

12 July 2013

Army Public Health Weekly Update

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

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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Until the end of September, the Army Public Health Weekly Update will be published every other week. The next issue will be available on **26 July**.

Subscription or Comments

If you wish to be added to the APH Weekly Update mailing list, removed from the mailing list, or if you have comments or questions about the update, please **contact us**. We welcome your comments. Please feel free to share this update with others who may be interested.



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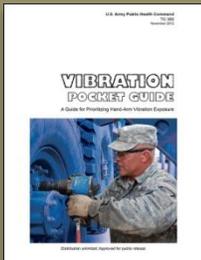
**TG 356 - Vibration
Pocket Guide**

A new technical guide provides:

A way to prioritize work areas needing further investigation relative to worker exposure to hand-arm vibration (HAV).

A method for determining an approximate estimate of a worker's HAV exposure.

A reference document of methods to minimize HAV exposure.



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- U.S.: Federal funds for disaster preparedness decline
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- U.S. health outcomes far worse than other comparable nations, report finds
- U.S. lagging other countries on many health measures
- U.S./Mexico: Doctors working in fast-food restaurants
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- India's food security plan met with skepticism
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USSOUTHCOM

- Brazil unveils plan to hire 10,000 doctors for poor areas
- Tropical Storm Chantal dissipates in Caribbean

**Transport of
Biomedical
Materials Course -
July 15**

This course details the provisions governing biomedical material transport and focuses on regulatory requirements.

Students learn to identify and classify hazardous materials; prepare regulated medical waste, diagnostic specimens, biological products and infectious substances for transport; prepare and certify shipping papers for all classes of hazardous materials; package samples and specimens for transport; and certify shipments of biomedical material for transport.

U.S. MILITARY

Finding simple tests for brain disorders turns out to be complex

8 July - If you're having chest pain, your doctor can test you for a heart attack. If you're having hip pain, your doctor could test for osteoarthritis. But what if you're depressed? Or anxious? Currently there are no physical tests for most disorders that affect the mind... One multimillion-dollar effort, funded by private foundations and the U.S. military, is looking for biomarkers for PTSD and traumatic brain injury. The idea is to explore whether changes in certain brain chemicals like cortisol and norepinephrine, which have been associated with anxiety and fear, could be signals of PTSD, according to Dr. Charles Marmar, head of psychiatry at New York University Langone Medical Center, who is leading the project. "There is a biological footprint of learned fear," Marmar says. The question is, he adds, "are there downstream effects?" If there were, it would be easier to identify soldiers with PTSD and get them treatment. [NPR](#)

Finds raise toxic chemical suspicions at ex-Kadena site

3 July - The Okinawa Defense Bureau and the city of Okinawa uncovered seven more barrels Tuesday at a former U.S. military installation in the prefecture that may have been used to hold toxic chemicals during the Vietnam War, stoking concern among residents. Prior to Tuesday's findings, the city had dug up 19 barrels from the same site in mid-June. The barrels found Tuesday had been buried about 1 meter deep in a soccer ground adjacent to the Kadena Air Base that had been part of the installation until 1987, the Defense Ministry said. The barrels had white stripes around their rims and bore "Dow Chemical" markings, a city official said. The Dow Chemical Co. was one of the main developers of Agent White and other herbicides. Some decayed barrels were also marked "30 gallons," the official added. [Japan Times](#)

IG report: Military burn pits may endanger health

11 July - A military camp in Afghanistan continues to use open-air burn pits to dispose of its solid wastes, potentially endangering the health of the nearly 13,500 people working there and violating the Pentagon's own regulations and guidance, federal investigators say. The Defense Department has said burn pits should only be used as a temporary last resort when no other alternative trash disposal method is feasible. Even then, at bases containing more than 100 personnel, burn pits are supposed to operate a maximum of 360 days. However, the burn pit at Camp Leatherneck in Afghanistan's Helmand province continues to operate some five years after the camp was started, says John F. Sopko, the special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction. The base could avoid using the burn pits altogether if the Pentagon were to make full use of four incinerators that cost \$11.5 million to purchase and install, Sopko said. [Yahoo! News](#)

Zoonotic Disease Report

The first issue of the **Zoonotic Disease Report** is now available on the **USAPHC Periodic Publications and Surveillance Reports** page. The report compiles current human, animal, and entomological information that affects Military members on Army installations.



