

## USACHPPM

# HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

12 March 2004

The HIO Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States (US) Army. The update does not attempt to analyze the information regarding potential strategic or tactical impact to the US Army and as such, should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available at <http://mic.afmic.detrick.army.mil/>. The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

<b>HOT TOPICS</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Benign Virus May Guard Against AIDS Progression .....	2
Clue to How Ancient Pain-reliever Works .....	2
Coffee Drinking Associated with Reduced Risk of Diabetes.....	2
Drug Used in Malaria Fight Deserves Closer Scrutiny .....	3
Firms Say Anthrax Drugs Show Promise, Report Says.....	3
Low-cholesterol Drug Found Key to Heart Health .....	3
Study Gives Clue Why West Nile More Popular in U.S.....	3
Relationship between Early Fever and Allergic Sensitization at Age 6 to 7 Years .....	4
Sunscreen could be Made of DNA.....	4
<b>FOCUS ON EPIDEMIOLOGY</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Chlamydia: New Programs Under Way to Detect Nation's Most Common Bacterial STD .....	4
DoD-GEIS – Avian Influenza .....	5
Influenza Update.....	5
Bird Flu Found at Large MD Farm .....	6
Dead Crows in Japan Test Positive for Bird Flu .....	6
<b>USEUCOM</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Madagascar Calls for Aid as Deadly Cyclone Hits .....	7
Mozambique: More Cholera Cases, But Fewer Deaths .....	7
Yellow Fever in Liberia - Update .....	7
<b>USCENTCOM</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Impoverished Southern Iraq Wrestles with Significant Refugee Returns .....	7
<b>USNORTHCOM</b> .....	<b>8</b>
California: Warning Follows Illness of 2 Marin Infants .....	8
Fat May Soon Be No. 1 Cause of Preventable Deaths in U.S. ....	8
Iraq War Amputees Get New Limbs, New Life.....	8
North Carolina: 1st Case of Rabies in 50 Years Found in Haywood County.....	9
Resistant Form of Gonorrhea Gains Foothold .....	9
Smoking, Drinking on Rise in Military .....	9
<b>USPACOM</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Australia: Soil Bug Claims Woman's Life.....	9
Cerebral Malaria Claims 19 Lives in Mirpur Khas, Sindh Province, Pakistan.....	10
China Provinces Could Have AIDS from Unsanitary Blood Sales .....	10
Dengue Fever Update.....	10
Milestone as China Province Lifts Ban on Non-infectious Hep B carriers .....	10
New Guinea: 160 Hit by Typhoid in Wau .....	11

<b>USSOUTHCOM .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Colombia: First Cases of Hantavirus Infection Reported in the North.....	11
Red Cross Resumes Medical Operations in Haiti .....	11

## HOT TOPICS

### Benign Virus May Guard Against AIDS Progression

03 March – Reuters reported a harmless virus common in the general population delays the development of [AIDS](#), according to a study released on Wednesday that could help researchers find new treatments for the epidemic. The benign virus can persist in the body for years and appears to interfere with HIV, the AIDS virus which affects 40 million people worldwide and has killed another 30 million. Both HIV and the benign virus, known as GBV-C, infect the same types of cells. Jack Stapleton of the University of Iowa and his colleagues found that HIV-infected men who were no longer infected with GBV-C after five to six years died nearly three times faster than men who continued to show signs of the infection. And once the GBV-C virus was gone, the AIDS virus seemed to attack with renewed vigor. [View Article](#)

### Clue to How Ancient Pain-reliever Works

04 March – The Washington Times reported Harvard researchers have found that acupuncture on pain-relief points cuts blood flow to key areas of the brain within seconds. It was seen as a valuable clue as to how the ancient technique might relieve pain and treat addictions, says Harvard scientist Bruce Rosen, who will release the findings at the American Psychosomatic Society meeting in Orlando, Fla. Rosen's team used functional magnetic resonance imaging, or MRIs, on about 20 healthy volunteers before, during and after acupuncture. This type of brain scan shows changes in blood flow and the amount of oxygen in blood. Rosen says the specific brain areas affected are involved in mood, pain and cravings. Researchers applied acupuncture needles to points on the hand linked to pain relief in traditional Chinese medicine. Blood flow decreased in certain areas of the brain within seconds of volunteers reporting heaviness in their hands, a sign the acupuncture is working correctly, Rosen says. [View Article](#)

