

27 March 2015

# Army Public Health Weekly Update

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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**National Disabled  
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Sports Clinic:  
29 March-3 April**

Co-sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs and DAV (Disabled American Veterans), the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic is a world-leader in adaptive winter sports instruction for U.S. military Veterans and active duty servicemen and women with disabilities. [Learn more.](#)

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

Look under Hot Topics & Current Issues.

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

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## U.S. MILITARY

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### Defense Department to do more to assist warfighters with mental illness

20 March - The Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are pledging to do more to help warfighters face the challenge of resuming a normal life after a long time spent in combat zones. Part of that challenge can be coping with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental illnesses. Combined, DoD and VA have spent more than \$1.5 billion during the past six years for psychiatric treatment, counseling and the development of peer-help groups to assist service members who need care for mental illness. Both agencies are committed to doing even more. [Health.mil](#)

### MHS: Measles and mumps among Service members and other beneficiaries of the U.S., Jan 2007–Dec 2014

February 2015 - Measles and mumps are highly communicable infectious diseases whose causative viruses are spread through airborne droplets and infected surfaces. Individuals at highest risk are infants and unvaccinated individuals. Despite effective vaccines, there have been recent increases in incidence in the U.S. of both infections. During the surveillance period, there were 14 confirmed measles cases and 99 confirmed mumps cases among U.S. military members and other beneficiaries of the U.S. Military Health System. Only one of the confirmed cases of measles was in a service member. Children aged 5 years and younger accounted for the greatest proportion of confirmed measles cases (50.0%); the greatest proportions of confirmed mumps cases were for children aged 1–5 years and adults aged 26–30 years (22.2% and 17.2%, respectively). California had more cases of both measles and mumps than any other state. Recent trends in measles and mumps in civilian populations in the U.S. highlight the importance of primary and booster vaccinations. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

### Veterans hurt by chemical weapons in Iraq get apology

25 March - The under secretary of the Army on Wednesday apologized for the military's treatment of American service members exposed to chemical weapons in [Iraq](#), and he announced new steps to provide medical support to those with lingering health effects and to recognize veterans who had been denied awards. Under Secretary Brad R. Carson acknowledged that the military had not followed its own policies for caring for troops exposed to old and abandoned chemical munitions that had been scattered around [Iraq](#), and he vowed improvement. [New York Times](#)

## Virtual reality helping warfighters with PTSD

24 March - If you think you are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, a new form of help is available at [Landstuhl Regional Medical Center](#), or LRMC, where they can recreate the look, sounds and smell of a deployed environment to help you revisit and cope with events that have affected you so profoundly. Approximately 30 patients have been treated with positive results through the Virtual Reality Exposure Therapy, or VRET, program since it was donated to LRMC in October 2014 by the Wounded Warrior Project. Results have been good, said Maj. (Dr.) Michael Valdovinos, chief of outpatient behavioral health there. [Armed with Science, DoD Science Blog](#)

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### GLOBAL

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## The hidden epidemic: The unseen world of childhood TB

24 March - In today's global tuberculosis (TB) epidemic, children have become an invisible population -- dying from this curable disease because they're hard to find and difficult to diagnose. Often unseen by health services, children embody a "hidden epidemic," which public health experts are now struggling to beat. In 2013, 550,000 children were estimated to be infected worldwide, according to the World Health Organization. [CNN](#)

## Mayo Clinic study of thousands of brains reveals tau as driver of Alzheimer's disease

23 March - By examining more than 3,600 postmortem brains, researchers at [Mayo Clinic's campuses in Jacksonville, Florida](#), and [Rochester, Minnesota](#), have found that the progression of dysfunctional tau protein drives the cognitive decline and memory loss seen in [Alzheimer's disease](#). Amyloid, the other toxic protein that characterizes Alzheimer's, builds up as dementia progresses, but is not the primary culprit, they say. The findings, published in [Brain](#), offer new and valuable information in the long and ongoing debate about the relative contribution of amyloid and tau to the development and progression of cognitive dysfunction in Alzheimer's, says the study's lead author, Melissa Murray, Ph.D., a [neuroscientist](#) at Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville. [Mayo Clinic News](#)