Johns Hopkins APL and AFHSC release open source electronic disease surveillance software

1 July - The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (APL) and the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center (AFHSC) have released the *Suite for Automated Global Electronic bioSurveillance* (SAGES), a collection of flexible, open-source software products developed for electronic disease surveillance in all settings. Public health officials around the world, especially those with limited capabilities or resources to meet World Health Organization International Health Regulations requirements for outbreak surveillance and reporting, can use a SAGES system that is both effective and secure (<http://www.jhuapl.edu/sages/>). Through this initial open source code release, users can download and customize the various software to fit their needs, as well as contribute to the continued development of SAGES. **AFHSC**

Medical evacuations from Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom, active and reserve components, U.S. Armed Forces



June 2013 - From October 7, 2001 to 31 December 2012, over 20,000 service members were medically evacuated from the Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) theater of combat operations to a medical treatment facility outside of theater... During every month of the period, medical evacuations for

disease and non-battle injuries exceeded those for battle-related injuries. The majority of evacuations (88.7%) occurred among males; however, the rate of medical evacuations was 22 percent higher among females. The major causes of medical evacuations differed among male and female deployers; however, rates of battle injuries and mental health disorders increased in both sexes during the period... Most service members were discharged back to duty after medical evacuation. The findings enforce the need to tailor force health protection policies and practices to the characteristics of the deployed force and the nature of the military operation. **Medical Surveillance Monthly Report**

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GLOBAL

Concern at undetected cases as WHO holds coronavirus talks



9 July - International health experts began urgent talks on the Middle East coronavirus (MERS) on Tuesday amid concerns about larger numbers of milder infections possibly going undetected, the World Health Organization (WHO) said. The

Surety Medicine VTC

Given the ocular hazards and special vision requirements associated with chemical, biological and nuclear surety programs, this video-teleconference will address the potential PRP reliability or suitability issues identified during vision screening or comprehensive vision examinations described in DA PAM 40-506

17 July 2013 at 1:00 pm ET

For VTC, dial-in audio, or Defense Connect Online access contact the **Surety Medicine Program**.

United Nations agency announced last Friday that it was forming an emergency committee, to convene this week, to prepare for a possible worsening of the SARS-like virus. The committee is to assess whether the outbreak constitutes a "public health emergency of international concern", and can recommend measures to try to contain its spread, such as travel restrictions. **Reuters**

Gut bacteria we pick up as kids stick with us for decades

4 July - Most of the microbes in our guts appear to remain stable for years, perhaps even most of our lives, researchers reported Thursday. An analysis of the bacteria in the digestive systems of 37 healthy women over a period of about five years found, for the most part, little variation over time, says molecular biologist Jeffrey Gordon of the Washington University School of Medicine, who led the research. As decades-long internal companions, Gordon says, many microbes "are in a position to shape our lives, to promote our health or, in certain circumstances, contribute to risk for disease." **NPR**

Human head transplants are possible, says neuroscientist

1 July - Scientists have been carrying out head transplants on animals since the 1970s, when a monkey's head was moved to another monkey's body; the resulting creature survived, paralyzed, for a few days. But so far, no one has attempted to put a human head on a different human body. That's because, in part, they haven't had a way to properly connect the donor body's spinal cord up to the head, so the head-body hybrid would be similarly paralyzed below the transplant area. But a new paper by an Italian neuroscientist says the technology now exists "for such linkage," Quartz reports. Dr. Sergio Canavero believes the best method would be to sever both spinal cords with an ultra-sharp knife, then rapidly fuse the two together mechanically, using plastics like polyethylene glycol, which has been successfully used to fuse severed spines in dogs. **USA Today**

New tick-borne illness discovered

1 July - Researchers have discovered a new tick-borne illness whose symptoms are similar to those of Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses but that does not respond to conventional doxycycline in the same way... New England researchers identified two patients from the northeastern United States who were hospitalized for presumptive [human granulocytic anaplasmosis (HGA)] and treated with doxycycline -- but both patients failed to respond. A lack of response to doxycycline after more than 24 hours prompted further analysis. *Borrelia miyamotoi* infection was identified in these patients who previously would have been reported to the Department of Public Health as possible HGA cases. Patients with the new illness, due to *B. miyamotoi*, presented much like the others, with patients complaining of acute febrile illness, with myalgia, headache, neutropenia, thrombocytopenia, and elevated hepatic aminotransferase levels. **MedPage Today**

Solving a viral mystery

1 July - ...The search for bats is part of an investigation into a deadly new viral disease that has drawn scientists from around the world to Saudi Arabia. The virus, first detected there

Detecting and Reporting DoD Cases of Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) Infection

Due to frequent deployments with geographic exposure potential and an unknown spectrum of illness presentation in DoD populations, AFHSC recommends more stringent screening criteria as follows*:

- A person with acute respiratory infection, which may include fever (> 38° C, 100.4° F), cough; AND
- History of travel to the Arabian Peninsula or neighboring countries within 14 days before onset of illness; AND
- Symptoms not already explained by any other infection or etiology, including clinically indicated tests for community-acquired pneumonia according to management guidelines.

*Note that these criteria apply to all suspect cases, even without evidence of pneumonia or ARDS

Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center

last year, is known to have infected at least 77 people, killing 40 of them, in eight countries. The illness, called MERS, for Middle Eastern respiratory syndrome, is caused by a coronavirus... As the case count climbs, critical questions about MERS remain unanswered. Scientists do not know where it came from, where the virus exists in nature, why it has appeared now, how people are being exposed to it, or whether it is becoming more contagious and could erupt into a much larger outbreak, as SARS did. The disease almost certainly originated with one or more people contracting the virus from animals — probably bats — but scientists do not know how many times that kind of spillover to humans has occurred, or how likely it is to keep happening.

