

USACHPPM

HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

16 July 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.

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HOT TOPICS

Abstinence, Condom Controversy Erupts at AIDS Meeting

12 July – Reuters reported a controversy erupted at a global [AIDS](#) conference over whether abstaining from sex or using condoms was more effective in preventing the disease. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni brought the issue, which has set many AIDS activists at odds with Washington, into the open at the first full day of the AIDS conference by saying abstinence was the best way to stem the spread of the killer virus. The remarks by Museveni, whose country is a rare success story in Africa's war on AIDS, were at odds with health experts who back condoms as a frontline defense against the incurable disease. "I look at condoms as an improvisation, not a solution," Museveni told delegates on the second day of the 15th International AIDS Conference in Bangkok. Instead, he called for "optimal relationships based on love and trust instead of institutionalized mistrust which is what the condom is all about." Museveni added fuel to a debate within the AIDS community over the best way to halt the spread of a disease that has killed 20 million people and infected 38 million. Uganda's "ABC" method (Abstinence, Being faithful and Condoms) is a model for the AIDS policies of the administration of President Bush and which are under fire at the conference for advocating sexual abstinence to stem infection. [View Article](#)

Bacterial Pneumonia Vaccine May Thwart Viral Forms

12 July – HealthDayNews reported that a vaccine to combat bacterial [pneumonia](#) also appears to stem viral forms of the disease, indicating that the two types of infection may somehow be linked. Tests on more than 37,000 South African children found that the bacterial vaccine also prevented 31 percent of viral pneumonia cases. The study indicated that forms of pneumonia once thought to be exclusively viral can actually be caused by a combination of bacteria and viruses. The same vaccine also appeared to protect against other bacterial illnesses including meningitis, blood infections, and ear infections. [View Article](#)

Experts Urge Tighter Cholesterol Control

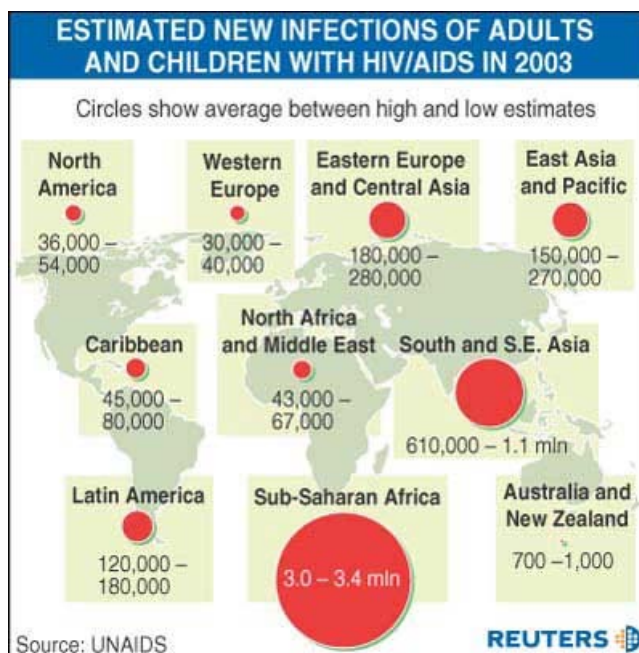
12 July – HealthDayNews reported that heart experts say cholesterol-lowering drugs should be used more aggressively in people who are at risk of [cardiovascular disease](#). The new goal for people at highest risk, those who have more than a 20 percent chance of a heart attack or cardiac death within 10 years, should be blood levels no higher than 100 milligrams per deciliter of LDL cholesterol. The old guidelines said LDL cholesterol levels should be no higher than 130 milligrams per deciliter. The new guidelines include the option of reducing LDL cholesterol to less than 70 milligrams per deciliter for persons at very high risk of heart attack or death, such as persistent cigarette smokers and those with existing cardiovascular disease and diabetes, poorly controlled high blood pressure, or a combination of other risk factors including very low levels of HDL cholesterol. For persons at moderately high risk, meaning they are estimated to have a 10 percent to 20 percent chance of a heart attack or cardiac death within 10 years, the guidelines call for keeping LDL cholesterol levels no

higher than 130 milligrams per deciliter, with an option of reducing them to 100 milligrams per deciliter. [View Article](#)

