

8 March 2013

# Army Public Health Weekly Update

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## Incidence, Prevalence, and Cost of Sexually Transmitted Infections in the United States

CDC's new estimates show that there are about 20 million new infections in the United States each year, costing the American healthcare system nearly \$16 billion in direct medical costs alone.

America's youth shoulder a substantial burden of these infections.

CDC estimates that half of all new STIs in the country occur among young men and women.

CDC's new data suggest that there are more than 110 million total STIs among men and women across the nation.



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**The Facts Hurt:  
A State-by-State  
Injury Prevention  
Policy Report**

Injuries—including those caused by accidents and violence—are the third-leading cause of death nationally, and they are the leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of one and 44.

This report by the Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation concludes that millions of injuries could be prevented each year if more states adopted additional research-based injury prevention policies, and if programs were fully implemented and enforced.



**U.S. MILITARY**

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## Are brain injuries from IED blasts causing the military suicide crisis?

5 March - Traumatic brain injuries sustained by more than 200,000 U.S. troops during combat explosions may be fueling the military's suicide crisis, according to a letter co-signed by 53 congressional members who are seeking additional data to investigate the new theory. In the letter, sent Tuesday to Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki, the lawmakers urged both agencies to provide Congress with a raft of figures, including the number of Iraq and Afghanistan service members and veterans who committed suicide or tried to end their lives after being brain injured by the detonation of an improvised explosive device — “the weapon of choice” in both wars.

[NBC News](#)

## Sexually transmitted infections, active component, U.S. Armed Forces, 2000-2012

February - This report summarizes incidence rates of the five most commonly diagnosed sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among active component service members of the U.S. Armed Forces during 2000 to 2012. Human papillomavirus (HPV) infections were the most common, followed in decreasing order of frequency by infections associated with chlamydia, herpes simplex virus, gonorrhea, and syphilis. Compared to their counterparts, women, younger service members, soldiers, and enlisted members had higher incidence rates of each STI. Rates tended to be lower among married personnel. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

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**GLOBAL**

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## Ensuring public health neutrality

27 February - In June 1968, a clearly marked Swedish Red Cross plane flying relief supplies into the breakaway state of Biafra was shot down by Nigerian fighters. Before the war was over, many relief planes would be shot down and far more would crash because the Nigerian government's shoot-to-kill order forced them to fly at night. The brazen targeting of Red Cross relief flights on civilian humanitarian missions was hard to imagine. In the minds of some people, however, these attacks were justified by another clear violation of humanitarian neutrality: on at least one occasion, a plane painted with the Red Cross insignia was actually carrying weapons. That rare instance of military action masquerading as humanitarian relief completely undermined the neutrality of everyone who operated by the accepted rules of humanitarian assistance, cost the lives of both aid workers and aid recipients, and provided a blanket of impunity for the future criminal actions of the Nigerian government. To underscore the necessity of humanitarian neutrality, 12 deans from

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

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prominent U.S. schools of public health sent a letter to President Barack Obama on January 6, 2013, protesting the conduct of a sham vaccination campaign as part of the hunt for Osama bin Laden. [New England Journal of Medicine](#)

## Unreported side effects of drugs are found using internet search data, study finds

6 March - Using data drawn from queries entered into Google, Microsoft and Yahoo search engines, scientists at Microsoft, Stanford and Columbia University have for the first time been able to detect evidence of unreported prescription drug side effects before they were found by the Food and Drug Administration's warning system. Using automated software tools to examine queries by six million Internet users taken from Web search logs in 2010, the researchers looked for searches relating to an antidepressant, paroxetine, and a cholesterol lowering drug, pravastatin. They were able to find evidence that the combination of the two drugs caused high blood sugar. [New York Times](#)