[New York Times](#)

The paradox of disease prevention: Celebrated in principle, resisted in practice

3 July - Prevention of disease is often difficult to put into practice. Among the obstacles: the success of prevention is invisible, lacks drama, often requires persistent behavior change, and may be long delayed; statistical lives have little emotional effect, and benefits often do not accrue to the payer; avoidable harm is accepted as normal, preventive advice may be inconsistent, and bias against errors of commission may deter action; prevention is expected to produce a net financial return, whereas treatment is expected only to be worth its cost; and commercial interests as well as personal, religious, or cultural beliefs may conflict with disease prevention. Six strategies can help overcome these obstacles: (1) Pay for preventive services. (2) Make prevention financially rewarding for individuals and families. (3) Involve employers to promote health in the workplace and provide incentives to employees to maintain healthy practices. (4) Reengineer products and systems to make prevention simpler, lower in cost, and less dependent on individual action. (5) Use policy to reinforce choices that favor prevention. (6) Use multiple media channels to educate, elicit health-promoting behavior, and strengthen healthy habits. Prevention of disease will succeed over time insofar as it can be embedded in a culture of health. [Journal of the American Medical Association](#)

Two patients HIV-free after stem cell treatment

3 July - Two HIV-positive men who got a stem cell transplant to treat blood cancers have now been off antiretroviral drugs for several weeks without evidence of the virus rebounding, a researcher said here. The apparent HIV remissions are exciting developments, but it is too early to say the men have been cured, according to Timothy Henrich, MD, of Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. "It is possible that the virus could come back next week," Henrich told reporters before his late-breaker presentation at the 7th International AIDS Society meeting on HIV pathogenesis, treatment, and prevention. But researchers have been unable to find evidence of HIV replication or of HIV DNA integrated into inactive immune cells, although the men have been off HIV therapy for 8 and 15 weeks, respectively, Henrich reported. If that state persists, he said, it might offer clues to a more widely applicable approach to inducing HIV remission, since stem cell transplant is "not a practical strategy" to cure the 34 million people with HIV worldwide. [MedPage Today](#)

**Understanding the
Public's Response to
a Possible Scenario
Involving Inhalation
Anthrax**

CDC COCA Conference Call

Date: Tuesday, July 23,
2013

Time: 2:00 - 3:00 pm ET

Dial In Number:
888-233-9077

Passcode: 8674163

More information

What it takes to cure drug-resistant tuberculosis

9 July - ...Regular TB takes about six to nine months to cure, with four antibiotics daily. Drug-resistant TB takes about two years to cure, and the treatment is much rougher. The drugs are more toxic, and only about 50 percent of people recover. That rate may be a little higher in the U.S. [NPR](#)

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INFLUENZA

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 26, ending June 29, 2013, 6.2% of all deaths reported through the 122-Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to pneumonia and influenza. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 6.5% for week 26. [FluView](#)

DoD Global Laboratory-Based Influenza Surveillance Program

Supplemental Report #1 – EUCOM: 30 September 2012 - 1 June 2013

- Data from Landstuhl Regional Medical Center (LRMC), Germany. LRMC's laboratory is the forward lab for military sites in Europe. This analysis does not include rapid antigen testing.
- Testing has been completed on 1,147 specimens from 29 EUCOM locations, of which 286 were positive for influenza A (123 A(H3N2), 106 A(H1N1)pdm09, 17 influenza A co-infections, and 40 A/not subtyped).
- Seventy-nine specimens were positive for influenza B/Unknown.
- There have been 278 other respiratory viruses isolated (16 adenovirus, 94 RSV, 18 parainfluenza, 90 rhinovirus/enterovirus, 29 metapneumovirus, and 31 non-influenza co-infections). [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

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

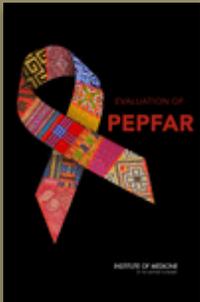
Influenza activity has been low in Europe since week 21/2013. In weeks 25-26/2013:

- All 18 reporting countries experienced low-intensity transmission. Stable trends were reported by almost all reporting countries
- Four countries tested five sentinel specimens, none of which was positive for influenza virus
- No hospitalised laboratory-confirmed influenza cases have been reported since week 21/2013 [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#)

Evaluation of PEPFAR

The U.S. government supports programs to combat global HIV/AIDS through an initiative that is known as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Evaluation of PEPFAR makes recommendations for improving the U.S. government's bilateral programs as part of the U.S. response to global HIV/AIDS.