## Mosquitoes can smell inside your blood



25 March - Garlic lovers: You can smell them before you see them. Some people would say they even stink! Hours after you eat garlic, your breath can still smell bad, as your body digests compounds in the plant and releases them into your blood. Now scientists say a similar process might explain why people infected with malaria attract more mosquitoes than those not

infected. Malaria-infected blood releases odors that lure mosquitoes, scientists at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis [reported](#) Tuesday in the journal *mBio*. But here's the kicker: The parasite makes these odors in a way similar to the way flowers make their sweet fragrance. "You can basically think of a malaria parasite as a plant in the dark," says molecular microbiologist [Audrey Odom](#), who led the study. [NPR](#)

## New global fund to help countries defend tobacco control

18 March - A new global fund is being launched to help developing countries fend off challenges to tobacco control measures by cigarette makers. The \$4m (£2.7m) fund is a joint effort by Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. They say tobacco control gains are being put at risk by the industry's use of trade agreements and litigation. But tobacco companies argue they are protecting investments, including intellectual property rights. The fund has been launched in Abu Dhabi at an international conference on tobacco control. [BBC News](#)

## Rapid blood test to 'cut antibiotic use'

19 March - A new blood test can help doctors tease out whether an infection is caused by a virus or bacteria within two hours, research in *Plos One* suggests. It could stop patients being given antibiotics when they are not needed, scientists say. It is still at a laboratory stage but the team is working on a portable device too. Independent experts say the work addresses a serious problem. Further studies are being carried out. [BBC News](#)

## EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE

### Ebola cases drop as progress shown in Guinea, Sierra Leone

25 March - Ebola-hit nations in West Africa showed more signs of progress last week, boasting a sharp drop in Guinea's cases and the lowest weekly total of the year so far, the World Health Organization (WHO) said today. The WHO said 79 lab-confirmed Ebola cases were reported in the three countries last week, down from 150 the week before. They include 45 infections in Guinea, 33 in Sierra Leone, and 1 in Liberia. The outbreak total has now reached 24,872 confirmed, probable, or suspected cases in the three countries. Outbreak hot spots in the region are now limited to two capitals—Conakry and Freetown—and a few of their surrounding districts. Deaths increased by 132 last week, boosting that total to 10,311. [CIDRAP](#)

## Ebola far deadlier for young children



25 March - Ebola appears to do its damage worse in young children than it does in adults, killing 90 percent of children under the age of one who become infected, a new study has found. The joint study by the World Health Organization and Imperial College London found that, although infection rates are lower in children than adults,

babies and toddlers who get the disease have a far slimmer chance of survival. [VOA](#)

## Emails: UN health agency resisted declaring Ebola emergency

20 March - In a delay that some say may have cost lives, the World Health Organization resisted calling the Ebola outbreak in West Africa a public health emergency until last summer, two months after staff raised the possibility and long after a senior manager called for a drastic change in strategy, The Associated Press has learned. Among the reasons the United Nations agency cited in internal deliberations: worries that declaring such an emergency — akin to an international SOS — could anger the African countries involved, hurt their economies or interfere with the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca. Those arguments struck critics, experts and several former WHO staff as wrong-headed. [The Washington Post](#)

## Official: Ebola survivor may have infected new Liberia case

24 March - A woman who tested positive for Ebola in Liberia last week is dating a survivor of the disease, a health official said Tuesday, offering a possible explanation for how she became the country's first confirmed case in weeks. Ebola is typically transmitted through contact with the blood, vomit or feces of people who are sick. Survivors of Ebola are not generally considered contagious, but the virus lingers in semen, and so scientists urge survivors not to have sex for three months after recovering. Even though sexual transmission of Ebola has not yet been documented, it may be possible. [AP](#)

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## INFLUENZA

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

- For Week 10:
- NORTHCOM: Influenza activity continues to decrease and while A/H3N2 viruses have been most common this season, an increase in influenza viruses has been identified in recent weeks.
- EUCOM: High influenza activity was seen in Germany and activity in Italy is now low.
- PACOM: Moderate influenza activity was seen in Hawaii.
- CENTCOM and AFRICOM: Influenza activity was minimal to low.
- SOUTHCOM: Influenza activity remains low. [AFHSC DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary](#)

### CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 10 (March 8-14, 2015), influenza activity continued to decrease, but remained elevated in the United States.