First Medical Test on CD Gets Good Results

13 July – EurekAlert reported that Ohio State University engineers have successfully automated a particular medical test on a compact disc (CD) for the first time -- and it takes a fraction of the normal time required using conventional equipment. The ELISA biochemical test -- one of the most widely used clinical, food safety, and environmental tests -- normally takes hours or even days to perform manually. Using a specially designed CD, engineers performed the test automatically, and in only one hour. The patent-pending technology involves mixing chemicals inside tiny wells carved into the CD surface. The spinning of the CD activates the tests. The engineers report that the CD successfully detected a sample of rat antibody using only one-tenth the usual amount of chemicals. This paves the way for CDs to be used to quickly detect food-borne pathogens and toxins. The same technology could one day test for human maladies such as cancer and HIV, using a very small cell sample or a single drop of blood. The engineers estimated that the first commercial application of the concept is at least two years away. [View Article](#)

Graphic-New HIV Infections in 2003



[View Source](#)

Panel's Ties to Drugmakers Not Cited In New Cholesterol Guidelines

15 July – Newsday.com reported that guidelines published by a government panel earlier this week (see Experts Urge Tighter Cholesterol Control, above) failed to list panelists' links to pharmaceutical companies. Of the nine panelists, six had received grants or consulting or speakers' fees from companies that produce some of the most popular statin medications on the market including Lipitor; Pravachol, Lovastatin and Crestor. Dr. James Cleeman, coordinator of the National Cholesterol Education Program, a division of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, called the omission of financial disclosures an oversight and said panelists' pharmaceutical company relationships will be

posted on the Institute's website within the next few days. The National Cholesterol Education Program is entirely government-funded, Cleeman said. It invites outside experts to serve as panelists and to review scientific data that will be considered for treatment guidelines. The information is further vetted by 90 to 100 outside experts, including heart specialists from the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association. "There are multiple layers of review," Cleeman said. [View Article](#)

Researchers Use Human Antibody to Cure Malignant Melanoma in Mice

15 July – EurekAlert reported that researchers have manipulated a human antibody to induce an anti-tumor response in living mice that consistently curbs -- and often cures -- malignant [melanoma](#), one of the most lethal forms of skin cancer. The researchers used cancer immunotherapy to manipulate the immune system to kill cancer cells without the toxic side effects of chemotherapy or radiation. In the investigation, one group of mice was treated intravenously with the experimental cross-linking antibody therapy, and two control groups were treated with known antibodies that do not prompt cross-linking structures. All groups had malignant melanoma tumors transplanted into them. In the two control groups, only one of 26 (less than 4%) was tumor free. By contrast, 11 of 16 mice (69%) were tumor free in the group receiving the experimental antibody treatment. The mice in this group that did develop tumors experienced significantly inhibited tumor growth compared to controls. [View Article](#)

SARS Patients Can Provide Therapy

14 July - BBC News Online reported that people infected with the [SARS](#) virus can be treated by taking antibodies from others who have recovered from the disease. The Swiss researchers who have developed the technique believe it could be adapted for use against other infections too. It may provide a fast method to combat emerging diseases, and, perhaps, biological attacks. The new approach, dubbed passive immune therapy, uses the immune cells of patients who have successfully fought off the disease. These cells make the proteins, or antibodies, that target the SARS virus for attack by the immune system. The researchers triggered the cells to start dividing indefinitely, creating a high-powered antibody factor. [View Source](#)

Study: Rapid PSA Rise Sign of Aggressive Prostate Cancer

8 July – Canoe Health reported [prostate cancer](#) is much more likely to kill if a man's PSA level rises rapidly before the cancer is even diagnosed. The finding could help patients and doctors make the often difficult decision of whether to undergo surgery or merely wait and watch. The PSA test is widely used to diagnose prostate cancer by measuring levels of prostate-specific antigen in the blood. Up to now, doctors have focused largely on the PSA level itself, and not on how it changes over time. But researchers found that how fast the PSA level increased in the year before prostate cancer was diagnosed predicts which tumors are deadly nearly 10 times better than the PSA level itself. [View Article](#)

