

USACHPPM
HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

06 December 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

Exercise Cuts Inflammation-Related Protein in Blood

27 November - Reuters reported on a study where men who are physically fit tend to have lower levels of a protein linked to body-wide inflammation, new research reports. People with high levels of this protein, known as C-reactive protein (CRP), appear to have a higher than average risk of cardiovascular disease. The findings of the new study could help explain why exercise is so beneficial, said study author Dr. Timothy S. Church of The Cooper Institute in Dallas, Texas. Church and his colleagues measured fitness and CRP levels in 722 men. The investigators found that men who were the fittest also tended to have the lowest levels of CRP in their bodies, while those deemed the least fit were more likely to show the highest levels of CRP. The relationship between CRP levels and exercise remained even after the researchers eliminated other factors, such as age and obesity. [View Article](#)

How Safe Is The Water?

21 November - CBS News reported the CDC said outbreaks of disease from drinking water and swimming pools have risen dramatically in recent years despite improvements in publicly operated water systems. One of the chief causes includes insufficient regulation of private wells. About 70 percent of the outbreaks traced to swimming pools involved the chlorine-resistant organism cryptosporidium. Germs found in wells and other sources of drinking water can include parasites such as giardia and cryptosporidium and bacteria such as *E. coli* and salmonella. In 1999 and 2000, the latest years for which numbers are available, there were a total of 39 outbreaks involving drinking water in 25 states, the CDC reported. That is more than double the 17 outbreaks reported in 1997-98. [View Article](#)

Nut and Peanut Butter Consumption and Risk of Type 2 Diabetes in Women

26 November — JAMA reported a study of more than 83,000 nurses suggests eating lots of nuts or peanut butter may help ward off diabetes. The prospective cohort study examined the relationship between nut consumption and risk of type 2 diabetes. Consumption of peanut butter was inversely associated with type 2 diabetes. Findings suggest potential benefits of higher nut and peanut butter consumption in lowering risk of type 2 diabetes in women. To avoid increasing caloric intake, regular nut consumption can be recommended as a replacement for consumption of refined grain products or red or processed meats. The study is published in JAMA. 2002;288:2554-2560. [View Article](#)

Oral Drug Thwarts 'Black Fever'

27 November - Reuters Health reported a drug originally designed to treat cancer appears to be an easy-to-take and effective way to fight "black fever," or visceral leishmaniasis, a parasitic disease that infects hundreds of thousands of people each year around the globe. Public health experts hope that the drug, miltefosine (Impavido) will be an improvement over current treatments because it can be taken in capsule form. Until now, all treatments for the fatal disease have included multiple injections or intravenous doses of other drugs, according to the report published in the November 28th issue of The New England Journal of Medicine. Miltefosine was approved for use in India in earlier this year. SOURCE: The New England Journal of Medicine 2002;347:1739-1746. [View Article](#)

Perceived Stress May Influence Vaccines' Effectiveness

25 November – The Times of India reported a person's state of mind might influence the body's response to a vaccine against meningitis C. Researchers at the School of Sport and Exercise Sciences and the School of Medicine at the University of Birmingham in England administered questionnaires and took blood samples to measure the concentration of protective meningitis C antibodies in students who had previously received a meningitis C vaccine. The results revealed that a high level of perceived life stress, but not actual stress, was associated with low antibody levels. A low level of psychological well being -feeling anxious or under strain, for example - was also linked to low antibody levels. According to the researchers, "The association between stress and vaccination response has potentially important clinical implications. In light of our findings, it may be important to monitor subsequent antibody status, particularly in those reporting high perceived stress and low levels of psychological well being." [View Article](#)

