

USACHPPM
HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

14 May 2004

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

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HOT TOPICS

AIDS Drive 'Needs Huge Boost'

11 May – Google News reported that according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), less than 7% of the six million [AIDS](#) victims worldwide who urgently need treatment actually receive medical care. The WHO called for a massive boost in the supply of life-saving drugs. The situation is even more acute in the poorest countries which are also those hardest hit by HIV/AIDS, said the WHO in its 2004 World Health Report. Only 100 000 Africans - just 2% of those in an advanced stage of the disease - are treated with the right medicine, if any. Half the treatment needs center on six African countries and on India, while South Africa alone accounts for about one-sixth of the AIDS victims who are in urgent need of medical care. An estimated 34 to 46 million people across the globe are living with HIV/AIDS and about three million died of the disease in 2003. The WHO wants the resources to be channeled primarily into treatment, to save lives and prop up economies where high infection rates are destroying the workforce and development prospects, despite prevention efforts. [View Source](#) [View Full Report](#)

Herbal Drug Widely Embraced in Treating Resistant Malaria

10 May – The New York Times reported after years of hesitation, world health agencies are racing to acquire 100 million doses of a Chinese herbal drug that has proved strikingly effective against [malaria](#), one of the leading killers of the poor. The drug, artemisinin, is a compound based on qinghaosu, or sweet wormwood. First isolated in 1965 by Chinese military researchers, it cut the death rate by 97 percent in a malaria epidemic in Vietnam in the early 1990's. It is rapidly replacing quinine derivatives and later drugs against which the disease has evolved into resistant strains. To protect artemisinin from the same fate, it will be given as part of multidrug cocktails. Until recently, big donors like the United States and Britain had opposed its use on a wide scale, saying it was too expensive, had not been tested enough on children and was not needed in areas where other malaria drugs still worked. But now almost all donors, UNICEF and the World Bank have embraced the drug. The new Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has given 11 countries grants to buy artemisinin and has instructed 34 others to drop requests for two older drugs — chloroquine and sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine — and switch to the new one. [View Article](#) (registration required)

High Blood Testosterone Levels Associated with Increased Prostate Cancer Risk

09 May – Eurekalert reported men over 50 with high blood levels of testosterone have an increased risk of [prostate cancer](#), according to a study by researchers at Johns Hopkins and the National Institute on Aging. The finding throws some doubt on the safety of testosterone replacement therapy, the investigators say. One form of testosterone, called free testosterone, which is biologically active and can actually be used by the prostate, was found to be associated with increased prostate cancer risk, according to J. Kellogg Parsons, M.D., instructor of urology at the Brady Urological Institute at Johns Hopkins and lead researcher of the study. Total testosterone levels and dehydroepiandrosterone sulfate (DHEAS), another androgenic hormone, were unrelated to prostate cancer risk, while the protein that binds testosterone in blood, called sex hormone-binding globulin (SHBG), was associated with a slightly decreased risk for prostate cancer. [View Article](#)

Magnesium May Reduce Risk of Diabetes

07 May – MSNBC News reported adequate amounts of magnesium could reduce the risk of [diabetes](#) by 10 to 34 percent. In a study of over 39,000 women, those who were getting the most magnesium had an 11 percent lower risk of developing diabetes six years later than those who got the least. Among overweight women the magnesium impact was even stronger: Risk fell more than 20 percent. In two other studies of more than 85,000 women and 42,000 men, individuals who consumed the most magnesium lowered their risk of developing diabetes more than 30 percent during the next 12 to 18 years compared to those who consumed the least amount. After adjusting for other influences on diabetes, like weight, exercise and family history, in all three studies, this beneficial effect of magnesium was evident. The conclusions of these three studies are generally supported by earlier large population studies. Laboratory studies suggest that magnesium influences the action of insulin in the body. A lack of magnesium may worsen insulin resistance, triggering the onset of diabetes. [View Article](#)

