

**USACHPPM**  
**HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE**

10 September 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 as to its strategic or tactical impact on the US Army and should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available from the [Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center](#). The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

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## HOT TOPICS

### Avian Influenza Virus in Pigs - An Update

1 September – OIE reported that the Veterinary Authorities of the People’s Republic of China have provided additional details concerning the isolation of H5N1 strain of [influenza](#) virus in pigs. They have confirmed that one H5N1 strain was isolated in 2002 from materials collected from pigs in the Fujian province in 2001. Subsequently, 1936 samples were collected in 2003 from pigs in 14 provinces including Fujian and again one H5N1 strain was isolated from that province. These two isolates have been subjected to detailed analysis and have been shown to be highly homologous to the duck-derived H5N1 virus isolated recently in birds in China. According to the Chinese authorities, no variation in the virus has been observed. More recently, as part of their ongoing epidemiological surveillance program, 1.1 million samples including 4447 from pigs have been collected and analyzed between April and August 2004 from 10 provinces including Fujian, and no infection from H5N1 has been detected in pigs. [View Article](#)

### Bird Flu Infects Cats, Too

2 September – ABC News reported that cats can get the [avian influenza](#) virus decimating bird flocks across Asia, which means pets are at risk of getting and spreading the disease -- and may serve as a mixing pot for dangerous new mutations. In an experiment, cats caught the H5N1 flu virus by breathing it in and by eating infected chicks. "The implications of the above findings are first that, during H5N1 virus outbreaks, domestic cats are at risk of disease or death from H5N1 virus infection, either due to feeding on infected poultry or wild birds, or due to contact with infected cats," the researchers wrote. "Second, the role of cats in the spread of H5N1 virus between poultry farms, and from poultry to humans, needs to be reassessed. Third, cats may form an opportunity for this avian virus to adapt to mammals, thereby increasing the risk of a human influenza pandemic." [View Article](#)

### Cold Weather Can Kill You

3 September – The Globe and Mail reported that cold weather alone can provoke a [heart attack](#) in people suffering from high blood pressure. Researchers found that the risk of a heart attack doubled among hypertensive patients when the temperature dipped below -4 C. And the risk was even more

pronounced following a sudden cold snap in which the temperature was about five degrees lower than the previous day. Even for healthy people, cold weather can increase blood pressure. That's because blood vessels tend to narrow to preserve body heat, making the heart work harder to pump blood around the body. So, for a person already afflicted with hypertension, the additional strain may be enough to trigger a heart attack. In addition, levels of artery-clogging cholesterol tend to rise in the bloodstream during winter months. [View Article](#)

## Common Cold Virus Can Cause Polio in Mice When Injected Into Muscles

6 September – Duke University Medical News reported that virologists at Duke University Medical Center have discovered that, under the right conditions, a common cold virus closely related to [poliovirus](#) can cause polio in mice. The researchers injected a cold virus called Coxsackievirus A21 into mice that were engineered to be susceptible to this particular virus. However, instead of developing a cold, the mice unexpectedly displayed paralytic symptoms characteristic of polio. The researchers determined that administering the virus directly into muscles, instead of the virus' normal home in the nasal cavity, was critical for development of polio. The findings challenge traditional views as to what defines a poliovirus. [View Article](#)

## Dry-On Nontoxic Lotion Suffocates Head Lice

7 September - Reuters Health reported that a dermatologist in Menlo Park, California, has developed a treatment for [head lice](#) that does not use toxic chemicals, and doesn't require nit removal. In early studies, it proved as effective as standard insecticide lotions. Nuvo lotion, as it's called, is massaged into wet hair and scalp and then blown dry to form a shrink-wrapped, airtight invisible film that completely covers hair shafts and lice. The lice then suffocate. The lotion is left on for at least eight hours and then is shampooed out. The process is repeated at one-week intervals for a total of three treatments. In two separate studies involving a total of 133 children with confirmed head lice infestation, the overall cure rate was 96 percent. These results are "comparable or superior" to results achieved with the standard neurotoxin-based head lice treatments. [View Article](#)