### Coffee Drinking Associated with Reduced Risk of Diabetes

10 March –Researchers have found an association between drinking coffee and a reduced risk for [type 2 diabetes](#) in Finnish adults, according to a study in the March 10 issue of The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). Researchers at the National Public Health Institute, Helsinki, Finland conducted a large study aimed at determining whether the suggested inverse relationship between coffee and type 2 DM exists. The study was conducted among the Finnish population, who have the highest per capita coffee consumption in the world. The study combined surveys conducted in 1982, 1987, and 1992 of 6,974 Finnish men and 7,655 women aged 35 to 64 years without a history of stroke, coronary heart disease, or DM at baseline. The researchers found that the risk of developing diabetes decreased as the amount of daily coffee consumed increased. For women, drinking 3-4 cups of coffee a day was associated with a 29 percent reduced risk of diabetes; 10 or more cups a day, a 79 percent reduced risk. For men, drinking 3-4 cups of coffee a day was associated with a 27 percent lower risk for diabetes; 10 or more cups a day, a 55 percent lower risk. [View Article](#)

## Drug Used in Malaria Fight Deserves Closer Scrutiny

08 March – USA Today reported after months of questions from veterans groups and members of Congress, the Pentagon announced it would set up a panel of experts to dispel safety "myths" about an anti-malaria pill dispensed weekly to troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Among them: fears the prescription drug Lariam causes suicide and neurological problems. Developed by the U.S. Army in the 1970s, Lariam was licensed to the Swiss company Hoffmann-La Roche and approved for use in the U.S. in 1989. In the 12 months through last October, Defense Department statistics show the military filled about 45,000 Lariam prescriptions. Defense officials say adverse reactions are rare, and Lariam is easier to dispense and more effective than three other anti-malaria drugs they prescribe. But that confidence is hardly universal. In the face of growing reports of problems, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) ordered La Roche last year to provide written warnings with every Lariam prescription that the drug causes side effects in a small number of cases. They include anxiety, suicidal thoughts, hallucinations and depression, which can continue after Lariam use is discontinued. Lawmakers and a group opposed to the drug, Lariam Action USA, say they have received more than 100 complaints from troops and veterans who describe dangerous reactions caused by Lariam. [View Article](#)

## Firms Say Anthrax Drugs Show Promise, Report Says

09 March – Reuters reported biotechnology company Human Genome Sciences Inc. was expected to say on Tuesday that its experimental [anthrax](#) drug appears safe for human use based on a recent test. The Rockville, Maryland-based company said that separate tests in rabbits suggested its drug known as Abthrax might be effective if given within 12 hours of exposure to anthrax, the newspaper reported. The newspaper said the company was to report on Tuesday that safety tests in 105 human volunteers caused no greater problems than a dummy injection and achieved blood levels likely to be effective against anthrax. A second company, Elusys Therapeutics Inc., has yet to enter human tests for an anti-anthrax drug it is developing. But it reported that its drug -- ETI-204 -- had shown promise in protecting rabbits and mice from the lethal effects of inhaling anthrax spores. According to the newspaper, Pine Brook, New Jersey-based Elusys is not as far along as Human Genome Sciences, but the drugs appear to be similar. Most of the test results have not been checked by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and government approval could be years away. [View Report](#)

## Low-cholesterol Drug Found Key to Heart Health

09 March – The Seattle Times reported heart-disease patients are much less likely to have a heart attack or stroke or to die if they take high doses of a commonly used cholesterol-lowering drug, according to a new study that many experts are calling a landmark. The study is likely to prompt doctors to give much higher doses of the drugs to hundreds of thousands of patients who already have severe heart problems. In addition, it will probably encourage physicians to start giving the medications to millions of people who are not yet on them and to boost dosages for some of those already taking them to push their cholesterol even lower, experts said. Another study in November found the more intensive treatment resulted in less artery clogging, but the new report is considered even more convincing because it weighed the risk of death and other complications of heart patients. [View Article](#)