Study Suggests UV Light Boosts Endorphin Levels in Sun Lovers

July 12 – HealthDayNews reported that habitual tanners may be drawn to the [ultraviolet exposure](#) for its mood-boosting ability. In the research, 14 people between the ages of 18 and 45 who tanned twice a week, split the time equally between a bed that emitted UV light and one that did not. Subjects' moods were measured before and after each exposure. The moods were better and relaxation greater after the subjects had used the UV light beds researchers found. The tanners were told they could opt for a third tanning session on Fridays in addition to the Monday and Wednesday sessions. They were also given their choice of tanning beds. "Twelve of the 14 chose to go back on Fridays,"

researchers said. "Of the 12, 11 -- or 92 percent -- picked the UV bed every time. The UV bed was reinforcing. [View Source](#)

Syphilis Becoming Resistant to Zithromax

7 July – Reuters reported some strains of the bacterium that causes [syphilis](#) have developed a mutation that makes them resistant to Zithromax (known generically as azithromycin). The recommended treatment for syphilis is penicillin, to which there is currently no evidence of resistance. "However, penicillin injections are painful for the patient," researchers noted, "and physicians have been looking for an alternative treatment that can be taken by mouth. Azithromycin has looked very hopeful in this regard." Researchers describe one syphilis patient, "among several cases that have been recognized," for whom treatment with azithromycin failed. A specimen from this patient revealed a mutation in one of the microbe's genes and lab tests confirmed that the bug was resistant to azithromycin. Lukehart's team subsequently found this azithromycin-resistance mutation in 11 percent to 88 percent of syphilis samples obtained in four different regions in the US and Ireland. [View Article](#)

Thyroid Disorders Common with Hepatitis C

8 July – Reuters reported people chronically infected with [hepatitis C](#) virus (HCV) have a significantly increased rate of thyroid abnormalities, according to a new report. This association "implies that these patients should be screened for thyroid function on a periodic basis," lead author Dr. Alessandro Antonelli from the University of Pisa School of Medicine, Italy, told Reuters Health. "A substantial proportion -- 13 percent in our series -- have [hypothyroidism](#), and thus might benefit from treatment." Thyroid involvement in HCV-infected patients has been reported previously but little is known about the prevalence and nature of thyroid disorders in such patients. Antonelli and colleagues found that significantly more HCV-infected patients than uninfected subjects or hepatitis B virus-infected patients were positive for anti-thyroid autoantibodies. Also, low thyroid function (hypothyroidism) was significantly more common among HCV-infected patients (13 percent) than among the comparison groups (3-5 percent). [View Article](#)

U.S. Fights Back in AIDS Dispute, Spurns Annan Plea

14 July – Reuters reported that the United States fought back against widespread attacks on its [AIDS](#) policies, insisting it is leading the fight against the killer epidemic and spending more money on it than the rest of the world combined. It rejected a plea from U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan to inject \$1 billion a year into a global AIDS fund. "The president has requested \$200 million for next year and I think that is more than adequate to meet the requirements of the Global Fund in terms of getting money out for putting programs in place," U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator Randall Tobias said. Room existed for different approaches in fighting AIDS, he said, rejecting accusations that Washington's decision to launch its own program and its support for sexual abstinence as a pillar of policy was undermining a unified strategy. The Bush plan pledges \$15 billion -- \$10 billion of it new money -- over five years for care, prevention and treatment in 15 countries, mostly in Africa and the Caribbean, which account for 70 percent of all infections. [View Article](#)

Women's AIDS Risk Spurs Need for Microbicide

14 July – MSNBC reported that women have become especially vulnerable to the dangers of the [AIDS](#) epidemic. Scientists hope that within five years, the first batch of broad-spectrum, HIV-killing vaginal products could be available. A second generation, more specifically targeting the HIV virus and expected to be more potent and longer-lasting, is in early testing. These products would include

gels or creams, slow-release sponges, dissolving films or long-wearing vaginal rings. While they are no substitute for condoms, they could profoundly affect how well the world's most vulnerable women can fight HIV even if the products turn out to be no more than 30 percent effective. Women make up nearly 60 percent of all HIV infections in Africa and their infection rates in many regions are climbing much faster than men, experts say. Because being young, married and faithful is no protection against infection, the need has never been greater. In southern Africa, teenage girls are five times more likely to become infected than teenage boys. In the Caribbean, 70 percent of new infections are in women. [View Article](#)