## Effects of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning are an Autoimmune Reaction

3 September – EurekAlert reported that in the fall, faulty furnaces and other mechanical mishaps lead to a spike in cases of [carbon monoxide \(CO\) poisoning](#). CO poisoning is the leading cause of injury and death by poisoning worldwide, with about 40,000 people treated in the U.S. annually. Brain damage occurs – days to weeks later – in half of the patients with a serious case of CO poisoning. Researchers found that CO causes profound changes in myelin basic protein (MBP) – a major protein constituent of myelin, the protective sheath surrounding neurons. The team suggests that the 50 percent or more of patients who develop brain damage following severe CO poisoning may do so, in large part, due to an autoimmune reaction. The body simply does not know when to stop attacking what it now views as an invader. [View Article](#)

## Inactivity May Trump Fat as Heart Disease Risk-Study

7 September – Reuters reported that when it comes to [heart disease](#), being fit may be more important than being thin. The study involved 906 women whose health histories were tracked from 1996 to 2000. Seventy-six percent were overweight at the start of the study, when the mean age of the group was 58. In addition to being measured for weight, the women were asked about their ability to do common physical activities at home, work and at leisure, such as climbing a flight of stairs, running a short distance or walking around the block without stopping. Women who were at least moderately active were less likely to develop heart disease or related problems than women with low activity

scores, no matter which weight category they were in. A second study published in the same journal, however, found that being overweight is a bigger risk factor than inactivity when it comes to adult-onset diabetes among women. [View Article](#)

## Loud Music Can Cause Lung Collapse

2 September - Reuters Health reported that blasting music can be hard on the ears and the neighbors, and now researchers say it can also pack enough punch to collapse a lung. They describe the cases of four young men who suffered a lung collapse -- technically called [pneumothorax](#) --that appeared to be triggered by loud music. Primary spontaneous pneumothorax happens in the absence of an underlying disease, typically striking tall, thin, male smokers. The researchers suspect that loud music may damage the lungs due to its booming bass frequency, which can be felt as a vibration going through the body. The lungs may essentially start to vibrate in the same frequency as the bass, which could cause a lung to rupture. [View Article](#)

## Malaria Drug Found Effective against SARS

3 September – Reuters reported that the anti-malaria drug chloroquine could be used to treat the [SARS](#) respiratory illness which killed hundreds of people last year. A research team found that chloroquine "is active against the SARS coronavirus in laboratory experiments." "Chloroquine could be of great importance as preventive medication for people living in or traveling to SARS-affected areas, and as an antiviral treatment for SARS patients," the research team said in a statement. [View Article](#)

## Measles Vaccine Proposed for Global AIDS Protection

2 September – Aidsmap News reported that Dr. Frederic Tangy from the Agence Nationale de Recherches sur le Sida in Paris advocated the use of a licensed live attenuated measles vaccine as a vehicle to deliver an [HIV](#) vaccine for future generations. The proposal marked a welcome shift in the direction of how to make future HIV vaccines available to infants and adolescents – especially girls - who are, in many countries, the populations most desperately in need of protection against the epidemic. A Swiss company, Berna Biotech, has already made prototypes based on a live measles vaccine with HIV genes inserted. [View Article](#)

## New Test Better Predicts Heart Attacks

5 September – Indy Star.com reported that a simple test may more reliably predict who is going to have a [heart attack](#). The current test measures total cholesterol and the breakdown of good HDL and bad LDL cholesterol. The new test instead measures the ratio of bad LDL cholesterol particles to good HDL cholesterol particles. A ratio of 1 to 2 is considered low risk, while a ratio approaching 1 to 1 would be considered high risk, and anything over that -- where the small LDL particles would dominate -- would be very high risk. The study, which followed 29,000 people in 52 nations, compared 15,000 who had suffered a first heart attack with someone of the same age, sex and location who had not had a heart attack. A high ratio of small LDL molecules to good HDL cholesterol turned out to be the most important factor linked to heart-attack risk, before even smoking. [View Article](#)

