

USACHPPM
HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

10 October 2002

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 ISSUES

BSE – Update

11 October – ProMED provides updates on [BSE](#), including cases suspected in Czech Republic, case confirmation in Poland, the 72nd BSE case in Italy, France resuming import of British beef and increased number of BSE cases in Ireland. [View Reports](#)

Exposure to Low Levels of Styrene May Cause Hearing Loss

7 October - Reuters Health reported workers exposed to styrene, even at lower than permissible levels, can experience adverse effects to their auditory system, researchers report in the September issue of the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. Dr. Morata, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Cincinnati, Ohio, and colleagues collected data on 313 workers in Swedish fiberglass and metal product manufacturing plants and in a mail distribution center. Workers in the fiberglass plant were exposed to both noise and styrene, while those in the metal working plant were exposed to noise only, and workers in the mail distribution facility were exposed to neither. Compared with workers exposed to noise only or not exposed, workers exposed to styrene and noise had significantly worse pure-tone thresholds at 2 kHz, 3 kHz, 4 kHz and 6 kHz, the researchers found. [View Original Report](#)

FDA Approves New Safety Data for Malarone

11 October – Doctor’s Guide reports the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the addition of new safety data to the prescribing information of GlaxoSmithKline's Malarone (atovaquone and proguanil hydrochloride) tablets, demonstrating that the malaria prevention medication has fewer adverse events overall, than the two antimalarials, mefloquine (Lariam, Roche Pharmaceuticals) and chloroquine/proguanil. [View Original Article](#)

Long-term Use of High-dose Rofecoxib Tied to Increased Risk of Coronary Disease

7 October - Reuters Health reports patients on 50 mg/day of [rofecoxib](#) for longer than 5 days are 70% more likely to develop coronary heart disease (CHD) than nonusers, according to a report published in the October 5th issue of The Lancet. The study group included 202,916 people who did not use non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), 24,132 who used

rofecoxib, and 151,728 who used other NSAIDs. All of the subjects were 50 to 84 years of age, lived in a community setting, and did not have any life-threatening non-cardiovascular diseases. "With the exception of rofecoxib 50 mg, none of the NSAIDs, including [celecoxib](#), were associated with an increased risk of serious CHD," Dr. Ray told Reuters Health. He and his colleagues report in the Lancet paper that the incidence rate ratio for CHD associated with 50-mg rofecoxib was 1.70 relative to nonusers of NSAIDs. The 25-mg dose was not associated with increased CHD risk (IRR, 1.03). Lancet 2002;360:1071-1073. [View Original Report](#)

Malaria and Mosquito Genomes Decoded

2 October – The World Health Organization (WHO) announced the decoding of the genomes of the most dangerous malaria parasite, *Plasmodium falciparum*, and of the most important mosquito that transmits it, *Anopheles gambiae*. "This is an extraordinary moment in the history of science," said Carlos Morel, director of TDR, the Tropical Disease Research program. "At last, the enormous power of modern technology is penetrating the mysteries of an ancient disease, a disease which continues to kill millions." The breakthroughs announced this week in [Nature](#) and [Science](#) open an entirely new field to public health researchers. With this new knowledge, malaria scientists will be able to pry out information long hidden in the genomes that can be used to design new insecticides, new repellants, and new drugs. [View Article](#)

Military Extends Sierra Pact

8 October – The Baltimore Sun reported Sierra Military Health Services Inc. has been awarded a \$1 billion, four-year extension of its Defense Department contract to provide health care services to military personnel in 13 states. Under the current arrangement, the Department of Defense divides the country into 12 health care regions, which are served by seven companies. Sierra serves Region 1, which runs from Maine to Virginia and includes the District of Columbia. It is home to more than 1 million active-duty and retired military personnel. [View Original Article](#)