- Viral Surveillance: Of 15,033 specimens tested and reported by U.S. World Health Organization (WHO) and National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS) collaborating laboratories during week 10, 1,685 (11.2%) were positive for influenza.
- Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality: The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was above the epidemic threshold. [FluView](#)

### China: Avian influenza, human

23 March - The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today [23 Mar 2015] received notification from the National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFPC) of a human case of avian influenza A(H5N1) affecting a man aged 34 in Yunnan. According to the information provided by NHFPC, the patient lives in Kunming and had been exposed to poultry. He developed a fever on 13 Mar 2015 and attended a local hospital on 15 Mar 2015. He is currently hospitalised for treatment and is in a serious condition. His specimen, which was tested by the relevant authority, was positive for avian influenza A(H5N1). "Locally, we will remain vigilant and work closely with the World Health Organization and relevant health authorities to monitor the latest developments," a spokesman for the DH said. Health surveillance measures have been implemented at all boundary control points... [ProMED-mail](#)

## DoD Global, Laboratory-Based, Influenza Surveillance Program

During 22 February - 7 March 2015, a total of 265 specimens were collected and received from 48 locations. Results were finalized for 160 specimens from 45 locations. During Week 8, the laboratory identified 38 influenza A(H3N2), two influenza A, and 28 influenza B. During Week 9, 11 influenza A(H3N2) and 17 influenza B were identified. [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

## Flu News Europe

Week 11/2015 (9-15 March 2015):

- Influenza activity continues to circulate at medium levels in 28 out of 45 countries but has passed its peak in most European countries. While the proportion of influenza virus positive samples is similar to that of the previous week (41%), the overall number of influenza detections further decreased.
- Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, A(H3N2) and type B viruses continued to circulate in the Region, with an increasing proportion of type B viruses. For the region as a whole influenza A(H3N2) viruses were most prominent, but several countries from the southern and far-eastern part of the Region (Georgia, Greece, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Turkey and Ukraine), reported predominantly sentinel influenza B virus detections over the season.
- This season, there are no indications of substantial reduced sensitivity of influenza A or B viruses to the neuraminidase inhibitors oseltamivir or zanamavir. [Flu News Europe](#)

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

For the week ending 14 March 2015:

- Influenza: Two cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza (A/H3) among US military basic trainees.
- Adenovirus: Vaccination against types 4 and 7 adenovirus was instituted at all basic training centers by mid-November 2011. FRI rates and the proportion of FRI cases positive for adenovirus have decreased markedly since vaccine was reintroduced. Sporadic adenovirus cases at basic training centers 2012-14. FRI rates remain low in general.
- FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates were moderately elevated at Fort Leonard Wood and at or below expected values at the remaining seven centers. [NHRC Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)

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

For the week ending 14 March 2015 (Week 10)

Although respiratory specimen testing continues to decrease, the percent of influenza A positive specimens was stable or slightly increased across all Army medical regions except ERMIC.