Google.org: Flu Trends

11 July – Estimates of flu activity based on certain Internet search queries indicate that the level of flu activity is minimal throughout the northern hemisphere and ranges from minimal to intense (Chile) in the southern hemisphere. [Google.org Flu Trends](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For week 27, ending 6 July 2013:

- Influenza: No new cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza (A/H3) among US military basic trainees.
- 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](#)

Variant influenza virus (H3N2v) infections

5 July - The first cases of influenza A (H3N2) variant1 (H3N2v) virus infection this year were reported in June 2013. These cases were associated with exposure to swine at an agricultural fair prior to illness onset. H3N2v viruses... were responsible for a multi-state outbreak in the summer of 2012... Clinical characteristics of the 2012 and 2013 H3N2v cases have been generally consistent with those of seasonal influenza... Rapid detection and characterization of novel influenza viruses remain important components of national efforts to prevent further cases and evaluate clinical illness associated with these viruses... CDC anticipates that state health departments will identify more H3N2v cases in 2013 as agricultural fair season continues. The number of cases may exceed those identified last year. [CDC](#)

PANDEMIC AND AVIAN INFLUENZA

NIH scientists assess history, pandemic potential of H7 influenza viruses

9 July - The emergence of a novel H7N9 avian influenza virus in humans in China has raised questions about its pandemic potential as well as that of related influenza viruses... In recent decades, the scientists write, avian H7 viruses have caused numerous influenza outbreaks among poultry in Europe and North America. Since at least 1918, none of these poultry-adapted viruses has evolved to widely infect humans or cause a pandemic. However, some of them have stably adapted to infect mammals such as horses, suggesting that these viruses might become adapted to and transmissible among other mammals, including humans. In particular, the novel H7N9 virus shares some genes with the H9N2 influenza virus subtype, which has also infected humans. This genetic relatedness may predispose it

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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to more easily adapt to humans than other H7 viruses. The possibility that H7N9 or another H7 virus may adapt to easily infect humans highlights a need for more research on how avian influenza strains adapt to mammals, especially humans, and better integration of influenza research between human and veterinary public health specialists, the study authors conclude. [NIH](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Coke changed caramel color to avoid cancer warning; Pepsi in transition



3 July - In 2011, the state of California created a problem for the soda industry. The caramel color that Coke and Pepsi used to give colas that distinctive brown hue contained a chemical, 4-methylimidazole — 4-MEI — that is listed as a carcinogen by the state... Now, it appears that both companies have managed to complete this transition [to sodas that do not contain 4MEI] sold in the state of California. But a new analysis by the Center for Environmental Health found that 10 of 10 samples of Pepsi products purchased nationwide during the month of June (in locations outside California) contained levels of 4-MEI that were about four to eight times higher than the safety thresholds set by California... In contrast, nine of the 10 samples of Coke products purchased in locations outside California contained little or no trace of 4-MEI. [NPR](#)

FDA bans some imports from Turkey as hepatitis count rises

1 July - The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said this weekend it will detain shipments of pomegranate seeds from Goknur Foodstuffs of Turkey in connection with a hepatitis outbreak that has now grown to 127 cases. The step came after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said on Jun 28 that the hepatitis A outbreak had grown to 127 cases and 55 hospitalizations, up from 122 cases and 54 hospitalizations just 2 days earlier. The number of affected states remained at eight, and no deaths have been reported in the outbreak. [CIDRAP](#)

Smithfield CEO: China deal won't hurt food safety

10 July - Congressional lawmakers grilled the top executive at pork giant Smithfield Foods Wednesday about how the proposed \$4.7 billion purchase of the company by China's largest meat producer might affect the U.S. food supply and agricultural producers. CEO Larry Pope told a packed Senate hearing his company remains committed to producing safe and plentiful food if the deal is approved. He underscored the benefits he said would come

from the takeover by Shuanghui International Holdings, including jobs and higher pork exports... Lawmakers expressed concern the takeover would squeeze the U.S. pork supply by shipping more of the meat to China and leave the U.S. susceptible to food safety concerns that have plagued Chinese companies, including Shuanghui. [USA Today](#)

Tainted cheese linked to *Listeria* infections in 5 states

5 July - Federal and state officials are investigating a *Listeria monocytogenes* outbreak linked to a Wisconsin company's cheese that has so far sickened five people in four midwestern states, killing one and causing a miscarriage in another. News of the outbreak first came to light on Jul 2 when the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) warned consumers about Les Freres cheese made by Crave Brothers Farmstead Classics Cheese, based in Waterloo, Wis., because it has been linked to a multistate *Listeria* outbreak. It said one of the state's residents got sick after eating the cheese in the middle of May. [CIDRAP](#)

Workers at livestock factories face increased MRSA risk

5 July - Biomarkers for livestock-associated *Staphylococcus aureus* were more prevalent in workers at industrial livestock operations than in those at antibiotic-free, free-range (AFFR) farms, researchers found. Nasal swab testing revealed that 36.6% of industrial livestock workers carried multidrug-resistant *S. aureus* (MDRSA) compared with 19.0% of AFFR workers, according to Christopher D. Heaney, PhD, of the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University, and colleagues. Complete resistance to tetracycline was found in 46.3% of *S. aureus*-positive workers in industrial operations compared with 2.4% of *S. aureus*-positive participants working with free-range livestock, the researchers reported online in *PLOS ONE*. [MedPage Today](#)

