

USACHPPM
HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO)
WEEKLY UPDATE

20 February 2002

The HIO Weekly Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States (US) Army. The weekly 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 Weekly Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

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HOT ISSUES

Anthrax Vaccine and Congenital Anomalies - Preliminary Study

On 15 February, the [CDC](#) published a report that the [DoD](#) Center for Deployment Health Research at Naval Health Research Center, San Diego, had used computerized medical records to conduct a preliminary evaluation of the potential association between the use of anthrax vaccine in the first trimester of pregnancy and the diagnosis of congenital anomalies in children. Review of the preliminary data indicated important limitations in computerized medical records that precluded drawing conclusions from the preliminary study. Investigators are conducting a systematic evaluation of original medical records, including vaccination and infant health records, which will require several months. Although the [FDA](#)-licensed vaccine has not been suspected to be a hazard to reproductive health, no studies of animals or pregnant women have been conducted, and the vaccine is neither recommended nor licensed for use in pregnancy. The DoD policy continues to restrict anthrax vaccination of pregnant women. Because of the importance of protecting women of childbearing age from adverse health events, both military and civilian health-care providers should continue to ask women if they are pregnant or intend to become pregnant and should not vaccinate women who state that they are pregnant. The report is at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5106a5.htm>.

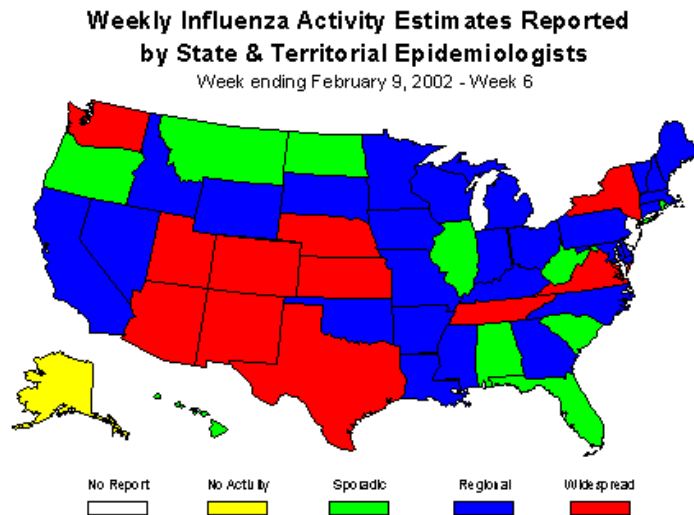
Influenza Surveillance – [DoD](#)

The [DoD](#) Worldwide Influenza Surveillance Program is a laboratory-based influenza surveillance program managed by the US Air Force. As of 14 February, 272 (16%) of 1,678 submitted specimens have been identified as positive for influenza since the start of the influenza season (29 September). Of the isolates, 63 (23%) have been subtyped, with 60 (95%) influenza A (H3N2), and three (5%) influenza A (H1N1). During the past week, 19 (40%) of the 47 isolates identified continued to be from US Air Force bases in Texas, which supports the [CDC's](#) report of continued widespread influenza activity in Texas. Further info, including data from the CDC and international sites, are available at: <https://pestilence.brooks.af.mil/Influenza/>. Note: Some users may experience difficulty accessing this link directly from this document; if this occurs, copy and paste the hyperlink in your browser address bar.

Influenza Surveillance – US

The [CDC](#) report for the weeks ending 2 and 9 February (weeks 5 and 6) indicated that during this week overall national visits to physicians for influenza-like illness were 3.1% and 3.0% respectively, which is above the national baseline of 1.9%. Deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza were 7.7 for week 5 and 7.4% for week 6, which are below

the epidemic thresholds of 8.2% and 8.3%, respectively for these weeks. For week six, laboratory reports indicated 363 (17.5%) of 2,071 respiratory specimens were positive for influenza: 157 influenza A (H3N2), six influenza B, and 200 influenza A viruses with unspecified subtype. The CDC has identified influenza A (H1N2) viruses from patient specimens collected during July, September, and December 2001 in Texas, Nevada, and Wisconsin, respectively. The CDC is continuing antigenic characterization of additional influenza A (H1) viruses. Since 30 September, 4,151 (9.8%) of 42,409 submitted specimens were positive for influenza: 4,091 (99%) were influenza A and 60 (1%) were influenza B. Of the 4,151 influenza A viruses, 1,299 (32%) were subtyped with the following results: 1,284 (99%) were influenza A (H3) and 15 (1%) were influenza A (H1) viruses. Laboratory-confirmed influenza has been reported by all 50 states. All viruses that have been antigenically characterized (169) were similar to the vaccine strains. The [CDC](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/flu/weekly.htm) classified influenza during the sixth week of the 2002 influenza season as in the map below. The report is at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/flu/weekly.htm>.



