

USACHPPM
HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

01 August 2003

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

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HOT TOPICS

Collagen Sealant 'Speeds Healing'

25 July – BBC News reported pouring a collagen-based sealant into a wound could speed up healing - and may reduce scarring, say doctors. Collagen - a protein found naturally in skin - has long been used in preparations designed to aid healing. However, a team working at the Texas Agricultural Research Station combined it with other ingredients to make it more flexible, and stop it tearing if the patient moves. They believe it could become a cheaper option because it only has to be applied once. The prime market for such products is in the treatment of diabetic sores, which can be extremely slow to heal. When tested on laboratory rats, wounds closed in three days compared with six if left untreated. The animals displayed less scarring, although the researchers said there was no proof that this would be the case in humans. [View Article](#)

DHEA May Ward Off Heart Problems, Diabetes

25 July – Reuters reported DHEA, a popular supplement with men, can reduce artery stiffness and improve the body's sensitivity to insulin -- which may lower the risk of [heart disease](#) -- new study findings indicate. Levels of DHEA (dehydroepiandrosterone) decrease with age, and this is linked to an increased risk of coronary artery disease. Japanese researchers studied the effect of replenishing the hormone in of 24 older men with high cholesterol levels. Half the men were given 25 milligrams of DHEA daily for 12 weeks, while the other half were given an inactive placebo. DHEA treatment, but not the placebo, produced a significant improvement in endothelial function, a measure of artery flexibility. This benefit was apparent after just 4 weeks of treatment, note Dr. Hiroaki Kawano and a team from Kumamoto University School of Medicine in Japan. Treatment with DHEA also produced a significant drop in blood sugar levels without altering insulin levels. In other words, it improved insulin sensitivity, the researchers report in The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism. [View Article](#)

Gene 'Increases Breast Cancer Risk'

25 July – BBC News reported scientists have taken a step forward in their effort to understand why a key gene may increase the risks of developing [breast cancer](#). They have discovered how the gene, called Aurora2, works. This gene is over-expressed in 16% of all breast cancers and

in up to 94% of the most common form of the disease, invasive ductal adenocarcinoma. The scientists believe their discovery could help in the development of new drugs to fight breast cancer. Scientists believe that identifying women with this version of Aurora2 could also identify those at increased risk of developing breast cancer. They also believe it could help in the development of new drugs targeted at those women in this high-risk group. [View Article](#)

Global Warning on Smoking

27 July – BBC News reported over 10 million people could die from [smoking-related diseases](#) within 20 years, the former head of the World Health Organization has said. Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, who retired as WHO director general in May, predicted deaths will double unless governments act to cut smoking. Smoking-related diseases currently claim the lives of five million people each year. However, more and more people in the developing world are taking up the habit, sparking fears of an impending public health time bomb. Dr Brundtland urged governments to implement the WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. The landmark treaty was agreed by the WHO's 192 member states in May. [View Article](#)

Green Algae Augments Flu Shot

28 July – Health Day News reported green algae extract can boost the body's immune response to flu vaccine, says a Canadian study. Researchers from Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Ocean Nutrition Canada found that taking a carbohydrate extract of green algae in pill form greatly boosted the immune response to the [flu vaccine](#) in people aged 50 to 55. This is the first published human study to show how a derivative of food source algae improves the body's immune response to the influenza vaccine. The study appears in the current issue of the Canadian Medical Association Journal. The researchers found the people taking 400 milligrams per day of the algae extract had much greater antibody responses to the vaccine at seven and 21 days after vaccination. The algae extract caused no adverse effects, the study says. [View Article](#)

Interferon May Help Fight SARS

25 July — MSNBC News reported scientists said a synthetic version of a natural immune system protein could be an effective treatment against the deadly respiratory infection. Patients with [SARS](#), which emerged in southern China late last year, have been treated with steroids and the antiviral drug ribavirin with varying degrees of success, but researchers in Germany said recombinant interferon can prevent the virus from replicating. “Interferon beta could be the drug of choice, alone or in combination with other antiviral drugs, in the treatment of SARS,” said Jindrich Cinatl of Frankfurt University Medical School. The researchers tested the drug on two strains of the SARS coronavirus that were analyzed in Frankfurt and Hong Kong. Their results were reported in The Lancet medical journal Friday, a day after a government official in Hong Kong reported that 12 people had been admitted to hospital with suspected SARS. [View Article](#)

