

USACHPPM

HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

18 April 2003

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

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HOT TOPICS

Aluminum in Drinking Water Tied to Alzheimer's

14 April – Reuters reported new research indicates the disease is more common in regions of northwest Italy where levels of [aluminum](#) in drinking water are highest. And when the investigators studied the effects of one form of the metal on two types of human cells in the lab, they found it hastened cell death. While there have been suggestions that aluminum cookware might pose a risk for [Alzheimer's disease](#), the type of aluminum used in pots and pans consists of multiple molecules and does not appear to affect human cells, according to study author Dr. Prolo. When the researchers tested water in regions of northwest Italy in 1998, they found total aluminum levels ranged from 5 to 1,220 micrograms per liter, while monomeric aluminum levels alone ranged from 5 to 300 micrograms per liter. After comparing the data to death rates from Alzheimer's in those regions, the researchers found that the disease was more common in areas with the highest levels of monomeric aluminum. [View Article](#)

Caffeine and Ephedra Before Workout Tax Heart

15 April – Health Scout News reported people who consume [ephedra](#) and [caffeine](#) before they exercise alter their [cardiovascular system](#), placing greater demands on their heart, says a South Dakota State University study. The combination of ephedra and caffeine increases hypersensitive response before, during and after exercise, and increases [systolic blood pressure](#) before exercise. That higher rate pressure results in more work for the heart. The study included five men and five women who were given either 150 milligrams of caffeine and 20 milligrams of ephedra or a placebo. They were then monitored while at rest, during exercise and after exercise. The people who took the caffeine/ephedra had higher hypertensive response after 60 minutes of rest. That response remained higher at 30 and 60 minutes of exercise. The people who took the caffeine/ephedra also had higher systolic blood pressure while they were resting and had higher mean arterial pressure. [View Article](#)

Cumulative Number of Reported Probable¹ Cases of (SARS) From: 1 Nov 2002² To: 16 Apr 2003

Country	# of case(s)	# of new cases since last WHO update	# of deaths	# recovered ³	Local chain(s) of transmission
Brazil	2	0	0	0	None
Canada	103	3	13	37	Yes
China	1432	14	64	1094	Yes
Hong Kong	1268	36	61	257	Yes
China, Taiwan	27	4	0	10	Yes
France	5	0	0	1	None
Germany	6	0	0	4	None
Indonesia	1	0	0	0	None
Italy	3	0	0	2	None
Japan	1	0	0	0	None
Kuwait	1	0	0	0	None
Malaysia	5	1	1	0	None
Philippines	1	0	0	1	None
Republic of Ireland	1	0	0	1	None
Romania	1	0	0	1	None
Singapore	162	0	13	85	Yes
South Africa	1	0	0	0	None
Spain	1	0	0	0	None
Sweden	1	0	0	0	None
Switzerland	1	0	0	1	None
Thailand	8	0	2	5	None
United Kingdom	6	0	0	3	Yes
United States	193	0	0	not available	Yes
Viet Nam	63	0	5	46	Yes
Total	3293	58	159	1548	

Notes:

Cumulative number of cases includes number of deaths.

As SARS is a diagnosis of exclusion, the status of a reported case may change over time. This means that previously reported cases may be discarded after further investigation and follow-up.

1. Due to differences in the case definitions being used at a national level, probable cases are reported by all countries except the United States of America, which is reporting suspected cases under investigation.

2. The start of the period of surveillance has been changed to 1 November 2002 to capture cases of atypical pneumonia in China that are now recognized as being cases of SARS.

3. Includes cases who are "discharged" or "recovered" as reported by the national public health authorities.

4. National public health authorities report to WHO on the areas in which local chain(s) of transmission is/are occurring. These areas are provided on the list of [affected areas](#)

5. One death attributed to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China occurred in a case medically transferred from Viet Nam.