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WELLNESS

High-tech gadgets monitor seniors' safety at home

10 July - ...Research is growing with high-tech gadgets that promise new safety nets for seniors determined to live on their own for as long as possible... Common-sense interventions like grab bars in bathrooms and taping down rugs to prevent tripping can make homes safer as seniors deal with chronic illnesses. Technology is the next frontier, and a far cry from those emergency-call buttons seniors sometimes wear to summon help. Already, some companies are offering monitoring packages that place motion sensors on the front door, a favorite chair, even the refrigerator, and then send an alert to a family member if there's too little activity over a certain period of time. Other gadgets can make pill bottles buzz when it's time for a dose and text a caregiver if it's not taken, or promise to switch off a stove burner that's left on too long. Researchers at the University of Missouri aim to go further: Their experiments show that certain automatic monitoring can spot

changes — such as restlessness in bed or a drop in daytime activity — that occur 10 days to two weeks before a fall or a trip to the doctor or hospital. [Yahoo! News](#)

Kids' pneumonia shots helping young and old

11 July - Vaccinating children against pneumococcal pneumonia cut hospitalizations for the infection over the past decade in nearly all age groups, particularly the youngest and oldest, a nationwide study showed. Annual hospitalizations for pneumonia fell by 10% overall -- an age-adjusted 55 per 100,000 people -- after addition of the 7-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine to the childhood immunization schedule in 2000, Marie R. Griffin, MD, MPH, of Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., and colleagues found. [MedPage Today](#)

Omega-3 supplements linked to prostate cancer



11 July - Taking health supplements with omega-3 fatty acids can increase the chances of contracting prostate cancer, according to new research. Omega-3 fatty acids, found naturally in oily fish and lauded for their anti-inflammatory properties, were found to increase the risk of high-grade disease by 71 percent. Taking omega-3 was also associated with a 44 percent greater chance of developing low-grade prostate cancer. Overall, the fatty acids raised the risk of all prostate cancers by 43%. [Fox News](#)

Prescription painkiller overdoses

July 2013 - Nearly 48,000 women died of prescription painkiller* overdoses between 1999 and 2010. Deaths from prescription painkiller overdoses among women have increased more than 400% since 1999, compared to 265% among men. For every woman who dies of a prescription painkiller overdose, 30 go to the emergency department for painkiller misuse or abuse. About 18 women die every day of a prescription painkiller overdose in the US, more than 6,600 deaths in 2010. Prescription painkiller overdoses are an under-recognized and growing problem for women. Although men are still more likely to die of prescription painkiller overdoses (more than 10,000 deaths in 2010), the gap between men and women is closing. Deaths from prescription painkiller overdose among women have risen more sharply than among men... This rise relates closely to increased prescribing of these drugs during the past decade. [CDC](#)

Skin cancer on the rise in young women

5 July - ...But as I learned more about skin cancer, I discovered that it is becoming increasingly common, especially among young women. A recent study by the Mayo Clinic found that melanoma, the most serious type, had increased eightfold for women under 40 since 1970. "There is this thought that, 'It won't happen to me because I'm young,' but that's not true anymore," said Dr. Jerry Brewer, a dermatologist at the Mayo Clinic and an author of the study. [New York Times](#)

Therapists say African Americans are increasingly seeking help for mental illness

9 July - Many people, regardless of race, have a hard time talking about mental illness. But for many African Americans, the topic has carried particularly negative connotations — to the point where it's easier to talk about drug or alcohol addiction than depression or anxiety. In 2008, whites received mental health treatment or counseling at nearly twice the rate of blacks, and whites received prescription medication for mental health-related issues at more than twice the rate of blacks, according to the 2010 National Healthcare Disparities Report. But African Americans' acceptance of therapy has been rising in the past decade, providers say, particularly among the young and those with more education and in those urban areas with large black populations. There have been no large-scale studies about the recent shift, but providers interviewed said they have seen it in their work and in their communities. [Washington Post](#)

WHO: Tobacco control measures avert millions of deaths



10 July - The World Health Organization reports [tobacco control measures](#) can avert millions of deaths. A new WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic 2013 shows hundreds of millions of non-smokers are less likely to start smoking because of national anti-tobacco campaigns that are reaching three billion people worldwide. WHO estimates some three billion people globally now are covered by at least one life-saving measure to limit tobacco use. In 2008, WHO identified six tobacco control measures that are the most effective in reducing tobacco-use. [VOA](#)

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USAFRICOM

Liberia: Boost for fistula treatment

10 July - The fight against fistula is gaining ground in Liberia, where doctors and nurses at 48 health clinics have been trained to treat the condition. Since the launch of the Liberia Fistula Program (LFP) in 2007, a government scheme supported by international network Zonta International and UNFPA, doctors have treated 1,026 fistula cases. All treatment is now free. While only six doctors in the country are able to perform the surgery, 65 professional nurses have been trained to train colleagues in fistula management in rural health clinics. Some 300 trainees are currently enrolled. [IRIN](#)

