

USACHPPM
HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS UPDATE

24 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

Fresh View of Migraine Attacks

22 September - The Guardian reported that people who have frequent [migraines](#) are also more likely to develop brain damage. For some people migraines got worse with time, leaving many severely disabled in their everyday lives. The lead researcher called for doctors to treat migraines as a progressive illness rather than a series of separate attacks. Dutch researchers had found that sufferers had an increased risk of brain lesions, and that the risk of brain damage increased according to the frequency of migraines. Over the course of one year, 3% of headache sufferers progressed to a point where they had headaches most days. The risk factors for headache progression are more than four headaches a month, obesity, and taking painkillers more than once a week. [View Article](#)

Mediterranean Diet Scores Twice

22 September – Food Navigator.com reported that two studies in the 22-29 September issue of the [Journal of American Medical Association](#) show that eating a Mediterranean-style diet improves healthy longevity and prevents metabolic syndrome. A Mediterranean diet is generally defined as one rich in plant foods and fish, low in meat and dairy products, and with a high ratio of monounsaturated fatty acids to polyunsaturated fatty acids. The first study concluded that individuals aged 70 to 90 years old who adhered to a Mediterranean-type diet and led a fairly healthy life had a more than 50 per cent lower death rate than those who did not. The second study found that after two years, patients in the Mediterranean diet group had significant decreases in body weight, blood pressure, levels of glucose, insulin, total cholesterol, and triglycerides and a significant increase in levels of high-density lipoprotein cholesterol. [View Article](#)

Morphine-Free Poppy Points Way to Addiction-Free Drugs

22 September - Yahoo! News reported that Australian researchers have discovered a natural variant of the opium poppy that produces powerful painkilling compounds but none of the addictive morphine and codeine. The mutant, called top1, naturally makes the morphine and codeine precursors thebaine and oripavine in its sap. Work is under way to grow top1 in commercial quantities in Tasmania, which provides 40 percent of the world's supplies of licit opiates. Thebaine and oripavine can be manufactured into several powerful analgesics, including buprenorphine, which as well as a high-powered painkiller is also used to wean addicts off narcotics. Conventional opium poppies exude a raw opium resin whose main addictive ingredient, morphine, is synthesized into heroin. [View Article](#)

Researchers Eliminate Leukemia in Mice

20 September – EurekAlert reported that new drugs may target molecules that block normal self-destruction in [cancer](#) cells. Scientists have corrected a flaw in cancer cells that lets them evade the normal cell-death process, and as a result they eliminated leukemia cells from mice. With this achievement, the researchers confirm that a key anti-cell-death molecule called BCL-2 is required by many types of cancer cells to survive, and that silencing it with designer drugs may prove to be an effective new avenue for cancer therapy. [View Article](#)

Scientists Decipher Genetic Code of Biothreat Pathogen

20 September – EurekaAlert reported that scientists have deciphered the genetic code of the ancient pathogen that causes the horse disease: *Burkholderia mallei*. The study found that *B. mallei*, a highly evolved pathogen that has been deployed in the past as a [biological weapon](#), has an extremely regulated set of virulence genes and an unstable genome that may explain the bacterium's ability to thwart the immune responses of its host animals – mainly horses, mules and donkeys. "The combination of virulence genes and genomic instability may explain why some scientists consider this to be the ultimate bacterial pathogen," says William Nierman, an investigator at The Institute for Genomic Research (TIGR). [View Article](#)