DNA Test May Detect Prostate Cancer Early

14 April – Health Scout News reported researchers have created a DNA test that appears to detect the spread of [prostate cancer](#) and also provides early warnings about which men are likely to develop the disease. Doctors often miss the spread of prostate cancer to other parts of the body because the migrating cancer cells can be difficult to detect. The new test could help doctors adjust treatment to fight off the spreading cancer before it kills the patient, said lead investigator Donald Malins. Malins and colleagues used a DNA test they developed to examine prostate tissue samples from 49 men aged 55 or older, some of whom suffered from prostate cancer. Forty percent of the samples from healthy men showed signs of damage to the prostate DNA. The damage is similar to

that in men who actually have prostate cancer, suggesting that the healthy men may be in trouble down the line. [View Article](#)

Drinking Concord Grape Juice May Reduce Blood Pressure in Hypertensive Men

14 April – Eurekalert reported men with elevated blood pressure who drank Concord grape juice for twelve weeks experienced a significant drop in both their [systolic and diastolic blood pressures](#), according to results from a preliminary study. The study, presented at the annual meeting of FASEB, the Federation for American Societies of Experimental Biology, looked at 80 healthy males, ages 45 to 70. For 12 weeks, half drank an average of 12 ounces of Concord grape juice per day and half drank the same amount of a placebo beverage designed to look and taste like grape juice. Median baseline systolic blood pressure was 132 mm Hg. At the conclusion of the study, the 19 participants with above-median systolic blood pressure who drank Concord grape juice showed a drop from an average baseline systolic blood pressure of 142.7 mm Hg to 137.0 (p<0.05), and from 87.9 to 82.1 mm Hg (p<0.05) for diastolic blood pressure. The 17 participants with above-median blood pressure who consumed the placebo showed no change from baseline. The systolic and diastolic differences between treatments were significant (p<0.05). [View Article](#)

Estimating the Incidence of Typhoid Fever and Other Febrile Illnesses in Developing Countries

April – Emerging Infectious Disease journal early released an article where researchers measured the incidence of [typhoid fever](#) and other febrile illnesses in Bilbeis District, Egypt, via household survey to determine patterns of health seeking among persons with fever. They then established surveillance for 4 months among a representative sample of health providers who saw febrile patients. Health providers collected epidemiologic information and blood. After adjusting for the provider sampling scheme, test sensitivity, and seasonality, they estimated the incidence of typhoid fever was 13/100,000 persons per year, and the incidence of [brucellosis](#) was 18/100,000 persons per year in the district. The researchers conclude this surveillance tool could have wide applications for surveillance for febrile illness in developing countries. [View Article](#)

Genetic Blueprint for Q Fever Bacterium Unveiled

14 April – the NIH reported the genetic blueprint of yet another important disease-causing microbe, the bacterium *Coxiella burnetii*, has been deciphered and analyzed. *C. burnetii* -- a highly infectious organism that sickened thousands of soldiers in Europe during World War II -- can cause a debilitating flu-like illness in humans called [Q fever](#). Additionally, the microbe is a potential agent of bioterrorism. Although only severe cases of Q fever are fatal, *C. burnetii* is of concern as a potential bioterrorist threat because early diagnosis of the disease is difficult, and the microbe is a hardy organism that can be aerosolized. A report describing the sequencing project will be published online this week in *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* and will appear in the journal's April 29th print edition. [View Article](#)

Low-Dose Radiation Harms Cells Longer

02 April — ABC News reported in a surprising finding, German scientists have found that cells take a longer time to repair after lower X-ray doses than after higher doses. [Radiation](#) damages all cells, which then must repair themselves or die. To date, scientists had thought that cell repair takes the same amount of time no matter how much radiation the cell is exposed to, but a new study

discovered that cells exposed to lower doses of radiation — the amount similar to dental X-rays — actually take from days to weeks longer to repair than cell damage caused by higher levels of radiation, which usually takes only a few hours to one day. "The difference in repair between low and high doses of X-rays did indeed surprise us," says study author Markus Lobrich, a professor of radiation biology at the University of Saarland in Homburg, Germany. The results appear in the March 31-April 4 Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. [View Article](#)

New Study Finds Yogurt May Help Burn Body Fat

14 April – Eurekalert reported while some calorie-conscious people may drop dairy products when they're dieting, a new study suggests this strategy could backfire. Research presented at the Experimental Biology conference reveals that yogurt may help turn up the body's fat-burning ability – making it easier to lose fat while maintaining lean muscle. The new study found individuals who included Yoplait Light as part of their weight loss plan lost significantly more weight compared to others who simply reduced calories. The yogurt eaters lost 22 percent more weight, 61 percent more body fat and 81 percent more trunkal (stomach) fat during the 12-week study. [View Article](#)