- Influenza-like illness (ILI) activity: Army incident ILI outpatient visits in week ten were 2% lower than in the previous week.
- Influenza cases: 11 hospitalized influenza cases were reported to USAPHC in weeks nine and ten: 5 active duty (AD) Service members (SM) and 6 non-AD beneficiaries. Six individuals were vaccinated. To date, 86 cases have been reported during this influenza season: 22 AD SM and 64 non-AD beneficiaries.
- Viral specimens: During week ten, 427 of 1363 (31%) laboratory specimens tested positive for respiratory pathogens; 149 of 1014 (15%) specimens tested for influenza A were positive. ERMIC reported the most influenza A-positive specimens (31%), followed by SRMC (28%), NRMIC (25%), PRMC (24%), WRMC (8%), and CENTCOM (0%). [USAPHC U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report](#)

## WHO Influenza Update

23 March - Globally, influenza activity remained elevated in the northern hemisphere with influenza A(H3N2) viruses predominating, although some countries in Asia, Europe and North Africa reported high levels of activity associated with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses.

- In North America, influenza activity was decreasing but remained above the threshold. Influenza A(H3N2) viruses predominated so far this season.
  - In Europe, influenza activity appeared to have peaked in many countries. Influenza A(H3N2)virus continued to be predominant.
  - In northern Africa and the middle East, influenza activity continued to decrease with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses predominating, except in Egypt, where there was co-circulation with influenza A(H3N2) and influenza B viruses.
  - In the temperate countries of eastern Asia, influenza A(H3N2) was predominant Asia with very little influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus activity, while in western Asia, influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and influenza B were predominant.
  - In tropical countries of the Americas, influenza activity remained low with mainly A(H3N2) viruses detected.
  - In tropical Asia, influenza activity patterns varied with influenza(H1N1)pdm09 predominant in Bhutan and India, influenza A(H3N2) predominant in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and influenza B predominant in south China.
  - In the southern hemisphere, influenza activity continued at inter-seasonal levels.
- [WHO](#)

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## VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

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### Opossums could hold the key to saving snakebite victims



23 March - The [opossum](#) may be known for being stupid, ugly, and the animal voted Most Likely to Become Roadkill in high school, but scientists say its blood may be key to fighting the effects of snakebites worldwide. In lab experiments with mice, a team discovered the exact molecule, called a peptide, in the North American marsupial's blood that can neutralize snake venom. The peptide worked against several venomous snake species, including America's western diamond back rattlesnake (*Crotalus atrox*) and India's Russell viper (*Daboia russelii*). [National Geographic](#)

### Russia: Brucellosis

25 March - Tver veterinary laboratory specialists confirmed brucellosis in 7 out of 10 samples obtained from small ruminants in the village Danilovsk, Kalininsky district. The information about the outbreak is being sent to the department of veterinary surveillance of the Tver and Pskov regions to initiate prevention measures addressing further spread of infection. [ProMED-mail](#)

### U.S.: Organic frozen foods recalled over listeria scare

23 March - Amy's Kitchen, the popular frozen organic dinner company, is voluntarily recalling over 73,890 cases of products due to possible listeria contamination. The company announced the recall after one of its organic spinach suppliers notified Amy's that they may have received organic spinach with the bacteria *Listeria monocytogenes*. So far no one has reported illness from the products, which range from meals like tofu vegetable lasagna to spinach pizza. [TIME](#)

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## WELLNESS

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### Air pollution raises stroke risk

24 March - Air pollution — even for just one day — significantly increases the risk of stroke, a large review of studies has found. Researchers pooled data from 103 studies involving 6.2 million stroke hospitalizations and deaths in 28 countries. The analysis, [published online in BMJ](#), found that all types of pollution except ozone were associated with increased risk for stroke, and the higher the level of pollution, the more strokes there were. [New York Times](#)

## Children and energy drinks: A growing public health crisis

24 March - Emerging evidence shows that highly-caffeinated, often sugar-laden energy drinks can harm children and adolescents, and supports physicians' groups and policymakers calling for restrictions on marketing and sales of these drinks to children under 18, according to a new study by the [Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity](#) at the University of Connecticut. This study examined the existing research on sales and marketing of energy drinks, their consumption by youth under 18, and growing evidence that they can be harmful and may lead to negative health, social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes, especially when consumed by youth. [UCONN Today](#)