Nigeria: Polio - Kaduna govt goes hunting for missing kids

6 July - Kaduna State government is hunting, discovering and administering polio vaccine on children in the state, who skipped the last routine exercise in southern Kaduna, in an effort to eradicate the crippling virus. As the battle for the total eradication of Polio in Kaduna State becomes more serious, state government officials have launched and intensified manhunt for children who missed the last immunization. Weekly Trust gathered that the incidence of two missing children in Zangon-Kataf community recently compelled the Kaduna state deputy governor, Ambassador Nuhu Audu Bajoga to lead the search into some huts in southern Kaduna to find the children and have them immunized. [Weekly Trust](#)

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USCENTCOM

Saudi Arabia: Hajj virus threat spurs WHO's Chan to call emergency meeting



10 July - Margaret Chan, the director-general of the World Health Organization, said she decided to convene the agency's emergency committee for just the second time to help protect travelers to the annual Hajj pilgrimage against the coronavirus that's killed 38 people in Saudi Arabia. The 15-member committee, which includes Saudi Arabia's deputy health minister Ziad Memish and health officials from six other predominantly Muslim countries, met via teleconference today to decide whether Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus, or MERS-CoV, represents a public health emergency of international concern. [Times of Oman](#)

Saudi Arabia: Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) – WHO update

7 July - The Ministry of Health (MoH) in Saudi Arabia has announced one additional laboratory-confirmed case and two deaths in previously confirmed cases of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) infection in Saudi Arabia. The new case is a 56 year-old female from Hafr Al- Batin city, North-eastern region. She is a health care worker with contact of a previously reported laboratory confirmed MERS-CoV case who subsequently recovered and was discharged. In addition, the two deaths in previously confirmed cases are a 53 year-old citizen from the Eastern Region and a two year-old male from Jeddah. [WHO](#)

Tajikistan: Rich with water but little to drink



10 July - The Central Asian nation of [Tajikistan](#) has huge rivers. They begin atop some of the world's highest mountains and then flow west through the country's lush, green valleys. Yet for many Tajik families, getting enough water each day is still a struggle. A study by the United Nations last year [found](#) that most Tajiks lack access to safe, clean water. Many people rely on rivers and open ditches for drinking water, which are often fouled by animals, agricultural runoff and even human sewage. The situation has gotten steadily worse as infrastructure built by the Soviets has decayed and failed. [NPR](#)

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Europe: Air pollution linked to higher risk of lung cancer and heart failure

9 July - Air pollution increases the risk of lung cancer even at levels lower than those recommended by the European Union, which are also standard in the UK, says a paper in the *Lancet Oncology* journal. Although smoking is a far bigger cause of lung cancer, a significant number of people will get the disease because of where they live. The study, codenamed Escape, combined data from 17 cohort studies in nine European countries covering a total of almost 313,000 people... It looked at the effect of long-term exposure to nitrogen oxides and particulate matter – PM2.5, which has a diameter of less than 2.5 micrometres, and PM10, with a diameter less than 10 micrometres. Among the participants, 2,095 developed lung cancer during an average 13 years of follow-up. The researchers, led by Ole Raaschou-Nielsen from the Danish Cancer Society Research Centre, found that for every increase of five micrograms per cubic metre of PM2.5 pollution, the risk of lung cancer rose by 18%, and for every increase of 10 micrograms per cubic metre in PM10 pollution the risk increased by 22%. They found no link between lung cancer and nitrogen oxides.

[Guardian](#)

Europe: Carbapenemase-producing *Enterobacteriaceae*, February 2013

11 July - The spread of carbapenemase-producing *Enterobacteriaceae* (CPE) is a threat to healthcare delivery, although its extent differs substantially from country to country. In February 2013, national experts from 39 European countries were invited to self-assess the current epidemiological situation of CPE in their country. Information about national management of CPE was also reported. The results highlight the urgent need for a coordinated European effort on early diagnosis, active surveillance, and guidance on infection control measures. [Eurosurveillance](#)

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Mexico takes title of "most obese" from America



8 July - Modern Mexicans' urban lifestyle, rising incomes and myriad consumption vices have fed a seemingly endless struggle that's killing thousands more of them each year. Yep, we're talking the desperate Battle of the (body) Bulge. Even as nearly half its people are poor and as officials launch a national anti-hunger campaign, Mexico by some accounts recently has replaced the United States as the chubbiest of the globe's larger countries. [CBS News](#)

Update: Recommendations for Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

12 July - On June 11, 2013, CDC issued interim infection prevention and control recommendations for hospitalized patients with known or suspected Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) infection in U.S. hospitals (1). To date, no MERS-CoV cases have been reported in the United States; however, cases have been reported in eight other countries (2). Recent published reports (3,4) have described limited health-care transmission of MERS-CoV, including cases among health-care personnel in international settings. These published reports highlight the need for rapid detection of infectious patients and adherence to correct infection prevention measures to prevent transmission of the virus among patients, health-care personnel, and visitors. In coming months, the U.S. health-care system might be called upon to provide care to patients infected with MERS-CoV. Front-line providers and health-care organizations should be prepared to care for MERS-CoV patients as part of routine operations. To aid providers and facilities, CDC has developed checklists that identify key actions that can be taken now to enhance preparedness for treating persons with MERS-CoV infection and compiled a [list of preparedness resources](#). [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