Picture courtesy of the CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/flu/weekly.htm>.

International Travel and Health - [WHO](http://www.who.int/ith/)

On 19 February, the WHO announced the book and accompanying website for *International Travel and Health*. The website provides information on more than 30 infectious diseases, global disease distribution maps, health factors involved in air travel, and the latest advice in prevention. The resource is at <http://www.who.int/ith/>.

Smallpox Vaccine - [CDC](http://www.cdc.gov/)

On 18 February, the [VOA](http://www.voanews.com/) reported that a CDC spokesperson recently announced that studies to determine if the existing smallpox vaccine dose could remain effective after dilution would be made public by the beginning of March. The spokesperson did not

provide details but did say that the experiments were successful. The live vaccine can be fatal in up to one or two people per million and can cause complications such as encephalitis in hundreds more. The CDC spokesperson also mentioned that third generation smallpox vaccine "is something that we're just now launching" with the ultimate goal of having an essentially non-toxic vaccine.

USCENTCOM

Leishmaniasis - Pakistan

On 12 February, the [WHO](#) reported that a second leishmaniasis assessment was conducted in the Northwest Frontier Province, which resulted in a total of 5,000 reported cases of cutaneous leishmaniasis in the Kurram Agencies and other Agencies of the Province. According to the report, the epidemiological pattern suggested person-to-person transmission through the sandfly vector with no animals involved. The most affected group in the Kurram Agency is children below the age of 15. Estimates indicate that 15,000 vials of pentavalent antimonials are needed to treat the cases and are being coordinated between the WHO and Iran, some of which will not be available until early March. The report is at <http://www.who.int/disease-outbreak-news/n2002/february/12february2002.html>.

Leishmaniasis - Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)

On 18 February, the 3rd MEDCOM and OTSG Operations reported that one confirmed and two suspected cases of leishmaniasis had occurred in US military personnel participating in OEF. The confirmed case was evacuated to CONUS for treatment. No further details are available at this time.

Meningitis - Ethiopia

On 14 February, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies reported that as of 3 February, a total of 1,332 cases and 85 deaths have been reported to the Ministry of Health mainly from the Southern Nations Nationalities Peoples region and the Oromia region. The report further stated that of the 44.5 million population aged 2-30 years, only about 5.8 million (13%) have been vaccinated in the past two years. The report further stated that patterns traced from September 2001 suggested that a major epidemic could emerge this year. The report is at http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?rpts02/Ethmeningitis1.pdf.

Paratyphoid Fever - Kazakhstan

On 8 February, the Kazakhstan Today news agency reported that 44 people were admitted to a hospital since 7 February in Zhanatas in the southern Zhambyl Region, with suspected paratyphoid B infection. According to the report the chief physician stated he had confirmed the disease in 32 people, half of whom had laboratory

confirmation. An investigation is ongoing with the primary suspected source being the town's water supply system.

Pesticide Leakage - Djibouti

On 19 February, the [UN](#) Food and Agriculture Organization reported that ten shipping containers were leaking chromated copper arsenate and creating serious human health and environmental problems in the port of Djibouti. The shipment of over 200 tons was from the [UK](#) and bound for the Ethiopian Power Corporation for use as a wood preservative in power and telegraph poles. The chemicals were packaged in plastic containers instead of the usual steel drums. The UN report expressed concern that the chemical could be spread by rain into the surrounding soil or possibly into the sea. The report is at http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/OIS/PRESS_NE/english/2002/2720-en.html.

USEUCOM

[BSE](#) Cattle in Food Chain - [UK](#)

On 14 February, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) announced that meat from the offspring of two BSE-infected cows had entered the human food chain. In December 2001, one 15-month old animal was slaughtered and put into the human food chain with no meat now remaining. The other animal, aged 26 months, was slaughtered in January, with some of the meat entering the human food chain. The FSA ordered the remainder of the meat be seized and destroyed. The parts of the animal most likely to contain "BSE infectivity" were removed at the abattoir. This is the second and third such cases this year, following the slaughter in Wales on 14 January of a 29-month old offspring of a BSE-infected cow. Estimates indicate that maternal transmission could occur in up to 10% of pregnancies, although this number is under review and may be revised downward. The report is at <http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/47503>.