## U.S. baby's cure from HIV raises hope, new questions

4 March - The remarkable case of a baby being cured of HIV infection in the United States using readily available drugs has raised new hope for eradicating the infection in infants worldwide, but scientists say it will take a lot more research and much more sensitive diagnostics before this hope becomes a reality. In a medical first for an infant, the Mississippi toddler was born in July 2010 infected with HIV, treated within 30 hours of delivery with aggressive HIV therapy, which continued for 18 months. She is now considered cured of her infection, a team of researchers led by Dr. Deborah Persaud, a virologist at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, said in a news conference at the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Atlanta on Sunday. [Reuters](#)

## More baccalaureate-prepared nurses in hospitals connected to fewer patient deaths

4 March — When hospitals hire more nurses with four-year degrees, patient deaths following common surgeries decrease, according to new research by the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing's Center for Health Outcomes and Policy Research as reported in the March issue of the prestigious policy journal *Health Affairs*. Less than half the nation's nurses (45%) have baccalaureate degrees, according to the most recent data available (2008). If all 134 Pennsylvania hospitals involved in the study had increased the percentage of their nurses with four-year degrees by 10 percentage points, the lives of about 500 patients who had undergone general, vascular, or orthopedic surgery might have been saved, the researchers found. [Newswise](#)

## Video reveals invisible motion all around us

4 March - We don't realize it, but there's an invisible world of pulsating movement and color all around us. Now a team of researchers has found a way to amplify this unseen world using video. Dubbed "Eulerian Video Magnification," the technology can be used to monitor a sleeping newborn's breathing, the pulse of hospital patients and even industrial

machines. "Once we amplify these small motions, there's like a whole new world you can look at," MIT computer scientist William Freeman told the New York Times. The system works by concentrating on a single pixel in a video. The program identifies subtle, frame-by-frame changes in color or motion, then amplifies them 100 times. A video of a person's face that might normally look pink shifts toward bright red when subjected to the algorithm. Such a program could reveal subtle changes in a person's pulse and make them immediately visible to a nurse or doctor. Besides monitoring pulses, scientists say their system could also be used to monitor spatial patterns of blood flow to check for any asymmetries that could indicate disease. [Discovery News](#)

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## INFLUENZA

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

- In Week 8 (through 23 February 2013), Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) and Pneumonia & Influenza (P&I) incidence rates continued to decrease in the US, but increased in EUCOM and PACOM. Among EUCOM service members, the proportion of outpatient visits due to P&I remained above both baseline rates and previous season rates.
- Across the overseas DoD laboratory surveillance network, influenza activity varied from low to moderate levels except in Europe, where high levels of influenza activity were detected with co-circulation of influenza A/H1, A/H3, and B.
- The influenza vaccination coverage for the DoD (Active Duty component only) is 97%. [AFHSC DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary](#)

### CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

- During week 8 (February 17 - 23, 2013), influenza activity remained elevated in the United States, but decreased in most areas.
- Viral Surveillance: Of 7,609 specimens tested and reported by collaborating laboratories, 1,288 (16.9%) were positive for influenza.
- Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality: The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was above the epidemic threshold.
- Influenza-Associated Pediatric Deaths: Three pediatric deaths were reported.
- Outpatient Illness Surveillance: The proportion of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) was 2.7%. This is above the national baseline of 2.2%.
- Geographic Spread of Influenza: Twelve states reported widespread influenza activity; Puerto Rico and 28 states reported regional influenza activity; [FluView](#)

## DoD Global Laboratory-Based Influenza Surveillance Program

- During Week 8 (17 - 23 February 2013), 38 specimens were tested from 17 locations. There were 10 influenza A viruses (six A(H3N2) and four A(H1N1)pdm09); and five influenza B viruses detected.
- To date this influenza season, 2,853 specimens have been tested from 81 locations of which 946 were positive for influenza A (850 A(H3N2), 86 A(H1N1)pdm09, one co-infection of A(H3N2) & A(H1N1)pdm09, three co-infections of A(H3N2) & B, one co-infection of A(H3N2) & parainfluenza, and five A/not subtyped); and 198 were positive for influenza B (14 B/Yamagata, two B/Victoria, and 182 B/lineage undetermined). There have been 189 other respiratory viruses isolated (45 adenovirus, 64 parainfluenza, nine enterovirus, and 71 RSV).
- In a recent CDC report, the interim adjusted estimate of seasonal influenza vaccine effectiveness was 56% [95% confidence interval (CI) 47% to 63%], suggesting moderate protection overall. The estimate for adults aged 65 and older was not significant [VE 27% (95% CI -31% to 59%)] (Morbidity and Mortality Report, 22 February 2013). [USAF School of Aerospace Medicine](#)