Focus on Epidemiology

Rapid Assessment of the Health Status of Older Adults after Hurricane Charley

17 September – MMWR reported that on August 13, 2004, Hurricane Charley, a Category 4 storm with sustained winds of 145 mph, made landfall at a Gulf of Mexico barrier island in Florida, resulting in an estimated 31 deaths statewide and extensive property damage in three counties. The Florida Department of Health requested that CDC conduct a rapid needs assessment of older adults (aged ≥ 60 years) because this vulnerable age group constitutes a substantial proportion of the population. Older adult residents experienced disruptions in both quality-of-life status and medical care for preexisting conditions (e.g., cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and physical disabilities). In Charlotte County, among households having at least one older adult household member with a preexisting medical condition, one third reported that at least one older adult's medical condition worsened because of the hurricane, and 28% of households reported that at least one older adult was prevented from receiving routine care for a preexisting condition. In DeSoto County, approximately 54% of households were still awaiting restoration of sanitation services at the time of the survey. Bottled (81%) and well (17%) water were the most common drinking water sources. In Hardee County, nine percent of households reported at least one older adult who did not have access to prescription medications. [View Article](#)

DoD-GEIS: Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance

22 September - Antimicrobial Resistance (AR) poses a threat to US forces in hospitals and training centers and on deployment. In US hospitals, 50% of *S. aureus* isolates are methicillin-resistant and multiple-drug resistant *Acinetobacter* is increasingly reported; in US communities, ~50% of pneumococci express high or intermediate resistance to penicillin and several outbreaks of methicillin-resistant *S. aureus* have been reported; and in South America, Southeast Asia, and Africa, *P. falciparum* resistance to sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine is spreading and enteric pathogens such as *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, and *Campylobacter* increasingly express resistance to traditional regimens. Through global surveillance, [DoD-GEIS](#) programs help to address the threat of AR to US forces. [NHRC](#) tests and regularly reports AR in isolates of [S. pyogenes at 8 US military recruit training centers](#) and [S. pneumoniae at 7 MTFs](#). [NEHC](#) is developing information technology infrastructure to facilitate laboratory-based surveillance for AR at MTFs. [NAMRU-2](#) in Jakarta, Indonesia tests thousands of isolates from patients with diarrhea annually for AR and trains laboratory personnel to build regional capacity for AR surveillance, and conducts clinical and genetic studies of malaria resistance patterns. [NAMRU-3](#) in Cairo, Egypt performs enteric pathogen AR surveillance through a network of hospitals and clinics throughout the country. [NMRCD](#) in Lima, Peru has developed the most detailed map of antimalarial resistance in the Americas, driving official changes in treatment recommendations. [USAMRU-K](#) in Nairobi, Kenya conducts antimalarial resistance surveillance at 5 field sites across the country and this month added enteric disease surveillance to the network. [AFRIMS](#) in Bangkok, Thailand conducts malaria and enteric pathogen resistance surveillance continuously and during last year's Cobra Gold exercise demonstrated a predominance of *Campylobacter* in isolates from US military personnel with diarrhea; 90% of the *Campylobacter* were fluoroquinolone-resistant. Surveillance programs such as these can inform planning for DoD operations and deployments as well as longer-term strategies for addressing the challenge of AR to force health protection. *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

Kenya: Patients Set to Benefit from Cheap AIDS Drugs

23 September – AllAfrica.com reported that the road to cheaper and readily available [AIDS](#) drugs has been a bumpy one. Before Kenya got approval to manufacture generics, many patients fell prey to dubious AIDS treatments and ineffective drugs. Problems started when the AIDS spread seemed to overwhelm the Government, pushing the prevalence rates to over 10 per cent. Now, thanks to relatively cheap generic drugs from Asian countries, many AIDS patients can prolong their lives without having to worry about where their next dose of anti-retrovirals will come from. The cost is expected to fall further after a Kenyan company, Cosmos Limited, was given the green light to manufacture generics by GlaxoSmithKline, a British pharmaceutical giant. The latter holds the patents for Efavir, Retrovir and Combivir, used in managing the disease. [View Article](#)

