

8 June 2012

Army Public Health Weekly Update

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U.S. Army Public Health Command



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Contents

U.S. MILITARY

- [Boost on the ground: Troops love 5-Hour Energy, but experts raise health concerns](#)
- [Holistic treatments help Soldiers battle PTSD](#)
- [Hospitalizations among members of the active component, U.S. Armed Forces, 2011](#)

GLOBAL

- [Dengue vaccine in sight, after 70 years](#)
- [Fighting non-communicable diseases](#)
- [Hepatitis C 'switch' offers target for new drug research](#)
- [New technology improves malaria control and vaccine development](#)
- [Nobel winning Barre-Sinoussi optimistic about HIV cure](#)
- [Researchers map structure of deadly pathogenic fungus, clear the way for vaccine](#)
- [Tobacco-caused deaths projected to increase further](#)
- [Untreatable gonorrhoea spreading around world: WHO](#)

INFLUENZA

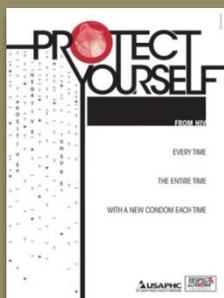
- [CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report](#)
- [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)
- [Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)
- [PANDEMIC AND AVIAN INFLUENZA](#)
- [Cambodia: Avian influenza situation update, WHO](#)
- [China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region: Avian influenza situation, WHO](#)
- [H5N1 virus in Hong Kong boy matches previous isolates](#)

VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

- [Europe: Schmallenberg virus](#)
- [U.S.: Judge orders FDA to revisit decision not to ban some antibiotics in animal feed](#)
- [U.S.: Multistate E. coli O145 outbreak confirmed in southern U.S.](#)
- [U.S.: Poultry-linked Salmonella outbreak lasted 8 years](#)

New HIV Prevention Posters

Three new HIV prevention posters are now available in the **Health Information Products eCatalog!**



WELLNESS

- Calorie-restricted diet keeps heart young
- Daily low-dose aspirin risks seem to outweigh gains for many: study
- Foggers no match for bedbugs
- Statistical model attempting to estimate level of alcohol consumption that is 'optimal' for health
- Waist size predicts diabetes risk
- When working out is too much of a good thing

USAFRICOM

- Ethiopia: HIV testing numbers rising steadily
- Gabon: Simultaneous chikungunya, dengue outbreaks caused co-infections
- Guinea: Doctors Without Borders vaccinates Guineans against cholera
- South Africa: Construction of TB wards to be accelerated
- Uganda: HIV superinfection may be more common than previously thought

USCENTCOM

- Iran's hidden scourge: widespread drug abuse at all levels of society
- Iraq: Mine-free 2018 target will be missed
- Saudi Arabia: 10m smokers by 2020

USEUCOM

- Greeks count mental health cost of a country in crisis
- United Kingdom: Legionellosis
- United Kingdom: Pertussis

USNORTHCOM

- U.S.: Prevalence of chronic hepatitis B may exceed 2 million, higher than previously reported
- U.S. racial gap in life expectancy shrinks: study
- U.S. study: Despite obesity rise, kids' blood pressure dipped
- U.S.: Venous thromboembolism in adult hospitalizations, 2007–2009

USPACOM

- Australia: Misuse of medicines the new danger
- China: Drug-resistant tuberculosis a 'serious epidemic'
- Vietnam: Dioxin may cause bizarre skin disease

USSOUTHCOM

- Cuban scientists in Peru showing advances against cancer

U.S. MILITARY

Boost on the ground: Troops love 5-Hour Energy, but experts raise health concerns

1 June - Each week, 9 million plastic vials of 5-Hour Energy disappear from store shelves worldwide — a clear sign that many of us are desperately seeking a quick boost for sleep-

Tri-Service Guidelines for Reportable Medical Events

The guidelines have been revised and changes include:

Influenza: Heading is now "Influenza-Associated Hospitalization"; clinical case definition and laboratory criteria for probable and confirmed cases have changed.

Hepatitis C: The heading is now "Hepatitis"; clinical description and lab criteria have changed.

Heat Injury: The heading is now "Heat Illness"; categorical labels are eliminated and the required comments have changed.

Outbreak: The heading is now "Disease Cluster or Outbreak"; SSNs are no longer reported, clinical description is simplified, and laboratory criteria have been added.

Case definitions for 32 other disease were changed to match the CDC and Council for State and Territorial Epidemiologists definitions.