U.S.: As Arizona fires rage on, inquiry into firefighters' death focuses on wind

2 July - A swelling army of firefighters aided by bulldozers, air tankers and helicopters struggled on Tuesday to subdue the forest blaze that killed 19 elite firefighters on Sunday and continued carving a destructive path through two mountainside communities whose residents were forced to flee... The firefighters' chief opponent has been the wind, which gusted at 20 miles per hour throughout the day from the south and southwest, only to twirl under thick storm clouds that have for days moved over the area in the late afternoons... Increasingly, the shifting winds — part of a meteorological phenomenon known as outflow — have become the main focus of investigators who arrived from several states on Tuesday to begin piecing together what happened to the 19 members of the Granite Mountain Hotshots, the elite firefighters killed Sunday. [New York Times](#)

U.S.: Federal funds for disaster preparedness decline

8 July - The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has awarded a total of \$916 million in emergency preparedness grants for states and territories for fiscal year 2013, a decrease of \$55 million from the previous year. In a Jul 3 announcement, the HHS said the grants include \$584 million for the Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) cooperative agreement and a \$332 million award for the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) cooperative agreement. Last year for the first time the HHS aligned the two programs to boost efficiency and streamline collaboration between the public health and healthcare systems. [CIDRAP](#)

U.S.: Health officials blame heroin for spike in Maryland overdose deaths

10 July - Heroin overdose deaths soared last year in Baltimore, a city that has struggled with one of the highest rates of heroin addiction in the nation and with the violence that comes with illegal drug dealing. In 2012, 126 people died in the city from heroin overdoses, a jump of 66 percent from the previous year, when 76 died, reversing recent declines, according to a Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene report released Wednesday.

[Baltimore Sun](#)

U.S. health outcomes far worse than other comparable nations, report finds



10 July - Compared to other major nations, the overall health outcomes of the United States have been found to be significantly lacking. In one of the most comprehensive studies of its kind, researchers from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) found that in nearly every major cause of premature death – from heart disease to interpersonal violence – the U.S. fares worse than its economic peers... While the United States has made strides in some major areas – such as preventing premature deaths from stroke and breast cancer – the country has fallen behind most nations in regards to deaths from many other conditions. Ischemic heart disease still remains the leading cause of premature death, measured in years of life lost. [Fox News](#)

U.S. lagging other countries on many health measures

10 July - Life expectancy has increased in the United States over the last two decades, but Americans are also spending more of their lives in poor health, a sweeping new study finds. And despite being the biggest spender on health care in the world, the United States lags behind many other prosperous countries in the leading causes of premature death, including heart disease, violence, traffic accidents and diabetes. The main culprit behind the U.S. health problems appears to be eating habits, which are too low in fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds, and too high in sodium, processed meats and trans fatty acids, according to the report. [Medline Plus](#)

U.S./Mexico: Doctors working in fast-food restaurants

4 July - ...In Southern California alone, there are an estimated 3,000 medically trained Latino immigrant doctors who aren't practicing medicine. "We had always wondered, where are the (immigrant) doctors from Latin America?" says Dr. Patrick Dowling, chairman of UCLA's Department of Family Medicine. "And we stumbled upon them working in menial jobs." Instead of treating patients, Dowling says, many doctors spend years cleaning houses or working on construction sites and in fast-food chain restaurants... Latino immigrant doctors have a harder time than other immigrants transitioning into the U.S. health system, according to Dowling. "Often they work in their own country for 10 years and then come here and they aren't licensed, and then they see how hard the process is and they have to get an odd job to support themselves" ...Dowling and his colleague, Dr. Michelle Bholat, have developed a program at UCLA that helps fast-track Latino immigrant doctors into the U.S. health care system, the International Medical Graduate program. [CNN](#)

U.S.: Surgical errors rise in Mass. despite new controls

7 July - Massachusetts hospitals are reporting more errors during surgery and invasive procedures, even after an intensive, decade-long campaign to reduce these mistakes — called "never events" because they're preventable and, with reasonable precautions, simply shouldn't happen... Several of them said the reported number of such incidents is rising as more care shifts to outpatient clinics, procedure rooms, and physicians' offices, where administrators and caregivers generally have been less vigilant about implementing safety protocols of the sort required in most hospital operating rooms. Hospital leaders said they are doing a better job recognizing and reporting these errors and training staff. [Boston Globe](#)

U.S.: Syphilis cases rising in Detroit, driven by young men in their 20s

7 July - Facing an alarming surge in syphilis cases, Detroit and state health authorities are launching a campaign alerting the public about the sexually transmitted disease that they say is making a comeback among a much younger crowd than in previous years. "One of the things we're learning is that with adolescents and young adults — they've not seen it, not experienced it, and they're not seeing the early signs and symptoms," said Karen Krzanowski, manager of the sexually transmitted disease section of the Michigan Department of Community Health... On average, about 100 cases of primary- and secondary-stage syphilis are reported for Detroit each year, with the number of cases increasing. Last year, the city logged 123 cases. By May 31, 82 cases had been reported, Davis said. [Detroit Free Press](#)