Planning Against Biological Terrorism: Lessons from Outbreak Investigations

April – Emerging Infectious Diseases journal early released an article where outbreak investigations conducted around the world from 1988 to 1999 were examined by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Epidemic Intelligence Service](#). Authors report the most critical component for bioterrorism outbreak detection and reporting is the frontline healthcare profession and the local health departments. Bioterrorism preparedness should emphasize education and support of this frontline as well as methods to shorten the time between outbreak and reporting. [View Article](#)

Run, Don't Walk to Stave off Heart Death

15 April – Reuters Health reported a brisk half-hour walk five days a week might make you healthier, but may not be enough to avoid a premature death from [heart disease](#). Current UK and U.S. heart guidelines recommend 30 minutes of moderately intense physical activity five days a week, but a study of nearly 2,000 middle-aged men suggests that only more-vigorous exercise protects against an untimely end from cardiovascular disease. Dr. John Yarnell from Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland, and colleagues studied for 11 years 1,975 Welsh men aged 45 to 59, none of whom had signs of heart disease at the beginning of the study. The few men who regularly engaged in the highest levels of heavy exercise, expending more than 54 calories a day in this way, were 47 percent less likely to die early and 62 percent less likely to die of heart disease. Those 54 calories equate to just nine minutes of jogging or doubles tennis, or seven minutes of climbing stairs. But men who engaged in the highest levels of light to moderate exercise, expending an average 343 calories a day -- which is equivalent to more than 90 minutes of walking or an hour of ballroom dancing -- were not protected from the risk of an early death. It was the intensity of exercise, rather than the number of calories burned, that seemed to be the crucial factor. [View Article](#)

SARS Update

10 April – Reuters reported officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are stepping up efforts to avert any wide community spread of [SARS](#) in the U.S. These efforts include specific information for schools and workplaces and working with the Food and Drug Administration and the blood banking industry to develop some "sensible guidance" about deferring donation from

people who have traveled to outbreak areas and could be in the incubation period. These new guidelines can be found on the CDC Website. [View Article](#) 10 April – ABC News reported Hong Kong said it will quarantine for up to 10 days anyone who resides with a confirmed SARS patient. [View Article](#) 14 April – Reuters reported a German biotech company began distributing what it says is the first commercial test for SARS. The test can detect the virus from throat swabs, sputum or feces and produces results in two hours. Classical tests for antibodies typically take 10 to 20 days after infection. [View Article](#) 14 April - The CDC has sequenced the genome for the coronavirus believed to be responsible for SARS. The availability of the sequence data will have an immediate impact on efforts to develop new and rapid diagnostic tests, antiviral agents and vaccines. This sequence information will also facilitate studies to explore the pathogenesis of this new coronavirus. [View Article](#) [View the Nucleotide Sequence of SARS](#). 14 April – CNN reported health officials in Hong Kong say they are increasingly concerned at the number of relatively young and healthy people falling victim to SARS. Most of the other deaths in Hong Kong have been of elderly patients or those suffering from chronic pre-existing conditions. [View Article](#) 15 April – ABC news reported Japan is one of the few East Asian countries that has so far been free of SARS, perhaps because of the custom of washing hands frequently. [View Article](#) 17 April – Reuters reported the National Institute of Virology has detected the first SARS case in India. [View Article](#)

Scientists Complete Human Genome Sequence

13 April – Reuters reported scientists have completed the finished sequence of the human genome, which holds the keys to transforming medicine and understanding disease. Less than three years after finishing the working draft of the three billion letters that make up human DNA and two years earlier than expected, an international consortium of scientists said the set of instructions on how humans develop and function is done. The Human Genome Project has already aided scientists in discovering a mutation that causes a deadly type of skin cancer and accelerated the search for genes involved in diabetes, leukemia and childhood eczema. [View Article](#)

“Sneaky” Bacteria Cause Meningitis

12 April – BBC News reported scientists know which bacteria cause [meningitis](#), but until now, they have not known how that happens. They needed to find out how they get through the blood-brain barrier. Once bacteria have gotten through that, they can easily get into the meninges, membranes which surrounds the brain and the spinal cord. An international team of researchers followed the progress of the bacterium E.coli in laboratory tests. Structures on the bacterium called ligands latch on to receptors on cells in the barrier, docking like a spaceship. This allows them to hitch a lift through the barrier and reach the meninges. [View Article](#)