Majority of Sexual Assaults Remain Unreported in Armed Services

11 May – NPR reported that more than 100 women have returned from war duty in the Middle East and Afghanistan and reported being [sexually assaulted](#) by male soldiers. Late last month, a task force completed a report on the military's response to the problem; the results have not been released yet. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker told a Senate committee in February that the Army was addressing the issue "aggressively," adding: "It's a chain of command issue, it's a leadership issue, it's a discipline issue." Despite the Pentagon's assertion that sexual violence has been cut in half in recent years, some female soldiers and rape counselors say the problem remains acute. In a Veterans Affairs survey published last year, three-fourths of the female respondents who said they were raped said they did not report the incident to a ranking officer. [View Article](#)

Marines Order 50,000 Pairs of Combat Arms Earplugs

05 May - The USACHPPM Hearing Conservation Program reported that a Marine captain called from Fallujah to verify ordering information for the Combat Arms Earplug. His Marines had been firing from relatively fixed positions for hours on end, so much in fact, that they were melting M60 barrels. The impulse noise exposure was so great that their ability to communicate verbally had degraded significantly. The Marines ordered 50,000 Combat Arms Earplugs that day and depleted the manufacturer's stocks. [View Information on the Combat Arms Earplug](#)

New Therapy Appears to Reverse Obesity in Mice

11 May – Drkoop.com reported that University of Texas researchers have devised a therapy to treat [obesity](#) by destroying blood vessels that support fat cell accumulation, according to research published in the June issue of Nature Medicine. One month of the so-called "molecular liposuction" therapy restored the normal weight of mice that had doubled their size by eating a high-fat diet, the researchers at the school's M.D. Anderson Cancer Center said in a statement. None of the mice used in the experiment was genetically altered or prone to obesity prior to treatment, the statement added. The authors said they conducted additional experiments to make sure there were no toxic side effects or other harmful complications. But they cautioned that much more study was needed. [View Source](#)

Perimenopause, Depression Linked

09 May – The LA Times reported a woman's odds of developing [depression](#) for the first time increase greatly during perimenopause, a time of irregular periods and hormonal shifts before menopause. The first research to follow a large group of women from before they enter perimenopause to menopause showed that women who suffer from hot flashes are at particularly high risk for depression. Psychiatrist Lee Cohen, director of the Center for Women's Mental Health at Massachusetts General Hospital, reported his study at the American Psychiatric Association meeting. The 591 women, most in their 40s, were premenopausal when the study began. As Cohen's team followed them for up to five years, 365 of the women passed into perimenopause. These women were three times more likely than premenopausal women to develop the symptoms of major depression, Cohen says. About a quarter of them became depressed. If women had bothersome hot flashes, they were six times more likely to be depressed. [View Article](#)

Platelets Now Suspects in Heart Disease, Diabetes

12 May – Innovations Report said until recently, the story on platelets was simple: these tiny blood cells had limited sophistication because they had no nucleus and their claim to fame was to be a first-responder to a wound site, to promote healthy clotting and prevent infection. Later scientists theorized platelets might be connected to harmful chronic inflammation, but the links were unclear. In a paper published in the journal Blood, a team of University of Rochester researchers opened a new frontier for platelets. They believe the platelet is the pivotal link between inflammation, [heart disease and stroke](#) -

and may even be a key cell in the body that promotes diabetic complications, the origin of which remains unknown. [View Article](#)

Researchers Open New Line of Attack on Tuberculosis

09 May – EurekAlert reported researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison have discovered a new chink in the armor of the bacterial family that causes diseases such as [tuberculosis](#) and [leprosy](#). The researchers' findings could lead to the development of a new family of antibiotics to treat those afflictions, which claim up to 3 million lives around the world every year. This prospect is especially welcome given the rapid spread of tuberculosis strains that are resistant to existing drugs. Microbes that cause tuberculosis and leprosy, and related bacteria, are particularly tough adversaries because of their unique, multilayered cell walls, which render them virtually invulnerable to easy treatment. In the research, however, UW chemist Laura L. Kiessling and her team have detailed the workings of a key enzyme the bacteria use to maintain the integrity of their cell walls. Enzymes are proteins that initiate chemical reactions within bacteria, plant and animal cells. [View Article](#)