More Help Needed for TB Hotspots – WHO

5 October – [BBC](#) News reports according to experts, ambitious targets to cut TB in some of the worst affected countries will not be met without extra financial help. The World Health Organization has identified a \$300 million "funding gap" between what is needed to fight the disease and what has been given by governments and raised from donors. The WHO is aiming to detect 70% of TB cases - and successfully cure 85% of them, by 2005. It warns that this is unlikely to happen unless the funding shortfall is addressed. It is hoped that the extra money to make this happen will be drawn from the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria, but this is not certain. Dr Jong-Wook Lee, Director of the Stop TB Department at the WHO, said: "This funding gap is clearly identified and affordable. The 22 worst affected countries include Bangladesh, Brazil, China, India, Kenya, South Africa and Thailand. [View Article](#)

Pesticide Product Label System (PPLS) Updated

2 October – The [EPA](#) reports the PPLS is a collection of images, in multi-page TIFF format, of pesticide labels that have been approved by the Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) under Section 3 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. The collection contains the initially approved label for pesticide products registered under FIFRA Section 3 as well as

subsequent versions of labels which have changed via amendment or notification. [View Update](#)

Record Number of Flu Vaccines Prepared

4 October – [CNN](#) reports a record 94 million doses of influenza vaccine are expected to be available in the United States for the 2002-2003 flu season, federal health officials reported this week. Influenza kills about 20,000 Americans and hospitalizes 114,000 every year. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Thursday the three flu vaccine manufacturers estimated that 80 percent of the U.S. stockpile would be distributed by the end of October, the traditional start of flu season. [See Article](#)

Researchers Successfully Deliver Drugs to the Primate Brainstem

3 October – [NIH](#) reports current drug treatments of brainstem tumors are largely unsuccessful, because the drugs often fail to bypass the blood vessel lining protecting the brainstem. Now, an NIH study shows that researchers can effectively deliver drugs to the primate brainstem and monitor how the drugs spread inside the brain. The study provides hope for improving treatment of brainstem tumors and other brain diseases. In the new study, researchers at the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) used a technique called convection-enhanced delivery (CED), which was developed at the National Institutes of Health, to deliver a tracer molecule to the primate brainstem. They then used magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to track the tracer's movement throughout the brain. The study appears in the October 2002 issue of the *Journal of Neurosurgery* [See Article](#)

Smoking, Drinking May Up Risk of Eye Disorder

7 October – Reuters reports on a study where smokers and heavy drinkers may be more susceptible to age-related maculopathy (ARM), the leading cause of blindness in the industrialized world. Dr. Ronald Klein and colleagues from the University of Wisconsin in Madison evaluated the association between smoking and alcohol consumption and the long-term risk of ARM in more than 3,600 adults aged 43 to 86 years. Cigarettes and alcohol can both result in oxidative damage to the cells of the retina, they explain. The study found that heavy drinkers, or adults who consumed at least four drinks a day, were about 6 times more likely to develop symptoms of late ARM over a 10-year period. And those who reported that they were heavy drinkers in the past were more than twice as likely to develop late ARM. Current smokers were also more likely to develop the disorder, report researchers in the October 1st issue of the *American Journal of Epidemiology*. [View Article](#)

Soy Supplements May Not Up Young Women's Bone Mass

4 October – Reuters reports on a study where soy supplements rich in estrogen-like compounds (isoflavones) do not appear to boost bone mass in young women. This suggests the bone benefits that have been linked to isoflavones in some studies of older women do not extend to young women, the study authors report. They speculate that the high levels of natural estrogen young menstruating women produce overshadow any effect soy isoflavones might have on bone. Dr. John J. B. Anderson of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and his colleagues report the findings in the current issue of the *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*. SOURCE: *Journal of the American College of Nutrition* 2002;21:388-393. [View Article](#)

Strengthened Warning for Lariam (Mefloquine Hydrochloride)

4 October – The [FDA](#) reports FDA and Roche strengthened the CONTRAINDICATIONS, WARNINGS, PRECAUTIONS, and ADVERSE REACTIONS sections of the label. Healthcare professionals were notified that Lariam is contraindicated for prophylaxis in patients with active depression, a recent history of depression, generalized anxiety disorder, psychosis, schizophrenia or other major psychiatric disorders, or with a history of convulsions. During prophylactic use, if psychiatric symptoms such as acute anxiety, depression, restlessness or confusion occur, these may be considered prodromal to a more serious event. In these cases, the drug must be discontinued and an alternative medication should be substituted. [View Original Report](#)