Revised Guidelines



deprived days. The quest for instant energy is particularly intense in the military, where these small shots of caffeine, vitamins and organic and amino acids have proved a particularly popular middle-of-an-op pick-me-up... Air Force researchers including Lt. Col. Michael Lee have launched a two-year study of its effects on blood pressure, heart rate and heart rhythm in 18- to 40-year-olds... "We have decent knowledge on what caffeine does to blood pressure," explained Lee's fellow researcher, cardiovascular pharmacologist Sachin Shah of the University of the Pacific in Stockton, Calif. "But a lot of energy drinks have other supplements in them. It's with the extra supplements that we don't know what happens to the cardiovascular system." [Army Times](#)

Holistic treatments help Soldiers battle PTSD



30 May - For some Soldiers, the emotional scars of combat can be just as overwhelming as the physical ones. Often, Soldiers had only a choice between suppression or medical discharge. But the Warrior Resilience Center at Fort Bliss, Texas, seeks to help Soldiers treat their post-traumatic stress emotionally and

spiritually, and return as functioning members to their units... Soldiers in the program remain assigned to their current units. However, their duty station for four weeks is the Warrior Resilience Center. From 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., program participants experience a variety of alternative treatments designed to give Soldiers tools they can rely on to treat the symptoms of PTS. [U.S. Army](#)

Hospitalizations among members of the active component, U.S. Armed Forces, 2011

April 2012 - This report documents the frequencies, rates, trends, and distributions of hospitalizations of active component members of the U.S. Armed Forces during calendar year 2011. Summaries are based on standardized records of hospitalizations at U.S. military and non-military (reimbursed care) medical facilities worldwide. For this report, primary (first-listed) discharge diagnoses are considered indicative of the primary reasons for hospitalizations; summaries are based on the first three digits of ICD-9-CM codes used to report primary discharge diagnoses. Hospitalizations not routinely documented with standardized, automated records (e.g., during deployments, field training exercises, shipboard) are not centrally available for health surveillance purposes and thus are not included in this report. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

[top of page...](#)

GLOBAL

Dengue vaccine in sight, after 70 years

5 June - One of the grimmest legacies of the war in the Pacific is still being fought 70 years on, but a victory over dengue, the intensely painful "breakbone fever" which that conflict

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](#)

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[Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

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

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[USAPHC Training](#)

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helped spread around the world, may be in sight. The U.S. Army, which like its Japanese enemy lost thousands of men to the mosquito-borne disease in the 1940s, has piled resources into defeating the tropical killer. But it may be about to see the battle to develop the first vaccine won not in the United States but by French drug company Sanofi. The Paris-based firm hopes for positive results in September from a key trial among children in **Thailand** that would set it on course to market a shot in 2015 which would prevent an estimated 100 million cases of dengue infection each year. Of 20,000 annual deaths, many are of children. [Reuters](#)

Fighting non-communicable diseases



1 June - The World Health Assembly, the decision-making body of the UN World Health Organization (WHO), aims to reduce preventable deaths from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes, heart attacks and strokes, chronic respiratory diseases and cancers, by 25 percent by 2025. WHO is coordinating

negotiations on the surveillance, indicators and voluntary targets that will form an eventual global plan to fight NCDs, and is drafting recommendations to be considered by member governments in October 2012. Many NCDs are caused by alcohol, tobacco, diet and a lack of exercise. Three main fronts were raised in **recent discussions** with civil society and government representatives on the best ways to rein in NCDs, and how to measure progress. IRIN examines the next steps in fighting the leading cause of death worldwide.

[IRIN](#)

Hepatitis C 'switch' offers target for new drug research

1 June - Scientists have discovered a "switch" in the hepatitis C virus which could be used as a target for new kinds of drug treatment. Hepatitis C affects more than 170 million people worldwide, but current combination treatment is only effective against a limited range of this naturally highly variable virus. However, according to new research by the University of Warwick, the newly discovered SL9266 'switch' is very highly conserved and present in all hepatitis C viruses, meaning this offers a good starting point for further research into an across-the-board treatment. [Infection Control Today](#)

New technology improves malaria control and vaccine development

5 June - A new technique that accurately determines the risk of infants in endemic countries developing clinical malaria could provide a valuable tool for evaluating new malaria prevention strategies and vaccines. The technique could even help to understand how anti-malarial vaccine and treatment strategies act to reduce malaria, say researchers... "It was very clear that infection with new and genetically different malaria parasites was the single biggest factor in determining the risk of an infant becoming sick from malaria, more than any other factor including age, the use of bed nets or the risk of transmission in the area.

We were actually surprised by how clear the correlation was," Mueller says. [Infection Control Today](#)

Nobel winning Barre-Sinoussi optimistic about HIV cure

7 June - The scientist who won a Nobel prize for her work in first identifying HIV says she at last believes finding a cure for the virus which causes Aids might be possible. French virologist Françoise Barre-Sinoussi said she could not put a timescale on when it might be found but scientists were developing promising new tools... Until recently medical researchers had virtually given up the pursuit of a cure but the experiences of two patients now suggest to many scientists that it may be achievable. One man, the so-called Berlin patient, apparently has cleared his HIV infection, albeit by arduous bone marrow transplants. More recently, a 50-year-old man in Trenton, New Jersey, underwent a far less difficult gene therapy procedure. [BBC News](#)

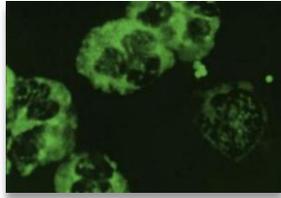
Researchers map structure of deadly pathogenic fungus, clear the way for vaccine