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

In week 8/2013, 19 of 28 countries reporting indicated concomitantly high/medium-intensity transmission and wide geographic spread. Only six countries reported increasing trends compared to eleven in week 7. Fifteen countries have been reporting decreasing or stable trends for at least two consecutive weeks.

- The proportion of influenza virus-positive specimens from sentinel sites remained high (50%), but it has decreased from the peak (~60%) observed around weeks 5 to 7/2013.
- Since week 40/2012, an even distribution of influenza virus types has been observed, 50% each for type A and type B viruses. After a sustained increase between weeks 2 and 7/2013, the proportion of A(H1)pdm09 has remained at around 60% of A viruses with subtyping information.
- 111 hospitalised laboratory-confirmed influenza cases were reported by six countries (Belgium, France, Ireland, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain) with an even distribution of influenza type A and type B viruses.

Influenza activity remained substantial in week 8/2013 across Europe but an increasing number of countries reported indications of declining transmission. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

## Google.org: Flu Trends

5 March – Estimates of flu activity based on certain Internet search queries indicate that the level of flu activity in the northern hemisphere ranges from low in Canada, Poland, and Bulgaria to intense in Russia. In the southern hemisphere flu activity ranges from minimal to low. [Google.org Flu Trends](#)

## Study: Getting flu shot 2 years in a row may lower protection

1 March – Experts are puzzled by a new study in which influenza vaccination seemed to provide little or no protection against flu in the 2010-11 season—and in which the only participants who seemed to benefit from the vaccine were those who hadn't been vaccinated the season before. The investigators recruited 328 households in Michigan before the flu season started and followed them through the season. Overall, they found that the infection risk was nearly the same in vaccinated and unvaccinated participants... In trying to figure out why the effectiveness was so low, the researchers sifted their data in different ways, said Arnold S. Monto, MD, of the University of Michigan, senior author of the study. "We discovered that if you separated out those that had not been vaccinated the previous year, you got percentages close to what were seen in the major vaccine effectiveness studies," he told CIDRAP News. [CIDRAP](#)

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

For the week ending 23 February 2013 (Week 8), Army Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) activity was lower than the same time last season. CDC reported ILI and the proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza remained elevated in the US, but continued to trend downward.

- ILI Activity: Army incident ILI outpatient visits in week 8 were 27% lower than the same week last year.
- Influenza cases: Three hospitalized influenza cases were reported to USAPHC in week 8. 78 hospitalized cases have been reported during this influenza season, 69 in dependents and 9 in Active Duty.
- Acute Respiratory Disease at BCT sites: While ARD rates remain low, surveillance testing in week 8 did not detect influenza at Army BCT sites.
- Viral specimens: During week 8, 295 of 930 (32%) laboratory specimens tested were positive for respiratory pathogens. Influenza A accounted for 39% of positive specimens. Most of the influenza positive specimens were from SRMC (36%); 21% were from WRMC, and 16% from ERM. [USAPHC U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report](#)

## PANDEMIC AND AVIAN INFLUENZA

### Effects of vaccine program against pandemic influenza A(H1N1) virus, United States, 2009–2010

March - In April 2009, the United States began a response to the emergence of a pandemic influenza virus strain: A(H1N1)pdm09. Vaccination began in October 2009. By using US surveillance data (April 12, 2009–April 10, 2010) and vaccine coverage estimates (October 3, 2009–April 18, 2010), we estimated that the A(H1N1)pdm09 virus vaccination program prevented 700,000–1,500,000 clinical cases, 4,000–10,000 hospitalizations, and 200–500 deaths. We found that the national health effects were greatly influenced by the timing of vaccine administration and the effectiveness of the vaccine. We estimated that recommendations for priority vaccination of targeted priority groups were not inferior to other vaccination prioritization strategies. These results emphasize the need for relevant surveillance data to facilitate a rapid evaluation of vaccine recommendations and effects.