USEUCOM

AIDS Up 6 Percent in South Africa, Seen Stabilizing

23 September – Reuters reported that the number of South Africans carrying the virus that causes [AIDS](#) rose in 2003 but the rate of infection especially among teenagers was stabilizing. The Department of Health estimated that 5.6 million of the country's 45 million population carried HIV, the virus that causes AIDS -- up 6 percent from 5.3 million in 2002. South Africa, the continent's economic powerhouse, has more people living with HIV-AIDS than any other country in the world, with hundreds of thousands dead. The government report found about 100,000 babies contracted the virus from their mothers in 2003, or more than 260 a day. About 28 percent of pregnant women were HIV positive, up from 26.5 percent in 2002, the report said. The report found HIV prevalence was highest in the 25 to 29 age group, while there was a marginal increase in infections among people under the age of 20, considered to be the best barometer of the infection rate. [View Article](#)

Botswana: Game Park Closed after Anthrax Outbreak

20 September – IOL reported that Botswana's wildlife authorities have closed Chobe National Park to tourists after an [anthrax](#) outbreak that threatens buffalo and elephants in one of the country's largest game reserves. Game rangers have found the carcasses of 68 buffalo and one elephant in the park, which borders Namibia. No other animal species have so far died, but nature officials were worried that predators such as lions, vultures, jackals and hyena may feed off the flesh of the dead animals. Chobe National Park is a major tourism draw in Botswana, luring tourists interested in game viewing because of its abundant wildlife including elephants, buffalo and lions. [View Article](#)

Namibia: Anthrax Outbreak in Elephants

17 September – The Namibian reported that two elephants have died of suspected [anthrax](#) in the Caprivi Region. The Director of Special Support Services in the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Dr. Pauline Lindeque, said the report of the animal deaths followed confirmed reports of an anthrax outbreak in the Chobe National Park in Botswana, which borders the Caprivi. Anthrax was also recently reported in Zimbabwe, where hundreds of animals are said to have succumbed to the disease. [View Article](#)

South Africa: New Avian Flu Scare

22 September – ProMED reported that agriculture officials will begin culling a further 4000 ostriches after discovering a new pocket of [avian flu](#) among ostriches on a farm near Fort Brown. Blood tests on the birds have confirmed the presence of the deadly virus, and many of them were showing symptoms of the disease. The Fort Brown farm had exchanged birds with farms in the area of the original outbreak, near Somerset East, prior to the quarantine measures. This is the second outbreak of the disease outside of the original 30 km radius control zone, since the virus was 1st detected in late July 2004. [View Article](#)

TB Care Will Save 500,000 Lives in Africa-Experts

21 September 2004 – Reuters reported that as many as half a million lives could be saved every year in Africa if governments combine their approach to tackle a rampant [AIDS](#) epidemic with measures to treat [tuberculosis](#). Tuberculosis is a major killer for people living with the HIV virus that causes AIDS, but few people on the continent are receiving the care they need. Activists urged health services to expand access to TB treatment for AIDS sufferers, as well as use existing programs to control tuberculosis to detect HIV cases and provide sufferers with life-prolonging anti-retroviral drugs. Of an estimated 25 million Africans now living with HIV, about eight million also harbor the bacillus that causes TB, a chronic lung infection. Each year, between five and 10 percent of these eight million people will also develop active TB. Without effective treatment most die within months. [View Article](#)

UK: Blood Donations May Carry Mad Cow

21 September – The Toronto Star reported that thousands of people who received plasma or other blood products in Britain received letters from the government today warning that they may have been exposed to the deadly human form of mad cow disease. The letters come after the deaths of the first two patients who may have contracted the disease from a blood transfusion. One patient died of [variant Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease](#) in December, and another died in July of unrelated causes. British health officials stressed that the letters were precautionary, and the recipients faced only a slightly increased risk of contracting the disease. The warnings went to people who received plasma-based products, such as clotting agents, which may have contained tainted blood. Those who received transfusions of whole blood from infected donors had earlier been traced and notified. [View Article](#)