SARS Virus May Be Excreted in Sweat, Urine, Feces

07 May – Reuters reported the [SARS](#) coronavirus, and the receptor protein it latches onto in the host, are found in multiple organs throughout the body, according to two studies. These findings imply that the SARS virus may be excreted in sweat, as well as urine and feces, the authors suggest. Dr. Yanqing Ding and colleagues write in the Journal of Pathology, that if the findings are verified, "new infection-control measures should be recommended," such as the requirement to wear gloves, disposable gowns and eye protection. Dr. Ding, at First Military Medical University in Guangzhou, China, and associates examined tissues from four patients who died of SARS. The SARS coronavirus (SARS-CoV) "was found in lung, trachea/bronchus, stomach, small intestine, distal convoluted renal tubule, sweat gland, parathyroid, pituitary, pancreas, adrenal gland, liver and cerebrum," they write. It is therefore possible that SARS-CoV may be released into the environment via feces and urine, the authors maintain, or transmitted in sweat by direct touch. Furthermore, they say, virus in contaminated food and water could infect the body through the skin and GI tract and not just the lungs. [View Article](#)

Small, Frequent Doses of Caffeine Best Strategy for Staying Awake

11 May – EurekAlert reported that people who take small amounts of caffeine regularly during the day might be able to avoid falling asleep and perform well on cognitive tests without affecting their nighttime sleep habits. The researchers propose frequent low doses of caffeine, to help shift workers, medical residents, truck drivers, and others who need to stay awake get a bigger boost from their tea or coffee. Subjects received either one caffeine pill, containing 0.3 mg per kilogram of body weight, roughly the equivalent of two ounces of coffee, or a placebo. They took the pills upon waking and then once every hour. Subjects who took the low-dose caffeine performed better on cognitive tests. They also exhibited fewer accidental sleep onsets, or microsleeps. Despite their enhanced wakefulness, the caffeine-taking subjects reported feeling sleepier than their

placebo counterparts, suggesting that the wake-promoting effects of caffeine do not replace the restorative effects gained through sleep. [View Article](#)

Summer Sun Can Put Older Eyes at Risk

11 May – The New York Times reported that people who spend long hours in the summer sun have an increased risk later in life of developing an eye disease that can cause blindness. The disease, age-related maculopathy, is the leading cause of vision loss in older people in the United States. A study by the University of Wisconsin Medical School found that people who said they had been exposed to the sun for more than five hours a day in their teens, 30's and at the beginning of the study were more than twice as likely to develop early signs of the eye disease within 10 years than were participants who spent less than two hours a day in the sun. Among those who were exposed to the most sunlight, wearing hats and sunglasses at least half the time cut the risk in half. Those who had 10 or more bad sunburns during their youth — a marker of intense exposure and sensitivity — were more than twice as likely as those not burned to develop signs of eye damage within 10 years. [View Article](#) (registration required)

Urine Test 'Spots Kidney Cancer'

09 May –Innovations Report reported a simple urine test could one day be used to diagnose kidney cancer. Scientists from Fox Chase Cancer Center in the United States say DNA from the disease can be found in urine. They carried out tests on 50 people with the disease. They found cancer DNA in the urine of 44. The DNA disappeared when they patients were cured. Speaking at the American Urological Association's annual meeting in San Francisco, they said the test may be a simple way to diagnose the disease. [View Report](#)