Yo-Yo Weight Loss May Impair Immunity

12 July – Reuters reported frequent intentional weight loss may have significant long-term detrimental effects on the immune system while maintaining a healthy weight benefits immune function. "There are clear health benefits to reducing body weight among those who are overweight or obese. Our main concern is the pattern of weight cycling or yo-yo dieting that many go through," said Dr. Cornelia M. Ulrich, from the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle Washington. She and her colleagues studied 114 healthy, overweight sedentary postmenopausal women. The team found that the immune function of so-called natural killer (NK) cells was significantly lower in those who had ever intentionally lost 10 pounds or more compared with those without this history. Moreover, the cell-killing ability (or "cytotoxicity") of NK cells was "increasingly lower" with the number of times a woman reported shedding 10 pounds or more. According to the team, frequent intentional weight loss reduced both the proportion and absolute number of NK cells. Maintaining a stable weight over several years, on the other hand, was associated with significantly greater NK cell numbers and cytotoxicity. [View Article](#)

Focus on Epidemiology

HIV and AIDS in the Former Soviet Bloc

8 July – The New England Journal of Medicine reported as compared with most nations affected by [HIV and AIDS](#), the countries of the former Soviet Bloc encountered the disease rather late. The first public announcement of cases of HIV infection in the former Soviet Union came in the mid-1980s and was greeted with denial and derision: many believed that AIDS could not happen there and that it must therefore be limited to homosexuals, drug addicts, and other "deviants," as well as black Africans and foreign tourists. Some believed that HIV was developed by the United States as part of the Cold War, to be "tested" on marginalized persons who led a disorderly sexual life. The epidemic may have taken a long time to reach this region because of the strict controls once placed on the movement of people and contacts with foreigners. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the barriers between its republics and the rest of the world tumbled down, facilitating the propagation of the virus. Today, this region has some of the fastest-growing rates of HIV infection in the world, according to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). In 2003, the official Russian figure was 240,000 cases of HIV infection. The UNDP estimate was 750,000 to 1.2 million — somewhere around 1 percent of the adult population. [View Article](#)

DoD-GEIS: Public Health Practice

7 July - The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists ([CSTE](#)) recently released a report, [Public Health Practice vs. Research: A Report for Public Health Practitioners](#). The purpose of this report is to provide a practical guide for state and local public health officials, their staff, and their partners on

the distinctions between public health practice and research for activities carried out by, or under the authority of, state or local health departments. Although DoD public health activities are not specifically referenced, the corresponding public health authorities and functions also exist in the Services and DoD. Distinguishing between public health practice and research activities conducted or funded by governmental public health authorities frequently is not simple. Many cases studies are presented, including recent communicable disease examples involving SARS and HIV. Existing proposals by CDC, states and academia for how to distinguish between practice and research have led to disagreements and inconsistent results among public health authorities, Institutional Review Board (IRB) members, and others; CSTE proposes a better way to clarify these concepts. The report provides a two-stage process for distinguishing public health practice from research activities with enhanced guidelines for more complicated cases, providing case studies and additional factors for clarification. CSTE hopes that the report's criteria will improve analysis and uniformity for difficult cases if applied across various levels of governmental public health and through IRBs in the public and private sectors. Additional information about communicable diseases and public health practices, "hot topics" such as WNV, Influenza (avian and human), Leishmaniasis and severe respiratory syndromes, including SARS, is available on the [DoD-GEIS website](#).