## Study Gives Clue Why West Nile More Popular in U.S.

04 March – CNN News reported human infection by [West Nile virus](#) may be more common in North America than in Europe because of a hybrid mosquito that bites both birds and humans, carrying the virus from one to the other. A genetic study of the *Culex pipiens* mosquito in 33 locations in Europe

has found that there are two different forms of the same species with different behaviors. One type lives underground, such as in a subway or in weather-protected areas, and one lives above ground, in the open. The underground type will bite humans, but not birds, while the above ground type favors birds. Dina M. Fonseca of the Smithsonian Institution, lead author of the study this week in the journal *Science*, said 40 percent of the mosquito population genetically analyzed in the United States are a type of hybrid *Culex* that will bite both humans and birds. Since birds are the primary reservoir for West Nile, the hybrid *Culex* forms an infection bridge between humans and birds that may not exist to the same extent in Europe, said Fonseca. [View Article](#)

## Relationship between Early Fever and Allergic Sensitization at Age 6 to 7 Years

February – The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology reported on a study that suggests early infections might protect against later allergic sensitization. The purpose of the study was to determine whether fevers before age 1 year were associated with allergic sensitization at age 6 to 7 years. 835 children from suburban Detroit, Michigan, were enrolled at birth. Clinic records from their first year were abstracted for episodes of fever, antibiotic use, and respiratory infections. At age 6 to 7 years, 441 children underwent allergy testing. The primary outcome measures were atopy (1 positive skin prick test result), seroatopy (1 positive allergen-specific IgE level), and allergic sensitization (either seroatopy or atopy). Results showed children with fevers before age 1 year were less likely to demonstrate allergic sensitivity at age 6 to 7 years. [View Article](#)

## Sunscreen could be Made of DNA

08 March – BBC News reported a short strand of DNA could become the sunscreen of the future, according to US researchers. Scientists at Boston University School of Medicine found a DNA fragment called pTT can help repair and prevent skin damage caused by UV radiation. pTT triggers a protein, called p53, that suppresses the growth of tumors, and helps repair damaged DNA. Scientists exposed hairless mice to UV radiation through sunlamps. Mice with pTT rubbed into their skin were six times less likely to develop a tumor. The DNA fragment works by penetrating the skin, then mimicking a response normally caused by DNA damage, which triggers DNA repair enzymes. The findings were published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Previous studies have highlighted the ability of pTT to help skin cells, but this is the first to show how it works in a live animal. [View Article](#)

## Focus on Epidemiology

### Chlamydia: New Programs Under Way to Detect Nation's Most Common Bacterial STD

08 March – WebMD Health reported defying previous research and popular belief that [chlamydia](#) affects women far more often, a new study indicates that America's most common bacterial sexually transmitted disease occurs nearly as frequently in men. Chlamydia was found in 9% of 1,300 men between ages 12 and 24 who were tested by the Minnesota Department of Health over a two-year period. That is nearly as high as the 11% prevalence rate among similarly aged women in that state. Nationally, about 3 million new cases are diagnosed each year. But this new research, unveiled at the 2004 National STD Prevention Conference, suggests that more efforts should be placed on screening men -- and possibly on developing new strategies to combat this bacterial infection. "The single biggest indicator -- more than whether or not men had unprotected sex -- was their number of sexual

partners," researcher Nicoline Collins Tablan, MPH, tells WebMD. "Young men who had at least three sexual partners in the previous six months were four times more likely to test positive as those with fewer partners." [View Article](#)