Update: Listeriosis Outbreak Investigation

3 October – The [CDC](#) issued a press release where CDC and state health departments are investigating an outbreak of Listeria infections. Thus far, Listeria bacteria isolated from 40 patients have been shown to have matching DNA patterns; this strongly suggests that these patients acquired illness from the same food. These 40 patients live in Pennsylvania, New York City, New York State, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Connecticut, and Michigan. All patients were hospitalized and seven persons have died. These illnesses began occurring this summer, and have continued through September. Federal and state investigators are working to determine the source of infection. [See Article](#)

USA - Possible West Nile Virus Transmission to an Infant Through Breastfeeding

4 October – ProMED reports the [CDC](#) and the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) continue to investigate West Nile Virus (WNV) infection in a woman who received a blood product later found to contain evidence of WNV, and in her child, who was exposed to breast milk later found to be WNV-positive by TaqMan® (1). This report updates the findings of this investigation. [View Article](#)

Violence Claims 1.6M a Year

3 October - [BBC](#) News outlines a [WHO](#) report where more than 1.6 million people are killed by violence around the world each year. The World Health Organization said that millions of others are left injured as a result of attacks. Violence is now the leading cause of death among people aged between 15 and 44. The WHO has called on governments across the globe to take urgent action to cut murder rates, domestic violence and armed conflict. The report shows that violence accounts for 14% of deaths in men and 7% of deaths in women. [View Article](#)

West Nile Virus Update

2 October - The total number of West Nile virus cases reported to [CDC](#) reached 2,530 with 125 deaths in 32 states and Washington D.C. have reported human cases of West Nile virus in 2002. The CDC, the [FDA](#), the Health Resources and Services Administration, in collaboration with blood collection agencies and state and local health departments, continue to investigate WNV infections in recipients of blood products and organ transplantation. CDC has received

reports from 10 states of 15 patients with confirmed West Nile infection diagnosed after receiving blood products within 1 month of illness onset. In addition, WNV may be passed on in breast milk. [See Article](#)

USEUCOM

Britain - Salmonella Outbreak Reported

7 October - Reuters reports British public health officials said on Tuesday they had seen an increase in the number of cases of food poisoning caused by a rare strain of Salmonella enteritidis, which they think may be linked to the same, as-yet-undetermined, source. Since 26 September, the Public Health Laboratory Service (PHLS) has been notified of 102 cases of Salmonella enteritidis phage type 14B. This compares to 393 cases of this strain during all of 2001, 40% of which were linked to foreign travel. The 102 cases were reported in various parts of England, but testing suggests there is a common source. [View Article](#)

S. Africa Plans Increase in AIDS Spending

7 October – Reuters reports South Africa plans to almost double its spending on fighting HIV/AIDS to \$173 million in the next financial year, a government health official said on Saturday. Thami Skenjana of the Government AIDS Action Plan said spending in the financial year starting in April would be set at 1.8 billion rand, up from around one billion rand now. South Africa has more people living with HIV/AIDS than any other country. One in nine South Africans, or 4.8 million people, are estimated to have AIDS or to be infected with the virus that causes it. [See Article](#)

Yellow fever in Senegal

4 October - The Ministry of Health has officially confirmed a total of 12 cases of yellow fever in Mbaké département, which includes the city of Touba with 800 000 inhabitants. The cases have been laboratory confirmed by the Institut Pasteur, Dakar. The Ministry of Health has started to take measures to contain the outbreak: a vaccination campaign began on 1 October and a vector control campaign is being carried out within the city. A national investigation team and entomologists from the Institut Pasteur, Dakar will be traveling to Touba to assess the outbreak. WHO has offered assistance to the Ministry of Health with the implementation of the vaccination campaign, surveillance and other containment measures. [See Article](#)

USCENTCOM

Alternative medicine services in UAE gain momentum

8 October – Gulf News reports public hospitals in the United Arab Emirates could start offering alternative medicine (Ayurveda) services to patients. The ministry has established a new

department to review the issue and scrutinize applications on a case-by-case basis. Ayurveda encompasses a range of treatments including medicinal herbs, changes in diet, meditation, massage and yoga to maintain or restore health. Its treatment procedures are traditional and the formulations made from natural herbs. There are already private Ayurveda clinics beginning to open in UAE. Previously, patients wanting Ayurvedic treatments would have to go to India.