Other timely information can be found in:

The current issue of the Army Medical Surveillance Activity's [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

This week's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

USCENTCOM

Typhoid Fever - Kyrgyzstan (02)

13 July – ProMED reported that dozens of people with suspected [typhoid fever](#) have been hospitalized in the southern Kyrgyz province of Batken. "As of Tuesday 13 July 2004, 124 people have been hospitalized in Batken province with suspected typhoid. In 64 cases, the diagnosis has been confirmed," said Inna Chernova, senior epidemiologist. But, the number of cases began to slow recently. "The intensity of the outbreak is now diminishing, with only a few patients, 2 or 3, being detected a week," Chernova said. In the first 6 months of 2003, there were 8 cases of typhoid in the area, while some 70 cases were registered in the second half of the same year. The health official cited contaminated water as the main cause of the problem. Local people were working in the fields using water from irrigation ditches contaminated by Batken town's sewage, and some apparently drank it, she explained. [View Article](#)

USEUCOM

Chad: Dirty Water Blamed For Malnutrition among Sudanese Refugees

14 July – IRIN News reported that more than a quarter of the Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad suffer from acute [malnutrition](#), but lack of access to clean drinking water rather than a shortage of food is the main cause of this alarming situation. A survey by the UN linked the rate of high malnutrition detected to rampant [diarrhea](#). It blamed the diarrhea, in turn, on poor water supplies in the semi-arid region which lies on the southern edge of the Sahara desert. The survey, conducted in June, covered 896 children aged between six months and five years living in three official refugee camps near the border town of Tine and in spontaneous refugee settlements nearby. It detected a global acute malnutrition rate of 27.0 percent within the refugee camps and 29.2 percent among refugees living outside them. The survey team also sampled the health of 175 Chadian infants living in 11 villages in the same area. It found the local farming population to be in as poor a state of health as the refugees they were hosting, with an acute malnutrition rate of 24.0 percent. [View Article](#)

Rural African Men Claim AIDS as Sign of Masculinity

13 July – EurekAlert reported that many rural African men unknowingly claim to have [AIDS](#), thinking it is an indicator of their masculinity and sexual prowess, says a University of Alberta researcher, Dr. Amy Kaler. She investigated the ways that young men in rural southern Malawi, Africa talk about HIV and their own perceptions of risk. Dr. Kaler found that a high number of sexually active young men say they are HIV-positive, without having any medical evaluation or signs of AIDS. "They assume, first, that it is everywhere and will eventually kill everyone and second, that AIDS is extremely infective and that if one has been exposed to the virus, one's days are numbered," said Kaler. Schoolboys, for example, argued with their teacher that there was no point in working hard in school because no one would "remain alive in the coming five years." These claims seem to emerge from a particular idea of masculinity which is used to justify continuing such risky sexual behavior as having multiple partners or not using condoms--this behavior is no longer dangerous if one believes he has already contracted the virus, said Kaler. "Given the relative homogeneity of masculinity scripts around the world, with emphasis on both heterosexual activity and taking risks, I doubt that these Malawian men are unique." [View Source](#)

UK Gulf War Servicemen Report More Ill Health

12 July – EurekAlert reported that a study of 24,000 UK Gulf War servicemen confirms that forces deployed in the first Gulf War report more ill health than veterans who did not serve there. Gulf War veterans were more likely to report mood swings, memory loss/lack of concentration, night sweats, general fatigue and sexual dysfunction than armed forces personnel who had not served in the Gulf. The study confirmed that Gulf War veterans report significantly more symptoms of disease than non-Gulf War veterans in almost all ill health categories examined, yet there is still no consistent explanation for this discrepancy. More than 1 in every 20 UK servicemen who served in the first Gulf War believes that they have [Gulf War Syndrome](#). Like other studies of veterans, those who thought that they might have Gulf War syndrome reported exactly the same types of symptom as veterans who had not been deployed to the Gulf. They just reported these symptoms at higher frequencies. This finding provides evidence against a unique Gulf War syndrome. The authors say, "There is a need to improve routine health surveillance and record-keeping both pre- and post-deployment. This surveillance should lead to more effective prevention and treatment programs that reduce the burden of post-war illness." [View Source](#)