## DoD-GEIS – Avian Influenza

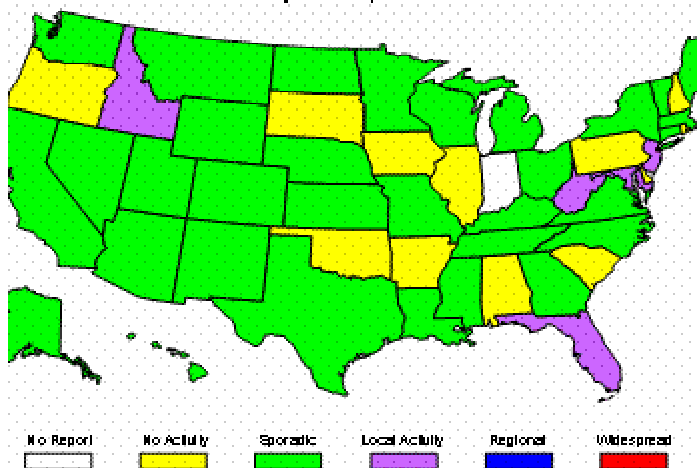
10 March – In Asia, highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) A(H5N1) is widespread in poultry. Influenza A(H3N2) activity (human) in the US declined in the past months. To date, 33 human cases of avian influenza (AI) with 15 deaths have been reported: 11 in Thailand with 7 deaths and 22 in Vietnam with 15 deaths. WHO plans a meeting soon to discuss priority public health interventions preceding (and during) an influenza pandemic; according to WHO the most important immediate intervention is to contain the current avian influenza emergency, reducing the likelihood of emergence and spread of a new pandemic virus. AI viruses usually do not infect humans but transmission from infected poultry to humans is thought to be the cause of these cases. Rare person-to-person transmission occurred in the influenza A(H5N1) 1997 outbreak in Hong Kong and in the Netherlands in 2003; secondary cases did not result in sustained chains of transmission or community-wide outbreaks. Previous experience with AI viruses suggests that limited person-to-person transmission of the current H5N1 viruses could occur. AI outbreaks in the US include a confirmed HPAI A(H5N2) outbreak in one flock in Texas, low pathogenic A(H7N2) in Delaware and A(H7) recently in Maryland. During these outbreaks no human A(H5N1), A(H5N2) or A(H7) cases have occurred in the US. CDC's interim guidance, travel precautions and other relevant information are available at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/>.

## Influenza Update

### CDC Update

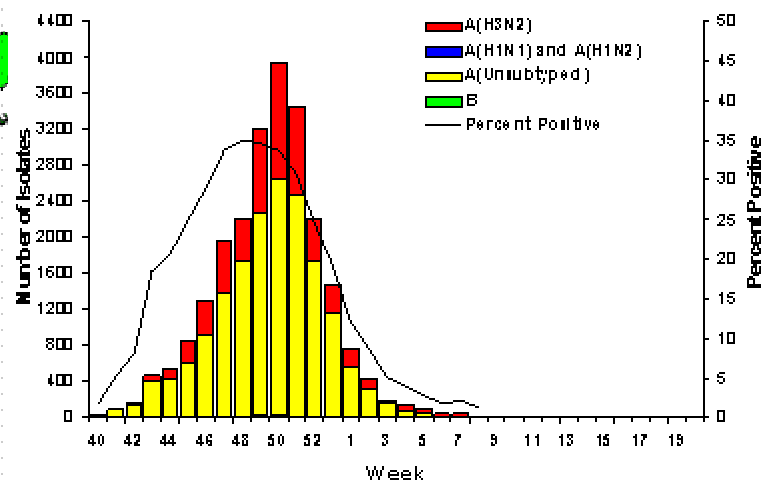
#### Weekly Influenza Activity Estimates Reported by State & Territorial Epidemiologists

Week ending February 29, 2004 - Week 8



[View Source](#)