[View Original Report](#)

HHS Secretary Thompson Travels To Afghanistan To Formalize Health Partnership, Assess Needs

8 October – The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) reports HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson announced today that he signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) to help redevelop the country's medical infrastructure and continue to improve essential health care services and the social service delivery system. The announcement comes on the same day as the Secretary's announcement of a new volunteer medical training initiative for Afghan-American physicians. The MOU will establish a formal relationship with the Afghan MOPH and will focus on improving maternal, infant and child health; securing and restoring hospital infrastructure; providing safe water and sanitation systems; epidemiological services; and mental health services. The MOU seeks to strengthen ongoing activities. The original press release can be found [here](#).

Kazakh Servicemen Get health Check, Doctors Call for Improvement

7 October - [Interfax-Kazakhstan news agency](#) reports thorough medical examination of Kazakh military staff has identified that less than 60 per cent of the military servicemen are fit for military service. The examination revealed that only 58.8 per cent of the examined servicemen could be regarded as "being fit for military service" and 27.9 per cent as "being practically fit for military service". Meanwhile, doctors think that 13.3 per cent of the total number of the examined was "in need of health-improvement measures". According to the examination results, servicemen frequently suffer from stomach ailments (more than 35 per cent), blood circulation (25 per cent), breathing (11.5 per cent) and nervous system-related problems (10.7 per cent).

U.S. Army Central Command Selects Chem-bio Decontamination Formulation Developed at Sandia

1 October – Sandia National Laboratories reports the U.S. Army Central Command (CENTCOM) has selected a decontamination formulation originally developed at Sandia National Laboratories that renders harmless chemical and biological warfare agents for use. CENTCOM placed an order with EnviroFoam™ Technologies last week for several thousand gallons of the company's EasyDECON™ solution. EnviroFoam licensed the formulation for EasyDECON from Sandia in August 2000. (See <http://www.sandia.gov/media/NewsRel/NR2000/envfoam.htm>.) The formulation neutralizes both chemical and biological agents and is nontoxic, noncorrosive, and environmentally friendly. The formulation can be deployed as a foam, mist, fog, spray, or liquid. (For more information, see <http://www.sandia.gov/media/cbwfoam.htm>.) [View Original Report](#)

USJFCOM

Beef Recall Expanded Nationwide

3 October – CBS News reports a recall of contaminated ground beef that has been linked to possible E. coli bacteria illnesses among 40 people in three midwestern states is being expanded to 2.3 million pounds of meat sold nationwide. The Wisconsin-based meatpacker, Empak Foods Inc., recalled 416,000 pounds of ground beef in September in Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota, but recently expanded the recall. The beef was sold in grocery stores, hotels, restaurants and other food institutions nationwide. The cases of ground beef products being recalled are marked with the "sell by" dates of 8-29-02, 8-30-02, 8-31-02, 9-01-02 or 9-02-02. The packages also include the establishment code of "EST. 20654" inside the USDA seal of inspection. Consumers who find they bought the contaminated beef should return it to the stores they bought it from, he said. The USDA referred consumers with questions about the recall to the Empak consumer hot line at 1-877-817-7622. [View Original Report](#) [View Recalled Lots](#)

Disease Outbreaks in Mexico May Increase in Wake of Hurricanes

2 October – [AFMIC](#) reported Hurricane Isidore has caused severe damage to Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. Three of the four electrical plants on the peninsula are unable to receive fuel as a result of flooding, and much of the power transmission grid has been destroyed. Storm-related destruction of infrastructure and disruption of public health services will increase the potential for disease transmission. Lack of electricity will hamper both potable water treatment and distribution. Because transmission in the local population will likely increase, US personnel exposed to mosquitoes are at increased risk of contracting dengue fever, with rates potentially 2 to 10 percent per month if appropriate countermeasures are not implemented. Malaria risk also may increase, with rates up to 1 percent per month. Additionally, an operationally significant number (potentially over 50 percent per month) of US personnel consuming local food, water, or ice could contract diarrheal diseases. Risk of hepatitis A, hepatitis E, typhoid, and other enteric infections is also increased. [View Original Article](#)