2 June - University of Alberta researchers have made breakthrough use of 3-D magnetic resonance technology to map the structure of a common fungus that is potentially deadly for individuals with impaired immune function. The work could pave the way for development of an effective vaccine. The researchers targeted Candida, a pathogen that in its most virulent form has led to more than 70,000 bloodstream infections in North American hospital patients. Health officials estimate that death rate from this bloodstream infection is 40 per cent. Lead U of A researchers Margaret Johnson and David Bundle as well as collaborators, at the Alberta Glycomics Centre, used nuclear magnetic resonance for a three-dimensional examination of the fungus at an atomic scale that measures less than 100 millionth of a centimeter. The process, called molecular recognition allowed researchers to examine carbohydrate and antibody molecules related to the fungus to determine what sort of vaccine can best combat Candida. Johnson described the three-dimensional approach to vaccinology as giving researchers a clear picture of how a vaccine must physically fit against the surface of the fungus. [Infection Control Today](#)

Tobacco-caused deaths projected to increase further

6 June - A British medical journal reports that the number of cancer cases could rise by 75 percent by the year 2030 - and most are expected in developing countries. Virtually all experts on tobacco use recognize it as the single most preventable cause of death worldwide. At the American Cancer Society, Nathan Grey focuses on global health issues. "Each year, tobacco kills about six million people throughout the world, and by 2030, that's projected to grow to about eight million people," he said. Grey was one of the authors of a report published in the British medical journal, The Lancet. The report projects cancer rates to rise by 75 percent worldwide in less than 20 years. "It's staggering. Six million deaths every year. There's no reason for any one of those deaths," said Joanna Cohen, who heads the Institute for Tobacco Control at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. [VOA](#)

Untreatable gonorrhoea spreading around world: WHO



6 June – Drug-resistant strains of gonorrhoea have spread to countries across the world, the United Nations health agency said on Wednesday, and millions of patients may run out of treatment options unless doctors catch and treat cases earlier.

Scientists reported last year finding a "superbug" strain of gonorrhoea in [Japan](#) in 2008 that was resistant to all recommended antibiotics and warned then that it could transform a once easily treatable infections into a global health threat. The World Health Organisation (WHO) said those fears are now reality with many more countries, including [Australia](#), France, Norway, Sweden and Britain, reporting cases of the sexually transmitted disease resistant to cephalosporin antibiotics - normally the last option for drugs against gonorrhoea. "Gonorrhoea is becoming a major public health challenge," said Manjula Lusti-Narasimhan, from the WHO's department of reproductive health and research. She said more than 106 million people are newly infected with the disease every year. [Reuters](#)

[top of page...](#)

INFLUENZA

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

Week ending 26 May - Nationwide during week 21, 1.1% of patient visits reported through the U.S. Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) were due to influenza-like illness (ILI). This percentage is below the national baseline of 2.4%. In addition, 6.6% 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 7.3% for week 21. [FluView](#)

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

During week 20 (14-20 May 2012), of the 23 reporting countries, 22 experienced low-intensity influenza activity. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For the week ending 2 June 2012:

Adenovirus

- Vaccination against types 4 and 7 adenovirus was instituted at all basic training centers by mid-November 2011 (week 45).

- FRI rates and the proportion of FRI cases positive for adenovirus have decreased markedly since vaccine was reintroduced.
- Type 14 adenovirus is present at MCRD Parris Island.
- A MSMR paper on the initial impact of adenovirus vaccine resumption was recently published.

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](#)

PANDEMIC AND AVIAN INFLUENZA

Cambodia: Avian influenza situation update, WHO

29 May - The Ministry of Health (MoH) of the Kingdom of Cambodia has announced a confirmed case of human infection with avian influenza A (H5N1) virus. The case was a 10 years old female from Kampong Speu Province. She developed symptoms on 20 May 2012 and after initial treatment at the village was eventually admitted to the hospital on 25 May with symptoms of fever and shortness of breath. Infection with avian influenza A(H5N1) virus was confirmed by Institute Pasteur du Cambodge on 26 May 2012, however, despite intensive medical care, she died on 27 May 2012. There are reports of recent deaths among poultry in her village and the patient prepared sick chicken for food prior to becoming sick. The girl is the twenty-first person in Cambodia to become infected with A(H5N1) virus and 19 have died from the disease. The National and local Rapid Response Teams (RRT) are conducting outbreak investigation and response following the national protocol. In addition, a public health education campaign is being conducted in the village to inform families on how to protect themselves from contracting avian influenza. [WHO](#)

China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region: Avian influenza situation, WHO