Focus on Epidemiology

Identify and Isolate Works Best in Controlling Infectious Diseases

06 May – EurekAlert reported that simple public health measures, such as the isolation of individuals with disease symptoms and the tracing and quarantining of anyone who has been in contact with them, are the most effective ways of stopping many infectious diseases, according to mathematical modeling by a team of Imperial College London researchers. The research examines how effective simple public health measures are when confronted with a variety of infectious diseases. The team identified how infectious certain diseases are, how long before symptoms show, and how they would affect an individual's behavior. They compared two moderately transmissible viruses, SARS and HIV, and two highly transmissible viruses, smallpox and pandemic influenza. They calculated that both SARS and smallpox could be effectively contained through simple public health measures. However, while control of SARS can be achieved solely by isolating diagnosed cases, smallpox control additionally requires contacts of cases to be traced and isolated. In contrast, pandemic influenza and HIV could not be stopped by these measures as many infections occur before symptoms are shown. They also found that the success of control measures was determined as much by the amount of disease

transmission before symptoms were displayed, as how easily the disease is transmitted.
[View Article](#)

DoD-GEIS: Outbreak Surveillance Systems

12 May - CDC has published a "Framework for Evaluating Public Health Surveillance Systems for Early Detection of Outbreaks" ([See Framework](#)). The threat of outbreaks, whether terrorism-related or naturally occurring (e.g., Influenza, SARS, West Nile, Norovirus) has raised awareness of public health surveillance systems for early detection of outbreaks. Surveillance serves eight essential public health functions, one of which is outbreak detection. Civilian local health departments are seeking ways to enhance existing surveillance and developing new systems to better detect outbreaks using public health surveillance, prompting CDC to provide guidance in the form of this framework. One such system for DoD is ESSENCE (Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community Based Epidemics), one of the earliest and best-known syndromic surveillance systems. Previously a report by the Institute of Medicine concluded that innovative surveillance methods might be increasingly helpful in the detection and monitoring of outbreaks but recommended a balance between strengthening proven approaches (e.g., diagnosis of infectious illness and strengthening the liaison between clinical-care providers and health departments) and the exploration and evaluation of new approaches. The framework supplements previous CDC guidelines for evaluating public health surveillance systems and is intended to improve decisions regarding use of surveillance for outbreak detection, advocating a standard evaluation methodology. The framework underscores the need for measurement of timeliness and validity for outbreak detection and is designed to support assessment and description of all surveillance approaches including traditional disease reporting, specialized analytic routines for aberration detection or surveillance using early indicators of disease outbreaks. Key links and information regarding DoD's Global Influenza Program and information on hot topics such Influenza (avian and human), Leishmaniasis, West Nile Virus, and severe respiratory syndromes, including SARS, is available on the DoD-GEIS website <http://www.geis.ha.osd.mil>.

USCENTCOM

Iraq: Child Malnutrition Increasing in South

06 May – IRIN News reported more than a decade of UN sanctions and various wars has exposed Iraqi children to a variety of health threats. One of the most neglected areas during Saddam Hussein's rule was the predominately Shiite south. Basic amenities were hard to come by in the city of Basra. With the added problem of contaminated water the number of malnourished children there has greatly increased. The Nutrition Rehabilitation Centre at Basra's general hospital was recently renovated by the Save the Children NGO in order to encourage women to bring their children for treatment. The center is the first of its kind in the city. The program aims to prevent malnutrition among children under the age of five in order to minimize infant mortality and child morbidity rates. According to World Health Organization statistics, infant mortality in 2002 was 108 per 1,000 and child mortality for under fives was 131 per 1,000. A 2003 UNICEF rapid nutrition assessment, which was confined to Baghdad,

showed that 7.7 percent of children under the age of five were suffering from acute malnutrition, compared to 2002's figure. [View Article](#)