USNORTHCOM

Anthrax Spraying Complete as Former AMI Building Declared Safe

13 July – The Sun-Sentinel.com reported that enough chlorine dioxide gas filled the former American Media Inc. headquarters by Monday morning to kill all the [anthrax](#) inside the Boca Raton building. Bio-ONE, the firm hired to decontaminate the former home of AMI, said the 23-hour fumigation process was successful. Bio-ONE workers will don protective suits starting today to go inside and start the eight weeks or so of testing to make sure all the anthrax is gone. The successful fumigation of AMI's old home marks the end of a three-year process to clean the nation's first building contaminated in a series of 2001 anthrax attacks. Five people across the country died as a result of those attacks, including AMI photo editor Bob Stevens. Bio-ONE was formed earlier this year with Sabre Technical Services. Sabre decontaminated the Capitol Hill complex and U.S. Postal Service plants in Washington, D.C., and New Jersey of anthrax. [View Source](#)

Bioterror Sleuths

13 July - The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported on a project called BioSense, a massive computer program developed by the CDC and private designers that scans for anomalies in routinely compiled databases of symptoms, diagnoses, drug sales and other health data. Its earliest prototype began operating late last year, and the system now covers about 30 cities. BioSense eventually will cover the entire country. If it achieves its goals, BioSense could solve an intractable problem in disease detection and [biodefense](#): shortening the time lag between a patient's first flicker of symptoms and the realization by authorities that an epidemic has begun. Currently, it uses records of emergency room and walk-in visits from Defense Department and VA hospitals — because those systems are computerized — and sales of over-the-counter drugs such as antihistamines and anti-diarrheals. CDC plans to add data from nurse-advice lines maintained by some health maintenance organizations, requests for laboratory tests and test results from two private chains of clinical labs, and test data from the BioWatch program run by the Department of Homeland Security, which has environmental sensors in about 30 cities. [View Article](#) (registration required)

EPA: DuPont Failed to Report Teflon Health Risks

8 July – Reuters reported DuPont Company, the No. 2 U.S. chemicals maker, failed for more than 20 years to report potential health risks caused by a key ingredient in the manufacture of Teflon, the Environmental Protection Agency said. The Wilmington, Delaware, company violated the Toxic Substances Control Act from June 1981 to March 2001 by not reporting dangers associated with perfluorooctanoic acid or C-8, EPA said. The chemical is crucial in the process of making the well-known coating used in a wide range of consumer products, including nonstick cookware and stain-resistant carpets. Tests by 3M, the original manufacturer of C-8, have shown that high levels of exposure may cause liver damage and reproductive problems in rats. Traces of C-8 were found as early as the 1980s by DuPont in water supplies near DuPont's West Virginia plant and in a pregnant employee, the EPA said. In an administrative complaint, EPA accused DuPont of "multiple failures to report information to EPA about substantial risk of injury to human health or the environment" from C-8. [View Article](#)

Idaho Agency Fights Syphilis Outbreak

13 July – The Idaho State Journal reported that the Southwest District Health department continues to battle a [syphilis](#) outbreak that began last year. The rapid spread of the disease prompted a visit from U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention officials earlier this year. The CDC staff suggested increasing public awareness campaigns stressing the importance of safe sex. In 1999, there were two cases of syphilis in Southwest District Health's region, and none in 2000. One case was confirmed in 2001, nine in 2002, 30 to 36 in 2003 and 15 so far this year. Syphilis, which can be deadly if not treated, appears to be spreading quickly in the region, especially among the young Hispanic population. Most of the new cases were discovered in pregnant women, the only class of patients required by law to be screened for sexually transmitted diseases. Both the women and their fetuses can be successfully treated with penicillin. [View Article](#)

Lead Exposure Still Poses Health Hazard

8 July – Reuters reported fewer U.S. adults are showing up with dangerously high [lead](#) levels, but lead remains a health threat, especially in the workplace. Lead in folk medicine and ceramics can also poison people, causing problems such as brain damage and miscarriages, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. The CDC found 10,658 adults with high lead levels in 2002, 37 percent fewer than in 2001. "Despite improvements in control of lead exposures, this hazard remains an occupational health problem in the United States," the CDC said in its weekly report on death and disease. A sample of adults in 35 states showed that 95 percent of people with dangerously high levels of lead -- defined as 25 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood for adults -- were exposed at work. The CDC found that 58 percent were exposed in the manufacturing industry, 22 percent in the construction industry and 8 percent in mining. [View Article](#)