5 June - The Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health, Hong Kong, China, has reported a human case of avian influenza A(H5N1) virus infection. The case is a 2 year-old male from Guangzhou City, Guangdong province. He developed symptoms on 23 May 2012 in Guangdong province and went to a private clinic in Hong Kong, China, on 26 May 2012. He developed febrile convulsion and was transferred to a hospital on 28 May 2012 and was laboratory confirmed as A(H5N1) on 2 June 2012. His condition remains serious and he remains hospitalized. The mother brought the case to visit a wet market with live poultry in Guangzhou in mid-May 2012 and a live duck was bought and slaughtered in the market. Close contacts of the case have tested negative for the virus. Evidence so far indicates that this is a sporadic case of human infection with A(H5N1) virus, with no secondary spread or clustering. So far, a total of 22 human cases of influenza A(H5N1) infection were reported in Hong Kong, China, including 18 cases in 1997, two cases in 2003, one case in 2010, and the current case in 2012. [WHO](#)

H5N1 virus in Hong Kong boy matches previous isolates

5 June - Health officials said the H5N1 virus that infected a 2-year-old boy hospitalized in Hong Kong matches a strain that has been found in wild birds and a previous human case in the region. Tests by the Hong Kong Centre for Health Protection (CHP) "showed that the H5 gene of the isolate belonged to clade 2.3.2.1, which is the same clade as the isolates from wild birds detected in 2011 and 2012 and in the imported human infection case in late 2010," the CHP said in a statement yesterday. "So far all the genes characterised belong to avian origin and there is no evidence of resistance to the antiviral agent oseltamivir (Tamiflu)." Guan Yi, PhD, a virologist from the University of Hong Kong, said the strain has also been seen in mainland China, Mongolia, and Eastern Europe, according to a report today in The Standard newspaper. The boy, who is from Guangzhou, capital of China's Guangdong province, remained in serious condition in the pediatric intensive care unit at Princess Margaret Hospital, the CHP said. [CIDRAP](#)

[top of page...](#)

VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Europe: Schmallenberg virus

5 June - The National Veterinary Institute has found antibodies against Schmallenberg virus [SBV] in samples from 2 cattle in southern Jutland. This is the 1st infection with this new virus found in Danish livestock. The 2 cattle originating from the same herd in southern Jutland have been subjected to SBV infection that has spread in Europe since the summer of 2011. This is shown in a survey for antibodies made by the National Veterinary Institute. "This is the 1st finding that livestock in Denmark has been infected with Schmallenberg virus," says Anette Botner, a veterinarian, head of Section for Exotic Viral Diseases at the National Veterinary Institute. The antibodies produced by the immune system can be traced in the blood for months after an infection with SBV, and the 2 cattle were probably infected in the autumn [2011] by small mosquitoes or midges. [ProMED-mail](#)

U.S.: Judge orders FDA to revisit decision not to ban some antibiotics in animal feed

5 June - A federal court has ordered the Food and Drug Administration to revisit its decision not to ban the use of certain antibiotics in animal feed and criticized the agency for relying on industry to voluntarily limit the use of these drugs. This week, the federal district court in Manhattan ruled that the FDA must reconsider two citizen petitions that asked the agency to withdraw approval of some antibiotics used in food-producing animals. The agency's denial of both petitions years ago was "arbitrary and capricious," the court said. In March, in a decision tied to the same case, the court ordered the FDA to follow through on a proposal it made decades ago that would have banned the use of penicillin and two forms of tetracycline in animal feed. The back-to-back rulings mark a victory for the Natural

Resources Defense Council and the other health and consumer advocacy groups that sued the government. The groups say they expect the FDA to fight back, and the agency already has appealed the March decision. But they also describe this round of the legal battle as a turning point in a decades-long conflict with the agency regarding a major public health threat. [The Washington Post](#)

U.S.: Multistate E. coli O145 outbreak confirmed in southern U.S.

6 June - The E. coli O145 outbreak that killed a 21-month-old girl in New Orleans on May 31 is connected to at least 11 illnesses across the southern United States, multiple state health departments confirmed with Food Safety News today. The Louisiana, Georgia, Alabama, Florida and Tennessee state health departments say they are working with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to investigate the outbreak. The CDC has not yet released any other information related to the investigation, but a spokeswoman said states are in various stages of investigation while CDC plays a supportive organizing role. So far, health officials do not know the source of the contamination, but many say the contamination vehicle is likely food. Food Safety News does not know if any other states may be involved in the investigation. "At this time, we continue to interview new cases as we are notified of them," a Georgia health department spokeswoman wrote in an email. "We have detected no food items or environmental exposures that are statistically associated with illness at this time. This investigation is ongoing." [Food Safety News](#)