## E-cigarettes: Helping smokers quit, or fueling a new addiction?



23 March - ...Tobacco kills almost 6 million people each year, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), and a growing number of people are now "vaping" instead of smoking, resulting in industry worth \$2.7 billion worldwide. Since their introduction in 2006, e-cigarettes have become commonplace among smokers trying to kick their habit, with a third of smokers trying to quit in the United Kingdom turning to e-cigarettes to aid them, according to one study. But some critics argue these electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) are fueling a new addiction to nicotine -- particularly among young people experimenting with them. [CNN](#)

## Latest diabetes care guidelines focus on individual approach

23 March - When caring for people with diabetes, primary care doctors need to tailor blood sugar targets and treatments to the individual patient, new recommendations suggest. That's just one of the guidelines highlighted in an article that experts from the Joslin Diabetes Center in Boston published in the March 23 issue of the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. The article summarizes important changes in the American Diabetes Association's (ADA) 2015 Standards of Care guidelines, which include screening Asian-Americans for diabetes at lower weights and giving statins to anyone with diabetes who is over 40. [Medline Plus](#)

## Powdered alcohol: What's the harm?

23 March - Substance abuse experts are concerned about the imminent availability of powdered alcohol because of its health risks and abuse potential. The flavored, freeze-dried alcohol, which looks like powdered Jell-O, can be thrown into a back pocket and taken almost anywhere, according to Harris Stratyner, PhD, regional clinical vice president, Caron

Treatment Center's New York Recovery Services, and associate professor of psychiatry, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York City. "You don't have to carry around a bottle of alcohol if you're going camping or for a bike ride. And when you get to your destination, you just add water or mixer to reconstitute the alcohol — and voilà, you've got an instant alcoholic beverage," he said. The powdered alcohol — known as Palcohol — was approved for sale earlier this month by the US Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau. [Medscape](#)

## Smog plus pollen may mean even more sneezing

23 March - Certain air pollutants may boost the potency of a birch tree pollen that plays a big role in seasonal allergies, researchers say. In laboratory tests and computer simulations, researchers found that two pollutants -- ozone and nitrogen dioxide -- have a significant effect on the pollen, called Bet v 1. Specifically, these pollutants appear to provoke chemical changes in the pollen that seem to raise its potency. Levels of both ozone and nitrogen dioxide are also tied to climate change, according to a team including Ulrich Poschl, of the Max Planck Institute in Germany, and others. This study finding, in combination with climate change, might help explain why airborne allergies are becoming more common, the researchers said. [Medline Plus](#)

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### USAFRICOM

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## Malawi: Global Fund cancels \$574 million for fighting AIDS

25 March - The Global Fund has canceled \$574 million in grants to Malawi for fighting AIDS and asked for a \$6.4 million refund over allegations of financial mismanagement, the health minister said on Wednesday. Jean Kalilani said the Global Fund asked for the refund after the ministry of health and the National Aids Commission (NAC) allegedly bought vehicles that were not budgeted for. NAC is a public trust meant to spearhead a national response to HIV/Aids, a pandemic which has wiped out an entire generation of adults in Malawi and left over a million children orphaned. [Reuters](#)

## Sudan: Hepatitis, HIV/AIDS

23 March - The Minister of Health for Khartoum State has warned of hepatitis and HIV/AIDS transmission through medical waste. Minister Mamoun Humeida told reporters on [Thu 19 Mar 2015] that the hospitals and health clinics in Khartoum produce 10 tons of waste each day. He acknowledged that the Ministry has failed to address recycling of the waste, in response to press reports about a human tissue found at a main street in the city. He suggested that the samples may have leaked from medical waste lorries. He stressed that people should not touch medical waste found in the streets, which could be infected with diseases such as hepatitis and HIV/AIDS. [ProMED-mail](#)