Pregnant Women Should Get Group B Strep Test

29 November - Reuters Health reported all pregnant women should be routinely screened for Group B streptococcus, a major cause of illness and death among newborns, according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). Group B streptococcus (GBS), or "strep," can cause serious infections, such as meningitis, in newborns. Infants can become infected with the bacterium during labor and delivery; so pregnant women are screened for GBS during the last few weeks of pregnancy. Women infected with strep may be treated with antibiotics to reduce the risk of passing on the infection. ACOG's current announcement stems from a recent review of data that found greater benefits of screening all pregnant women for the

presence of GBS as opposed to just treating those believed to be at high risk for GBS infection. SOURCE: Obstetrics & Gynecology 2002; 100:1405-1412. [View Article](#)

Protein May Be Key to 'Traveler's Diarrhea' Vaccine

22 November - Reuters reported a group of researchers at the University of Maryland believe they may be on the way to a vaccine that could prevent most cases of traveler's diarrhea. Such a vaccine also could potentially cut down on as much as 80% of bacterial diarrhea cases in developing countries. The researchers report in the November issue of The Journal of Clinical Investigation that a surface protein, which they named "dispersin," seems to help some strains of the bacteria cling to the inside of the intestines and penetrate the thick "mucous blanket" that protects the digestive tract. Dispersin is the first protein found that is common to many strains of enteroaggregative *E. coli*. In the group's collection of strains obtained from all over the world, dispersin was present in 80%. [View Article](#)

Second Strain of Human 'Mad Cow'?

29 November - A paper published in the Journal of the European Molecular Biology Organization reported more than one BSE-derived prion strain might infect humans. The study showed that transgenic mice expressing human PrP methionine 129, inoculated with either bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) or variant CJD prions, may develop the neuropathological and molecular phenotype of vCJD, consistent with these diseases being caused by the same prion strain. Surprisingly, however, BSE transmission to these transgenic mice, in addition to producing a vCJD-like phenotype, could also result in a distinct molecular phenotype that is indistinguishable from that of sporadic CJD with PrPSc type 2. It is possible that some patients with a phenotype consistent with sporadic CJD may have a disease arising from BSE exposure. [View Article](#)

Test to predict heart danger

24 November – The BBC reported high frequency radio waves can be used to analyze blood samples and predict which patients are in imminent danger of a heart attack. The new test, developed by scientists at Imperial College London, and Cambridge University, could help spot high-risk patients early so treatment can be arranged. Its inventors claim that it could remove the need for more invasive tests such as angiography in some patients. The technique, called Metabonomics, needs only a few drops of blood. In small-scale trials, it matched the accuracy of a full angiography test in 95% of cases - and predicted the severity of the heart disease in 80%. The blood of a patient suffering from hardening of the arteries gives a different reading to that taken from a patient without this problem because it contains different chemicals. Advanced computer software is now able to interpret these differences with an increasing degree of accuracy. Large trials of the system are currently under way at Papworth Hospital near Cambridge, and if these are successful the test could be available more widely within two years. [View Report](#)

UN Sees Synthetic Pills as Next Big Drug Problem

29 November – Reuters reported the head of the UN drugs agency believes use of designer drugs, such as methamphetamine, is spreading so fast it could soon dwarf the problem of traditional narcotics such as heroin and cocaine. Antonio Maria Costa, global executive director

of the Vienna-based United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, told Reuters these newer drugs could be produced cheaply and easily almost anywhere in the world, making them very difficult to control. The pills are easily trafficked by well-organized crime syndicates from production centers mostly in Southeast Asia to consumers in cities in the region and the West. Data on narcotics production and consumption are notoriously unreliable, but the United Nations keeps records of seizures across the world and these suggest an alarming increase in the use and abuse of synthetic drugs. UN data show seizures of synthetic drugs, known by drugs agencies as "amphetamine-type stimulants" or ATS and made in secret laboratories from chemicals such as ephedrine, reached almost 40 tons in 2000 from just 5 tons in 1991. [View Article](#)