Teflon Chemical May Pose Health Risk

14 April – MSNBC reported C8, an unregulated chemical used in furniture, carpet and Teflon could be a serious health risk to the public, prompting the Environmental Protection Agency to launch an in-depth assessment to determine its safety. Most of the U.S. population is exposed to low levels of the chemical C8, or perfluorooctanoic acid, according to the EPA. The chemical is used in hundreds of consumer and industrial products such as jackets, to keep them dry, and as an ingredient in Teflon to prevent food from sticking to pots and pans. EPA scientists plan to determine all potential sources of C8, how the public is exposed to it and if high levels pose a threat to human health as some animal studies have suggested. [View Article](#)

USEUCOM

Controversy with AIDS Malaria Tests

14 April – Reuters reported Dr. Henry Heimlich, inventor of the famous anti-choking maneuver, is working with doctors in several African countries to begin human tests of a controversial [AIDS](#) therapy in which patients are deliberately infected with [malaria](#). The method has drawn the ire of the medical establishment, but Dr. Heimlich, the 83-year-old head of the Cincinnati-based Heimlich Institute, believes that using a curable form of the mosquito-borne disease to induce high fevers can stimulate the immune system to fight off HIV. His research on the topic has led to partnerships with African doctors who are launching trials of the technique. In 1993, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a memorandum saying malarial therapy could not be justified because it may well do more harm than good. The technique was used between 1918 and 1975 to combat syphilis that had spread to the brain, but that disease is now stopped at a much earlier stage by antibiotics. Heimlich, citing 1990s studies showing improved survival for African children who were HIV positive and had malaria, said in a recent interview that inducing high malarial fevers stimulates the immune system, but he is not sure why. He argues that infecting someone with one disease to cure another is not that unusual. A Heimlich pilot study of the malarial therapy was carried out in China between 1993 and 1996 on eight HIV-positive patients, but they were only followed for two years. "After treatment, levels of ... T-cells increased rapidly," Heimlich said. [View Article](#)

England Faces Worsening Sexual Health Crisis

15 April – Health News reported England is on the brink of a public health crisis as rates of [sexually transmitted diseases](#) continue to worsen, warns the government's main advisor on sexual health strategy. Professor Michael Adler says the government has failed to deliver on all the sexual health targets set out in its publication, The Health of the Nation, in 1992. Writing in the medical journal Sexually Transmitted Infections, he points out that cases of [HIV and AIDS](#) are set to rise almost 10 per cent a year and to double between 1997 and 2005. [Syphilis](#) infections have risen 374 per cent since 1997, with an increase of 112 per cent between 2000 and 2001 alone. [Chlamydia](#) and [gonococcal](#) infections have also risen by more than 70 per cent since 1997. [View Article](#)

Germans Warned of Measles Risk in Switzerland

09 April – Reuters reported German parents were warned this week to be certain they and their children are up to date with [measles](#) vaccinations before going to Switzerland, where an epidemic has so far made 180 people ill. The German Association of Child and Youth Doctors, based in Cologne, issued the warning about a week before the start of the Easter holidays, when many German families head for the Alps to catch the end of the skiing season. The statement referred to the two Swiss states of Wallis and Schwyz as being the most badly hit by the measles outbreak. There are 80 cases in Wallis alone, and state doctor Georges Dupuis is said to be assuming that many other cases have not yet been diagnosed. The vast majority -- around 80 percent -- of those with the disease are children and young people, but adults should also be on alert, says the German association. [View Article](#)

Sierra Leone: Lassa Fever Hits Refugee Camps

09 April – ProMed reported in central Sierra Leone 8 people have died and 80 are suffering from highly infectious [Lassa fever](#) and the disease has spread to camps for Liberian refugees in the region. The disease that leads to high fever, aches, skin trouble and potential death through heart or kidney failure, is spread by bush rats that urinate on food. People who eat the contaminated food become infected within 24 hours. Lassa fever is endemic in both the Kenema and Kailahun districts of Sierra Leone, but has previously been kept in check with medical assistance from the Center for Disease Control. However, such aid was scaled down during the civil war that wracked the West African country from 1991 to 2001. Officials from the health ministry, the UN World Health Organization and a number of non-governmental organizations have set up a task force to combat the outbreak. [View Report](#) [View Comment](#)