Key Protein Involved in Osteoporosis

23 July — MSNBC News reported British scientists experimenting with mice believe they may have found why post-menopausal women often suffer from [osteoporosis](#). The researchers discovered that mice lacking a key estrogen-regulating protein were unable to grow enough

bone cells. The finding could lead to new therapies to treat osteoporosis in post-menopausal women. Researchers at the Royal Veterinary College in London studied female mice that were bred both with and without a protein called estrogen receptor alpha, or ER-alpha. The hormone estrogen circulates in the bloodstream and binds to certain cells via estrogen receptors, protein molecules that regulate the level of estrogen. In humans, varying amounts of the receptors are present in almost every cell in the body. Researchers discovered that mice with active ER-alpha receptors formed three times more new bone than mice without the receptors. The study appears in Thursday's issue of the journal Nature. [View Article](#)

Prostate Test May Miss Many Tumors

23 July – MSNBC News reported the widely used PSA blood test, designed to look for early signs of [prostate cancer](#), misses 82 percent of tumors in men under 60, according to a study released Wednesday. The prostate-specific antigen test missed 65 percent of cancers in older males, the study, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, found. [View Article](#)

Treating Risk Factors Could Produce Health Gains

24 July – Reuters reported treating multiple risk factors that increase the odds of developing a variety of illnesses could nearly halve the number of premature deaths worldwide and increase life expectancy, researchers said. They identified 20 major factors ranging from vitamin and mineral deficiencies to smoking, drinking and poor sanitation and malnutrition and showed how treating them could slash deaths from major diseases. In research reported in The Lancet medical journal, Ezzati and his team assessed the impact of tackling the risk factors in 14 regions of the world. Eliminating them would increase global life expectancy by 9.3 years and add 16 years in parts of sub-Saharan Africa. [View Article](#)

U.N. Says It Can Eradicate Polio by 2005

29 July – Reuters reported U.N. health chiefs said they could eradicate [polio](#) on target by 2005 if governments in four key countries gave full backing to extensive immunization campaigns. The officials, from the U.N.'s World Health Organization (WHO) told reporters the disease might never be conquered unless a window of opportunity offered by a new flow of funds was used now. "Polio eradication is a top priority," said new WHO Director-General Lee Jong-wook. "We have eliminated it from almost every country in the world ... clearly eradicating it by 2005 is a doable job." The disease, which once paralyzed and killed thousands of children annually in dozens of countries, has claimed 235 victims so far this year, Lee said. In its wild virus form it is now concentrated in India, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Egypt, which account for 99 percent of all new cases, according to the WHO. It is also known to exist in Afghanistan. [View Article](#)

When Smokers Quit, Surgical Wounds Heal Better

25 July – Reuters reported quitting smoking for as little as 4 weeks can dramatically reduce the odds of wound infection after surgery, according to a new report. Surgery patients are routinely advised to quit smoking before their operation, and previous research has shown that abstinence from smoking can reduce post-op complications, including wound infection. However, exactly how long abstinence must be maintained to produce a benefit has been unclear. To investigate, Dr. Lars Tue Sorensen and colleagues, from Bispebjerg University Hospital in Copenhagen, studied the healing of small incisions in 78 volunteers. Some were

habitual smokers and some had never smoked. Wounds became infected in 12 percent of smokers, significantly more than the 2 percent of never-smokers, the investigators report in the *Annals of Surgery*. In addition, wounds broke open in 12 percent of smokers, while no ruptures were seen among never-smokers. After 4 weeks and again at 8 and 12 weeks, abstinent smokers were significantly less likely to develop a wound infection than continuous smokers. Moreover, this benefit did not depend on whether they quit using a nicotine or placebo patch.