#### WHO/NREVSS Collaborating Laboratories National Summary, 2003-04

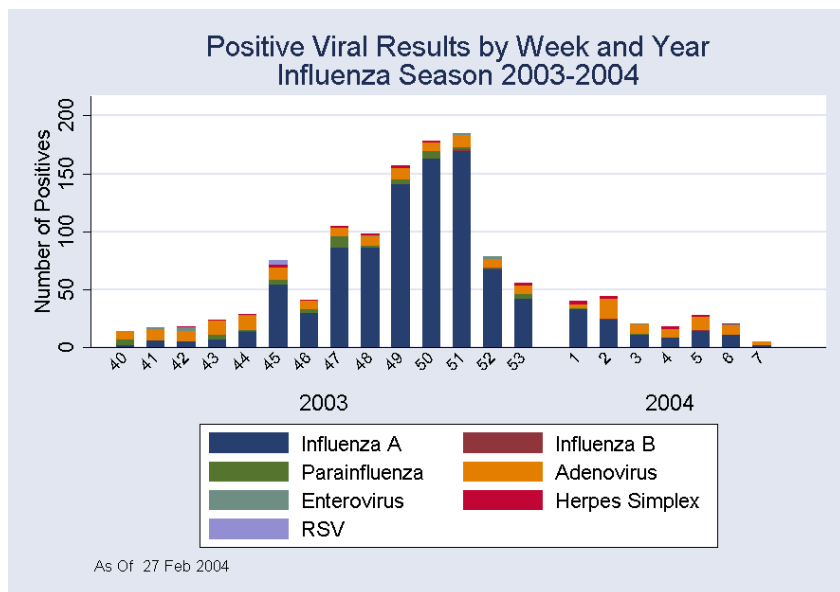


## WHO Update

09 March - To date, Thailand has reported 11 laboratory confirmed cases of H5N1 infection in humans, of which 7 have been fatal. Vietnam has reported 22 laboratory confirmed cases of H5N1 infection in humans, 15 of which have been fatal. [View Source](#)

## DoD Global Influenza and Other Respiratory Viral Pathogens Surveillance Weekly Update Week 9 (29 Feb – 6 Mar)

Since the start of the influenza surveillance season (Week 40: 28 Sep to 4 Oct 03), the Epidemiological Surveillance Division (AFIOH/SDE) has received 2,871 throat swab specimens as part of the influenza surveillance program. 2,791 (97%) of the specimens have been processed to date. Of those processed, 949 (34%) were positive for Influenza A virus and 5 were positive for Influenza B virus.



[View Source](#)

## Bird Flu Found at Large MD Farm

08 March – CBS News reported poultry farmers in Maryland got the bad news they had been bracing for when agriculture officials discovered a case of avian influenza had infected a farm on the state's Eastern Shore. The infection, confirmed Saturday, compelled the slaughter of 328,000 birds at the huge commercial chicken farm, nearly four times the amount killed when two Delaware farms were infected last month with the flu. [View Article](#)

## Dead Crows in Japan Test Positive for Bird Flu

08 March – Reuters reported two dead crows found near a poultry farm in western Japan have tested positive for bird flu, raising concerns that the spread of the disease may be difficult to control, the Agriculture Ministry said. One crow that tested positive was found adjacent to a farm that has been affected by bird flu and the other about 5 miles away, a ministry official said. The official said it was likely the crows had been infected by chickens at the farm, which became the third poultry operation in Japan to be declared affected by bird flu on February 27. "We cannot completely rule out the possibility that the crows may have spread the disease but if that was the case then we would have seen more visible cases of dead crows much earlier," the official said. [View Article](#)

## USEUCOM

### Madagascar Calls for Aid as Deadly Cyclone Hits

08 March – AlertNet reported Madagascar called for international aid as a powerful cyclone tore across the northern half of the island, killing 18 and leaving at least 50,000 homeless. Local media said the government had declared tropical cyclone Gafilo a “national emergency” and had appealed for food, water and medicine from the international community. Radio Madagasikara said two people had been killed by a falling tree, another person was electrocuted and 10 others drowned as the cyclone swept across the island, packing average winds of over 200 km/hour (124 mph). “There is very little information on the extent of the damage, but it’s predicted to be the most serious cyclone for 10 years,” said Roy Probert, Africa spokesman for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). [View Article](#)

### Mozambique: More Cholera Cases, But Fewer Deaths

03 March – AllAfrica.com reported Mozambique's Deputy Health Minister Aida Libombo said cases of [cholera](#) have increased in the country, but the number of deaths and the lethality rate have dropped significantly, when compared with past outbreaks. Addressing questions tabled by the ruling Frelimo party on the cholera situation in the country, she told the Assembly of the Republic, the Mozambican parliament, that since November 2003 up until 26 February, the total number of cases diagnosed throughout the country was 10,977 patients, with 68 deaths. The lethality rate is thus 0.6 per cent in this outbreak. There has been a steady decline in lethality from cholera: in the last three outbreaks it was two per cent, 1.5 per cent, and in the 2002-2003 rainy season one per cent. The World Health Organization (WHO) puts the normal cholera lethality rate at one per cent. [View Article](#)

### Yellow Fever in Liberia - Update

05 March – ProMed reported as of 3 March 2004, a total of 33 suspected cases of [Yellow Fever](#) including 8 deaths, were reported to WHO from 5 counties. Of the total cases, 2 from Bong County and 2 from Nimba County were laboratory confirmed by Institut Pasteur Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. The first emergency mass immunization campaign started on 26 February 2004 in Bong County, targeting camps for Internally Displaced People (IDP). As of 1 March 2004, 42 percent of the target population (72 000) have been immunized. Additional emergency mass immunization campaigns are planned to start in the next few weeks in Nimba County. WHO, UNICEF and NGOs operating in Liberia are supporting the Ministry of Health in the implementation of the campaigns. [View Report](#)