U.S.: Poultry-linked *Salmonella* outbreak lasted 8 years

31 May - A nationwide Salmonella outbreak linked to one US poultry hatchery has continued for 8 years, illustrating both the risk that chicks can pose to children and the difficulty of ridding hatcheries of the pathogen, according to a report released yesterday in the New England Journal of Medicine. The outbreak involved 316 cases in 43 states from 2004 through 2011. Among patients who were interviewed, 23% were hospitalized and 55% had bloody diarrhea. After the hatchery took a number of steps to eliminate the contamination, the number of cases dropped, but they didn't disappear. The report comes as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other agencies track another Salmonella outbreak linked to a mail-order poultry hatchery, located in Ohio, with 93 cases reported in 23 states as of yesterday (see separate news item). The long-running investigation involved experts from the CDC, several state health departments, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), and Pfizer Animal Health in Overland Park, Kan. In 2009 the United States had 20 mail-order hatcheries that shipped about 50 million live poultry, which brought in between \$50 million and \$70 million, the report says. Sales that year set new records, fueled by growing interest in raising backyard flocks and "urban chickens." [CIDRAP](#)

[top of page...](#)

Calorie-restricted diet keeps heart young

6 June - People who restrict their caloric intake in an effort to live longer have hearts that function more like those in people who are 20 years younger. Researchers at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis have found that a key measure of the heart's ability to adapt to physical activity, stress, sleep and other factors that influence the rate at which the heart pumps blood, doesn't decline nearly as rapidly in people who have significantly restricted their caloric intake for an average of seven years. The study is available online in the journal *Aging Cell*. [Science Daily](#)

Daily low-dose aspirin risks seem to outweigh gains for many: study



5 June - Unless you're at high risk for cardiovascular disease, you probably shouldn't take a low-dose aspirin every day, a new study suggests. Researchers report that daily low-dose aspirin use may significantly increase the chance of major gastrointestinal or cerebral bleeding. Any benefit of low-dose aspirin in preventing heart disease could be offset by that risk, the study authors said. [Medline Plus](#)

Foggers no match for bedbugs

3 June - Bug bombs and other insect foggers may be no match for pesky bedbugs. A new study confirms that these commonly used pesticides are ineffective against the current bedbug invasion. "These foggers don't penetrate in cracks and crevices, where most bedbugs are hiding, so most of them will survive," researcher Susan Jones, an urban entomologist at Ohio State University, says in a news release. "If you use these products, you will not get the infestation under control, you will waste your money, and you will delay effective treatment of your infestation." During the last decade, a growing number of bedbug infestations has been reported in hotel rooms, dormitories, and homes, prompting concern from public health officials. Although the cause of this resurgence is unknown, experts suspect the tiny bugs are becoming increasingly resistant to pesticides. [WebMD](#)

Statistical model attempting to estimate level of alcohol consumption that is 'optimal' for health



6 June - Cutting the amount we drink to just over half a unit a day could save 4,600 lives a year in England, according to a modelling study by Oxford University researchers published in the journal *BMJ Open*. Scientists have carried out a complex analysis in an attempt to determine the "optimal" level of alcohol consumption that is associated with the lowest rates of chronic disease in the UK. They conclude that the intake of about one-half of a typical drink per day would result in the healthiest outcomes, and the authors conclude that the recommended alcohol intake for the UK should be reduced from the current advised level of drinking. Half

a unit of alcohol is as little as a quarter of a glass of wine, or a quarter of a pint. That's much lower than current government recommendations of between 3 to 4 units a day for men and 2-3 units for women. [Science Daily](#)

Waist size predicts diabetes risk

7 June - Measuring your waist circumference could help gauge your risk for developing type 2 diabetes. Doctors have long used body mass index, a measurement of body fat based on height and weight, to determine patients' diabetes risk, but adding waist circumference makes those predictions more accurate, according to a study published Tuesday in the journal PLoS Medicine. While BMI doesn't make any distinction between different kinds of fat, waist circumference identifies visceral fat in the abdomen, which has the strongest link to diabetes. It's not affected by fat in the arms, thighs, or any other part of the body. [U.S. News](#)

When working out is too much of a good thing



4 June - ... Fitness experts say more is not always better and overworking a workout can sap strength and invite injury. "We have fit people and deconditioned people who overdo it," said Geralyn Coopersmith, national director of the Equinox Fitness Training Institute. "Exercise is like a drug, if you don't have enough, you get no benefits, if you have too much, you have problems," she said. Shin splints, heel spurs, tendonitis are among the common overuse injuries that Coopersmith, who oversees the training of personal trainers for Equinox fitness centers, sees. "Some days should be intense, some days not so intense," she said. "Exercise is a stressor. If it's too much, the body can break down." Extreme fatigue, irritability, moodiness, an elevated resting heart rate, fever, and an inability to work your earlier level are among the signs that you've overdone it, she said. [Chicago Tribune](#)

[top of page...](#)

USAFRICOM

Ethiopia: HIV testing numbers rising steadily



5 June - Successful HIV testing campaigns in Ethiopia are showing a ten-fold jump in the number of people testing each year since 2005. "Currently, 36 percent of women and 38 percent of men have ever been tested and received their test results," the latest Demographic and Health Survey noted. "Twenty percent of women and 21 percent of men have been tested for HIV and received their results in the 12 months before the [latest] survey," published in March 2012. "HIV testing has increased ten-fold since the 2005 EDHS [Ethiopia Demographic and Health