[View Article](#)

USEUCOM

Cholera Kills at Least 74 in Northern Nigeria

29 July – ProMed reported the latest outbreak of [cholera](#) in Nigeria's northern state of Kano has claimed at least 74 lives, local radio reported on Wed, 23 Jul 2003. According to the report, about 500 others have been infected since the epidemic broke out a week ago in 20 of Kano State's 44 local government areas, including 2 in the crowded city of Kano itself. The Kano State government has reportedly allocated 300,000 naira (about 2,340 US dollars) for each of the 20 affected local government areas to help them contain the contagious disease. But the disease has spread to the neighboring areas and is expected to kill more. [View Report](#)

Liberia: International Organizations Concerned About Cholera Among Refugees

29 July – ProMed reported a WHO spokesperson reported that close to 1,950 cases of [cholera](#) have been registered over the past few weeks in Monrovia hospitals. More cases are expected. WHO warns of increasing health problems for the people in central Monrovia, where thousands of people have gathered out of fear of becoming victims to the armed offensive of the rebel group. The International Committee of the Red Cross, whose personnel remain in Monrovia, considers the security conditions in the capital extremely precarious. [View Report](#)

CAR: UNICEF Digs Wells to Fight Guinea Worm in East

29 July – AllAfrica.com reported the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) has begun digging 15 modern wells equipped with water pumps in the town of Bangassou, 742 km east of the capital of the Central African Republic (CAR), Bangui, where the [Guinea worm disease](#) has been reported by medical services. Dr Eugene Kpizingui, an epidemiologist and UNICEF health and nutrition project officer, said that the eastern provinces of Mbomou, Haut Mbomou, Haute Kotto and Vakaga were endemic zones, mostly because local populations did not have access to clean drinking water. He said the region was close to neighbouring Sudan, a highly endemic zone. Kpizingui said that the lack of early appropriate diagnosis and education contributed to the propagation of the disease. Kpizingui said the 15 wells being dug for Bangassou's 10,000 residents would not be enough and would need to be followed by others. In the east, he said, wells were handed over to local managing committees that collected money from users for maintenance of the pumps. In each village, Kpizingui added, UNICEF has trained two people on how to service wells and water pumps. [View Report](#)

Cases of Measles Rise in Europe between 2001-2002

28 July – Eurosurveillance reported a total of 17,928 [measles](#) cases were reported to EUVAC.NET in 2001-02, with a 41% increase between the 2 years, giving a crude incidence of 2.36 and 3.37 per 100,000 population respectively. Most reported cases were aged 1-9 years. Outbreak related measles cases amounted to 18% of reported cases in 2001 and 20% in 2002. Less than 1% of cases were known to be imported in 2001 and 2002. Encephalitis as a severe complication was reported in 21 in 2001 and 6 cases 2002. One death attributed to measles was reported in 2001. The proportion of reported cases with known vaccination status increased from 56% of cases in 2001 to 72% in 2002. Overall, the proportion of reported measles cases that were unvaccinated rose from 50% in 2001 to 66% in 2002. [View Report](#)

Russia (Volga Region) – Parasitic Infection

23 July – ProMed reported a new subcutaneous [parasite](#) was discovered in Ulyanovsk, Volga Region. Physicians misdiagnosed the infection as a tumor. Parasitologist Viktor Kiselev suggests that it was caused by eating dried fish. Other theories point to raw or semi-raw food, or perhaps this unknown parasite was carried by birds and fish and has adapted to life in a closed reservoir. One possible diagnosis is *Sparganosis*, which is caused by a cestode occasionally infecting man. It migrates through the tissues and sometimes can be found inside a skin cyst. Infection is transmitted from drinking water infected with invertebrates hosting an intermediate stage of the parasite. [View Report](#) [View Report2](#)

Sharp Rise in Syphilis Cases Alarms Germany

28 July – Yahoo News reported Germany saw a dramatic jump in [syphilis](#) cases last year, part of an alarming trend in many Western countries that may point to increasing carelessness when it comes to safe sex. The Robert Koch Institute (RKI) for infectious diseases reported 2,275 cases of the sexually transmitted disease in 2002, 720 more than one year before. Most of the new cases were among gay and bisexual men and were concentrated in the cities of Berlin and Hamburg, the institute said in a statement. RKI epidemiologist Ulrich Marcus said the findings indicated "more risky behavior" among homosexual men, noting that syphilis often appeared as a "co-infection" in HIV (news - web sites) patients. The number of men among patients infected with syphilis rose by 85 percent in 2002 while the number of heterosexuals affected remained stable. [View Article](#)