[Emerging Infectious Diseases](#)

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## VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

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### More cases in multistate Salmonella outbreak linked to chicken

6 March – Four more illnesses have been reported in a multistate Salmonella Heidelberg outbreak linked to a brand of retail chicken, and lab testing in Washington has detected the outbreak strain on products from patients' homes, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said yesterday. The new cases push the total in the outbreak that has been simmering since last June to 128. Epidemiologic and trace-back investigations in Oregon and Washington previously found that most of the patients ate chicken before they got sick and that Foster Farms brand chicken was the most likely source. The new findings on chicken samples added to the evidence that the company's chicken is probably the source of the outbreak, and tests found that some of the patient isolates and one from a chicken sample were resistant to antibiotics. [CIDRAP](#)

### FDA finds field contamination links in cantaloupe *Salmonella* probe

4 March – *Salmonella* contamination in an Indiana grower's melons linked to a 2012 outbreak likely occurred in the growing fields and was likely spread during various handling stages, according to an environmental assessment by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The findings, posted Mar 1 on the FDA's Web site, describe an extensive investigation of cantaloupe and watermelon growing operations at Chamberlain Farms in Owensville,

Ind., that took place in September after an initial inspection found one of the outbreak strains in the packing area, two outbreak strains from cantaloupes collected from the field, and one outbreak strain from a watermelon growing area. The outbreak sickened at least 261 people, 3 of them fatally, in 24 states, according to the CDC's final outbreak report on Oct 5. [CIDRAP](#)

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## WELLNESS

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### Barefoot running can cause injuries, too

6 March - When Dr. Douglas Brown, a radiologist in Orem, Utah, noticed an uptick recently in the number of barefoot runners he was seeing with heel and foot problems, he wondered if there might be a connection between their unshod training and their sore feet... To find out, Dr. Ridge began by recruiting 36 adult, experienced runners, male and female, who, until then, had run between 15 and 30 miles a week while wearing normal running shoes... She then randomly assigned half of the group to continue running as they had: same mileage, same shoes. The other half were given a pair of Vibram Five Fingers barefoot-style shoes and asked to begin sprinkling barefoot-like mileage into their runs, but gradually. They were told to wear the minimalist shoes for one mile during the first week of the study, two miles the second, three the third, and then as much as they liked, which is what the Vibram Web site recommended at the time of the 2011 study. After 10 weeks, both groups of runners received a follow-up M.R.I. There was no evidence of injuries to or changes in the tissues of the lower leg, like the Achilles' tendon, among any of the runners. But more than half of the runners wearing the minimalist shoes now showed early signs of bone injuries in their feet. [New York Times](#)

### BUSM study reveals potential target to better treat, cure anxiety disorders

5 March – Researchers at Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) have, for the first time, identified a specific group of cells in the brainstem whose activation during rapid eye movement (REM) sleep is critical for the regulation of emotional memory processing. The findings, published in the *Journal of Neuroscience*, could help lead to the development of effective behavioral and pharmacological therapies to treat anxiety disorders, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, phobias and panic attacks... Memories of fearful experiences can lead to enduring alterations in emotion and behavior and sleep plays a natural emotional regulatory role after stressful and traumatic events. Persistence of sleep disturbances, particularly of REM sleep, is predictive of developing symptoms of anxiety disorders. A core symptom of these disorders frequently reported by patients is the persistence of fear-provoking memories that they are unable to extinguish. [EurekAlert](#)

## Fitness experts separate folklore from fact

4 March - Can crunches create six-pack abdominal muscles? Do weight-lifting women risk bulging biceps? Is stretching always a good idea? Experts say disentangling folklore from fact is not easy in fitness, where misconceptions are as pervasive as push-ups and as stubborn as love handles. [Reuters](#)