Six Inmates Get Staph Infections

8 July – MiamiHerald.com reported that six inmates in Miami-Dade jails have tested positive for a highly contagious skin infection, and corrections officials have quarantined another 19 in an effort to slow the spread of the disease. Four corrections department employees have also been tested for [methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus](#) -- commonly known as staph, a drug-resistant infection that causes skin lesions. Three of the employees tested negative and a fourth is still awaiting the results of the test. "The best way to control is through educating everyone about standard hygiene, hand washing and not sharing things like combs or nail clippers," said Conchita Ruiz-Topinka, spokeswoman for Jackson Memorial Hospital, which provides medical care at the county's jails. The infection is spread by direct physical contact or by contact with objects infected people have touched. All the infected inmates have been treated at the jails and have not required hospitalization. [View Article](#)

Whooping Cough Outbreak Sickens More Than 100 in Chicago Area

8 July – NBC5.com reported that an ongoing [whooping cough](#) outbreak in four Chicago-area counties has sickened more than 100 people since March. The outbreak of whooping cough (pertussis) began in McHenry County. Eighty-three cases have been confirmed there. State health officials said 107 cases have been confirmed since March in McHenry, Kane, Cook and Lake Counties. No deaths have been reported. The outbreak has hit adolescents the hardest, with 80 percent of the cases involving 10- to 15-year-olds. The disease is highly contagious, and symptoms are similar to those of a cold, including runny nose, sneezing, low-grade fever and a cough that gradually worsens. Anyone displaying symptoms of the disease should seek medical attention to be treated with antibiotics, officials said. A five-dose vaccine is recommended for children beginning at 2 months of age. Children

should then receive more doses as they grow older. But the vaccine's power wanes with time and can be completely gone 12 years after the final dose, which is usually given between the ages of 4 and 6. [View Article](#)

Yellowstone Investigating Stomach Flu That Sickened 132

8 July – BillingsGazette.com reported that Federal and state health workers are investigating a gastrointestinal illness that has sickened at least 132 people in Yellowstone National Park since late May. Yellowstone spokeswoman Cheryl Matthews said 79 park employees and 53 guests were sickened. All had similar symptoms of stomach illness, including nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. The majority of cases were reported during the last week of June and occurred in the Old Faithful and Yellowstone Lake areas, she said. Since then, the number of reported cases has sharply declined, Matthews said. The U.S. Public Health Service, which has someone stationed full-time in the park, and the Wyoming Department of Health have been investigating. Matthews said Wednesday park officials believed the illness was passed from person-to-person. Park officials hope lab results, which are expected within the next two weeks, will provide some answers. [View Article](#)

USPACOM

30 Die of Epidemic Diarrhea and Nausea - Nepal

6 July - Kantipur Online reported that over 30 people have died of epidemic diarrhea and nausea in the remote areas of Achham and Bajura districts during the last two weeks. Acute shortage of medicines has added to the plight of the local people plagued by the epidemic. More than 20 people have already died of the epidemic in Payal, Patal and Marku districts. The local people have started going to Dipayal to buy medicines. [View Article](#)

Eight Thai Provinces Hit By New Bird Flu Outbreak

14 July – Reuters reported that Thailand now has new outbreaks of the deadly [bird flu](#) which ravaged Asian flocks early this year in eight provinces and it may have returned to Bangkok. "Bird flu is confirmed in two farms in Sukothai and Chiang Rai provinces," Yukol Limlaemthong, head of the ministry's Livestock Department, told reporters. That confirmation meant new outbreaks had now been reported in eight of the country's 76 provinces. More than 25,000 fowl had been culled as a result of the latest outbreaks, officials said, and Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said any poultry showing signs of the disease which killed 16 Vietnamese and 8 Thais earlier this year would follow. [View Article](#)