## West Africa: Measles takes over from Ebola as health Care threat in West Africa, report

23 March - Even as West Africa struggles to recover from the deadly Ebola outbreak, which has so far claimed thousands of lives across the region, people in countries such as Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone are facing an even deadlier threat -- the measles virus. According to a report by [Agence France-Presse \(AFP\)](#), experts believe that an outbreak of measles in these West African countries -- which were also the worst affected by Ebola -- could infect hundreds of thousands of lives, especially slum-dwellers, outdoing the Ebola epidemic's impact on the local population. Since the first confirmed case of Ebola was recorded in March 2014, the disease has reportedly killed more than 10,250 people in six countries, including Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, the U.S. and Mali, [BBC reported](#), citing the World Health Organization (WHO). [International Business Times](#)

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### USCENTCOM

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## Saudi Arabia: MERS-CoV

25 March - In the period since the last update there have been a total of: 14 newly confirmed cases of MERS-CoV infection, 7 newly reported deaths, and 13 newly reported recoveries. As of 24 Mar 2015 there have been a total of: 964 laboratory confirmed cases of MERS-CoV infection including, 419 deaths, 525 recoveries, and 20 currently active cases.

[ProMED-mail](#)

## Syria: Adverse birth outcomes in women exposed to Syrian chemical attack

April 2015 - The city of Moadamyah, Syria, is one of the areas affected by a chemical attack on Aug 21, 2013. While the acute exposure resulted in several deaths, the long-term consequences are still unfolding. One of the observations we are witnessing is adverse effects on pregnant women and their offspring. Our review of the medical records of the last months of 2014 has shown a high rate of spontaneous miscarriages, stillbirths, and birth defects among children born to women who had past exposure to the chemical warfare gases used in the attack. [The Lancet](#)

## Syrian aid groups seek greater role



18 March - Local NGOs and diaspora groups involved in frontline aid delivery in Syria want more recognition from the wider humanitarian community as well as the chance to access direct funding, rather than working merely as silent implementers for international NGOs. Relations between local and international aid agencies are often uneasy - and the topic is likely to feature prominently on the agenda at the 2016 [World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul](#) – but the scale of the Syrian crisis, as well as access and security challenges, have raised the stakes. Limited communication due in part to language and cultural barriers but also to concerns around terrorism has led to parallel and duplicated operations, competition for donor funding, staff poaching and a general feeling of mistrust. [IRIN](#)

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### USEUCOM

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## Scotland: Risk factors for TB and HIV coinfection, 2001 to 2010

19 March - The number of patients with tuberculosis (TB) increased steadily in Scotland between 2005 and 2010. Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection has been a contributory factor to increases in TB in a number of comparable industrialised countries. This study investigated the extent of, and risk factors for, TB and HIV coinfection in Scotland from 2001 to 2010. Patients with TB in the national TB database were linked to those in the national HIV database using probabilistic data linkage. Patient records were anonymised to maintain confidentiality. From 2001 to 2010, 106/4,097 (2.6%, 95% CI: 2.1 to 3.1) TB patients matched with HIV patients, equating to a 10-year incidence of 2.1 cases per million population. Patients with both TB and HIV were more often born outside the United Kingdom, were of black African ethnicity, had refugee status and had extra-thoracic lymph node involvement or cryptic/disseminated TB disease. Individuals with TB and HIV coinfection were younger and symptomatic for a shorter time before their diagnosis of TB, compared with TB patients without HIV. TB and HIV coinfection was relatively uncommon in Scotland in the study period. [Eurosurveillance](#)

## Russia: Tick-borne disease

24 March - The chief sanitary epidemiology doctor of Kaliningrad, E. Babura, reported that tick-borne encephalitis and Lyme disease were still highly prevalent in 2014. There were 11 cases of tick-borne encephalitis registered in 2014; the incidence rate was 1.15 per 100 000 population. The disease has been registered in 6 regions of Kaliningrad (2 in the city, 1 in

Svetlovsky and 5 in Nesterov districts, 1 in Nemansk, 1 in Slavsk, and 1 in Gusev districts). The incidence of Lyme disease is also high with 137 cases; the incidence rate was 14.35 per 100 000 population, which is higher than the national Russian average. In 2014, 2520 people reported tick bites in Kaliningrad (in 2013 - 2523), and in 26 percent of cases these are children under 14 years of age (665 cases). Tick encephalitis antigen was discovered in 1.5 percent of ticks removed from affected people (in 2013. - 1.1 percent), and antigen to borreliosis was found in 13 percent (in 2013 - 18 percent). [ProMED-mail](#)