## New Evidence of Radiation Risk in Childhood Leukemia

7 September – EurekAlert reported that although ionizing [radiation](#) has long been recognized as a cause of [leukemia](#) in exposed children, research is now providing evidence that the children of men

exposed to radiation may also be at increased risk of developing leukemia. Researchers found that germ-line mutation rates in unexposed offspring of irradiated male mice do not return to the mutation rates seen in unexposed individuals but are maintained at levels similar to those of directly exposed males. The elevated mutation rates persisted into the second generation of offspring, through both the male and female germ-lines. The researchers also studied germ-line mutation among families from rural areas heavily contaminated by fallout from the Chernobyl accident. They found a statistically significant 1.6-fold increase in mutation rate in the germ-line of exposed fathers. The maternal germ-line mutation rate was not elevated. [View Article](#)

## Show us All Your Data, Medical Journals Demand

8 September - Reuters reported that editors of major medical journals joined forces to make researchers and companies register all clinical trials when they begin so that unflattering or unclear results cannot later be covered up. The 11 top journals, including some of the most influential medical publications in the world, agreed not to publish any studies that were not registered when they began. "One consequence of this lack of reporting is a persistent bias in favor of positive results and therefore in favor of the newer and more expensive treatments," Dr. Drummond Rennie, a deputy editor of the Journal of the American Medical Association, wrote. "Another consequence is that harmful effects found in unpublished trials disappear without a trace, since the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has no mandate to report them to the public." [View Article](#)

## Stored Smallpox Vaccine Effective After Dilution

7 September - Reuters Health reported that even when diluted, the Aventis Pasteur [smallpox vaccine](#) (APSV), which has been in frozen storage since the 1950s, yields a high rate of successful vaccination. Smallpox vaccination resumed in the US with the goal of having enough doses so that every citizen could be vaccinated in the event of a biological attack. Overall, 99 percent of subjects had a successful vaccination and the success rates did not differ significantly between dilutions. The authors state, "Therefore, the existing supply of approximately 85 million doses of APSV can be expanded, leaving an ample stockpile of smallpox vaccine to protect the entire US population in the event widespread vaccination is imminently needed." [View Article](#)

## World Suicide Prevention Day - 10 September

8 September – The WHO reported that [suicide](#) is a huge but largely preventable public health problem, causing almost half of all violent deaths and resulting in almost one million fatalities every year, as well as economic costs in the billions of dollars. World Suicide Prevention Day, collaboration between WHO and the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP), will be held on 10 September to focus attention and call for global action. Dr Catherine Le Galès-Camus, WHO Assistant-Director General, Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health says, "Suicide is a tragic global public health problem. Worldwide, more people die from suicide than from all homicides and wars combined." Among countries reporting suicide, the highest rates are found in Eastern Europe and the lowest are found mostly in Latin America, in Muslim countries and in a few of the Asian countries. Rates tend to increase with age, but there has recently been an alarming increase in suicidal behaviors amongst young people aged 15 to 25 years, worldwide. [View Article](#)

# Focus on Epidemiology

## Outbreak of Aflatoxin Poisoning --- Eastern and Central Provinces, Kenya

3 September – MMWR reported that CDC Kenya, trainees of the CDC-supported Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program in Kenya, the World Health Organization, and CDC were invited by the Kenya Ministry of Health to participate in the investigation of an outbreak of jaundice with a high case-fatality rate in the districts of Makueni and Kitui, Eastern Province. Preliminary laboratory testing of food collected from the affected area revealed high levels of aflatoxin, suggesting that the outbreak was caused by [aflatoxin poisoning](#), as was a previous outbreak in the same area in 1981. The 2004 outbreak resulted from widespread aflatoxin contamination of locally grown maize, which occurred during storage of the maize under damp conditions. Urgent replacement of the aflatoxin-contaminated maize with non-contaminated maize proved to be a critical intervention; however, new cases continued to be detected. This report summarizes the preliminary results of the outbreak investigation. Aflatoxin poisoning likely will continue to be a public health problem until culturally appropriate storage methods for dry maize are implemented by the local population. In addition, enhanced surveillance for human aflatoxin poisoning and testing of commercially sold maize for aflatoxin levels will lead to long-term improvements in public health. [View Report](#)