USEUCOM

Cote D'Ivoire: Meningitis Outbreak in Northeast kills 36

05 May – IRIN News reported the Ivorian government has appealed for 200,000 doses of meningitis vaccine to combat an epidemic which has caused 36 deaths in the rebel-held northeast of the country since March. Health Minister Albert Mabri Toikeuse made the appeal to international relief agencies last Friday. Approximately 100 cases of [meningitis](#) have been recorded in and around Bouna, the main town in northeastern Cote d'Ivoire, a health ministry official told IRIN. The disease is particularly prevalent in West Africa towards the end of the dry season. The Ivorian Health Ministry said it was working with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) to obtain over 200,000 doses of meningitis vaccine to stem the spread of the disease in Bouna and the surrounding district. UNICEF and WHO hoped to eventually run a three-year program to vaccinate 233,000 people in the northeast of Cote d'Ivoire, where the dry climate favors the spread of meningitis. [View Article](#)

More Sleeping Sickness Cases in Kwanza-Norte

06 May – ProMED reported about 41 new cases of [sleeping sickness](#) have been recorded at Lukala District in the Northern Kwanza-Norte Province, from January to March 2004, killing 2 people among 570 diagnosed cases in the area. According to the Director of the centre for the treatment of the sickness, Mbiavanga Eduardo Alves, 30 people received treatment during this period. In the last quarter of 2003, about 7000 people were examined, with 181 found to be positive. The local center can accommodate 60 inpatients and works with 13 technicians. [View Article](#)

Namibia: Malaria Leading Cause of Death in Five Regions

05 May – IRIN News reported [malaria](#) is the leading cause of death in five of Namibia's northern regions, claiming the lives of 467 people since January this year, a senior health official told IRIN. "Most of these deaths are malaria-related. The incidence of malaria peaked earlier this year because of the heavy rainfall in the north," said Dr Petrina Usiko, director of primary health care services in the ministry of health. Although malaria cases were on the increase, she said the country was not experiencing an epidemic. Last year 454 people died of malaria in the first four months; by the end of last year, 419,223 cases of malaria had been reported, of which 1096 resulted in death. According to Usiko, the five most affected regions were the Kavango, Oshana, Caprivi, Oshana and Omusati regions. Other less affected regions, also in the north, were Kunene, Otjozondjupa, Oshikoto and Omaheke. [View Article](#)

USNORTHCOM

CDC: Lyme Disease at Record High

07 May – CNN News reported [Lyme disease](#) has climbed to its highest level on record in the United States, in part because of the building of more and more homes in the woods, the government reported. During 2002, a total of 23,763 cases were reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention -- up 40 percent from the previous year. Lyme disease bacteria are transmitted to humans by ticks that are carried by deer. The CDC attributed the rise in cases to growing populations of deer that support deer ticks, more homes being built in wooded areas and better recognition and reporting of the disease. People can lower their risk of getting the disease by using insect repellent and promptly removing ticks from the body, the CDC said. [View Article](#)

High Rate of Chlamydia in U.S. Young Adults

11 May – EurekAlert reported that more than one in 25 young adults in the United States is infected with the organism that causes [chlamydia](#), according to the latest results from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. If not detected and treated, chlamydia, which usually has no symptoms, can cause pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancy and infertility. The prevalence of chlamydial infection was higher than expected, especially among men. The infection was six times greater in young black adults than in young whites, researchers found. Almost 14 percent of young black women and more than 11 percent of black men of comparable ages carried the bug. Analysis of urine specimens of 12,548 study participants from across the country showed U.S. Asian men to have the lowest infection rates, scientists said. The highest infection rate occurred in the South (5.4 percent); the lowest was in the Northeast (2.4 percent). Overall, the prevalence of gonorrhea was far lower -- 0.43 percent, the scientists discovered. Among black men and women, however, the prevalence was 2.13 percent. [View Article](#)

New Releases in Preventive Services

01 May – The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality announced The Guide to Clinical Preventive Services provides the latest available recommendations on preventive interventions: screening tests, counseling, immunizations, and medication regimens for more than 80 conditions. The Third Edition, 2000-2004, updates recommendations from the Second Edition and evaluates new topics. Reviews and recommendations are released when completed. These recommendations are made by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF). [View Guide](#)