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Bangladesh: Clothiers act to inspect factories

7 July - A mostly European consortium of 70 retailers and apparel brands has agreed to inspect within nine months all Bangladeshi garment factories that supply the companies. In a plan to be announced on Monday, the companies agreed that they would take responsibility and immediate action wherever serious safety problems are found. They pledged "to insure that sufficient funds are available to pay for renovations and other safety improvements." The companies are announcing details of their ambitious, legally binding plan after negotiating with labor unions and nongovernment organizations since mid-May... Very few American companies have joined the effort. [New York Times](#)

China: Air pollution in Northern China blamed for drop in life span



9 July - Researchers studying the health impact of China's air pollution say that people in the south of the country are living on average 5.5 years longer than their counterparts in the north. Using health and pollution data collected by official Chinese sources, scientists concluded that decades of burning coal have led to a rise in deaths from cardio-respiratory diseases for people living north of the Huai River - considered the dividing line between northern and southern China. The academics from the United States, Israel and China concluded that government coal policies in force since China's Mao era have resulted in higher levels of total suspended particulates north of the Huai River. [VOA](#)

China floods death toll rises



11 July - Floodwaters surging through Himalayan foothills in western China have swept away bridges, houses and hillsides, leaving at least 25 people dead and dozens missing. Flooding in Sichuan was the worst for 50 years in some areas of the province, with more than 100,000 people forced to evacuate their homes. Nationwide at least 44 people have died, around 66 are missing and at least 1.6 million have been otherwise affected since Sunday, according to figures from the civil affairs ministry and the official Xinhua news agency. Thousands of homes have been destroyed or damaged and transportation has been brought to a virtual standstill in hard-hit areas. Many of the casualties in Sichuan were from a massive landslide at a resort outside the city of Dujiangyan. [Guardian](#)

India's food security plan met with skepticism

8 July - India's government is moving forward with a landmark measure that will provide highly subsidized food grains to more than two-thirds of the country's 1.2 billion

population. With food inflation hitting 8.25 percent in May, New Delhi resident Geeta Kashyap bargains even harder at the market to keep costs down. As food prices rise, she is left to wonder how the poorest in India can survive. "Everything is so expensive now, diesel is expensive, gasoline is expensive, food is getting expensive - tomatoes that used to be 20 rupees a kilo are now 70 rupees a kilo - how can someone eat?" asked Kashyap. It's a question the Indian government wants to answer with the food security program - aimed at guaranteeing a majority of India's population five kilograms of rice, wheat and coarse cereal a month at extremely cheap rates of one to three rupees or a few pennies per kilogram.

VOA

India: Dengue-like disease hits Bangalore

9 July - A mysterious, dengue-like disease is spreading in Bangalore. The still unidentified ailment is affecting many children, triggering a sharp fall in blood platelet count, multiple organ failure, and eventual death. At least five deaths have been reported from a prominent city hospital alone with more feared in other medical set-ups, both private and government. Based on the symptoms — high fever, vomiting and low platelet count—many doctors have dubbed it "dengue shock syndrome," a serious form of dengue. But they are not so sure, and want the government laboratories to label the disease... Doctors are more worried because patients are mostly children and adolescents. Dr Preeti Galgali, a consultant paediatrician and central executive board member for the Indian Academy of Paediatricians, told Deccan Herald: "There are three types of dengue—the dengue fever, the haemorrhagic dengue and the dengue shock. The first one is the most common one and the latter two the serious forms." [Deccan Herald](#)

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USSOUTHCOM

Brazil unveils plan to hire 10,000 doctors for poor areas

8 July - Brazil has unveiled plans to hire 10,000 doctors to work in poorly served areas as part of wider reforms. The shake-up will include employing foreign doctors for the first time from September, as well as changes to the university medicine curriculum. Students graduating from 2015 must serve two years in the public sector. The changes come about a month after millions took to the streets in mass demonstrations against poor public services, corruption and other issues. The health ministry said the "More Doctors" scheme was modelled on health services in countries such as Britain and Sweden. [BBC](#)

Tropical Storm Chantal dissipates in Caribbean

10 July - Tropical Storm Chantal dissipated into a tropical wave late Wednesday after skirting the southern coasts of the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The storm's remnants could bring heavy rain to areas where many people live in vulnerable homes of plywood

and corrugated steel and where flooding is common. In both countries, people fortified houses with extra tarps and wood and gathered supplies, largely ignoring warnings to leave their neighborhoods... The storm passed overnight to the south of Puerto Rico. Authorities in the U.S. island territory said some 7,000 people are without power and more than 2,500 people without water. More than 20 people also sought shelter at a school in the southern city of Ponce, but officials said they would return home soon. [USA Today](#)

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