## DoD-GEIS: West Nile Virus

8 September - CDC reported in the 3 September MMWR that during the week 25 –31 August in the US, a total of 210 cases of human [West Nile virus](#) (WNV) illness were reported from 14 states (Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma and Pennsylvania). Arizona, California and Colorado reported the highest numbers of cases this year. A total of 36 states have reported 1053 cases, with 28 deaths, of human WNV illness to CDC through ArboNET. Of the cases, 56% were males; median age was 51 years with a range of 1 month to 99 years, and the date of illness onset was 23 April to 24 August. Subsequently those totals were updated (ArboNET as of 7 September) to reflect 1191 human cases with 30 deaths and 429 cases of neuroinvasive disease. As of 7 September, a total of 98 presumptive West Nile viremic blood donors (PVDs) have been reported this year (units of donated blood from PVDs are sequestered). Of the PVDs, three persons developed neuroinvasive illness, 15 had West Nile fever and the remainder had minimal or no illness. Mexico reported its first case (Sonora) and Canada reports 17 human cases as of September 3. Although human cases have not yet been reported from Puerto Rico, three sentinel horses have seroconverted. Additional information about national surveillance of WNV activity, including useful links to clinical, laboratory and other guidance is available from [CDC](#) and the [US Geological Survey](#). Surveillance data by state and county for birds, veterinary cases, sentinel flocks and humans is regularly aggregated, updated and displayed. *Information on many “hot topics” such as Influenza (avian and human), Leishmaniasis and severe respiratory syndromes, including SARS, is available on the [DoD-GEIS website](#); for information on ongoing investigations see the [DOD-GEIS secure site](#).*

### **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

### Afghanistan: Urgent Assistance Needed to Combat Drought

2 September – IRIN News reported that the government of Afghanistan and the United Nations launched an emergency appeal to combat drought in the war-ravaged country. A spokesman for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, Kabul said that more than six million people continue to be food insecure. The severe food and water shortages had forcibly displaced a great number of farmers and villagers. In the south and east of the country grain prices have almost doubled in the past year while in seven of the country's 34 provinces most of the population survive on less than the daily recommended 2,100 calories. The people of Afghanistan have been suffering from drought for six years. Some 37 percent of the population is suffering from [poor nutrition](#) as a result of the drought, double the figure believed to have been affected in 2003. [View Article](#)

### Hepatitis E in Sudan - Update 2

8 September – The WHO reported that from 22 May - 27 August 2004 a total of 3753 cases and 55 deaths of suspected [hepatitis E](#) was reported from health clinics in the Greater Darfur region. West Darfur remains the most affected area reporting 73% of the total reported cases. There is a slight decrease in the total number of cases reported from South and West Darfur, while cases in North Darfur have increased slightly. Despite efforts, existing resources remain insufficient to cover the basic water and sanitation needs of the displaced populations in Darfur. Additional efforts are still needed improve access to safe, clean water and better sanitation in the camps in order to stop spread and reduce the number of new infections. [View Article](#)

### Iran: Afghan Heroin Leads to Growing Domestic Drug Problem

7 September – IRIN News reported that every year, thousands of kilograms of heroin, opium and hashish stream through the mountain passes on Iran's border with Afghanistan. Most heroin sold in Europe comes from poppies in Afghanistan, and the shortest route is through Iran. The incessant flow of heroin through the country has meant that Iran's own drug problem is now rocketing. Mehrdad Rezaeian, UNODC national technical officer, reported, "The government says that there are two million [drug users](#) in Iran of which 1.2 million are regular users and 800,000 are recreational drug users, but unofficial figures by experts are quoted as up to 5-6 million - 10 percent of the population." "Heroin use began to soar when the Taliban banned poppy cultivation. People couldn't get hold of good opium so they resorted to taking heroin," Emran Razzaghi, assistant professor of psychiatry at Tehran University stated. [View Article](#)