Hepatitis Outbreak Increases

13 July – The Korean Times reported that health authorities are on high alert as the number of patients suffering [hepatitis A](#) was at a record level in June. The Korea Center for Disease Control (KCDC) and Prevention (KCDC) said Tuesday that the number of patients who contracted hepatitis A last month was 76. The number of patients infected with hepatitis A was 105 in 2001, 319 in 2002 and 311 in 2003. South Chungchong Province topped the list with 45 hepatitis A cases followed by Kyonggi Province with 15. KCDC sent out a research team comprising around 10 experts to Kongju. "The survey showed that almost 80 percent of the patients who contracted hepatitis A last month had

been to the same restaurant, of which the landlord and his son were also found to have been infected with the disease," a KCDC official said. "The underground water that the restaurant used is a highly possible source of the trouble," he said adding that the official health center is trying to find the real cause. [View Source](#)

Isolation of a Novel Arbovirus Associated With Acute Encephalitis in Viet Nam

8 July – ProMED reported that the Central Hygiene and Epidemiology Institute identified a new [arbovirus](#), which causes acute encephalitis, in Vietnamese children. The virus, isolated in a culture from a 20-month-old child in the northern province of Nam Dinh, is transmitted by mosquitoes. According to Dr. Phan Thi Nga, head of the institute's Encephalitis Virus Division, the new arbovirus, named Nam Dinh virus, is as dangerous as Japanese encephalitis virus, which is also appearing in some northern provinces. "People should not worry about an epidemic. We only identified the virus to isolate the disease for study. The new arbovirus appeared in children in Bac Giang Province in 2004, but there were many more cases of Japanese encephalitis virus infection," said Nga. The hospital has received 240 encephalitis patients since early May 2004. 31 patients died, and 40 percent were diagnosed with Japanese encephalitis virus infection. [View Article](#)

Shock Syndrome Dengue Fever Confirmed In Malaysia

6 July – Utusan Online reported that an eight-year-old boy suffering from [shock syndrome](#), the most severe form of dengue fever, has been admitted to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of Hospital Kuala Terengganu (HKT) where he is in critical condition. The matter was highlighted by State Executive Councillor for Welfare, Health, Community Development and Women's Affairs Rosol Wahid who visited the boy at the hospital. Rosol said apart from the boy, several residents from his village had been referred to hospital as suspected dengue cases. More than 100 residents in two districts were suspected to have dengue fever and 57 of them were confirmed to have contracted the disease. "Last night, 42 students from a school in Penarik, Setiu were referred to the HKT for suspected dengue fever but the results had not come in," he said. [View Article](#)

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Immunization Can Drive Economic Growth, Expert Says

8 July – PAHO reported [immunization programs](#) can be highly effective tools for promoting economic growth and poverty reduction in developing countries, according to Dr. David Bloom of the Harvard School of Public Health. He underscored the potential benefit of upcoming new vaccines against rotavirus, a disease that kills 608,000 children every year. "A ten-year gain in life expectancy translates into nearly one additional percentage point in annual income growth," Bloom said. "This is significant given that the world economy grows by 2-3% a year. Ten-year life expectancy gains are within the grasp of many developing countries." A major means of increasing life expectancy is to lower the infant mortality rate, which can vary by a factor of more than 50 between developed and developing countries, Bloom said, and one of the main ways to decrease infant mortality is through vaccination against childhood diseases. Based on the latest figures reported at the meeting, rotavirus causes approximately ten percent of those deaths. Rotavirus is considered by experts to be a particularly promising disease to target for global childhood vaccination. [View Source](#)

Mosquito Researchers Track Dengue Fever in Sonora, Mexico

7 July – EurekAlert reported that biologists from the University of Arizona in Tucson are teaming up with health officials from Sonora, the Mexican state just south of Arizona, to learn more about the mosquitoes that carry [dengue](#) and [West Nile viruses](#) and about the disease-causing organisms. The reported number of dengue fever cases in Sonora has been increasing in the last several years, and the disease appears to be moving north. The UA-Mexican research collaboration will investigate the ecology, genetics and distribution of various mosquito species in Sonora and of the four types of dengue virus and its close relative, West Nile virus. Sonora once had only two types of the dengue virus but now all four are found there. That means people have an increased risk of getting dengue fever a second time because, although having one bout of dengue fever makes a person immune to the one type, the person is still susceptible to the other three. It's only during the second infection with dengue virus that the person can develop dengue hemorrhagic fever, which is fatal in about five percent of patients. [View Article](#)

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