Theory Links Hepatitis C to Polio Syringes in Italy

10 April – Reuters reported poorly cleaned glass syringes used to administer the [polio vaccine](#) in the 1950s and 60s could have spread the [hepatitis C](#) virus from person to person in southern Italy, researchers said. The accidental spread of the virus might explain why southern Italy has a particularly high rate of chronic liver disease. In the mid 1950s and 1960s, an injected vaccine known as the Salk vaccine was used to protect against the crippling disease polio. In southern Italy, reusable glass syringes were used to deliver the vaccine until the new oral version was introduced in 1965. According to the study which was performed on people without known risk factors for Hepatitis C, seven percent of men and five percent of women aged 40 to 49 years had antibodies to hepatitis C, suggesting infection with the virus. People born between the 1940s and early 1960s were nearly three times as likely as younger subjects to have the virus. The prevalence of hepatitis C is about 1.8 percent in the U.S. and ranges from 0.5 percent to nine percent in Western Europe. These data are linked to the years when the Salk polio vaccination was administered. About 20 percent of people infected with the virus will develop severe and potentially fatal liver damage, or cirrhosis, which in turn increases a person's risk of liver cancer. [View Article](#)

USCENTCOM

Afghanistan: Relief Efforts for Quake-Hit Villages Continue

14 April – IRIN News reported efforts to provide relief to those affected by a moderate earthquake in the northeastern province of Takhar last week continued on Monday, with aid agencies struggling to access two remote villages. "Due to problems of access and communications, we don't have exact details of how many homes were destroyed," David Singh, a spokesman for the United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA) said. The UN said Thursday night's quake, which measured 4.6 on the Richter scale, had ripped through the remote villages of Yaka Baghi and Sag Baghi, located in Afghanistan's northeastern Hindu Kush region. There were no immediate reports of deaths or injuries, but affected families were said to be in urgent need of food and non-food assistance. [View Article](#)

Turkey: Cross-border Operations Improving

11 April – IRIN News reported facilitation along Turkey's 331-km border with Iraq is improving, further enhancing the importance of what could prove a major humanitarian corridor to northern Iraq, aid agencies told IRIN. The Habur crossing is seen as a key entry point for much-needed relief

items. Since its first convoy passed the border on 29 March, the food agency has successfully delivered 2,500 mt of wheat flour, enough to feed 175,000 people for one month. [View Article](#)

UNICEF Vaccinates Afghans Against Polio

15 April – ABC news reported The U.N. children's agency, hoping to end the [polio](#) scourge in Afghanistan, started a three-day immunization campaign Tuesday aimed at reaching every child in the country less than 5 years old. An estimated 30,000 vaccinators and volunteers from the Ministry of Health, the U.N. World Health Organization and UNICEF are expected to administer two drops of oral polio vaccine to more than 6 million children. The immunization campaign likely will be repeated four more times by the end of the year to ensure all children are immunized, he said. Afghanistan is one of the last 10 countries where polio remains endemic, according to UNICEF. [View Article](#)

USNORTHCOM

Battling Battle Fatigue

12 April – CBS News reported not all military mishaps can be blamed on combat. Fatigue, scientists say, also causes accidents. The military is hoping a new study will help determine which soldiers are alert enough to fight and which of them would need to catch up on their sleep. In an effort to combat this problem, the Department of Defense is researching ways to predict who are the most exhausted soldiers and how they'll perform in action. The subtle changes aren't noticeable to the naked eye, so researchers are developing a series of tests to chart the changes in tired individuals. The tests will also measure their ability to make decisions and react, important skills on the battlefield. It will be at least a year before the new testing is widely used. Right now the military is testing a drug called [Modafinil](#), which is used to treat narcolepsy. It is also being tested by the French and British military. Preliminary results have found sleep-deprived helicopter pilots who took Modafinil performed better than those who had not taken the drug. [View Article](#)

Canada: Hantavirus Infection Responsible for Death of Farmer in Saskatchewan

13 April – ProMed reported a Storthoaks-area farmer has died from [Hantavirus](#) infection, the Sun Country Regional Health Authority has confirmed. It is believed the 39-year-old farmer, who died on 26 Mar 2003 in Regina, came in contact with the disease while chopping bales on his farm. Dr. David Butler-Jones, medical health officer with the health authority, has confirmed hantavirus as the cause of death and said health officials will hold an education meeting in Redvers on Monday with farmers to discuss the disease. [View Report](#)

Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents (2003 Edition)

April – The Department of Veteran's Affairs has released the 2003 edition of the federal benefits for veterans and dependents. This booklet lists the variety of federal benefits available to veterans and their dependents. [Download Booklet](#)

Postal Service Tests Anthrax Detector

09 April – MSNBC News reported the Postal Service, still feeling the effects of the [anthrax](#)-by-mail attacks 18 months ago, said it will test a new anthrax detection system in 14 mail sorting sites around the country. The system samples the air around mail as it passes through postal sorting machines and can promptly issue an alert if it detects a biological hazard such as anthrax. The new system has been undergoing tests in Baltimore and will now be installed in the mail sorting sites June 30. The system samples the air around mail as it passes through postal sorting machines and can promptly issue an alert if it detects a biological hazard such as anthrax. [View Article](#)

Red Cross Agrees to Fines for Safety Violations

11 April – Reuters reported the American Red Cross could face substantial fines for future lapses in blood safety practices under a new agreement with federal regulators announced. The American Red Cross (ARC) and U.S. Food and Drug Administration officials agreed to the new system of fines, even after the issue kept the two groups at odds in federal court for the last year and a half. The agreement calls for the Red Cross to pay up to \$10,000 for violations of established blood safety practices and up to \$50,000 for the release of each unit of blood that could cause serious adverse health problems or death. The announcement follows a report issued last December in which FDA inspectors accused the American Red Cross of widespread managerial lapses and safety violations, including collection of blood from ineligible donors and falsification of inventory records. [View Article](#)

SARS Report of Suspected Cases Under Investigation in the United States

These data were reported to the World Health Organization on April 14, 2003.

Alabama	1	Indiana	1	Missouri	2	Pennsylvania	5
California	41	Kansas	1	New Hampshire	1	Rhode Island	1
Colorado	6	Kentucky	1	New Jersey	3	Texas	6
Connecticut	4	Maine	2	New Mexico	1	Utah	5
Florida	11	Massachusetts	8	New York	22	Vermont	2
Georgia	3	Michigan	2	North Carolina	6	Virginia	5
Hawaii	5	Minnesota	5	Ohio	10	Washington	19
Illinois	11	Mississippi	1	Oregon	1	Wisconsin	1
						Total	193

*[Case definition](#)

For more information visit the CDC [SARS web site](#).

Tests Point to (Possible) Domestic Source Behind Anthrax Letter Attacks

13 April – ProMed reported army scientists have reproduced the [anthrax](#) powder used in the 2001 mail attacks and concluded that it was made using simple methods, inexpensive equipment, and limited expertise. The findings reinforce the theory that has guided the FBI's 18-month-long investigation: that renegade scientists and not a military program such as Iraq's probably produced the mailed anthrax. The new research, carried out at the Army's biodefense center at Dugway Proving Ground in Utah, raises the disquieting possibility that al-Qaida and other terrorist groups could create lethal bioweapons without scientific or financial help from a state. The Bush administration had cited the possibility that Iraq might supply weapons to al-Qaida as a key reason for overthrowing Saddam Hussein. But Richard O. Spertzel, a biowarfare expert and former United Nations weapons inspector in Iraq, said he has heard that the Dugway research failed to match exactly the purity and small particle size of the mailed anthrax. Though he has no involvement in

the case, he believes the FBI would be wrong to rule out Iraq or other states as the source of the deadly powder. [View Report](#)

Texas: Exotic Newcastle Disease Confirmed

10 April – ProMed reported birds and poultry movement from 5 counties in Texas and New Mexico is being prohibited after laboratory tests completed late Wednesday, 9 Apr 2003, confirmed [Exotic Newcastle Disease](#) (END) had infected a backyard flock of chickens last week near El Paso. As a preemptive measure, state and federal animal health regulatory officials earlier this week destroyed the flock, but are concerned that END, a highly contagious foreign-origin virus, may have spread to other poultry and birds in the area. [View Report](#)