## USEUCOM

### Hepatitis E in Chad - Update 2

6 September – ProMED reported that between 26 June and 2 September, 1077 cases and 35 deaths (case fatality rate 3.2 percent) of suspected [hepatitis E](#) has been reported from the refugee camps Goz Amer (973 cases; 31 deaths) and Goz Abal (63 cases; 3 deaths) and from the neighboring communities (Koukou, Am-Ouchar, Am-Bitin, Habile, Aradibe). The WHO investigation team in Koukou near the Goz Amer camp will identify the risk factors of the disease, and recommend appropriate control measures, including those targeting water and sanitation. [View Article](#)

## Smuggled Bushmeat Poses Disease Risk to Britain

5 September – ProMED reported that at least 11,600 tons of illegal bush meat, including monkey, rat, bat, gorilla, camel and elephant, were smuggled into Britain during 2003, exposing cattle to a range of infectious diseases, including [foot and mouth](#). The extent of the illegal trade in meat from Africa, Asia and the Middle East is revealed in an internal government report. Almost all of the meat, which is bound for street markets and ethnic restaurants, is hidden in passengers' suitcases and goes undetected by airport security. The food includes snake and antelope meat, frogs' legs, snails, and cows' nostrils, as well as meat from endangered species such as chimpanzees, antelopes and elephants. Some of it is infected and could cause epidemics. The number of seizures of such illegal imports has more than doubled from 7819 in the year to April 2003 to 15,838 for this year. [View Article](#)

## Typhoid Fever - Algeria (Batna)

2 September - ProMED reported that "38 patients are still under medical observation out of the 328 [typhoid](#) cases declared in Batna province," the Health Minister said. He indicated that the concerned services have filled in more than 100 wells and stopped 16 suspected drinking water supply points. "In spite of the typhoid cases declared this year in El-Eulma, Bechar and Btina, a decline of 26 percent of this disease was registered," he observed. The Minister however, affirmed that other cases can appear in the few days to come, saying the incubation period in this disease can last between 15 and 30 days. [View Article](#)

## USNORTHCOM

### California: More Than 250 Report Parasite Symptoms

4 September – The San Luis Obispo Tribune reported that more than 250 local residents have now reported symptoms of a parasitic disease known as [cryptosporidium](#), which causes long bouts of diarrhea and nausea. Cryptosporidium is the most likely cause of the recent outbreak when people who had visited Lopez Lake's Mustang Water Slides in late August reported feeling sick. Officials have started posting hundreds of signs at public pools and spas around the county warning people to stay out of the water if they've had diarrhea within the last two weeks. All confirmed cases and the vast majority of the suspected ones are associated with Mustang Water Slides, which owner Phil O'Carroll said is now closed for the season. [View Article](#)

### CDC: 18 People Die from Injuries Each Hour

September – Health Day News reported that 157,000 people -- an average of 18 per hour -- die from [injuries](#) each year in the United States. Unintentional injury is the nation's fifth-leading cause of death, according a CDC fact sheet released with the report. In 2001, from which the statistics were gathered, 29.7 million people were treated at hospital emergency rooms for nonfatal injuries, mostly from falls. Motor vehicle crashes were the primary cause of fatal injuries. The report also found that: 1) all types of injuries were more common among males than females, 2) drowning was the primary cause of death among children 4 years old and younger and 3) people 75 and older had the highest suicide rate of any age group. [View Article](#) [View Report](#)



## CDC Issues Advisory about Lassa Fever Case

7 September - CIDRAP News reported that a case of [Lassa fever](#) in a New Jersey man who fell ill after visiting Liberia has caused federal health officials to issue a health advisory about the viral disease, rarely seen in the United States. The 38-year-old man died in a New Jersey hospital 28 August, 4 days after returning from a 5-month visit to Liberia. The CDC said the man's case was the first known travel-related Lassa fever case in the United States since 1989. Lassa fever is caused by an arenavirus that is found in much of West Africa. About 80% of cases are mild or asymptomatic, but shock, hemorrhage, seizures, and death may occur in severe cases. [View Article](#) [View CDC Health Advisory](#)