Echoviruses 30 and 13 - Europe

On 14 February, the Eurosurveillance Weekly reported recent increases in the incidence of echoviruses 30 and 13 in Europe. Echovirus 30 is one of the more common echovirus types isolated by laboratories, and outbreaks occur every few years. During 2001, outbreaks occurred in England/Wales, Scotland, and Germany with smaller outbreaks in these countries during the previous year. In 2000, outbreaks also occurred in France, Iceland, Kosovo, and the Netherlands. Echovirus 13 is one of the less commonly isolated echovirus types. In 2001, Germany reported that the number of isolations of this virus more than doubled that in the previous year. During 2000, outbreaks occurred in England and Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, France, and the Netherlands. The report also referred to increased cases during 2001 in the US and western Australia. All cases that mentioned symptoms associated with echovirus referred to meningitis except for Turkey, which reported acute flaccid paralysis. The report is at http://www.eurosurv.org/2002/pfp/020214_pfp.htm.

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) - Botswana

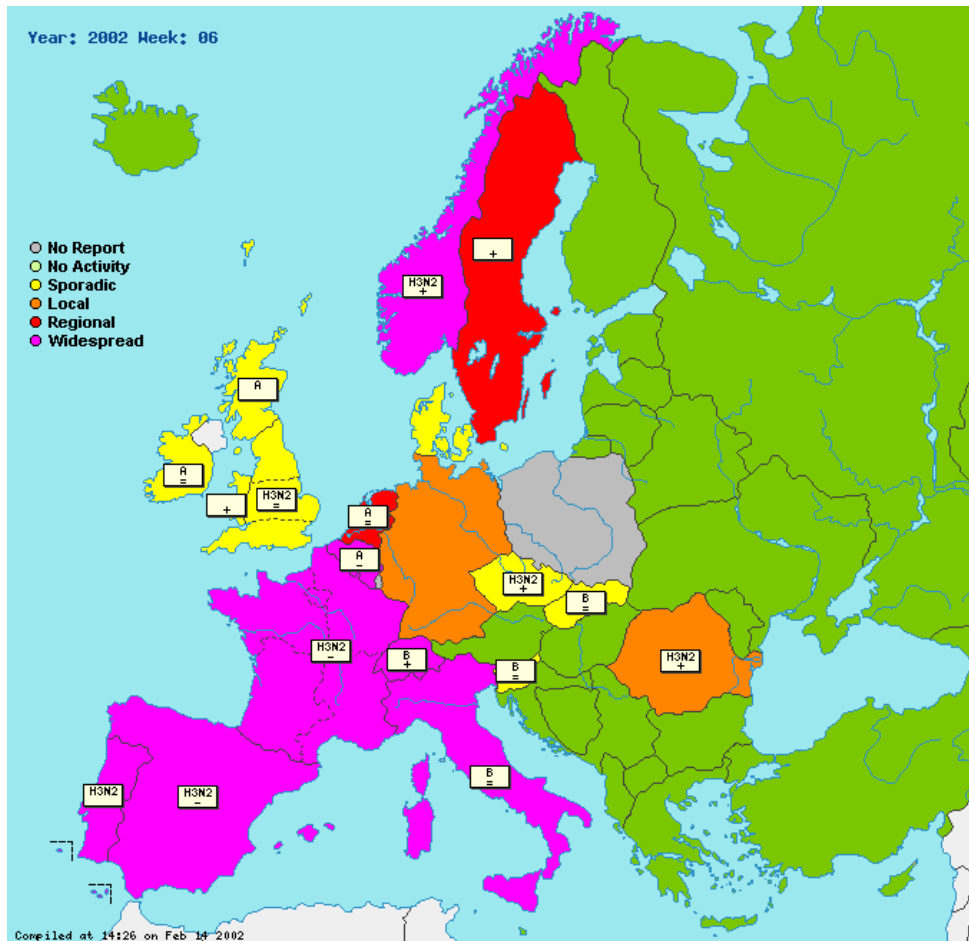
On 14 February, the OIE reported an outbreak of FMD, virus type SAT 2, in the Francistown district of Botswana, near Zimbabwe. The outbreak involved 66 cattle in a herd of 700 and occurred in an area previously recognized as FMD free without vaccination. The measures taken in the outbreak included: infected animals impounded and scheduled for destruction as soon as possible; countrywide cloven-hoofed animal movement ban; export and non-export abattoirs closed indefinitely; road blocks and picketing instituted around the infected area; all animals in infected area undergoing trivalent vaccination (SAT 1, 2, and 3); and all animals in surveillance zone undergoing examination and serologic sampling. All people and vehicles leaving the infected area are thoroughly dipped and/or sprayed with 4% sodium carbonate or virucidal disinfectant and other bio-security measures are reportedly in place. The report is at http://www.oie.int/eng/info/hebdo/AIS_31.HTM#Sec3.