## United Kingdom: Mosquitoes 'could bring exotic diseases to UK'



23 March - Mosquitoes could bring diseases such as dengue fever and West Nile virus to the UK within the next few decades, experts are warning. Writing in [The Lancet Infectious Diseases journal](#), they said warmer UK temperatures could make conditions favourable for the insects to breed. However, climate change is just one of many factors in the spread of diseases. Public Health England said it had been monitoring places where mosquitoes like to lay eggs, such as used tyres. [BBC News](#)

## United Kingdom: Views of terminally-ill children should be heard, new guidelines

24 March - Britain issued new guidance on Tuesday for doctors treating severely or terminally ill children, strongly advising that children's own views on whether they want to live or die should be taken into account. The guidelines, from Britain's Royal College of Paediatrics and Child health, will be watched carefully around the world, experts said, since Britain is one of the few countries to have a framework to help doctors decide if and when to withdraw life-sustaining treatment from a child. [Reuters](#)

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### USNORTHCOM

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## U.S.: Depression, related ailments take their toll on the workplace, study finds

23 March - For every dollar spent on treating depression, almost five dollars is spent on the treatment and workplace costs of related medical conditions like back and chest pain, sleep disorders and migraines – placing a greater financial burden on businesses and the health care system, according to new [research](#) measuring the economic impact of depression. “The fact that they’re finding such greater costs with all these different [related conditions]

underscores how the fragmented system is not helpful for our economy because people with mental illness are not getting the rounded health care they need," said Lynn Bufka, assistant executive director of practice research and policy at the American Psychological Association, who was not affiliated with the study. [Kaiser Health News](#)

## U.S.: Employment and activity limitations among adults with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, 2013

27 March - Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a group of progressive respiratory conditions, including emphysema and chronic bronchitis, characterized by airflow obstruction and symptoms such as shortness of breath, chronic cough, and sputum production. COPD is an important contributor to mortality and disability in the United States (1,2). *Healthy People 2020* has several COPD-related objectives,\* including to reduce activity limitations among adults with COPD...[Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

## U.S.: Even in nursing, no equal pay for women



24 March - Even though nine out of 10 nurses are women, men in the profession earn higher salaries, and the pay gap has remained constant over the past quarter century, a study finds. The typical salary gap has consistently been about \$5,000 even after adjusting for factors such as experience, education, work hours, clinical specialty, and marital and parental status, according to a report in *JAMA*, the journal of the American Medical Association. [Reuters](#)

## U.S.: For Mexican-Americans, heart risks can rise even if not obese

20 March - In Mexican-Americans, heart-damaging risk factors such as high blood pressure or high blood sugar levels are common, even in the absence of obesity, a new study finds. Those who weren't obese but were metabolically unhealthy showed similar signs of early artery hardening as those who were obese, according to the study published in the March 18 issue of the *Journal of the American Heart Association*. [Medline Plus](#)

## U.S.: New dietary recommendations first to consider environmental impact



20 March - The [Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee](#) issued its [recommendations](#) today, calling on Americans to eat less meat, watch their sodium intake, and start thinking about the environment more. As [many had predicted](#), it also peeled back a 40-year-old warning against eating foods high in cholesterol, like eggs and shrimp. "The overall body of evidence examined by the 2015 DGAC identifies that a healthy dietary pattern is higher in vegetables, fruits, whole

grains, low- or non-fat dairy, seafood, legumes, and nuts; moderate in alcohol (among adults); lower in red and processed meat; and low in sugar-sweetened foods and drinks and refined grains," the report says. Not a surprise, unless you've been living under a rock somewhere, but the devil will be in the details. [National Geographic](#)