Survey], when just 2 percent of women and men had been tested and received their results in the 12 months before the survey."... Data from the recent EDHS also indicated that out of 6,000 cohabiting couples who tested for HIV, 98.3 percent were HIV-negative, 0.6 percent were both HIV-positive, and 1.1 percent of couples were HIV discordant. [IRIN](#)

Gabon: Simultaneous chikungunya, dengue outbreaks caused co-infections

6 June - Simultaneous outbreaks of chikungunya and dengue virus infections that began in 2007 in Gabon led to the rare identification of 37 patients infected with both viruses at the same time, according to a report yesterday in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. The episode began with a large outbreak around Libreville in northwestern Gabon in 2007. Smaller outbreaks traced a southeasterly path in 2008 and 2009, and in 2010 a large outbreak hit Franceville in the southeast. Using active surveillance of acute febrile illnesses from 2007 through 2010, Gabonese researchers identified 1,567 patients with chikungunya infections, 376 with dengue infections, and 37 who were co-infected. Nineteen of 24 co-infected patients in Franceville had clinical examinations; none of them required hospitalization or had hemorrhagic or neurologic complications, though all had fever and joint pain. There was no evidence of differences in clinical manifestations between co-infected and mono-infected patients. [CIDRAP](#)

Guinea: Doctors Without Borders vaccinates Guineans against cholera



1 June - The medical aid group, Doctors Without Borders, has vaccinated more than 100,000 people against cholera in Guinea. The group says this is the first intervention of its kind in Africa, where people were vaccinated during a major cholera outbreak. Experts say that while the vaccine

is a vital tool, it cannot be seen as a solution in itself. Along with local health workers, Doctors Without Borders - known by its French acronym MSF - just wrapped up a campaign providing the two-dose oral vaccine to 117,000 people in Guinea's Boffa region, about 150 kilometers north of the capital, Conakry. MSF intervened with the vaccine following an outbreak in the region - the first time people in Africa are receiving protection during a cholera epidemic. MSF says the campaign could lead to a more effective response to outbreaks worldwide. [VOA](#)

South Africa: Construction of TB wards to be accelerated

5 June - The Gauteng Department of Health is expected to speed up the construction of a new multi-drug resistant TB complex at Sizwe Tropical Disease Hospital. A meeting between hospital management, officials from the department's infrastructure sections and representative from the construction company has been scheduled for this week to discuss work required to finalise the construction of the wards, the department said. Construction was delayed because of changes in the scope of work, variation of orders and slow payment. The department paid R435 000 to the construction company last week to enable it

to complete the work. Minor work including painting, construction of a ramp, ventilation and electrical installation are some of the issues that need to be finalised before the wards can be commissioned. "The costs of the construction of the wards have escalated from R30.2 million to more than R42 million because of changes in the scope and variation of orders. Additional work such as the construction of a new sewerage system and storm water drainage are factors that contributed to cost escalations," the department said. [All Africa](#)

Uganda: HIV superinfection may be more common than previously thought

7 June - HIV superinfection, when a person with HIV could acquire a second, new strain of HIV, may occur as often as initial HIV infection in the general population in Uganda, a study suggests. Since researchers demonstrated more than a decade ago that a person infected with HIV could subsequently acquire a second, new strain of HIV, there has been little agreement in the scientific community as to how often HIV superinfection occurs... Studies of the rate of new cases, or annual incidence rates, of HIV superinfection, including those conducted in the United States, estimate 4 percent incidence among highly sexually active people diagnosed with HIV infection. [NIH](#)

[top of page...](#)

USCENTCOM

Iran's hidden scourge: widespread drug abuse at all levels of society

27 May - In the fetid slum of Shoosh, addicts lie comatose in a warren of alleys in one of Tehran's oldest neighbourhoods. Buyers glance nervously at strangers while dealers stash huge stacks of worn bills into bulging pockets of over-large jackets on a hot spring day. Iran is battling widespread drug abuse, although no one seems to know just how big the problem. From the southern slums, past the fancy shopping avenues like Vali Asr, where a glassy-eyed young man in expensive clothes is bundled into an ambulance, to the high-end parties behind walls of fancy houses in North Tehran, addiction infests every strata of society. Coping with the massive problem while still denying it poses a serious threat, unmasking the sort of wildly improbable paradox that sometimes seems to define this proud, embattled, society. "For a long time nobody wanted to admit it but drug abuse was ravaging our society," said Abbas Deylamizade, the managing director of Rebirth, an Iranian non-governmental organization dealing with drug addiction and abuse. "But now the scourge is so bad that we are finally reaching the point where the government is getting really involved." [The Globe and Mail](#)