Hepatitis C Compensation Cases - Hungary

On 16 February, the British Medical Journal reported that a Central Court in Budapest awarded monetary compensation to a man who won a lawsuit in which he claimed that he was infected with hepatitis C as the result of a transfusion of unscreened blood administered during a hospital operation in 1993. The report stated that this might encourage other lawsuits by the estimated 100,000 to 150,000 Hungarians infected with hepatitis C from transfusions. According to the report, the Hungarian medical system began screening blood donors for hepatitis C in 1992. The report is at <http://bmj.com/cgi/content/full/324/7334/384/a>.

Influenza Surveillance – Europe

For week six, 4-10 February, the [EISS](#) reported widespread influenza activity in seven countries: Belgium, France, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland. Weekly clinical morbidity rates were decreasing in Belgium, France, Portugal and Spain, were stable in Italy, and were increasing in Norway and Switzerland. Influenza activity was regional in the Netherlands and Sweden. Local outbreaks were reported in Germany and Romania. Other central and northern European countries reported sporadic activity. Eleven networks reported the predominant influenza type was A and four networks reported that it was B. Among the networks that reported influenza A as the prominent type, seven networks reported that influenza A (H3N2) was the dominant subtype. No cases of influenza A (H1N2) were reported during week six; however, France reported two cases, which had samples taken during weeks four and five. The report is at http://www.eiss.org/cgi-files/bulletin_v2.cgi?display=1&code=55&bulletin=55.



Picture Courtesy of EISS at http://www.eiss.org/cgi-files/bulletin_v2.cgi?display=1&code=55&bulletin=55.

Measles Education Campaign - [UK](#)

On 16 February, the British Medical Journal (BMJ) announced that the UK government would be launching an education campaign in an effort to improve a declining immunization rate of [MMR](#) in children from 92% in 1997 to 86% in October 2001. The campaign will include newspaper articles and a mailing to general practices that will update patient information sent out previously. The education campaign also comes after a televised announcement of a controversial research study that demonstrated 75 of 91 children with inflammatory bowel disease and a developmental disorder had measles virus present in intestinal tissue as compared with five of 70 control patients. The study will be published in a future edition of *Molecular Pathology*, which is co-owned by the BMJ Publishing Group. The research study can be accessed at <http://mp.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/54/6/DC1> and the BMJ report is at <http://bmj.com/cgi/content/full/324/7334/383>.

Meningitis - Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 15 February, the [WHO](#) reported that as of 2 January a total of 893 cases (104 deaths) of meningococcal disease had occurred in Katana, Bukavu, and Idjwi health zones, South-Kivu province since the onset of the outbreak in August 2001. *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup A was laboratory confirmed, and a vaccination campaign targeting 2-30 year olds was undertaken in the targeted area. A total of 413,500 people were vaccinated with an overall vaccination coverage of about 70% with regional differences (Katana 72%, Bukavu 53%, and Idjwi 87.5%). The number of newly reported cases is declining as enhanced surveillance activities continue. The report is at <http://www.who.int/disease-outbreak-news/n2002/february/15february2002.html>.

USJFCOM

[BSE](#) Inspections - [GAO](#)

The GAO is expected to release a report on BSE Inspections during the week of 18 February.

Hantavirus Hemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome - Russia

On 14 February, [AFMIC](#) reported that an outbreak of hemorrhagic fever ongoing since 18 December 2001 was confirmed to be hantavirus hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome. The total number of confirmed cases now stands at 101 with two deaths. AFMIC reports can be obtained by registering at <http://mic.afmic.detrick.army.mil/>.

Hepatitis B Perinatal Guidelines - [CDC](#)

On 15 February, the CDC announced that it is revising the 1996 *Guidelines for the Prevention of Perinatal Group B Streptococcal Disease* to address common clinical questions and challenges that have arisen during implementation of the guidelines. Comments or questions can be sent before 15 March 2002 to gbs@cdc.gov.