## HIV linked to higher chance of heart attack

5 March - People with HIV are almost 50 percent more likely to have a heart attack than those who aren't infected with the virus - even after taking into account their other health risks, according to a new study. Researchers aren't sure what explains the higher heart attack rate in HIV-positive people, but they speculate it's a combination of the effects of HIV itself and the antiretroviral drugs used to treat it. [Reuters](#)

## New research shows direct link between salt laden western diet and autoimmune diseases

6 March - For years scientists and doctors have wondered why autoimmune diseases are so prevalent in the western world. The prevailing thought has been the "hygiene hypothesis" in which researchers have seen that in countries that were less developed people washed their hands less, were in close proximity to animals and the soil in addition they had had parasites present in their digestive tract. People in these countries had incidence of autoimmune diseases such as Multiple Sclerosis or Rheumatoid Arthritis that were almost non-existent. But new research out today in the journal Nature implicates the high salt western diet in many autoimmune diseases and even shows proof in mice that an increase of dietary salt can make them more susceptible to a version of Multiple Sclerosis. [Medical Daily](#)

## Sacrificing sleep makes for run-down teens — and parents

1 March- When NPR, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Harvard School of Public Health asked parents and caregivers in our new poll whether getting a good night's sleep is important, families overwhelmingly told us that sleep is a high priority. But almost all said that it's difficult to pull off. And studies suggest this is especially true for teenagers... Lots of teens are cruising by on too little sleep, but that's not ideal. "All of the data we have suggests that teenagers need 8 1/2 to 9 1/4 hours of sleep per night," explains sleep expert Helene Emsellem, medical director of the Center for Sleep & Wake Disorders in Chevy Chase, Md. When teens don't get enough sleep, there are consequences beyond just being more irritable or moody. Over the long term, a lack of sleep can influence appetite, nudging a person to reach for more empty carbohydrates and sugar. [NPR](#)

## Study: Processed meat linked to premature death

7 March - Vegetarians have healthier hearts, while those with diets high in processed meat - regardless of whether or not it contains horse -- are at a significantly increased risk of death due to cardiovascular disease, and to a lesser extent, cancer. For half a million people throughout ten European countries, a study in *BMC Medicine* found, consuming processed meat went along with other unhealthful lifestyle choices, such as eating few fruits and vegetables, being more likely to smoke and, for men, consuming large quantities of alcohol. But because this sample size was so large, the researchers were able to isolate meat consumption from these other factors. When they did so, they found the association between processed meat and premature death became even stronger. They estimated that if people reduced their daily meat consumption to under 20 grams -- cutting sausage down to a matchbook-sized portion -- about 3 percent of premature deaths in a given year could be prevented. [Atlantic](#)

## Why ER docs in the Big Apple won't replace that painkiller prescription

6 March - Early this year, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg said public hospitals there would take steps to reduce overdoses and abuse of opioid painkillers. The drugs have become a public health problem. Narcotic painkillers, such as Vicodin and Oxycontin, are involved in more than 16,000 overdose deaths a year nationwide. A third of unintentional drug overdoses in New York City in 2010 involved prescription painkillers. So New York came up with nine recommendations for emergency room doctors to try to lower the risks. Doctors who follow the advice will consider alternatives to opioids and prescribe only a few days' worth of the drugs, if they decide that's the best course for short-term pain relief. They'll also avoid starting patients on long-acting opioids, like Oxycontin, and will refrain from replacing lost, or allegedly lost, opioid prescriptions without lots of due diligence first.