## U.S.: Why loneliness is a growing public health concern - - and what we can do about it

21 March - Our time has been called the "[age of loneliness](#)." It's estimated that [one in five Americans](#) suffers from persistent loneliness, and while we're more connected than ever before, social media may actually be [exacerbating the problem](#). A new wave of research is shedding light on some of the causes and consequences of chronic loneliness, a condition that significantly raises the risk of a number of physical and psychological health problems, [including heart disease and depression](#). For a condition that has such an enormous impact on our health and well-being, loneliness has been relatively neglected by psychologists -- but that's beginning to change. [Huffington Post](#)

## U.S., Oregon: Yellow fever vaccine-associated death

23 March - In September 2014, a previously healthy Oregon woman in her 60s went to a hospital emergency department with malaise, dyspnea, vomiting, and diarrhea of 3-5 days' duration. She reported no recent travel, ill contacts, or dietary changes. She had received a single dose of yellow fever vaccine and typhoid vaccine 6 days earlier, before planned travel to South America... The patient's clinical course and laboratory results, including her requirement for mechanical ventilation, met Level 1 diagnostic certainty for viscerotropic disease. The temporal relationship between yellow fever vaccination and development of symptoms was consistent with YEL-AVD. The presence of yellow fever virus-specific antigen in multiple organs demonstrated by immunohistochemistry, in addition to amplification of yellow fever 17D viral RNA from tissue, met criteria for definite yellow fever vaccine-associated causality. Both her age at vaccination and occult thymic disease likely predisposed this patient to YEL-AVD development. [ProMED-mail](#)

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### USPACOM

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## India: Undiagnosed skin disease

24 March - While 3 children have died of a mysterious disease at Kurattihosur village (a 16-year-old girl, a 13-year-old boy, and an 11-year-old girl), many other children have been suffering from the disease in the village over the last 6 months. Initially, pimples are seen all over the body of the patients. They burst after some time, and this leads to wounds that do not heal with any treatment, posing a threat to the lives of the affected children. In some

instances, the children have lost their sight. A village resident said that the disease had so far claimed the lives of 10 children and that more were suffering from it, but no one from the Health department or any elected representative had visited Kurattihosur. Dr Pandu Vijayan, the district health and family welfare officer, has promised to visit the village to take stock of the situation. [ProMED-mail](#)

## Malaysia: Malaria, plasmodium knowlesi

21 March – Sarawak Assistant Minister of Public Health Datuk Dr Jerip Susil said knowlesi malaria was transmitted from monkeys to humans and could be fatal as the virus is more destructive to human red blood cells. The Sarawak Health Department is on high alert following the discovery of a new type of malaria known as knowlesi malaria, which was detected at Mile 13 of the Kuching-Serian Road area...At the moment, he said it was endemic only at the Mile 13 area and was still under control. [ProMED-mail](#)

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## Dominican Republic: Cholera

23 March - Epidemiological Bulletin No. 7, received today [16 Mar 2015], reported that 147 suspected cases of cholera and 10 deaths due to the disease have been reported so far in 2015 in the Dominican Republic. According to the Ministry of Health's report this represents a slight increase in cases, but still within expected numbers compared to 2014. The report adds that in recent weeks, 114 people have been affected by a diarrhea outbreak in Santiago, 40 in the province of Santo Domingo, 19 in the National District, and 15 in San Pedro de Macoris, for a total of 188 affected. [ProMED-mail](#)

## TB remains a threat to public health in the Caribbean

24 March - Tuberculosis remains a threat to public health in the Caribbean, where more than 30,000 new cases are registered each year, the Caribbean Health Public Agency, known as CARPHA, said Tuesday. "TB control must be mainstreamed into the health agenda as with HIV, and include broader strategic planning approaches and financial frameworks aimed at poverty reduction," CARPHA Executive Director James Hospedales said in a statement to mark World Tuberculosis Day. The presence of HIV/AIDS, a shortage of laboratory capacity, limited treatment success and funding gaps are among the factors that contribute to the prevalence of TB in the region, CARPHA said. [Fox News Latino](#)

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