Measles, 2000 - US

On 15 February, the [CDC](#) reported that a provisional total of 86 confirmed measles cases were reported during 2000 resulting in a record low and a 14% decrease from the 100 cases reported for each of the two previous years. Of the 86 reported cases, 53 (62%) were importation-associated cases. Measles was imported from 10 countries with the largest numbers reported from Japan (seven) and Korea and Ethiopia (four each). On average, imported cases resulted in less than one import-linked case (range: 0-5), which suggests the US population immunity is high, probably as a result of successful vaccination efforts. Of the 86 reported cases, 33 were of unknown source. This number has been consistently small indicating that measles is no longer endemic in the US. Collection of viral specimens is an important part of any measles case investigation. Worldwide, during large outbreaks or in areas where disease is endemic,

one measles genotype usually exists. Since 1992, no genotypes have been found consistently in the US, and when genotypic data are available, all isolates from imported cases have the genotype found in the country of origin. Maintaining high levels of measles vaccination is important in limiting indigenous spread of measles from imported cases. The report is at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5106a2.htm>.

Sudden Cardiac Deaths, 1999 - US

On 15 February, the [CDC](#) reported that 728,743 cardiac disease deaths occurred in 1999 of which 462,340 (63.4%) were sudden cardiac deaths (SCDs). Of the SCDs, 120,244 (16.5%) occurred in an Emergency Department (ED) or were dead on arrival, and 341,780 (46.9%) occurred out-of-hospital. The proportion of SCDs that occur out-of-hospital has increased since 1989. Women had a higher total number of cardiac deaths and a higher proportion of out-of-hospital deaths than men (375,243 and 51.9% for women and 353,500 and 41.7% for men). This finding supports an earlier study that found women more often delay seeking help for heart attack symptoms. The CDC reported that all of these rates suggest a national effort is needed to increase the proportion of the public that can recognize and respond to symptoms and can intervene when someone is having a heart attack, including calling 911, attempting cardiac resuscitation, and using automated external defibrillators (AEDs) until emergency personnel arrive. On 2 January, the HIO Weekly Update reported that [OSHA](#) had earlier announced its support in the use of AEDs in the workplace. Interest in the use of AEDs in the workplace may continue to increase. The CDC report is at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5106a3.htm> and the OSHA report is at <http://www.osha.gov/media/oshnews/dec01/trade-20011217A.html>.

Surgeon General's Reports - National Library of Medicine

On 12 February, the National Library of Medicine made available a website, which contains a complete listing and text of all the official reports of the Surgeon General beginning in 1964. The website is at <http://sgreports.nlm.nih.gov/NN/>.

Vaccine Shortages - CNN

On 18 February, CNN reported that a shortage of [MMR](#) vaccine is leading federal officials to dip into an emergency stockpile, while shortages of Prevnar (pneumococcal bacteria), DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis), and chickenpox vaccines remain in effect because of production and/or supplier issues. The report is at <http://www.cnn.com/2002/HEALTH/parenting/02/18/vaccine.shortages/index.html>.

Varicella Disease, 1995-2000 - US

On 14 February, the Eurosurveillance Weekly reported on a study of *Varicella* disease in the US, which was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) on 6 February. The report stated that the overall vaccination coverage in the US was only 68% after six years of vaccination (vaccination began in 1995). The report

conjectured that the reason for the low coverage and the reason few countries have adopted the vaccine is because the effect of giving the vaccine in early life on the subsequent development of herpes zoster is not known. In spite of the low vaccination rates, the herd immunity effect appears to be strong as the incidence of *Varicella* fell markedly in all age groups, including a 64-68% fall in those aged 20 years and older. The total numbers and rate of hospital admission fell considerably, although this was not statistically significant. The author stressed that high immunization rates are important to ensure the age distribution does not shift towards older age groups in whom the disease is more serious. While, *Varicella* is not typically associated with serious disease, deaths can result, and in England and Wales there are now on average 25 deaths from chickenpox annually, 10 times as many as from whooping cough, mumps, measles, and *Haemophilus influenzae* type b infection combined. The report is at http://www.eurosurv.org/2002/pfp/020214_pfp.htm and the JAMA abstract is at <http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v287n5/abs/joc10385.html>.