[NPR](#)

## Your child's fat, mine's fine: Rose-colored glasses and the obesity epidemic



4 March - About 69 percent of American adults are overweight or obese, and more than four in five people say they are worried about obesity as a public health problem. But a recent poll conducted by NPR, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Harvard School of Public Health revealed a curious schism in our national attitudes toward obesity: Only one in five kids had a parent who feared the boy or girl would grow up to be overweight as an adult. Put another way, assuming current trends persist, parents of 80 percent of American children think all these kids will somehow end up being among the lucky 31 percent of adults who are not overweight. Tali Sharot is a neuroscientist at University College London who studies why large numbers of people — faced with a large number of different kinds of risks — believe they and their family members will dodge the odds. [NPR](#)

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## USAFRICOM

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### Anti-AIDS pill, vaginal gel unsuitable for Africa: study

4 March - Trying to prevent HIV infection through vaginal gels or daily tablets has proven ineffective in the southern African region ravaged by the disease because people did not use the medicines properly, a study released on Monday said. A ground-breaking study issued in 2010 indicated a vaginal gel containing an HIV drug can sharply reduce infections in women who use it before and after sex. However, a test of the gel and two types of anti-HIV pills among more than 5,000 women in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Uganda showed that, based on blood tests, more than 70 percent did not use the medication as instructed. [Reuters](#)

### Kenya: Antiretroviral drugs sold for food in Kenya's slums

2 March - Impoverished Kenyans living with HIV/AIDs are sometimes selling their antiretroviral drugs to buy food for themselves and their families. Medical professionals believe there has been a slight growth in the trend, saying that people are simply trying to survive. [VOA](#)

### Nigeria violence halts anti-polio program

5 March - Nearly a month after nine health workers in Nigeria were slaughtered as they prepared to administer polio vaccinations, the polio eradication program remains at a standstill in Kano, a state health officials call the epicenter of the disease. Officials say other polio vaccination programs in Nigeria are operating and they are working to beef up security to assure hundreds of health workers it is safe again to give vaccinations. [VOA](#)

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## USCENTCOM

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### Afghanistan: Mental health in Afghanistan: Poverty, vulnerability have bigger impact than war, study finds

6 March - ...[A] new study on mental health in Afghanistan looks beyond the effects of war and identifies the root causes of mental distress and anxiety among its citizens: poverty and vulnerability. "War exposure is undisputedly a factor of mental distress and anxiety, but other predictors, such as poverty and vulnerability, are stronger and probably more persistent risk factors that have not received deserved attention in policy decisions," says Jean-Francois Trani, PhD, assistant professor at the [Brown School](#)... "A lack of resources or

inability to find work make it impossible to assume one's social status. That, in turn, leads to distress that can conduct to young men choosing a path of violent opposition to authorities and an international presence." ... "Our study shows these groups are less resilient and more at risk of mental health distress and disorders," Trani says. "Genuinely addressing their needs can only help build a more stable and prosperous Afghanistan." [Washington University in St. Louis Newsroom](#)

## Iraq's depleted uranium clean-up to cost \$30m as contamination spreads

6 March - Cleaning up more than 300 sites in Iraq still contaminated by depleted uranium (DU) weapons will cost at least \$30m, according to a report by a Dutch peace group to be published on Thursday. The report, which was funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, warns that the contamination is being spread by poorly regulated scrap metal dealers, including children. It also documents evidence that DU munitions were fired at light vehicles, buildings and other civilian infrastructure including the Iraqi Ministry of Planning in Baghdad – casting doubt on official assurances that only armoured vehicles were targeted. [Guardian](#)

## Syrians risk their health to keep warm

4 March - Residents of Syrian towns that have run out of heating oil say they are getting sick after resorting to burning crude oil to keep warm. The nearly two-year conflict in Syria made fuel widely unavailable, and though spring is drawing nearer, cold spells are still intermittently hitting some parts of the country. "The smoke stinks terribly, and many people are suffering from respiratory problems and skin irritations because of it," said a dentist in the eastern governorate Deir-ez-Zor, calling himself Abu Adnan. "But what can we do? We need warmth and we need something to cook our food with." Residents of rebel-held areas of Deir-ez-Zor, Idlib, Aleppo, Hama, Homs and Rural Damascus governorates say heating oil, known as mazout, as well as diesel and gasoline have all but disappeared from the market. [IRIN](#)

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### **USEUCOM**

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## Greece: ECDC urges better West Nile control efforts