## USCENTCOM

### Impoverished Southern Iraq Wrestles with Significant Refugee Returns

09 March – ElectronicIraq.net reported a UN assessment team just back from southern Iraq has warned that an unregulated flow of returnees is straining already limited resources in communities impoverished by decades of conflict and sanctions. The visiting team reported that Basra seems busier, partly because many Iraqis have returned to the south in recent months. UNHCR cannot verify the number of returnees in Basra aside from the over 9,000 Iraqi refugees it has helped home from Saudi Arabia's Rafha camp and western Iran's camps since last July. According to the Iraqi Ministry of

Trade, more than 122,000 refugees have returned to the nine southern governorates since last year. The Iranian authorities have also reported that more than 70,000 Iraqis previously settled among the local population in Iran have left for home on their own. "The returning refugees are going back to communities impoverished by decades of conflict and sanctions," cautioned UNHCR spokesman Ron Redmond in a press briefing in Geneva Tuesday. He added that Sunday's assessment team "highlighted increased fears that if the flow of people is not regulated, economic hardship and social unrest will increase." The visiting UN team was told of the presence of more than 60,000 malnourished children in four southern governorates. Also worrying is the housing situation, which is under enormous strain with the sudden return of long-time exiles and refugees born abroad. Some of them lack shelter or family members who can host them, while others are living with relatives, exacerbating an already crowded situation. [View Article](#)

## USNORTHCOM

### California: Warning Follows Illness of 2 Marin Infants

08 March – Promed reported Marin County health officials are warning the pregnant and infirm to avoid certain food choices, after 2 infants were sickened during February 2004 with the bacterium [Listeria](#). The babies, born on 14 and 16 Feb 2004, became ill with listeriosis shortly after birth, triggering an investigation into potential sources for the bacteria, said Deputy Public Health Officer Dr. Nathalie Bera. Both babies have made a full recovery, she said. [View Report](#)

### Fat May Soon Be No. 1 Cause of Preventable Deaths in U.S.

10 March – Mercury News reported [obesity](#) may soon overtake tobacco as the leading cause of preventable death in America, according to a study to be released by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC estimates that 400,000 deaths were related to overeating and physical inactivity in 2000. Smoking remained the leading cause of death and accounted for some 435,000 deaths. "Obesity is catching up to tobacco as the leading cause of death in America. If this trend continues, it will soon overtake tobacco," said Julie Gerberding, director of the CDC. Based on current trends, obesity will become No. 1 by 2005, with the toll surpassing 500,000 deaths a year, rivaling the annual deaths from cancer, the researchers found. The CDC estimates that at least 30 percent of all Americans are obese and are at risk of developing heart disease and some forms of cancer and diabetes. [View Article](#)

### Iraq War Amputees Get New Limbs, New Life

07 March — ABC News reported dozens of amputees from the Iraq war have been sent to Washington's Walter Reed Army Medical Center, which ranks as a world leader in treating people with lost limbs. Some of the high-tech prostheses Walter Reed offers its patients could enable them to run, play sports perhaps even jump out of airplanes one day. "We view these patients as world-class athletes," said Col. Jonathan Jaffin, commander of the Walter Reed Health Care System. "Our goal is to restore them to world-class status, and that means that we're going to make sure we get them the very best in terms of prosthetics. We don't want to just settle for an adequate prosthesis." [View Article](#)



## North Carolina: 1st Case of Rabies in 50 Years Found in Haywood County

08 March – ProMed reported a raccoon in Haywood County has tested positive for [rabies](#), the 1st such case in the county in 50 years. The raccoon was tested after the animal bit an Allen's Creek woman, according to Bob Wood, Haywood County's health director. The woman is in good condition and undergoing treatment, which involves a series of 6 shots administered one every 7 days. [View Report](#)