Iraq: Mine-free 2018 target will be missed



22 May - Iraq is drawing detailed maps of areas contaminated by landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO), but is unlikely to clear these areas by a 2018 deadline, says a government official. "Lack of detailed maps for landmines was one of the major problems and it delayed our mine-clearance efforts

because the previous regime planted them randomly," Deputy Environment Minister Kamal Hussein Latif told IRIN. "We have teamed up with the ministries of interior and defence since 2011 to start our own survey which will help to identify the exact contaminated areas," he said. Despite this, Latif added, the country will not meet the 2018 deadline to clear all landmines and UXO. Iraq set itself the target in 2008 when it joined the Ottawa Convention, under which it committed not to use, produce, acquire or export landmines. [IRIN](#)

Saudi Arabia: 10m smokers by 2020

6 June - A recent study revealed that the number of the smokers in the Kingdom will jump to 10 million by the year 2020 and spending on tobacco products will reach a staggering SR21 billion annually. Citing the study's findings that the increase is due to a lack of awareness programs, the Saudi Diabetes & Endocrine Association (SDEA) urged the ministries of Health and Education to hold regular tobacco awareness campaigns to enlighten the general public about the negative effects of smoking. On the occasion of World No Tobacco Day, the SDEA called upon the Ministry of Health to ban smoking in all hospitals and medical centers in order to protect patients from the hazards of active and passive smoking. It also stressed the importance of making all recreational facilities, sports clubs, beaches, malls, hotels, restaurants and public parks and spaces smoking-free areas. The SDEA said banning smoking in public places will protect society from the dangers of second-hand smoking while at the same time promote positive, healthy lifestyles and a cleaner and safe environment. [Zawya](#)

[top of page...](#)

USEUCOM

Greeks count mental health cost of a country in crisis

31 May - Behind every suicide in crisis-stricken countries such as Greece there are up to 20 more people desperate enough to have tried to end their own lives. And behind those attempted suicides, experts say there are thousands of hidden cases of mental illness, like depression, alcohol abuse and anxiety disorder, that never make the news, but have large and potentially long-lasting human costs. The risk, according to some public health experts, is that if and when Greece's economic woes are over, a legacy of mental illness could remain in a generation of young people damaged by too many years of life without hope.

"Austerity can turn a crisis into an epidemic," said David Stuckler, a sociologist at Britain's

Cambridge University who has been studying the health impacts of biting budget cuts in Europe as the euro crisis lurches on. "Job loss can lead to an accumulation of risks that can tip people into depression and severe mental illness which can be difficult to reverse - especially if people are not getting appropriate care," Stuckler said. [Reuters](#)

United Kingdom: Legionellosis

6 June - A man in his 50s has died as the number of confirmed and suspected cases of legionnaires' disease in an Edinburgh outbreak continues to rise. The man, who had underlying health conditions, was being treated at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh. NHS [National Health Service] Lothian says it is dealing with 17 confirmed and 15 suspected cases. The source of the infection is still being investigated. The potential area for infection is estimated at about 44 square miles [114 sq km]. This is because NHS Lothian is working on the basis that the potential area of infection is about 7.5 miles [12 km] in diameter. Industrial water-cooling towers in the south west of Edinburgh, where all of the cases have come from, have been identified as a potential source. 16 cooling towers in the area have been treated by environmental health staff in an attempt to halt the outbreak. [ProMED-mail](#)

United Kingdom: Pertussis

1 June - A national increase in laboratory-confirmed cases of pertussis was observed after the 2nd quarter of 2011, predominantly in adolescents and adults. This increase continued into 2012 and extended into infants under 3 months who are at the highest risk of severe complications, hospitalisation, and death. A level 3 incident was declared in April 2012 to coordinate the response to the ongoing increased pertussis activity (1,2). Pertussis is a cyclical disease with increases occurring every 3-4 years. The increase in 2011 has previously been reported (3), with the last peak occurring in 2008. During 2011, numbers of confirmed cases were high in age groups under 15 years, but in line with anticipated cyclical increases. The number of confirmed cases in the 15+ age group, however, exceeded expected levels; cases in this age group were nearly 50 per cent higher in 2011 than those in 2008. The data below update current pertussis activity to 30 Apr 2012. [ProMED-mail](#)

[top of page...](#)

USNORTHCOM

U.S.: Prevalence of chronic hepatitis B may exceed 2 million, higher than previously reported

1 June - The prevalence of chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection in the U.S. may be as high as 2.2 million cases according to a new study now available in *Hepatology*, a journal published in the journal *Hepatology* on behalf of the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases. Findings suggest the higher prevalence of chronic HBV can be attributed to foreign-born persons who were infected in their country of origin prior to arrival in the U.S.