4 March - Greece has taken productive steps since West Nile virus cases surfaced in 2010 but can do more to combat seasonal outbreaks that have affected more than 500 people, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) said in a report today. Greece has developed a comprehensive surveillance and control program but can more thoroughly analyze surveillance data, better disseminate information, coordinate private and public partners more effectively, and better prepare and activate mosquito-control

programs, the agency said. "ECDC can provide support in risk assessment, conduct data analyses, and facilitate the scientific discussion on blood safety issues," the report concluded. Greece confirmed 262 West Nile cases in 2010, 100 in 2011, and 161 in 2012. Of those 523 cases, 381 (73%) involved neuroinvasive disease. "Based on the observed dynamic in the last 3 years, further human cases can be expected in the coming years, although a precise prediction about the epidemic dimension and the regions at risk is not possible," the ECDC said. [CIDRAP](#)

## U.K.: Confirmed cases of measles in North East tops 120

6 March - The number of confirmed cases of measles across the north-east of England has topped the 120 mark. The Health Protection Agency (HPA) has already declared the outbreak as one of the worst in recent years. Since September there have been 122 confirmed and 126 suspected cases, compared to just 18 confirmed in 2011. The agency said 38% of all cases involved young people aged between 10 and 19 in the Stockton, Darlington and Middlesbrough areas. [BBC News](#)

## U.K. 'fares badly in European health league table'

5 March - The UK is lagging behind progress by similar countries on many indicators for ill-health, research suggests. Health data over 20 years was compared with figures from 18 other countries in the research published in the *Lancet*. Although average life expectancy has risen by four years since 1990, it says the UK needs to increase its strategies for tackling preventable problems such as heart disease and stroke. Health secretary Jeremy Hunt has said he has a plan to address the lag. [BBC](#)

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## USNORTHCOM

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## U.S. border patrol finds, detains its first XDR-TB case

4 March - A Nepalese man detained at the Mexico border in November is in medical isolation at a US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facility in Texas undergoing treatment for extensively drug-resistant (XDR) tuberculosis (TB), according to a Mar 1 *Wall Street Journal (WSJ)* report. The man is the first patient to be detained by the ICE with the disease. The man's XDR-TB infection has prompted extensive international actions to track contacts who may have been exposed to the man, who spent 3 months traveling in South Asia, Brazil, and Mexico. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) told the *WSJ* that the man was detained when he tried to cross the border illegally near McAllen, Tex. The man's illness came to light during routine TB screening by ICE officials when he first arrived at the detention facility. The article cited a government report that said the man's strain has been seen only once before in another Nepalese national. The government's report said the man's strain is resistant to at least 8 of 15 standard TB drugs. He was moved to a detention facility with more medical staffing, and it's unclear how long he will be in US care, the story said. [CIDRAP](#)

## U.S.: CDC warns of drug-resistant Enterobacteriaceae

5 March – Federal officials today warned of a new type of antibiotic-resistant threat that is more dangerous than methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), but could be curbed now with prompt action from health leaders, healthcare workers, and even patients, they say. Carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CRE), seen primarily in patients who have been exposed to hospital settings, are "nightmare bacteria" that pose a triple threat, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). CRE, which include two common digestive system organisms, *Klebsiella pneumoniae* and *Escherichia coli*, are resistant to nearly all antibiotics, have a high mortality in invasive infections, and can spread resistance genes to other bacteria in patients' bodies, CDC officials said... The CDC also found that almost 200 hospitals and acute-care long-term care facilities treated at least one patient infected with CRE from a catheter-associated urinary tract infection or a central-line-associated bloodstream infection. [CIDRAP](#)

## U.S.: Continued vigilance urged for fungal infections among patients who received contaminated steroid injections

4 March - CDC continues to receive new reports of fungal infection among patients who were given injections of contaminated methylprednisolone acetate (MPA1) from the New England Compounding Center (NECC) in Framingham, Mass. Most of these recent cases have been localized spinal or paraspinal infections (e.g., epidural abscesses) in patients, although new cases of meningitis or arachnoiditis also have been reported. Because many of these new cases are among patients with minimal symptoms, CDC is re-emphasizing the recommendation for clinicians to remain vigilant for fungal infections, especially in patients with mild or even baseline symptoms, and consider evaluation with magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) if clinically warranted. [CDC](#)