## Chicken Pox Vaccine Saves Money, Protects Whole Population

7 September – EurekAlert reported that the [chicken pox vaccine](#) has saved America hundreds of millions of dollars since its introduction in 1995 by preventing the kinds of severe cases that used to send children, teens and adults to the hospital. In fact, it's even more effective -- and cost-effective -- than originally predicted. And the widespread immunity to the disease that has resulted from vaccination of most children even appears to be protecting people who haven't had the shot. Fewer infections among kids mean less exposure for teens and adults who haven't had the disease or the vaccine. "The results show an annual savings of \$100 million since the varicella, or chicken pox, vaccine was introduced, just in the cost of hospital care for people with severe cases. That's greater than the savings predicted in the vaccine's pre-approval analysis," says the lead author. [View Article](#)

## Colorado: Plague Outbreak Suspected

2 September - Rocky Mountain News reported that health officials in Jefferson County are warning visitors to Bear Creek Lake Park of a possible bubonic [plague](#) outbreak after a prairie dog colony suddenly died. The prairie dogs, which are highly susceptible to plague if bitten by infected fleas, died during the weekend. Health officials are conducting tests to verify plague was the cause. Jefferson County officials say the plague has been affecting Colorado heavily this year. Eight Colorado cats have tested positive for the disease this summer. In mid-August, a Weld County woman became the first Colorado person diagnosed with the plague in four years. [View Article](#)

## “Courage to Care” Launches Help for Returning Combatants, Families

24 August – Military.com reported that a team of experts in military medicine and health communication at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences launched a new health education campaign -- "Courage to Care." It is aimed at helping combatants integrate back into their families after surviving the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan. Courage to Care consists of ready-to-use fact sheets written for physician providers, as well as servicemen and women, on topics about military life and health. The content derives from interviews conducted by the university's health professionals with affected service members and families who have experienced combat stress and family separation. [View Article](#) (registration required)

## Four Ottawa Nursing Homes Hit by Flu Outbreak

9 September - CTV.ca News reported that an Ottawa senior is dead and dozens more are ill following a [flu](#) outbreak that is mystifying doctors. "I don't think we've ever had Influenza A that early before. Not that I can remember," said Liz Palmer, director of care for the Starwood nursing home. "We've got four clusters of flu at four different long-term care facilities," said Dr. David Salisbury, associate medical officer of health. "One of the people who are sick has the Fujian subtype ... so there's a bit of

question as to hangover from last year," he said. Globally, the Fujian strain of the Influenza A virus was the most common cause of flu in the 2003-04 flu season. Other experts say that's not likely. They think it's probably the start of an unusually early flu season. [View Article](#)

## Health Claims Rest on Inconclusive Data

7 September – The Boston Globe reported that the US Food and Drug Administration is loosening restrictions on [food label](#) language. Walnuts are the first food for which the federal agency has formally approved a "qualified" health claim under its new rules. In the past, only health claims for which there was "significant scientific agreement" could make their way onto food packaging: ones linking calcium to a reduced risk for osteoporosis, for example, or fiber to a reduced risk for cancer. Such claims receive a grade of "A" by the government. Now "B," "C," and "D" claims, for which there are limited data and inconclusive evidence, will start appearing. FDA officials say the change will help consumers make informed choices at the supermarket as nutrition science unfolds. Others, including public health professionals, contend the government caved in response to intense lobbying from the food industry. [View Article](#)

## Leptospirosis in Dog Handlers and Military Working Dogs at Lackland AFB

3 September – ProMED reported that four students in the Lackland Air Force base (San Antonio, Texas) Dog Handler course reported flu-like symptoms on 1 September and were referred to the Infectious Disease Service, Brooke Army Medical Center for possible [leptospirosis](#). Concurrently, the DoD Veterinary Food Analysis and Diagnostic Laboratory at Fort Sam Houston found positive titers to three Leptospirosis serovars from 3 military working dogs (MWDs) in medical therapy for renal failure. Ongoing epidemiological investigation includes serology and culture of other MWD handlers and MWDs with possible exposure, and environmental sampling with possible rodent capture to identify the source of the outbreak. [View Article](#)