Texas: Local Shigella Outbreak Has Local Health Officials Worried

16 April - A highly contagious disease, [shigellosis](#), is sweeping through several area communities. Shigellosis is a communicable disease that causes severe diarrhea. It is caused by the bacteria *Shigella* and is spread from one infected person to the next by fecal-oral transmission. On the South Plains of Texas, the disease is having a big impact on 3 communities: Lubbock, Levelland, and Brownfield. Right now, the Lubbock City Health Department is investigating 48 cases of shigellosis and that's more than double the number of cases they tracked last month. Most cases of shigellosis occur among toddlers who are not fully toilet-trained. The practice of frequent hand washing is being reinforced throughout the communities. Without medical treatment, it takes about 24 to 48 hours for shigella to exit your system. But officials say, even if you no longer have symptoms, you are still contagious for sometime afterward. [View Report](#)

USDA: More is Being Done to Track E. coli

08 April – CNN reported Merle Pierson, USDA deputy undersecretary for food safety, told about 250 people at a meat safety conference that federal inspectors have started regularly taking meat samples from all meatpacking plants. In the past, federal inspectors usually took raw ground beef samples only from plants that did not do their own [E. coli](#) testing. Pierson said officials decided to change the policy because some plants that conducted the testing still had problems with the bacteria. [View Article](#)

U.S. Moves to Cut Diesel Pollution

15 April – MSNBC News reported the Bush administration proposed reductions of more than 90 percent in non-highway diesel engine pollution blamed for thousands of premature deaths, heart attacks and respiratory ailments. The proposal would force manufacturers of diesel-powered bulldozers, farm combines, marine engines and other equipment not used on roadways to install modern emission controls between 2008 and 2014. It also would require cleaner burning diesel fuel that contains 99 percent less sulfur. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that by 2030, the White House-approved proposal will have prevented 9,600 premature deaths, 16,000 [heart attacks](#) and 260,000 [respiratory problems](#) in children. The proposed rule would take effect next year after EPA evaluates public comments. [View Article](#)

U.S. Smallpox Vaccine Program Lags

13 April – The Washington Post reported four months after President Bush summoned millions of doctors, nurses, firefighters and police officers to form a nationwide network of [smallpox](#) response

teams, officials running the immunization program concede it has fallen far short of expectations. The campaign, portrayed as the centerpiece of the administration's efforts to protect against bioterrorism, has proven to be more expensive, less popular and medically riskier than initially thought, said experts in and out of government. And as a result of overly optimistic projections, tens of thousands of doses of the precious vaccine are in danger of spoiling if states cannot quickly recruit more volunteers. The disappointing response, coupled with mounting doubts Iraq will launch a smallpox attack against the United States, has prompted a growing chorus of public health leaders to call for a halt. [View Article](#)

Work Zones Dangerous To Drivers

08 April – CBS News reported highway construction-zone crashes are killing more people, and it's most likely drivers and passengers rather than road workers who die, according to a coalition that's urging motorists to slow down in work zones. Eighty percent of the 1,079 people killed in construction-zone crashes in 2001 were drivers or passengers, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials said. Work-zone crashes killed 150 road workers and injured 40,000 workers, drivers and passengers. [View Article](#)

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Emerging Rickettsioses of the Thai-Myanmar Border

April – Emerging Infectious Diseases journal early released a study where researchers tested the blood of 46 patients with fever on the Thai-Myanmar border. Four patients had [murine typhus](#), three patients had [scrub typhus](#), and eight patients had [spotted fever group rickettsioses](#), including the first case of *Rickettsia felis* infection reported in Asia. In this study, researchers report rickettsioses in Sangkhlaburi. Data suggests that *R. felis* infection is endemic in Sangkhlaburi and perhaps globally. [View Article](#)

Ibaraki Detects Prewar Poison Gas Compounds

16 April – Japan Today reported authorities in Ibaraki Prefecture have detected chemical compounds from well water in Kamisu that appear to have been derived from disintegrated organic arsenicals produced by the prewar Japanese Navy for use as poison gas. Prefectural officials investigated contamination in the vicinity after a woman and her child developed symptoms of numbing limbs and last month found [arsenic](#) 450 times the government-accepted standard from water in the well used by the family. Prefecture officials believe that the contamination was caused by poison gas chemicals abandoned by the Imperial Navy after World War II. The Imperial Navy had a chemical laboratory in the township. An expert committee set up by the prefecture concluded Tuesday it is highly likely that the chemical compound was the kind used by the Japanese military to produce sneeze gas. Sneeze gas, which would cause sneezing and vomiting, was manufactured by the military to lower the fighting ability of enemy soldiers. [View Article](#)