USPACOM

Anthrax Vaccine - India

On 6 November, *The Hindu* reported that Indian scientists had produced an anthrax vaccine, which they had tested on laboratory animals. The vaccine provided 67% protection in mice and 100% protection in guinea pigs but required six-nine months of further study in other species. The scientists reportedly used cloning and over-expression of the protective antigen gene through [PCR](#) to produce the new vaccine. The report is at <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/2001/11/06/stories/0206000g.htm>.

Contaminated Honey - China

On 19 February, the [UK's](#) Food Standards Agency (FSA) announced that all jars of Chinese and blended honey (unless shown not to be of Chinese origin) should be withdrawn from sale due to the presence of chloramphenicol in 10 out of 16 samples. In the European Union (EU) it is illegal to use chloramphenicol on animals where they, or their products, are destined for human consumption. An independent panel of scientific experts concluded that the residue poses an "extremely small risk" to consumers and advised that consumers may continue to eat honey already bought regardless of the country of origin. The report is at <http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/47797>. These tests were performed as a follow up to an announcement on 31 January by the EU that imports of all products of animal origin from China were banned due to a lack of controls on the use of veterinary drugs, particularly chloramphenicol.

Flood-related Diseases - Indonesia

On 14 February, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies reported that up to 113,000 people remain displaced from flooding last month in East and West Java, of which 51,000, most of whom are children, are suffering from flood-related diseases such as diarrhea. The situation was reported as especially bad in two

of East Java's 22 districts, southeast of Surabaya. The report is at <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/news/02/021401/>

Pneumonic Plague - India

On 18 February, the [VOA](#) reported an outbreak of pneumonic plague in the Himachal Pradesh state had claimed its fourth victim - a woman, who succumbed to the infection at a hospital in Chandigarh, the capital of the nearby Punjab state. Eight people remain in the quarantine ward, two of them in critical condition. The two state governments took unspecified measures to prevent disease spread. According to *The Hindu*, the Indian National Institute of Communicable Disease and the WHO released a statement that they believed the outbreak had been contained. The report is at <http://www.hinduonnet.com/stories/2002022003110100.htm>.

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

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ACRONYMNS

ACIP - Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices
AFMIC - Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center
AFPS – American Forces Press Service
AIDS – Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
APHIS – Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
BSE – Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy
CBRN – Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear
CDC – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDR – Communicable Disease Report (England)
CIA – Central Intelligence Agency
CME - Continuing Medical Education
CONUS – Continental United States
DARPA – Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, the central research and development organization for the Department of Defense
DHHS – Department of Health and Human Services
DoD - Department of Defense
DOE – Department of Energy
DOS – Department of State
DOT – Department of Transportation
ECG - Electrocardiogram
EISS – European Influenza Surveillance Scheme
EPA – Environmental Protection Agency
ESSENCE – Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-Based Epidemics
FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigation
FCC - Federal Communications Commission
FDA – Food and Drug Administration
FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency
FMD – Foot and Mouth Disease
FSIS – Food Safety Inspection Service
GAO – US General Accounting Office
GEIS – Global Emerging Infections System
HACCP – Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points
HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IAEA – International Atomic Energy Agency
ICBM – Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
IDP – Internally Displaced Persons
ILI – Influenza-Like Illness
ICRC – International Committee of the Red Cross
IRCS – International Red Cross Society
JTF-CS – Joint Task Force – Civil Support http://www.jfcom.mil/About/com_jtfc.htm
K-FOR – Kosovo Forces, a [NATO](#)-led international peace enforcement force that entered Kosovo on 12 June 99 under a [UN](#) mandate. <http://www.kforonline.com/>
MMR - Measles, Mumps, and Rubella

MRSA - Methicillin Resistance *Staphylococcus aureus*
NAS – National Academy of Sciences
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCI – National Cancer Institute
NEJM – New England Journal of Medicine
NICHD – National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
NIH – National Institutes of Health
NIOSH – National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
NPIC – National Pesticide Information Center
NRC – Nuclear Regulatory Commission
OIE – World Organisation [sic] for Animal Health
OSHA - Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PA – Protective Antigen
PCR – Polymerase Chain Reaction
PHLS – Public Health Laboratory Service
PHS – Public Health Service
PPE – Personal Protective Equipment
RSV – Respiratory Syncytial Virus
TB – Tuberculosis
UK – United Kingdom – England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales
UN – United Nations
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAMRIID – United States Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Diseases
USDA – United States Department of Agriculture
USPSTF – United States Preventive Services Task Force
vCJD - variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease
VOA – Voice of America, an international multimedia broadcasting service funded by the US Government
WHO – World Health Organization
WMD – Weapons of Mass Destruction