Vitamin C and Vitamin E Supplement Use and Bladder Cancer Mortality

1 December – The Journal of Epidemiology published a study where the authors examined the association between use of individual vitamin C and vitamin E supplements and bladder cancer mortality. Regular vitamin C supplement use was not associated with bladder cancer mortality, regardless of duration. Regular vitamin E supplement use for 10 years was associated with a reduced risk of bladder cancer mortality, but regular use of shorter duration was not. Results support the hypothesis that long-duration vitamin E supplement use may reduce the risk of bladder cancer mortality. [View Article](#)

USEUCOM

Africa to Fight Malaria with Mosquito Net

21 November – Reuters reported malaria is killing an estimated one million Africans a year and with a vaccine still years away experts say the best available weapon against the disease on the continent remains the mosquito net. Malaria, which is transmitted to humans by the anopheles mosquito, is becoming increasingly resistant to anti-malarial drugs in many areas and is harming economic development. There is also increasing resistance to insecticides and the growth of HIV/AIDS has compounded the problem of treating those affected. "There is nothing, other than mosquito nets, that can reduce child deaths (from malaria) across Africa," Halima Mwenesi, a scientist working with the Kenya Medical Research Institute told an international malaria conference in north Tanzania this week. "Mosquitoes are most active between five p.m. and six a.m., and that's when people are most vulnerable. (Bed nets) are not a new tool, but only in the last six years has scientific evidence shown that bed nets reduce prevalence by 25%." Researchers have also called on the donor community to give more aid to malaria projects, saying that the disease is having a devastating effect on Africa's development. [View Article](#)

Cholera Outbreak in Zimbabwe

2 December – IRIN reported 24 people in Tongwe have tested positive for the illness since 1 December, forcing authorities to close the local school to contain the spread of the disease. The Minister of Health had seconded additional staff to the district to help, and UNICEF would send urgent help where required. It was not yet known what had caused the outbreak. [View Article](#)

DDT Back in Use to Fight Malaria

25 November - African ministers and leading health experts have recommended the widespread use of DDT (Dichloro-Diphinyl Tri-chloroethane) to combat malaria. The Commonwealth Regional Health Ministers Conference urged member states to use DDT as an effective insecticide against the malaria vector that has for long ravaged the continent. DDT is a pesticide introduced at the end of the Second World war as an insecticide but has since been discouraged and banned mostly in the western world. USAID regional director Andrew Sisson said DDT was dangerous and had a negative effect on the children in his country. [View article](#)

DRC: Hemorrhagic fever outbreak in Province Orientale

26 November – IRIN reported the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has issued an alert regarding an outbreak of hemorrhagic fever that has so far killed eight people in Orientale Province, a region plagued by fighting among various rebel groups and ethnic factions. According to DRC Health Minister Dr Mashako Mamba, who is also the coordinator of the country's epidemiological alert system, the eight deaths were caused by a type of hemorrhagic fever that has not yet been identified due to armed hostilities throughout the region. "We are calling upon all belligerents to allow medical emergency teams full access to work under peaceful conditions," Mashako said. A crisis committee has been organized to oversee the emergency. [View Article](#)

Influenza B, Virulent - Spain (Balearic Islands)

29 November – ProMed reported that during epidemiological week 47, 3 influenza type B viruses were isolated. The 3 cases are very special because they affected 3 children between 11 & 13 years old and with extraordinary clinical virulence. Two children presented with high fever, myalgias, rbdomyositis (CPK greater than 1000), arthralgias and maculopapular erythema with petechias (one case). These clinical presentations are not normal and could represent the behavior of the new antigenic and genetic variant of Influenza B virus described last year [2001] in Asia and this year in Houston, Texas, USA (March 2002). The strains have been sent to the National Influenza Reference Center (Madrid) to characterize and sequence to demonstrate correspondence with the strain B/Hong-Kong/330 (included in the current flu vaccine). [View Article](#)