Mosquitoes Infected with Malaria are Found in MD

8 October – The Baltimore Sun reported for the first time in at least 30 years, researchers have found malaria-infected mosquitoes in Maryland, trapping them on an uninhabited Montgomery County island in the Potomac River. Dr. Carol Garvey, Montgomery County's health director, said that a decision is likely in the next 48 hours on whether to spray insecticide in areas where malaria-infected mosquitoes may be breeding. [View Original Article](#)

Smallpox Vaccine Backed for Public

6 October – ProMED reports the United States' top public health officials said today that they favored offering smallpox vaccine to the public, even in absence of a bioterror attack, but only after up to 10 million health care workers are immunized, and after a vaccine is licensed for general use, which is not likely until 2004. It was the first time federal officials have said that the public should have access to the vaccine, which carries significant risk of serious side effects.

But the final decision rests with President Bush, and a White House spokesman said the issue was still under review. [View Article](#)

Turkey Meat Suspected in Listeria Cases

5 October – Reuters reports a study where turkey deli meat is a likely source of a listeria outbreak linked to 20 deaths and 120 illnesses in eight states. The CDC, along with the Agriculture Department, has linked at least 7 deaths and 40 illnesses to the same listeria strain. The illnesses were reported in early September. The agency said in a statement an analysis of data indicated, "that the leading suspect food in this outbreak is sliced turkey deli meat." The Agriculture Department, however, has not been able to confirm this. The department said it had conducted more than 200 tests on lunch meats and deli products after the illnesses were reported, most of them in the Northeast: New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. [View Article](#)

USPACOM

Asia Behind Africa in Dealing with AIDS

7 October – Reuters reports Asian countries lag African nations in addressing the threat of HIV/AIDS and risk major social and economic woes if they fail to act, business and health experts said Monday. Seven million Asians carry the HIV infection, including four million of India's population of more than one billion and high per capita rates in Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar, but public and political knowledge are lacking. UNAIDS has said China, with up to 1.5 million people carrying HIV at the end of last year, could see the figure rise to 10 million by the end of the decade if there is no effective action. [See Article](#)

Hong Kong - Public Urged to Prevent Dengue Fever

4 October - The Hong Kong Department of Health (DH) confirmed one more local case of dengue fever and urged members of the public to take measures against mosquito breeding and to prevent the spread of mosquito-borne diseases. A DH spokesman said 14 out of 17 local cases confirmed so far were related to Ma Wan and the rest related to Sham Shui Po and Tsuen Wan districts. To date, 31 confirmed cases of dengue fever were reported in Hong Kong this (2002) year. Of these, 14 were imported cases and 17 local cases. [View Report](#)

India to Be Hit Hard by AIDS

4 October – Press Trust of India reports India will be the hardest hit by AIDS by the year 2010, according to the latest projections prepared by the National Intelligence Council of the United States. The US Consul General in the city, George N. Sibley, quoting the report said that AIDS will reduce economic growth of countries by one per cent of the GDP and governments will have to spend a large amount of their budgets towards healthcare due to this incidence. By 2010, nearly 20 million to 25 million cases of AIDS will be in India only, which was half of the current number of 42 million worldwide. The other countries, which will be affected most along with India, were Nigeria, Ethiopia, Russia and China. [View Article](#)

USSOUTHCOM

Nothing significant to report.

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/Hioupdate/>.

POC: Rachel Gross, PhD
Rachel.Gross@APG.amedd.army.mil
Lorraine Bell, DrPH, MSN
Lorraine.Bell@APG.amedd.army.mil

Approved:
[Kevin Delaney](#)
Chief, Health Information Operations
(410) 436-5217 or DSN 584-5217

ACRONYMS

AFMIC - Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center

BBC – British Broadcasting Company

BSE – Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

CDC – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CNN – Cable News Network

EPA – Environmental Protection Agency

FDA – Food and Drug Administration

IRIN - Integrated Regional Information Networks, part of the [UN](#) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

MMWR – Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

NIH – National Institute of Health

WHO – World Health Organization