in China, study finds

17 August - Burning coal has the worst health impact of any source of air pollution in China and caused 366,000 premature deaths in 2013, Chinese and American researchers said on Thursday. Coal is responsible for about 40 percent of the deadly fine particulate matter known as PM 2.5 in China's atmosphere, according to a study the researchers released in Beijing. Those figures are consistent with what Chinese scientists have been saying in recent years about industrial coal burning and its relation to air pollution. ... The study attributed 155,000 deaths in 2013 related to ambient PM 2.5 to industrial coal burning, and 86,500 deaths to coal burning at power plants. Fuel combustion of both coal and biomass in households was another major cause of disease that year, resulting in 177,000 deaths, the study concluded. [The New York Times](#)

China: Human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus

17 August - On 11 August 2016, the National Health and Family Planning Commission of China notified WHO of five additional cases of laboratory-confirmed human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus, including one death. Onset dates ranged from 24 June – 29 July 2016, and three of the five cases are male. Cases ranged in age from 13 – 79 years. ... Two of the five cases reported exposure to live poultry, or were involved in the slaughter of poultry. There was no reported history of exposure to poultry for the other three cases. Cases were reported from two provinces (Fujian and Hebei) and one municipality (Beijing). Cases reported from Hebei and Beijing were reported to be family members. Investigations are on-going, at this stage human-to human-transmission cannot be ruled out, however to date no further transmission has been reported. [WHO](#)

China: The looming public health crises threatening to take down China's health care system

14 August - In the 1980s diabetes was a rarity affecting just one percent of China's population. Now, due to rapid economic development, and the subsequent growth in availability of high-calorie diets, cars and sedentary lifestyles, China has the highest number of diabetics in the world, totaling 109 million people in 2015—roughly 11 percent of the population. ... [The] country's health system as a whole is under reform. ... Currently, access to health care varies greatly by location and economic status, but long lines outside hospitals are a common sight, in part due to a growing ageing population. [Quartz](#)

India: Suicide deaths in India increasing at alarming rate

12 August - Suicide rates in India are climbing faster than in the rest of the world with Indian women having some of the highest rates on the planet. India alone accounts for approximately 30 percent of the world's suicide deaths. In 2013, suicide claimed the lives of

more than a quarter of a million Indians. ... Rates of suicides among women in India are among the highest in the world. ... In absolute numbers of deaths, India is by far the leader for suicide among women, accounting for more than 100,000 deaths. In comparison, China, the country with the second-highest number of female suicides, has just half that number. Some researchers suggest that the rigid marriage system in India may be contributing to the country's high rates. In an article published by the Indian Journal of Psychiatry, the authors highlighted the expectations placed on Indian women to marry and stay married, no matter the cost or negative circumstances such as mistreatment or mental illness.

[Humanosphere](#)

India: What is killing India's babies?

15 August - Nearly a third of the world's newborn deaths occur in India and the rise of antibiotic-resistant bacteria - so-called superbugs - is threatening to wipe out recent successes in reducing the country's infant mortality rate. A recent study of newborns by one of the world's leading microbiology researchers, Professor Ramanan Laxminarayan, estimates that 58,000 babies die in India, each year, from superbugs. ... [Researchers] isolated 15,000 high-risk newborns for [a second] study. The results are alarming. "We found that 60 to 80 percent of organisms that cause infections in newborns in our country are resistant to the kind of antibiotics that we normally use," [a leading paediatrician] says. The rise of antibiotic-resistant bacteria in India is blamed on poor hygiene, overcrowding but most importantly, the uncontrolled use of antibiotics. [Al Jazeera](#)

[top of page...](#)

USSOUTHCOM

Colombia: Malaria caused by the *falciparum* parasite spreading throughout country

15 August - ... Historically in Colombia, as in the rest of Latin America, the type of malaria we usually see is caused by the *vivax* parasite, but this year there were also many cases caused by the *falciparum* strain, a variant that causes the most severe form of the disease. ... In the first six months of 2016, Colombia has registered more than 50,500 cases of malaria, exceeding in just half a year the total number of cases in 2014 and 2015. Ninety-eight per cent have been simple cases: 60 per cent *falciparum*, 35 per cent *vivax*, and 3 per cent due to co-infection with both strains. The cause of this changing pattern is still unknown, but if it is happening in Colombia, it may also be happening (or end up happening) in other countries in the region, like Venezuela or Brazil. [Medecins Sans Frontieres](#)

Peru: Shallow quake in Peru kills at least 4, including U.S. tourist

15 August - A shallow magnitude 5.4 earthquake centered in southern Peru's picturesque Colca Valley killed at least four people, including a 65-year-old U.S. tourist, and left some 30 injured as it toppled adobe homes, authorities said Monday. The quake hit at 9:58 p.m. local time Sunday near the town of Chivay near the city of Arequipa, with an epicenter just 6 miles deep, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. The USGS later confirmed that a 4.3 magnitude had also hit the other side of the country about an hour earlier. The U.S. man died at the Eco Inn Valle del Colca in Yanque, close to Chivay, when part of the hotel's ceiling collapsed on him, said local Gov. Cipriano Llasa. [NBC News](#)

Steep chikungunya rise in Americas reflects Brazil rise

17 August - In its latest update on chikungunya, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) reported 32,492 more cases in the Americas, raising the total to 247,656 for the year. The increase is sharply higher than for recent weeks, with the bulk of the new cases—30,449—related to a month's worth of confirmed cases in Brazil, the Aug 12 update said. ... The number of deaths from chikungunya also rose sharply, by 21, putting the total for 2016 at 50. Most of the new fatalities were from Brazil. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

Venezuela: Hard times in Venezuela breed malaria as desperate flock to mines

15 August - ... Venezuela was the first nation in the world to be certified by the World Health Organization for eradicating malaria in its most populated areas. ... The country's economic turmoil has brought malaria back, sweeping the disease out of the remote jungle areas where it quietly persisted and spreading it around the nation at levels not seen in Venezuela for 75 years, medical experts say. ... With the economy in tatters, at least 70,000 people from all walks of life have been streaming into this mining region over the past year. ..[They] are catching malaria by the tens of thousands. Then, with the disease in their blood, they return home to Venezuela's cities. But because of the economic collapse, there is often no medicine and little fumigation to prevent mosquitoes there from biting them and passing malaria to others, sickening tens of thousands more people and leaving entire towns desperate for help. [The New York Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

[U.S. Military](#) | [Global](#) | [Influenza](#) | [Veterinary/Food Safety](#) | [Wellness](#) | [Contact Us](#)

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