More Than 500 Die in Flu Outbreak in Northern Congo

26 November – The Nando Times reported the World Health Organization confirmed an outbreak of flu in rebel-controlled northern Congo, and the country's health minister said more than 500 people have died. Deaths have been recorded in a number of towns - including Bosobolo, Gbadolite and Gemena - in the north of Equator province, near the border with Central African Republic, Health Minister Mashako Mamba said. People fleeing an Oct. 25 coup attempt in Central African Republic, Mamba said, apparently spread the illness. It was not immediately clear what strain of flu was involved. [View Article](#)

Angola Measles Vaccination Campaign in 2003

29 November – AllAfrica.com reported the Angolan Ministry of Health is preparing a vaccination campaign against measles starting in the first quarter of 2003. According to Mr. José Van-Dunen, who was speaking after returning from Senegal "studies show that the localized vaccination does not brings about good results and there is need to carry out nationwide

vaccination campaigns like it has been done with polio". He asserted that all actions are in progress, but there are some problems as the measles vaccination is not as easy as to administer as the polio vaccine which consists of only two drops. He reminded that measles is one the causes of country's high infantile death rate. [View Article](#)

Nigeria - Influenza Claims 14 Lives in Ebonyi

28 November – All Africa.com reported at least 14 persons have been confirmed dead in Ndi Obasi Oso-Edda community in Edda-East Local Government Area of Ebonyi State following an outbreak of influenza in the area. More than 700 persons affected by the disease were lying critically in various hospitals in the area. The council's transition committee chairman, Mr. Okon Ibiam, said the council had bought drugs worth thousands of naira to ensure prompt treatment of the affected persons. He described as unfortunate the outbreak of the disease, which he said was accompanied by fever and vomiting. [View Article](#)

Plague Reported in Uganda

30 November – ProMed reported on 6 diagnosed cases of Bubonic Plague in Uganda. Two cases came from the Arua district and 4 cases came from the Nebbi district. [View Article](#)

Salmonella typhimurium DT120 - Denmark

3 December – ProMed reported on an outbreak of multi-drug resistant *Salmonella typhimurium* DT120 due to ready-to-eat turkey meat in Denmark. From Aug to Oct 2002, 41 human cases of multi-drug resistant *Salmonella typhimurium* resistant to ampicillin, tetracycline, streptomycin, and sulfamethoxazole (R-type ASSuT) were reported in Denmark. Cases were not confined to one region, but were spread out over most of the country. Until August 2002, *S. typhimurium* R-type ASSuT was uncommon in human isolates. From 1997 to July 2002, a total of 81 (2.5 per cent) strains with this resistance profile were found in 3114 cases of *S. typhimurium* infection tested for antimicrobial susceptibility. Following this outbreak, additional restrictive guidelines were put in place at the production facility. [View Article](#)

Trichinella Infection in Russia

22 November – ProMed reported a trichinosis epidemic has broken out in Siberia, with 71 people affected in Khakassia and Kemerovo so far. According to officials, the mass contamination has presumably been triggered by consumption of smoked meat of a bear infested with trichinae. Investigation has now been launched to identify the actual causes of the epidemic. [View Article](#) [View Comments](#)

UK to Vaccinate Health Workers Against Smallpox

2 December - Reuters Health reported by the end of next month Britain plans to have around 350 health workers vaccinated against smallpox as a precaution against a deliberate release of the deadly virus. Although there is "no evidence of a specific threat," the government wants to ensure the National Health Service (NHS) can deal effectively with a potential smallpox emergency. As part of an "interim plan of action," the government will establish 12 regional smallpox response groups consisting of infectious disease doctors and pediatricians, public

health physicians, microbiologists, nurses and occupational health staff. The government's interim plan of action for dealing with smallpox says the primary strategy in the case of an emergency is for the regional response teams to "ring vaccinate" people around any outbreak. The Ministry of Defense is also planning to vaccinate a similar cohort of specialist military personnel. [View Report](#)