Emigrants from Asia and Africa, where infection with hepatitis B is highly endemic, represent close to 70 percent of the 1.32 million foreign-born persons living with chronic HBV in the U.S. in 2009. [Infection Control Today](#)

U.S. racial gap in life expectancy shrinks: study

5 June - Whites in the United States have typically lived longer on average than blacks, but a new study released on Tuesday suggests that gap in life expectancy may be shrinking. The shift appears to be because fewer African Americans are dying of AIDS and heart disease, but also because more whites are dying in early and mid-adulthood from unintentional injuries - mainly poisonings, including prescription drug overdoses, researchers said... "There's still quite a large gap in life expectancy for men and women, and that gap is still much larger than we would like it to be," Harper told Reuters Health. [Medline Plus](#)

U.S. study: Despite obesity rise, kids' blood pressure dipped

5 June - The rate of childhood obesity in the United States may have soared between the 1970s and the 1990s, but children's blood pressure did not follow the same trend, according to a study. Researchers at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that while the obesity rate among children in the state of Louisiana nearly tripled between 1974 and 1993, their blood pressure actually improved a bit. "I think the take-home from this study is that we should not necessarily assume that increases in childhood obesity will be associated with changes in every risk factor," said lead researcher David Freedman of the CDC's division of nutrition, physical activity and obesity. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: Venous thromboembolism in adult hospitalizations, 2007–2009

8 June - Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a blood clot that occurs in a deep vein of the body; pulmonary embolism (PE) occurs when a clot breaks free and enters the arteries of the lungs. DVT and PE comprise venous thromboembolism (VTE), an important and growing public health concern (1,2). Hospitalization is a major risk factor for VTE, and many VTE events that occur among hospitalized patients can be prevented (2,3). A new program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Partnership for Patients: Better Care, Lower Costs) aims to reduce the number of preventable VTE cases in hospitals (4). To estimate the number of hospitalizations with VTE each year in the United States, CDC analyzed 2007–2009 data from the National Hospital Discharge Survey (NHDS). The results of that analysis determined that an estimated average of 547,596 hospitalizations with VTE occurred each year among those aged ≥ 18 years in the United States. DVT was diagnosed in an estimated annual average of 348,558 hospitalizations, and PE was diagnosed in 277,549; both DVT and PE were diagnosed in 78,511 hospitalizations. Estimates of the rates of hospitalizations with VTE were substantially higher among adults aged ≥ 60 years compared with those aged 18–59 years. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

Australia: Misuse of medicines the new danger

28 May - Misuse of prescribed pharmaceuticals is Australia's fastest growing drug problem, raising the possibility that deaths from prescribed drugs may eventually surpass those from illicit drug overdoses, doctors have warned. Structural issues in the health system including limitations of GP consultations and rapid hospital discharges are contributing to an explosion in prescriptions for opioids, benzodiazepines and codeine-containing analgesics. These drugs are being diverted for non-medical use by ill people seeking to supplement low incomes, while doctors also report that young people are increasingly initiating drug use with their parents' leftover scripts for painkillers, sleeping pills or stress-reducing drugs. Between 2002 and 2006, the use of legal narcotic drugs in the United States increased by 60 per cent and consumption of pharmaceutical amphetamines rose by 42 per cent. According to the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, poisoning deaths involving opioid analgesics including oxycodone, methadone and hydrocone more than tripled from 1999 to 2007. [The Sydney Morning Herald](#)

China: Drug-resistant tuberculosis a 'serious epidemic'



6 June - China's first national survey of tuberculosis has produced some of the worst TB news in years. Out of the million Chinese who develop TB every year, researchers say at least 110,000 get a form that's resistant to the mainstay drugs isoniazid and rifampin. Patients with such **multidrug-resistant or MDR tuberculosis** have to be treated for up to two years with expensive second-line drugs that are toxic and less effective. Worse yet, the new survey shows that at least 8,200 Chinese are coming down with **extensively resistant or XDR-TB**. That means it's also resistant to at least two of the second-line drugs — and thus may be incurable in many cases. And still worse, most of these resistant cases are being passed from patient to patient... Writing in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the researchers report that a third of new TB cases and half of patients with previously treated TB have drug-resistant forms. [NPR](#)

Vietnam: Dioxin may cause bizarre skin disease

8 June - Dioxin must be considered as a possible cause of the unidentified skin syndrome that has affected about 200 people, 23 of whom have died, in central Quang Ngai Province since last year, many experts warned at a seminar. They voiced their concern at the seminar held by the Health Ministry in Da Nang City yesterday to discuss possible causes of the strange disease characterized by thickened skin (keratosis) over the palms and soles, causing stiffness in the limbs and ulcers on victims' hands and feet that look like burns. Most experts agreed that the syndrome might be caused by intoxication from harmful substances in the environment, including dioxin, which is used to refer to a family of toxic chemicals that have been considered by the US Environmental Protection Agency as likely

to be human carcinogens and are anticipated to increase the risk of cancer at background levels of exposure. [Vietnam.net Bridge](#)

[top of page...](#)

USSOUTHCOM

Cuban scientists in Peru showing advances against cancer

1 June - Outstanding Cuban specialists are now on an intense activity in Peru, where they are showing the Cuban advances of in the fight against cancer, as a fruit of the importance that the Cuban Revolution gives to the health of the population... The visitors highlighted the importance that the Cuban Revolution has given to the attention for the health of the people and the political will to take expensive processes of investigation that Cuba also puts at the service of other peoples ahead, all of it in spite of the US blockade for more than half a century. [EIN News](#)

[top of page...](#)

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

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