Plague Identified in Rodents in West Texas, Panhandle

06 May – ProMED reported the Texas Department of Health (TDH) confirmed today that *Yersinia pestis*, the bacterium that causes [plague](#), has been detected in wood rats found dead in a rural location near the Midland-Glasscock counties border in West Texas and in fleas from wild prairie dogs in Dallam County in the Texas Panhandle. The last

recorded human case of plague in Texas was in 1993 in a Kent County resident. An average of 13 human cases a year occur in the United States. TDH is issuing a plague advisory to veterinarians and physicians in the West Texas, Panhandle and South Plains areas of the state and reminding the public to take routine precautions to reduce the chances of being bitten by an infected flea. The public is asked to report large die-offs of rodents to public health officials. [View Article](#)

Telemedicine on Rise in U.S. Military

09 May – Newsday reported the use of telemedicine, in which doctors practice from afar using everything from telephone consultations to remote-controlled surgical tools is rapidly expanding as the military upgrades medical care. Although military doctors aren't performing remote surgeries just yet, telemedicine has been vital to helping diagnose soldiers in the Middle East who suffer from leishmaniasis. Left untreated, some forms of the disease can cause organ damage. The disease is easily diagnosed by dermatologists, but there is only one such doctor in the military's medical crew in Iraq, so dermatologists in the United States are helping by reviewing digital pictures of infected skin. It takes just a couple hours to diagnose the problem and recommend a treatment via e-mail. The doctors have handled about 600 cases in six months out of the Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan, officials said. [View Article](#)

U.S. Says Folic Acid behind Drop in Birth Defects

06 May – Reuters reported the number of fetuses developing two severe types of birth defects each year has fallen about 26 percent since the United States started adding folic acid to some foods, federal officials reported. But the decrease in prevalence of [spina bifida](#) and [anencephaly](#) was smaller than what had been expected by researchers, raising doubts that the nation will be able to achieve a 50-percent reduction in these devastating neural tube defects by 2010. The Food and Drug Administration made it mandatory in 1998 for enriched bread, pasta and other cereal grains to be fortified with folic acid, which is also found in leafy green vegetables, some beans and orange juice. The incidence of neural tube defects has been shown to drop by up to 70 percent when women take 400 micrograms of folic acid daily before conception and in the first trimester of pregnancy. [View Article](#)

USPACOM

Australia: Cutaneous Leishmaniasis in Kangaroos

07 May – ProMED reported ulcerations were found in Red kangaroos housed in a fauna park outside Darwin and were reported as presumptive cutaneous leishmaniasis (CL) on 18 Jun 2003. Detailed investigations have since confirmed that the infection is due to *Leishmania* parasites, but molecular characterization of the parasites from skin lesions show that the parasite species is not *L. major* or *L. tropica*, which causes CL in the Old

World, nor *L. donovani infantum* (Old World visceral leishmaniasis), nor *L. enrietti* a parasite of laboratory guinea pigs in Brazil, and not *L. mexicana* which causes CL in Central America. Nevertheless all infected kangaroos had detectable anti-*Leishmania* antibodies. The conclusion was that the parasites infecting kangaroos are probably a new species of [Leishmania](#). Although imported cases of CL have been recorded from soldiers returning from overseas and immigrants and also from dogs, leishmaniasis transmission in Australia has not previously been recorded. Worldwide vectors of leishmaniasis are phlebotomine sand flies, but until now Australia has been considered free of suitable vectors. The present findings indicate that the parasites were somehow imported into Australia and that phlebotomine sand flies transmitted the parasites to the kangaroos. There is the possibility of human transmission of leishmaniasis in Australia, especially as most forms of leishmaniasis infecting humans are zoonoses. [View Article](#)