USCENTCOM

FAO Warns of Spread of Rinderpest in Somalia

21 November – IRIN reported one of the world's deadliest livestock diseases is on the verge of spreading from its last stronghold in northeastern Kenya and southern Somalia, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has warned. Not only are nearby areas of Africa at risk from reinfection by the movement of cattle, but trade in cattle could carry the virus across the Red Sea to the Arabian Peninsula or, according to recent reports, even further afield to southeast Asia, the FAO statement warned. [View Article](#)

U.S. Troops in Afghanistan Fall Ill

30 November – The Associated Press reported turkey stuffing from a Thanksgiving meal might have caused more than 100 soldiers to fall ill with food poisoning at a U.S. base in Afghanistan, the U.S. military said Saturday. Seventy-nine U.S. soldiers, 25 Romanians and some soldiers from other countries suffered nausea, diarrhea and vomiting beginning Thursday night at the base near the southeastern city of Kandahar, said Master Sgt. Kelly Tyler, a spokeswoman at Bagram Air Base, the headquarters of the U.S.-led military operation in Afghanistan. The source of the illness was under investigation, though one medical official at Bagram said turkey stuffing from the Thanksgiving Day holiday meal was suspected. No soldiers were hospitalized, and most were ill for no more than 24 hours. Sanitation officials were inspecting the kitchen facilities where the meal was prepared. [View Article](#) [View ProMed Report](#)

USNORTHCOM

E. coli Fears Spur Ground Beef Recall

25 November - CNN reported a New York meat processing company, is voluntarily recalling 320,000 pounds of fresh ground beef products that may be contaminated with the *E. coli* bacteria, the U.S. Agriculture Department announced. The products subject to recall by the Ashville, New York firm -- also know as Fairbanks Reconstruction Corp. -- bear the establishment code "EST.492" inside the USDA inspection mark. The problem was discovered through microbiological sampling that traced the bacteria back to the product. [View Article](#),

FDA Approves Water-Spread Infection Drug

2 December – The Las Vegas Sun reported the government approved sale of the first treatment for a miserable infection spread through contaminated drinking water and dirty swimming pools - a drug called Alinia (nitazoxanide) intended especially for children sickened by the bug. It's highly unusual for the Food and Drug Administration to clear a new drug for children before it has been Okayed for adults to use. But the agency said manufacturer Romark Laboratories proved the liquid kids' version of its drug worked before it provided similar proof for adult-strength Alinia tablets. The drug treats diarrhea caused by cryptosporidium, a parasite spread by human and animal waste most common in developing countries but that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates causes up to 4,000 infections a year here, too. The chlorine that kills most germs in water doesn't kill cryptosporidium - it must be filtered out. In addition to drinking water, the bug also can contaminate swimming pools, mostly because of children's diaper leaks. [View Article](#)

Increases in Fluoroquinolone-Resistant *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* -- Hawaii and California, 2001

22 November – The CDC MMWR reported a summary of investigations of increases in *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* (QRNG) in Hawaii and California in 2001. This summary provides data to support the recommendation that fluoroquinolones should no longer be used as first-line gonorrhea treatment for infections acquired in these two states. While only sporadic cases of QRNG have been reported in other states, researchers note that there is risk of QRNG spreading throughout the United States. The article reminds clinicians throughout the U.S. to obtain a travel history of all patients suspected to have gonorrhea and to use cephalosporins, not fluoroquinolones, as treatment for gonorrhea acquired in Asia, Hawaii, and California. [View Report](#)

Mold Found in Schools Across U.S.