Two Die of Legionnaire's Disease in Germany

29 July – ProMed reported two patients in a hospital in eastern Germany have died of [Legionnaires' disease](#), the state of Brandenburg's social ministry said on Tuesday. The two patients died in a hospital in Frankfurt-on-Oder, near the Polish border, the ministry said, adding officials were investigating how the virus could have reached the hospital. [View Report](#)

Uganda: Sandfly Disease Hits Nakapiripirit

30 July – AllAfrica.com reported fifteen people have been reported to be suffering from [Kalazar disease \(Mucocutaneous Leishmaniasis\)](#) in Nakapiripirit district. Kalazar is a killer disease transmitted by the sandfly. An epidemiological report released by the Ministry of Health

indicates that all the affected people have been treated. The most affected areas are Alakas, Lolepon, Naremit, Loro, Amudat and Karita sub-counties along the Uganda-Kenya border. These areas are plains that experience hot, humid climate throughout the year. The searing heat in the semi-arid region provides optimum conditions for the sand flies to breed. Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF)'s intervention has helped keep the situation under control, but officials report there is still a need to sensitize the population about the causes and prevention of the disease. [View Report](#)

USCENTCOM

Afghanistan: Sandstorms Affect Over Ten Thousand People

24 July –IRIN reported the United Nations in Kabul reported this week that more than 12,000 people living in 57 villages had been badly affected by serious sandstorms in the Lash Juwayan and Shib Koh districts of western Farah province. "Up to 20 villages had to be evacuated because they were covered in sand which was banked up against the walls of homes and compounds," Manoel de Almedia el Silva, spokesman for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), told IRIN. The UN spokesman said the storms had left hundreds of people homeless, destroyed crops and contaminated water supplies. [View Article](#)

Iraq - Death of Soldier Will be Investigated Amid Spike in Pneumonia Cases

28 July – ProMed reported epidemiologists are investigating 2 unusual deaths from illness among troops in the Middle East to see whether they are related to 10 cases of severe [pneumonia](#). A 20-year-old male from Missouri died of an illness 12 Jul 2003. His parents said the disease caused various organs to break down. 2 researchers have already been sent to the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, where this patient was treated before his death. The U.S. Army surgeon general's office stated an additional team of 6 researchers is preparing to fly to Iraq to investigate. The cases under investigation have occurred since 1 Mar 2003. Another soldier died about a month earlier, on 17 Jun 2003. Col. Robert DeFraités, the surgeon general's senior preventative-medicine physician, said officials have not yet been able to identify a specific bacterium or virus that could have caused such severe cases of pneumonia. "It's not entirely unheard of for this to happen," said DeFraités. He said that in the past 5 years, 17 soldiers have died of acute respiratory distress syndrome. However, he said it is uncommon for pneumonia to cause a breakdown in organs other than the lungs. [View Report](#)

Israeli Laser to Make Bomb Squads' Job Safer

30 July – Reuters reported bomb disposal experts may soon have an alternative to their hazardous hands-on duties, thanks to a laser detector under development at Israel's nuclear research center. The instrument uses a laser beam's ultra-violet spectrum to "light up" molecules in fumes given off by TNT explosives from a distance of eight feet, a spokesman at Nahal Soreq said. "This project was launched in the 1990s to contend with the threat of terrorist smugglers on our borders," the spokesman said of the prototype, for which no marketing date has been set. According to the spokesman, Nahal Soreq intends to expand the laser detector's operating range to 30 feet. [View Article](#)