## Resistant Form of Gonorrhea Gains Foothold

10 March – The Boston Globe reported a dangerous form of [gonorrhea](#) that can't be treated with standard antibiotics has swiftly established a foothold in Massachusetts, highlighting a resurgence of sexually transmitted illnesses across New England, disease trackers report. The new germ was first detected in the state in 2002. By last year, one of every seven gonorrhea patients tested positive for the bacteria, which cannot be treated with the cheapest antibiotic pills. Maine reported its first case in January. Though other New England health departments do not routinely examine blood samples for the new bug, health officers in those states said they suspect its presence. Infectious disease specialists fear that the number of drug-resistant gonorrhea cases will grow exponentially, as patients with the new strain are unwittingly prescribed drugs that do them no good. Thinking they're cured, the patients may resume unsafe sex practices and pass on the infection. [View Article](#)

## Smoking, Drinking on Rise in Military

09 March – Military.com reported cigarette smoking and heavy drinking are on the rise in the military, particularly among younger troops, and many in the armed forces report feeling stress in their work, a Pentagon health survey says. Drug use, however, is holding steady far below the rate for civilians. Specific findings include 1) The share of military members categorized as heavy drinkers rose to 18.1 percent from 15.4 percent in the previous survey in 1998. 2) Military personnel aged 18 to 25 showed significantly higher rates of heavy drinking (27.3%) than civilians (15.3%). 3) Cigarette smoking rose from 30 percent in the 1998 survey to 34 percent in the latest survey. About 30 percent said they had taken up smoking since joining the military. 4) The percentage who reported use of illicit drugs was 3.4 percent, up from 2.7 percent in 1998 but not a statistically significant change. In addition, 3.4 percent for the military compares with about 12 percent for the civilian population of the United States. 5) About one-third of the respondents said they felt a lot of stress in their military duties. An additional 30 percent said they felt some stress. 6) In measuring overall job satisfaction, 65 percent indicated they were either satisfied or very satisfied with their current assignment. Satisfaction was highest in the Air Force (72 percent) and lowest in the Army (61 percent). Males and females indicated similar levels of satisfaction. Full survey results can be found at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/main/news/art0514.html> [View Article](#)

# USPACOM

## Australia: Soil Bug Claims Woman's Life

08 March – Promed reported a Townsville woman has died from [melioidosis](#), sparking warnings that precautions should be taken against the soil-borne disease. Hers was the 2nd Townsville death from the disease in 2004. The Tropical Public Health Unit revealed for the first time yesterday a Townsville man had also died from melioidosis in recent weeks. Public health physician Dr Jeffrey Hanna said there also had been 2 other cases in the city recently, as well as others across the region. "6 other

cases have been reported in North Queensland this year -- 2 from the Torres Strait islands, 2 from northwest Queensland, 1 from Cairns and 1 from Cape York," he said. Melioidosis is an infection caused by bacteria living in the soil, particularly in the tropical north of Australia. The disease usually presents as either severe pneumonia or septicemia. The Tropical Public Health Unit said melioidosis was usually acquired through scrapes or wounds on the skin having contact with contaminated soil or water. [View Report](#)

## Cerebral Malaria Claims 19 Lives in Mirpur Khas, Sindh Province, Pakistan

08 March – Promed reported 19 people including 18 children died of cerebral [malaria](#) in civil hospital, and the district Nazim has ordered investigation into the matter. About 255 patients were admitted to civil hospital with cerebral malaria from October to December 2003. The majority of the patients were children. About 19 people including 18 children succumbed to this fatal disease. 7 people died in October 2003, 5 in November, and 7 in December. 5 children are reported to have been shifted to hospitals in other cities in precarious condition. The media has also reported massive casualties in the areas of Taulqa, Kot Ghulam Muhammad, Omar Kot, Degree, Misma, and other localities. [View Report](#)

## China Provinces Could Have AIDS from Unsanitary Blood Sales

03 March – Yahoo News reported according to Chinese and US health officials, most areas of China likely have farmers infected with HIV/AIDS from selling blood in government-backed schemes which operated until the mid-1990s (they are now banned). Blood collecting was something practically the whole country was involved in because plasma was needed to make blood products. Now China is at a peak period -- it takes eight to 10 years for the symptoms of [AIDS](#) to show and now people are dying. China claims 20 percent of its estimated 840,000 HIV/AIDS patients contracted the disease from selling plasma, but international experts believe the total number of cases and number of people infected through blood sales is far higher. [View Article](#)