24 November – Medline Plus reported - Nationwide, school districts are finding allergy-inducing mold in walls, on carpets and near ventilation systems. While one report blames aging buildings and mold-promoting construction techniques, one expert says it's due to a lack of proper ventilation in newer schools. Another factor is the tendency of cash-strapped districts to delay maintenance and patch leaks, he said. Mold occurs naturally and can grow almost anywhere that's warm and damp. Mold problems usually go unnoticed until people become ill. No federal agency regulates or monitors air quality in schools, and few states inspect for it. [View article](#)

Postal Workers Getting Potassium Iodide

2 December – The Las Vegas Sun report American postal workers will be issued potassium iodide pills to protect against thyroid cancer in the event of a radiological emergency. The U.S. Postal Service said Monday that it was purchasing nearly 1.6 million pills for distribution to workers. The FDA-approved potassium iodide tablets are being offered to all 750,000 postal workers nationwide. Two tablets will be given to any employee who wants to have the pills in case of an emergency. [View Article](#)

Trouble With Pathogen Monitoring

26 November – CNN reported enforcement of a federal law meant to track the movement of dangerous pathogens among U.S. laboratories is fraught with problems, posing an "urgent and

potentially serious public health threat," congressional auditors said in a letter released Monday. The law required labs that transfer hazardous biological materials, known as "select agents," to register with the CDC. But if a laboratory had these agents before 1997, when the law took effect, it was not required to register with the CDC at all. Congress fixed that loophole this year, requiring all labs that possess select agents to register with CDC. The GAO found however that the CDC was not conducting adequate inspections of registered labs and was failing to keep track of material being transferred among labs. Its database of what labs had which agents included inaccurate or inconsistent entries, the GAO said. Additionally, the program was not independent enough from the CDC to inspect its own labs. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, charged with enforcing the law, said it is already working to fix the problems. [View Article](#) [View GAO Report](#)

Unexploded Arms Require Big Cleanup

25 November – The Washington Post reported unexploded munitions at 16,000 inactive military ranges, including chemical and biological weapons, pose "imminent and substantial" public health risks and could require the largest environmental cleanup program ever implemented by the U.S. government, according to newly released Environmental Protection Agency documents. The documents, made available by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER), a Washington-based advocacy group that advises environmental whistle-blowers, also state that EPA officials are concerned by the Pentagon's refusal to abide by EPA regulations when cleaning up the sites. One of the documents, a briefing paper written this summer for the EPA's head enforcement officer, cites a "disturbing trend" by the military services and the Army Corps of Engineers to limit their cleanup activities or "take ill-advised short-cuts to limit costs." The EPA documents released by PEER indicate the potential of far greater and costlier cleanup problems associated with unexploded ordnance than previously acknowledged by government officials. One senior EPA official, whose office produced two of the documents made public by PEER, said both those documents are more than two years old and cite problems related to Pentagon cleanup practices that have since been rectified. [View Article](#)

USPACOM

Anthrax Outbreak Hits Victoria, Australia

26 November – ProMed reported a Victorian beef property has been quarantined after anthrax killed a 17-month-old Hereford heifer. The Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) quarantined the property 50 km northwest of Swan Hill in northwestern Victoria after pathology samples confirmed diagnosis of the disease. The infected carcass was incinerated and remaining cattle on the property have been vaccinated. Investigations into why anthrax was confirmed in an area where it had previously been unreported were continuing. The property will remain quarantined for 42 days with no animals leaving it during this time. [View Article](#)

Cleaner Air Linked to Survival Boost in Hong Kong

22 November -Reuters Health reported new laws cutting emissions of the air pollutant sulfur dioxide may be responsible for a decrease in deaths in Hong Kong, according to a group of

researchers there. As of July 1990, all power plants and road vehicles in Hong Kong had to switch to a low-sulfur fuel. The result was a drop in sulfur dioxide by up to 80% as well as a 41% drop in sulfate in particulate matter in the most polluted areas, according to Dr. Anthony Johnson Hedley of the University of Hong Kong and colleagues. Hedley and colleagues monitored the death rate and air-pollution concentrations in Hong Kong for 5 years after July 1990. They found that the annual death rate due to all causes dropped by 2%, deaths from respiratory disease dropped 4% and cardiovascular-related deaths decreased by 2%.
SOURCE: The Lancet 2002; 360:1646-1652. [View Article](#)