## U.S., New York: Bloomberg to target loud headphones in new campaign

6 March - Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who has previously banned smoking in public places, cracked down on noise, limited soda sizes and aims to get rid of Styrofoam, has now turned his gaze or rather his ears towards getting people to crank down the volume on their headphones. The city is planning a social media campaign blitz as well as conducting focus groups to warn young people about the dangers of loud music blasting through their headphones, the health department said yesterday. With grant money from the Fund for Public Health in New York, the Hearing Loss Prevention Media Campaign will use social media such as Twitter and Facebook to alert users to the risks of hearing damage, including increased risk of injury. [Metro](#)

## U.S.: Study says life expectancy falls for some U.S. women

5 March - A new study offers more evidence that life expectancy for some U.S. women is falling, a disturbing trend that experts can't explain. The latest research found that women younger than 76 are dying at higher rates than in previous years in nearly half of the nation's counties - many of them rural and in the South and West. For men, life expectancy has held steady or improved in nearly all counties. The study is the latest to spot this pattern, especially among disadvantaged white women. Some leading theories blame higher smoking rates, obesity, and less education, but several experts said they simply don't know why... The new study, released Monday by the journal Health Affairs, found declining female life expectancy in 43 percent of the nation's 3,141 counties. [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

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### USPACOM

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## China: 151 cases of measles confirmed in Kunming

6 March - As of the end of February, 151 cases of Measles had been confirmed in Kunming, capital of Yunnan province, with two deaths caused by the highly contagious disease, Yunnan.cn, an official news portal in the province, reported on Tuesday. To contain the spread of the disease, Kunming on Wednesday will begin offering free vaccinations for all children in the city, the report said, citing the Kunming Center for Disease Control. [People's Daily Online](#)

## India fortifies food to fight 'hidden hunger'

5 March - Malnutrition is more common in India than in sub-Saharan Africa, according to the United Nations. To address this "hidden hunger," Indian officials are joining forces with a U.S.-based program to fortify staple foods with key nutrients. The numbers are stark. The U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) says in India, one in every three children is malnourished, and nearly half of all childhood deaths are attributed to malnutrition. The problem centers not necessarily on how much people are eating, but what they are eating. Millions in India rely on rice and wheat to fill their stomachs, but those staple foods lack crucial vitamins and minerals. [Voice of America](#)

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## Paraguay: More than 76,000 dengue cases



5 March - Dengue epidemic is still striking Paraguay and the Health Ministry informed that more than 76,000 people in the whole country are confirmed or suspicious of suffering from the disease. The most recent report of the General Direction of Health Surveillance emphasized that 26,512 carriers of the disease were counted, while other 50,000 citizens are still suspicious cases, according to the medical report. As it happens since the epidemic started, the highest amount of infected people is registered in the central area of the nation, which includes the capital city, since 42,000 cases were reported in Asuncion and the adjacent Central Department... As it has been shown in the report, so far this year the confirmed fatal victims related to dengue come to 27 in Paraguay. [Prensa Latina](#)

## Peru: Bartonellosis

4 March - Since 12 Jan 2013, 40 cases of bartonellosis have been reported in Rodriguez de Mendoza province [Amazonas region]. Authorities from the Amazonas Regional Health Directorate and some district mayors agreed to immediately start a fumigation campaign aiming to combat the insect vector [sandfly, locally know as 'uta'] for Carrion's disease [bartonellosis] and cutaneous leishmaniasis. This campaign will focus more intensively in Omia district, where there is a greater presence of the sandfly vector. The local epidemiologist, Dr Pershing Bustamante-Chauca, indicated that (samples from the) reported cases have already been sent to the laboratories from the Regional Health Directorate, in order to identify the type of disease affecting persons from the districts of Mariscal Benavides, Omia, San Nicolas, and other nearby areas in Mendoza Province. [ProMED-mail](#)

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