Japan Gov't Drafts Bill to Respond to Biological, Chemical, Nuclear Attack

10 April – Japan Today reported the government has drafted a bill stipulating how it should respond to a military attack on the country that involves the use of [nuclear, biological or chemical weapons](#). The outline states the government is responsible for combating contamination if the country comes under attack with biological or chemical weapons. This is the first time this has been mentioned in

Japan's legal structure. Officials said the government will present the bill as early as next week to a special committee in the House of Representatives that has been scrutinizing legislation on how Japan should respond to a military attack. The outline stipulates that the government will have a major role in protecting and rescuing civilians in the event of a military attack. [View Article](#)

Pakistan: Youth Dies of Mysterious Disease

14 April – ProMed reported a 26-year-old young man who had recently come from South Africa died of a mysterious disease here at the ICU of a local hospital on Sunday. This death was not due to SARS. The patient did not have any symptoms of pneumonia and no significant findings on chest x-ray. He presented with fever, sore throat, cough, vesicular lesions in the oral cavity, and hepatomegaly. After admission he developed gastrointestinal bleeding and haematuria. The patient was isolated and precautionary measures were taken, not because of SARS, but because of an initial suspicion of [viral hemorrhagic fever](#). However, subsequent serum IgG and RT-PCR for Congo Crimean hemorrhagic fever are negative as was [Dengue](#) serology. [View Report 1](#) [View Report 2](#)

Vietnam: Surge in Dengue Fever Cases in Southern Mekong Delta

14 April - ProMed reported Southern Vietnam recorded twice the number of [dengue fever](#) cases in the first 2 months of the year, as during the same period in 2002. An official from the Pasteur Institute in Ho Chi Minh City says, of the 2611 reported cases, 7 people died from the fever. The institute is setting up a hotline between hospitals in the region to improve co-operation in diagnosing and treating cases. The worst affected provinces were in the southern Mekong Delta region, where moist and humid conditions provide ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Health experts say major outbreaks of the disease, which first appeared in Vietnam in 1969, tend to occur every 4 or 5 years. [View Report](#)

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Brazil: Fatal Mystery Virus

12 April – ProMed reported a mysterious virus has claimed a third victim in Santarem, western Para state, Brazil. An 8-year-old schoolboy died yesterday in the emergency ward of the municipal hospital from "respiratory insufficiency" and "cardiorespiratory complications." He had been seen at the emergency room several times during the past week with vomiting, diarrhea, and high fever. Dr. Aparecida Helena Ferreira gave the cause of death as "unknown." [View Report](#)

First Evidence of *Aedes albopictus* (Skuse) in Southern Chiapas, Mexico

May 2003 - The journal of Emerging Infectious Diseases early released a letter to the Editor where [Ae. albopictus](#) was confirmed in the city limits of Tapachula, southern Chiapas, Mexico. This mosquito carries many viruses including [dengue fever](#), [West Nile virus](#) and [yellow fever](#). Although *Ae. albopictus* was expected to spread to southernmost Mexico, this mosquito has never been reported there until now. [View Article](#)

For First Time in Decades, Dengue Mosquito in Chile

15 April – Reuters reports that after a century, the mosquito responsible for the spread of [dengue fever](#) and [yellow fever](#) has been detected again in the continental area of Chile, a country traditionally proud of being free of the two illnesses. Last week the Chilean national surveillance program detected one female specimen of the feared mosquito *Aedes aegypti* in the Huasco province, located in the northern part of the country. The *Aedes aegypti* is a domestic, day-biting mosquito that prefers to feed on humans. If the mosquito carries one of the four types of dengue virus, its bite can produce a spectrum of illnesses, including severe and fatal hemorrhagic disease. Chile was the only country in South and Central America free of the presence of the *Aedes aegypti*. In North America, the mosquito is found in south Texas and the southeastern U.S. and in parts of Mexico, according to a U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention survey conducted in 1997. The Chilean authorities said that despite the presence of the mosquito in the Huasco Province there are still no reports of patients with dengue. To prevent the viral infection, they launched a sanitary campaign, which includes the fumigation of houses and buildings. [View Article](#)

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

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