India Experts Eye Mystery Child Virus

30 November IntelliHealth reported health experts have begun investigating a mysterious virus that has killed nearly 100 children and sickened hundreds of others over the last two months in India's northern state of Uttar Pradesh. Two teams of doctors and public health specialists from the federal and state government have begun investigations in Saharanpur to study the outbreak of the disease, said Navtej Singh, another administrator in Saharanpur. Children have also died in the neighboring Muzaffarnagar, Ghaziabad and Meerut districts, he said. Doctors and government authorities were divided over the cause of the virus, which caused patients to show symptoms similar to Japanese encephalitis. "This time it is not encephalitis. It's a viral fever," said Ganshyam Singh, Saharanpur's chief medical officer. "But we have not been able to identify the killer virus. We hope these two specialist teams will be able to do so." [View Article](#)
[View ProMed Commentary](#)

Japan - Ministry Reveals Steps to Prepare for Chemical Attacks

02 December — Japan Today reported that the health ministry notified regional governments of new measures to prepare for possible acts of terrorism using chemicals or viruses, specifically, providing training for doctors and equipping public health centers with protective gear. About 100 doctors and some 50 clinical laboratory technologists from emergency medical centers and major hospitals nationwide will participate in a training exercise on a chemical disaster to be held this week. They will receive training on decontamination from chemical substances, as well as the transportation and treatment of victims. As part of the plan, the ministry has distributed a guideline on diagnosing and treating anthrax, smallpox, tularemia and botulism to medical institutions. The ministry has also developed a system to provide air transport for blood products for transfusion and reagents for virus testing 24 hours a day. [View Article](#)

Water in Meerut, India Unfit for Drinking

2 December – The Times of India reported much of the drinking water, supplied through municipal pipes and hand pumps in villages and towns of Meerut division, has been found unfit for consumption. The water has a high content of heavy metals like iron, chromium, nickel, zinc and aluminum. Experts maintain that in many villages and municipal localities, the residents were forced to consume the water, which has been contaminated due to the untreated waste being thrown into Kalinadi. The use of pesticides and chemicals in excess by farmers in the villages of Jalalpur, Kudla and Jaibheem Nagar has also contributed to the problem. Senior medical officers posted in Daurala and Sakauti primary health centers have cautioned people against drinking the polluted water and warned that regular intake of the contaminated water may spread disease. A health officer in a government department admitted that the

consumption of the drinking water had caused fatal diseases, often diagnosed only when the patients came to them. [View Article](#)

"Yaa baa" Creating Teenage Addicts in Thailand

28 November – BBC News reported "yaa baa" - an innocuous looking pink pill - has created almost a million new teenage addicts within five years in Thailand. Yaa baa - tiny pink pills that look like sweets and smell of chocolate or vanilla, appeals to young tastes, but they are a form of methamphetamine, and are said to contain ephedrine, formaldehyde, caffeine and a variety of addictive agents and poisons, from heroine to cyanide. Yaa baa literally means "crazy medicine" because of its psychotic effects. In some cases the paranoia becomes overwhelming and addicts jump off buildings. Doctors have discovered evidence of irreversible brain damage. To date, 7,000 dealers have been arrested and 28 million yaa baa tablets seized. Most comes from the Wa State, an ethnic enclave inside Burma. [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/Hiupdate/>.

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ACRONYMS

AFMIC - Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center
BBC – British Broadcasting Company
BMJ – British Medical Journal
BSE – Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy
CIDRAP – Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy
CDC – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CNN – Cable News Network
CSR – Communicable Disease Surveillance and Response – A branch of the WHO
DoD/GEIS – Department of Defense/Global Emerging Infections System
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
MSNBC – Microsoft National Broadcasting Company
NASA – National Aeronautic and Space Association
NIH – National Institute of Health
NIOSH- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
VOA-Voice of America
WHO – World Health Organization