UK: Health Alert after Mumps Outbreak

16 September – BBC News reported that public health officials are dealing with East Yorkshire's first major [mumps](#) outbreak for three years. Over 30 cases have been confirmed throughout the East Riding and Hull among people in the 18-24 age group - the pre-MMR generation. A three-day vaccination program is to be held at Hull University next week in a bid to protect as many young people as possible. [View Article](#)

UK: Salmonella Outbreak Tops 100 Cases

17 September – BBC News reported that more than 100 people have now been struck down by a [salmonella](#) bug in North East Lincolnshire. Environmental health officials are still trying to pinpoint the exact source of the outbreak - two weeks after the first cases were confirmed. They now believe the bacteria are being carried in salads at takeaway outlets. Of the 106 confirmed cases so far, five had resulted in hospital treatment but all of those had now been discharged. Although most of the cases stemmed from just two fast food outlets, others had been reported at "a dozen or more" takeaways throughout the area. The relatively rare Salmonella Newport strain is involved in the outbreak. [View Article](#)

UK: Second Woman Dies in Legionnaires' Disease Outbreak

17 September – The Scotsman.com reported that a woman in her 60s has become the second person to die in an outbreak of [Legionnaires' disease](#). The bug claimed the life of a 62-year-old woman in Redditch, Worcestershire, last week. A man in his 50s, who had also contracted the illness, has since been released from hospital. Public health officials, who are still working to determine the source of the outbreak, have advised local businesses to clean and disinfect their wet cooling systems. [View Article](#)

Zimbabwe: Disease Outbreak Feared At Waterless Hopley

16 September – AllAfrica.com reported that a serious health hazard is looming unless steps are taken to address the critical water and sewer problems affecting residents of Hopley Township in Waterfalls. The new low-income housing suburb does not have water and sewer facilities because it is not connected to the city council's mains, and the more than 50 families residing there are in danger of [cholera](#) and [dysentery](#). Residents are being forced to scrounge for water in surrounding areas and some even go to far-away areas such as Glen Norah in search of water. Hopley Township has more than 300 housing units, 270 of which have been completed. Residents say incessant rental hikes had forced them to come and occupy houses in the suburb although there were no water and sewer facilities. [View Article](#)

USNORTHCOM

Disease Hazards Common in Food Operations, FDA Says

16 September - CIDRAP News reported that a nationwide survey by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) suggests that risk factors for [foodborne disease](#), such as inadequate hand washing by workers and keeping food at unsafe temperatures, are very common in the nation's restaurants, retail stores, and institutional food services. The FDA found failures to comply with hand washing guidelines in 73% of full-service restaurants and 34% of hospitals. Failure to heed guidelines for food holding times and temperatures occurred in 63.8% of full-service restaurants, 64.4% of delis, 41.7% of fast-food restaurants, and 40.3% of hospitals. In the food holding category the most common problems were "improper cold holding of potentially hazardous food" and failure to date-mark refrigerated ready-to-eat foods after 24 hours. Inspectors saw cases of noncompliance with guidelines for cleaning food-contact surfaces in 58% of retail deli departments and 25% of elementary schools. [View Article](#)
[View Report](#)

Farms Should Test for Salmonella in Eggshells - FDA

20 September – Reuters reported that large U.S. farms that sell eggs will be required to adopt stricter food safety measures to reduce the risk of chicken egg shells being contaminated with [salmonella](#). The FDA proposed new rules that will require about 4,100 of the nation's biggest egg farms to test their chicken houses for salmonella enteritidis. The farms will also have to refrigerate eggs once they are collected from hens and adopt better

sanitation measures to control mice and other pests. An estimated 118,000 illnesses a year are caused by eating eggs contaminated with salmonella enteritidis. The agency said its proposed rules for farms would cut the number of cases by an estimated 33,500 annually. Eating eggs with salmonella enteritidis that have not been fully cooked can lead to severe diarrhea, short term or chronic arthritis and in rare cases, death. The elderly, children and individuals with weak immune systems are most susceptible. [View Article](#)