## Ohio: Tainted Wells Hint at Source of South Bass Island's Illness

2 September – The Toledo Blade reported that state officials are focusing on [water contamination](#) as a possible source of an illness outbreak that has sickened more than 1,300 people. Of the 42 private wells tested on South Bass Island, 32 have tested positive for total coliform bacteria, which could indicate the presence of more serious bacteria or pathogens. Of those 32 wells, 11 also were found to be contaminated with *E. coli*. Of the 17 wells used by businesses and public facilities on the island, 11 have tested positive for total coliform, with four also found to have *E. coli* present. Jay Carey, a spokesman for the Ohio Department of Health, said, "It's beginning to confirm the suspicion of widespread groundwater contamination." The number of laboratory-confirmed cases remained at 24, including instances of campylobacter infection, norovirus, salmonella, and giardiasis. [View Article](#)

## Rise in Rabid Bat Numbers Spurs Health Alert

3 September – The Washington Times reported that a sharp increase in the number of rabid bats found in the District of Columbia prompted city officials to issue a health alert yesterday advising residents to "bat-proof" their homes by fixing broken window screens and securing loose shingles, vents, chimneys; and stay away from bats and other wild animals. Residents are advised not to capture bats or to chase them out but to back out of the room, close the door and call animal control. Health officials will want to test the bat and determine whether the resident needs [rabies](#) treatment. [View Article](#)

## Smog Impedes Kids' Lung Development

8 September – Forbes reported that the air in some parts of Southern California is so dirty that it impedes the development of children's lungs. By the time they are 18, many children who grow up in polluted areas have lungs that are underdeveloped and that will likely stay that way into adulthood. "The pollutants that we studied are likely to be present in any urban environment. They are primarily products of fuel combustion," said the study's author. The years from 10 to 18 are critical ones when it comes to lung development. According to the researchers, teenagers living in smoggy areas were nearly five times as likely to have clinically low lung function compared to peers living in less polluted areas. Clinically low lung function means that the person has less than 80 percent of the lung function expected for his age. Short-term effects can include more severe colds that last longer, while long-term effects can include increased risk of death due to cardiovascular and respiratory illness. [View Article](#)

## USPACOM

### Diarrhea and Pneumonia Continue to Spread in Bangladesh

30 August – Asia Pacific Disease Outbreak/Surveillance Report stated that the [diarrhea](#) situation is becoming worse as thousands of people are drinking contaminated water in their makeshift houses. Two people have died of and 3,258 were affected by diarrhea in the last 24 hours. As many as 618 children also were ill with [pneumonia](#) during this time. Since June, 77 people died of diarrhea and approximately 198,000 were affected, while 136 children died of pneumonia and 24,402 contracted the disease. Dysentery, an infection of the intestine, is also spreading in the flood-affected areas. Skin and eye diseases are also widespread in these areas. [View Article](#)

### India: Leptospirosis (South Gujarat)

2 September – ProMED reported that the death toll due to suspected [leptospirosis](#) in south Gujarat has increased to 58 today with 3 more deaths - 2 from Surat and 1 from Navsari district. Of the 58 deaths, 20 have been confirmed as due to leptospirosis. Out of 402 cases of suspected leptospirosis, 179 cases were reported from Surat district alone followed by Navsari (177) and Valsad (45). As many as 24 people have died in Surat district while 28 and 6 deaths were reported from Navsari and Valsad districts. [View Article](#)

### Malaysia Battles Second Flu Outbreak

8 September - Two people were under hospital observation in northern Malaysia with [flu](#)-like symptoms yesterday as the country fought to contain the second case of deadly bird flu in two weeks. Workers slaughtered 1,200 chickens and ducks to stop it spreading. The patients, a 10-year-old boy who lived near the affected house and a veterinary worker, displayed fever, cough or diarrhea, and doctors were watching for signs of the potentially lethal H5N1 strain of bird flu. The two were among more than 800 people screened for signs of the illness after chickens and quail were found dead of suspected H5N1 in the Kampung Belian area, in a quarantine zone declared around the village where bird flu was initially found on August 17. No people have been confirmed infected with the disease in Malaysia. [View Article](#)