## Dengue Fever Update

08 March – ProMed reported the death toll from [dengue fever](#) across Indonesia since January this year [2004] has reached 389 and the sufferers increased to 226,013. Jakarta is still the area with the most infections. The ministries of health, the people's welfare and poverty alleviation, as well home affairs coordinated with all provincial governments to step up efforts to stop the spread of the outbreak. As a result of this outbreak, Singapore has increased Dengue Fever Checks and Fiji has issued a "red alert". Fiji has had 2 cases of Dengue Fever since the outbreak in Indonesia. In Australia more cases of dengue fever have been reported in Cairns, bringing the year's total to 10. Medical entomologist Dr Scott Ritchie urged residents to regularly check their yards for mosquito breeding sites and use insect sprays, repellants, mosquito zappers, and coils. In addition, The Philippine government urged the public to observe cleanliness practices to prevent a dengue fever epidemic after 399 cases, including 3 deaths, were reported nationwide in the first 2 months of this year. [View Report](#)

## Milestone as China Province Lifts Ban on Non-infectious Hep B carriers

04 March – Utusan Malaysia Online reported a Chinese province has lifted a ban on hiring non-infectious [hepatitis B](#) carriers in a move seen as a major milestone in the fight against discriminatory hiring practices, state media said. The Hunan provincial government lifted the ban, and stipulated that hepatitis B carriers, for the first time, can be employed by government agencies, the China Daily said. With some exceptions, government agencies in China can legally reject job applicants based on the

condition of their liver. Statistics show that 120 million Chinese people, a number equivalent to the total population of France and Britain together, are chronic carriers of the disease. A delegate to the National People's Congress - the annual parliament session - has proposed lifting the ban against hiring hepatitis B carriers nationwide, state media reports have said. [View Article](#)

## New Guinea: 160 Hit by Typhoid in Wau

08 March – ProMed reported 160 students from the Grace Memorial High School in Wau have been infected by [typhoid](#). Morobe health adviser Dr Likei Theo confirmed the outbreak, which hit the first group of students 3 weeks ago. Typhoid outbreak is confined to the school community alone, and health authorities are working to ensure there is enough stock of medical supplies at the Bulolo Health Center to contain further outbreak of the sickness. Dr Theo said there were no deaths, but the threat of typhoid spreading to the whole school community is serious. He said health workers are already investigating the cause of the outbreak while keeping the school open for classes. [View Report](#)

# USSOUTHCOM

## Colombia: First Cases of Hantavirus Infection Reported in the North

10 March – ProMed reported health authorities detected the first cases of [Hantavirus](#) infection in the north of Colombia. These first Colombian cases were seen in agricultural communities of Cotorra and Cienaga de Oro, as well as in Lorica and Cordoba and in the rural zone of San Marcos in the department of Sucre. [View Report](#)

## Red Cross Resumes Medical Operations in Haiti

04 March – VOA News reported international relief shipments to Haiti are increasing as multinational forces in the Caribbean re-establish security. The International Committee of the Red Cross says it is resuming medical operations it suspended last week because of violence in the country. The ICRC says about 30 employees are back on the job in medical relief operations. The U.N. children's agency, UNICEF says it will begin distributing 30 tons of medical supplies that arrived in Haiti this week now that the security situation in the country is improving. Haiti's Prime Minister, Yvon Neptune, has declared a state of emergency and a new police chief has been appointed to help end the violence. More than 1,000 Marines, nearly 1,000 French troops, as well as troops from Canada, Chile, and other countries in the region are patrolling areas in and around the capital hard hit by violence during the past week. [View Article](#)

Please contact the below-listed POC for suggested improvements and/or comments regarding this report. This report is also available on the USACHPPM website at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/Hioupdate/>.

POC: Rachel Gross, PhD  
[Rachel.Gross@APG.amedd.army.mil](mailto:Rachel.Gross@APG.amedd.army.mil)

Lorraine Bell, DrPH, MSN  
[Lorraine.Bell@APG.amedd.army.mil](mailto:Lorraine.Bell@APG.amedd.army.mil)

Approved:  
[Kevin Delaney](#)  
Chief, Health Information Operations  
(410) 436-5217 or DSN 584-5217