FDA Panel Supports New Meningitis Vaccine

22 September – Reuters reported that a new Sanofi-Aventis [meningitis](#) vaccine aimed at protecting adolescents throughout their college years is safe and effective but should undergo longer-term studies if approved. The new vaccine, called Menactra, protects against one of three types of the bacterial infection that strikes the fluids surrounding the brain and spinal cord and can lead to seizures, brain damage, memory loss and even death. It is designed to protect children as young as 11 through their college years, especially those who live in crowded dormitories. The panelists unanimously agreed that Menactra is as safe and effective as Menomune, the company's other vaccine for meningococcal meningitis that loses effectiveness after three to five years. Menactra lasts longer and can be strengthened with booster shots. [View Article](#)

Nurses Union Fighting Flu-Shot Requirement

22 September – The Seattle Times reported that the Washington State Nurses Association is protesting a requirement by Virginia Mason Medical Center that nurses, along with other staff members, be immunized against [influenza](#) this year or be fired. Association officials said the new policy takes away individuals' right to decide about their own health care and violates labor law because it was dictated without bargaining with the nurses association. A hospital official said there has been much effort to encourage voluntary vaccinations, but the hospital has achieved only a 55 percent immunization rate among the 5,000 staff members, including nurses. The vaccinations are free for staff members. The CDC has long recommended that all health-care workers receive flu shots because many patients have suppressed immune systems and are more vulnerable to severe complications, such as a fatal case of pneumonia. Nationally, less than 40 percent of health workers are immunized. [View Article](#)

Poor Medical Treatment Kills Thousands

23 September – ABC News reported that requiring doctors and hospitals to report publicly on their performance and tying their pay to the results would dramatically reduce avoidable deaths and costs attributable to poor medical care. Wild variations in medical care led to 79,000 avoidable deaths and \$1.8 billion in additional medical costs last year. The report described a substantial gap in quality between the best providers and the national average for treating a range of common conditions that would not be tolerated in almost any other sector of the U.S. economy. For example, failure to control high blood pressure resulted in up to 26,000 deaths last year that could have been avoided with competent medical care. On the other hand, the report found that health insurance plans that publicly report their performance showed marked improvement in most areas, including cholesterol management, diabetes care, breast cancer screening and flu shots for adults. [View Article](#)

Study Warns Child Abuse High in U.S. Military Families

23 September – Reuters reported that murders of children in U.S. military families in North Carolina were more than double the state average over a 15-year period. The report by the North Carolina Child Advocacy Institute examined 378 murders of children aged 10 and younger between 1985 and 2000. It found that the average child homicide rate for the state as a whole was 2.2 deaths per 100,000 children. But in Cumberland County, home to the major military bases of Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base, the annual homicide rate for children of military families averaged 5 per 100,000. Onslow County, which contains Camp Lejeune and New River Air Station, recorded an annual average murder rate of 4.9 per 100,000. Family advocacy groups fear the Iraq war

may lead to an increase in both spousal and [child abuse](#). Lt. Col. Joe Richard, a department spokesman, said, "Military life is stressful by its very nature. Now that we are on a war footing, with military personnel coming home from long, dangerous deployments, we have stepped up our initiatives to prevent child abuse." [View Article](#)

U.S. Orders 2 Million Doses of Avian Flu Vaccine

22 September – Dr.koop.com reported that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has awarded a contract to Aventis Pasteur Inc. to make and store two million doses of [avian influenza](#) H5N1 vaccine. The vaccine is designed to counter the H5N1 influenza virus that has killed 29 people in Vietnam and Thailand so far this year. The \$13 million contract is meant to ensure that the US is prepared for a pandemic of this form of avian influenza virus. The vaccine would be used to protect laboratory staffers, public health workers and, if needed, the general public. The US is the first country to produce and stockpile such a large quantity of avian influenza H5N1 vaccine. [View Article](#)