## Nepal: Encephalitis Kills 25 in Dang District

30 August – Asia Pacific Disease Outbreak/Surveillance Report stated that twenty-five people have died of [encephalitis](#) in the Dang district of West Nepal, including five in the last three days. The disease has spread since July 16 in ten villages of Dang. A total of 94 encephalitis patients were admitted in the Mahendra Hospital during this period. [View Article](#)

## Taiwan: Respiratory Illness in Ilan County Prison Infects 70 Inmates

2 September – The Taipei Times reported that CDC lab analyses confirmed 70 suspected cases of a respiratory infection in an Ilan prison are an outbreak of [influenza](#) and admitted to a lapse in the country's medical surveillance system. About 70 inmates have developed dry cough, sore throat and nasal congestion since 23 August. Under current regulations, local authorities must inform the center once more than three people are found to be suffering from flu-like symptoms. But prison officials reported the outbreak just three days ago. [View Article](#)

## Thailand Faces Dilemma over Bird Flu Vaccine

2 September – Nature reported that as Thailand's battle with [avian influenza](#) drags on, the government has cracked down on the illegal use of bird vaccines. But farmers are relying on black-market vaccines in an attempt to avoid culling their chickens, leaving the country debating whether vaccination should be allowed. In Thailand, more than 300,000 chickens have been destroyed since July, and the bird flu that began this summer remains active in 25 villages. To farmers, vaccination seems like a good idea. It promises to keep healthy birds infection-free and to lessen symptoms in those already infected. But the unregulated use of vaccines can do harm. Vaccinated birds that seem healthy can still get infected and spread the virus. Black-market vaccines might also contain viruses that have not been properly inactivated. The vaccine virus strain might also interact with any infectious flu strains present in the same bird, possibly leading to the evolution of a more dangerous virus. [View Article](#)

## Tuberculosis Infects Philippine Army

1 September - BBC News / Asia-Pacific reported that a Philippines army doctor has confirmed figures for the high rate of [tuberculosis](#) infection in the army which were released by the Department of Health last week. Over 200 new cases were recorded in the first six months of 2004, on top of about 800 cases last year. Officials have expressed concern about the rate of infection among the military, particularly as soldiers often move around the country and could spread the disease. Tuberculosis is the sixth leading cause of death in the Philippines. [View Article](#)

## Vietnam Blames another Death on Avian Flu

7 September - CIDRAP News reported that Vietnamese officials have blamed the 5 September death of a 14-month-old boy on [avian influenza](#). Officials said the boy was infected with an H5 strain of influenza A, but doctors had not yet determined whether the virus was H5N1. The boy, who lived on the outskirts of Hanoi, died of pneumonia. The WHO said H5N1 is the only H5 subtype that has been known to cause disease in humans. The WHO stated that this year there have been 27 cases of avian flu with 20 deaths in Vietnam and 12 cases with 8 deaths in Thailand. [View Article](#)

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## Dengue Update – Brazil and Venezuela

3 September – ProMED reported that in Brazil, the Dengue Bulletin published by the Ceara State Health Secretariat reported 7211 cases of [dengue](#) so far in 2004, with 2121 lab confirmed. The disease is present in 146 of the 184 townships in the state. There have been 4 deaths suspected of being dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF). Fortaleza (the capital) leads the ranking with 2088 cases reported. The Venezuelan Ministry of Health reported a year-to-date total of 20,752 cases, almost double the number for the same period of 2003. In 2004, there were 1335 cases of DHF with 3 deaths. [View Article](#)

## Venezuela: Yellow Fever (Tachira)

4 September – ProMED reported that 5 cases of [yellow fever](#), 3 of them fatal, have been registered in 2004. Another, suspected, fatal case is awaiting laboratory confirmation. Ministry of Health statistics show 23 cases, including 15 deaths. The PAHO notes that 8 of the 23 cases were infected in Colombia but fell ill in Venezuela. Travelers to Tachira & Zulia provinces are being vaccinated against YF, as are children older than 1 year throughout the country. [View Article](#)

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