China SARS Patient Released From Hospital

11 May – Drkoop.com reported that a Beijing laboratory worker believed to be the first [SARS](#) patient in China's latest outbreak was released from the hospital Monday. The 26-year-old woman is thought to have caught SARS while studying the virus at the government lab. She went on to infect several other people. They included her mother who died last month, becoming the world's first SARS fatality this year. The nine cases in China's latest SARS outbreak were all linked to the laboratory and were reported in either Beijing or Anhui province. The World Health Organization has been examining the lab to determine how the virus spread. Chinese health officials claimed success in controlling the disease in Anhui province, the Xinhua News Agency reported. [View Source](#)

China Takes Urgent Steps to Stop Spread of AIDS

10 May – The Globe and Mail reported China warned that [AIDS](#) is spreading rapidly in the country and ordered urgent measures, including school education and public-awareness campaigns, to help keep the deadly virus in check. The state council, in a 12-page circular to all levels of government, said officials would be judged by their efforts in prevention and control. "Those officials breaching duty or hiding epidemic reports will be severely punished," Xinhua news agency quoted the circular as saying. China has faced international condemnation for disguising the scale of its AIDS epidemic, neglecting patients and arresting AIDS activists. [View Article](#)

India: Andhra Pradesh on High Alert after Two Encephalitis Deaths

10 May – ProMED reported that health authorities in Warangal are on high alert after two children died and six others developed [encephalitis](#), raising fears of a possible epidemic. Encephalitis is a viral infection of the brain transmitted by culicine mosquitoes that breed in stagnant water, mostly in paddy fields, and proliferate in summer and during the monsoon season. Though curable if detected early, unhygienic living conditions, coupled with delayed medical care, often result in epidemics. Andhra Pradesh is particularly prone to Japanese encephalitis virus infection, the deadliest form of encephalitis, but a much milder strain has been diagnosed. Doctors say children are most prone to the disease because of their inadequate immunity to it. [View Source](#)

India: Over 200,000 Nomads Trapped By Snowfall in Himalayas

06 May – The Asia-Pacific Daily Report stated that over 250,000 nomads belonging to the Gujar and Bakerwal ethnic groups have been trapped by unseasonable snowstorms in the mountain passes of Indian-controlled Kashmir since the weekend. Officials said that 11 people and 5,000 cattle have been killed in the past week by avalanches. Official reports said that the nomads were trapped on the upper reaches of mountain ranges, known as dhoks, about 7,000 to 9,000 feet above sea level. The Tribal Research and Cultural Foundation, a local NGO working for the welfare of tribal communities, as well as Gujar leaders, have asked the military to provide rescue services and to airdrop food, medicines and blankets. Officials also said that so far 10,000 nomadic shepherds have been rescued and sent for medical treatment. [View Article](#)

Vietnam Finds New Case of Bird Flu, Contains It

06 May – Reuters reported that [bird flu](#) has broken out in Dong Thap, Vietnam more than a month after an outbreak that killed 16 people was declared over. The latest outbreak of the deadly H5N1 bird flu virus was found on a farm in the south of the country. It has been successfully contained, according to a senior agriculture official. Bird flu erupted across many parts of Asia from late last year and killed millions of chickens and devastated poultry industries in several countries. It also killed 24 people -- 16 in Vietnam and eight in Thailand. Vietnam had declared itself free of the disease on March 30. Thailand has twice delayed declaring itself free, most recently after a new outbreak was found on April 19. [View Article](#)

USSOUTHCOM

Mexico Rushes Out Measles Vaccines to Curb Outbreak

10 May – Reuters reported Mexico said it was rushing [measles](#) vaccinations to 16.5 million people across the country after an outbreak of the disease among adults sparked fears of an epidemic. While the health ministry opened a telephone hotline for the public, Health Minister Julio Frenk played down the risk of a repeat of Mexico's 1989-1991 measles epidemic which killed several thousand people. The ministry said 64 cases of the highly contagious disease had been documented so far this year, two thirds of those involving adults, marking a jump from the 44 cases recorded in the whole of 2003. No deaths have been reported to date. [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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