Whooping Cough Outbreak Spreads

17 September – The Post-Standard reported that there is a [whooping cough](#) outbreak throughout Central New York. Since the outbreak started last fall, 160 cases of pertussis have been reported in Onondaga County. The county usually has 10 cases a year. Ten children have been hospitalized with pertussis since that time. Health officials in adjacent counties are also concerned about the growing threat of pertussis, which is making a comeback nationwide. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report most cases are among infants and adolescents from ages 10 to 19. Vaccination against pertussis is not required, although that's expected to change within the next year. [View Article](#)

USPACOM

A State Is Quarantined Over Bird Flu Outbreak

16 September - The International Herald Tribune reported that Malaysia has placed the entire state of Kelantan under quarantine because of the outbreak of [bird flu](#). The nation has yet to have a human infection and has culled thousands of chickens, ducks and birds after the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu surfaced last month in the northern state of Kelantan, about 300 kilometers (190 miles) northeast of Kuala Lumpur. "The whole state has been declared a disease-controlled area," Dr. Hawari Hussein, director general of veterinary services, said. This means the movement of poultry out of the state is restricted, he said. [View Article](#)

Bird Flu Detected at Farm near Cambodian Capital

22 September – ProMED reported that a farm near the Cambodian capital was closed after about 2300 chickens died of [bird flu](#), apparently the first cases of the disease in the country following an epidemic in Asia earlier this year. The remaining 2200 birds at the farm, located about 5 km outside Phnom Penh, were destroyed. Testing by the Pasteur Institute in Phnom Penh confirmed the bird flu strain of H5N1. [View Article](#)

China's Energy Crisis Blankets Hong Kong in Smog

21 September 2004 – Reuters reported that Hong Kong is often shrouded in toxic smog. Hong Kong's [air pollution](#) hit a record high Sept. 14, with the index rising to over 200 for the first time since air quality monitoring was introduced in 1995. Doctors advised asthma sufferers and those with heart disease to stay indoors. Experts lay the blame for Hong Kong's worsening air pollution on China, which the WHO says has seven of the world's 10 most polluted cities. Most of the pollution cloaking Hong Kong is generated by coal-

fired power plants and smokestacks from China's industrial south, as well as traffic fumes from the city's own congested streets. China faces a chronic energy shortage and making the switch from coal-fired plants to cleaner fuel is costly and disruptive. Double-digit growth in individual car ownership in the neighboring province of Guangdong compounds the problem. [View Article](#)

India: Encephalitis Outbreaks Attributed To Virulent Form of Chandipura Virus

22 September – ProMED News reported that [Chandipura virus](#) has attracted considerable attention in India, particularly after the large-scale deaths of children in parts of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh last year and in Gujarat this year. But a recent study at the National Institute of Virology (NIV) has predicted that the worst is still to come, because the virus has now acquired a totally virulent form. In addition, in the absence of any treatment, coupled with a lack of previous exposure to this pathogen, human beings have not developed immunity to fight the virus. As many as 250 children in certain pockets of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh succumbed to Chandipura virus infection last year, which was initially diagnosed as Japanese encephalitis. [View Article](#)

Philippines: Rabies Outbreak in Bacolod City

17 September - Asia-Pacific Disease Outbreak/Surveillance Report stated that an outbreak of [rabies](#) has been declared in Bacolod City following one death and 14 other positive cases within five month period. The barangays with positive rabies cases are Handumanan, Villamonte, Cabug, Paganocoy, Tangub, Taculing, Handumanan, Mandalagan, Alijis, Bata and Greenville. Massive rabies vaccination and extermination of all stray dogs are measures implemented to control the outbreak. The target to eliminate rabies can be achieved only if stray dogs can be eliminated and 80 percent of the dog population is vaccinated. The country has one of the highest incidences of dog rabies in Asia. [View Article](#)

Red Tide Causes Illness in Southern India

20 September – The New Zealand Herald reported that an outbreak of destructive algae has killed thousands of fish in southern India, causing more than 90 children to fall ill because of the stench. The waters off Valiyathura village in southern Kerala state are crimson because of the outbreak, known as [red tide](#), which occurs when *Karenia brevis* algae blooms in higher than normal numbers. The algae affect the central nervous system of fish and can be toxic to humans. Thousands of dead fish have washed ashore, producing a stench that sent the children to hospitals with nausea. [View Article](#)

Singapore: Melioidosis Kills 24 in Singapore

17 September - Asia-Pacific Disease Outbreak/Surveillance Report stated that twenty-four people have died in Singapore this year from a soil-borne bacterial infection called [melioidosis](#). The bacteria enter the body when bruised skin comes into direct contact with contaminated soil or water, leading to abscesses and blood poisoning. Victims experience fever, coughing and shortness of breath. In some cases they develop pneumonia. The death rate hit 40 percent between January and July this year, up from 10 percent last year. Up to early September, 79 people have been diagnosed with the disease. There is no vaccine but the illness can be treated with antibiotics. [View Article](#)

Study Shows Majority of Chinese Urban Dwellers Sick

20 September - VOA News.com reported that three-quarters of all Chinese city dwellers are in ill health and that [life expectancies](#) are declining for skilled and educated workers. The survey by the Red Cross Society of China covered 16 Chinese cities with populations of over one million, including Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. The report said the problem was worst among senior and mid-level managers and well-educated white collar workers. Their life expectancies have fallen to 58 years - less than the national average of 72. China's industrial

boom and soaring vehicle use have contributed to severe air and water pollution, while changing diets and exercise habits have led to increased obesity, stress, heart attacks and strokes. [View Article](#)

Thailand: Five More Suspected Bird-Flu Cases Found

20 September 2004 – The Nation reported that five more suspected cases of [bird flu](#) were discovered in Bangkok and upcountry over the weekend, but all of the patients are recovering. One lives in Bangkok, one in Lop Buri and three in Prachin Buri. Prachin Buri was recently hit by a new outbreak of avian influenza that claimed one life. Three of the new suspected patients raised chickens that later died, but they say they had no direct contact with those birds. Of the 109 people put on medical observation earlier, 97 have been dropped from the list. There is now only one confirmed case of bird flu, and results of medical tests are pending for 11 suspected cases. [View Article](#)

Unidentified Flu Affects Thousands in Fiji

13 September – Asia-Pacific Disease Outbreak/Surveillance Report stated that an undiagnosed strain of [influenza](#) has hit Fiji, making more than 16,000 people ill. Health authorities have not been able to identify the strain, which is highly contagious. The new agent has been spreading for the past few weeks and has symptoms of sore throat, cough and fever with some people experiencing vomiting and diarrhea. The number of people afflicted is alarming. Employers are being asked to allow sick workers time off since there will be substantial losses in productivity through the spread of the disease. [View Article](#)

USSOUTHCOM

Flooding Spawned by Storm Kills More Than 550 in Haiti

21 September – The New York Times reported that more than 550 people died in Haiti over the weekend from flooding and mudslides set off by Tropical Storm Jeanne. More than 500 people died in Gonaïves in the Arbonite Province. Forty-seven people were also confirmed killed in the Northwest Province, around the town of Port-de-Paix. Eight deaths were recorded elsewhere, bringing the total confirmed toll to 556. Half of Gonaïves remained under water, and 80 percent of its inner urban population of more than 100,000 had been affected by the floods, which at one point forced hundreds of people to take cover on the roofs of their homes. Twelve trucks carrying 44 tons of food were scheduled to leave the capital, Port-au-Prince, for Gonaïves. The WHO planned to deliver medicine, and 15 trucks from the Brazilian-led peacekeeping force went to reinforce a detachment of Argentine peacekeepers stationed in the city. The storm also killed 11 people in the Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti, and two in Puerto Rico. [View Article](#) (registration required)

Please contact us to comment on or suggest improvements to this report. This report is also available on the [USACHPPM website](#).

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