Scandinavia - Ethyl Glycol Poisoning from Rum

28 July – ProMed reported Norway's Food Control Authority (SNT) warned Wednesday that bootleg [black market] rum emanating from Estonia had already caused one fatality in Finland. The SNT fears tourists may have purchased bottles via illegal channels. "We want to warn people against drinking 'Captain Morgan Black Label Jamaican Rum' if they are unsure it has been purchased via legal channels," said SNT information consultant Oeyvind Henriksen in a press release. According to the SNT Finnish and Estonian police are investigating the case, and Norwegians should refuse to drink the product unless it comes from one of the state alcohol monopoly outlets in the Nordic countries. Finnish authorities say that the fake Captain Morgan bottles containing [ethyl glycol](#) have been very professionally prepared. The bootleg bottles include original labels and a sealed cork. [View Report](#)

Pakistan: Sindh Death Toll Reaches 81 After Heavy Rains

28 July – IRIN reported at least 59 people died and hundreds of thousands were left stranded in the southern province of Sindh after heavy rains flooded an entire district over the weekend, bringing the total number of rain-related deaths to 81 in a week, and forcing the provincial government to declare an emergency, officials said. Sindh's chief minister has declared an emergency, and the provincial governor has set up a relief cell to coordinate humanitarian efforts battling the pounding rains. Army and navy personnel had been called in to assist local administrations. But hopes that the abnormally high rainfall might abate, thereby assisting struggling relief workers to help the marooned populace of Badin, a district about 300 km northeast of Karachi, were dashed by fresh weather forecasts warning of more rains over the next two days. The Sindh authorities were preparing for a worst-case scenario and intended to evacuate locals should the impending storm worsen matters, Salahuddin said. [View Article](#)

Tajikistan: Malaria Back with a Vengeance, Experts Say

24 July – IRIN reported [malaria](#) remains a source of concern in Tajikistan due in part to the collapse of preventive measures after the country gained independence in 1991. Cases of the deadly malaria falciparum have increased in the past year. "The current situation with malaria in Tajikistan is very similar to that of 2002," Nazira Artykova, head of the World Health Organisation (WHO) office in Tajikistan, told IRIN from the capital, Dushanbe, adding that according to official statistics, the total number of registered cases for the first six months of 2003 was 1,474, showing a decrease of 3.1 percent compared to 1,521 incidences in 2002. Meanwhile, the number of malaria falciparum (Plasmodium falciparum), the most deadly type of the disease, had increased from 17 in 2002 to 39 in 2003, she said. [View Article](#)

US Health Military Official: Iraq's Health Care System Being Rebuilt

26 July – VOA News reported the U.S. military's top health official says American and Iraqi medical professionals are rebuilding the country's health care system with help from other countries and international donors. Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., just back from Iraq, says U.S. administrator Paul Bremer has approved a huge increase in spending for the nation's Health Ministry. He notes that the agency is reopened with much of its old staff, except former Baath Party members, and will get \$211 million for the next six months. The new budget is more than 20 times the under-\$20 million a year that ousted dictator Saddam Hussein had spent on health care. According to Dr. Winkenwerder, that amounted to less than one dollar per Iraqi per year.

"There had been very little investment for 10 to 15 years," he said. The U.S. military official says Saddam Hussein used Iraq's health system to punish and traumatize people. He points out that the government forced physicians to torture or mutilate opponents, polluted the water supply of one southern city, and withheld medical services from regions. [View Article](#)

USNORTHCOM

Brady Announces Collaborative Grant to University of Pennsylvania, Uzbek Scientists to Develop Radiation Injury Treatment

24 July – EurekaAlert reported Congressman Robert A. Brady (D., PA), a member of the House Armed Services and House Administration Committees, in conjunction with the U.S. Civilian Research and Development Foundation, announced a cooperative anti-terrorism research grant of \$68,000 to a team of University of Pennsylvania and Russian scientists who will be working on treatments for [radiation injuries](#) and the management of blood diseases. The grant comes from the U.S. Civilian Research and Development Foundation (CRDF). Congressman Brady said the grant supports innovative and cooperative research that is critical in the global fight against terrorism. "These times demand scientific innovation to counter the complexity of the dangers the world faces because of the spread of weapons of mass destruction." [View Article](#)

Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) update

25 July – ProMed reported a 10-year-old child from Valdosta, Georgia is in critical condition after becoming ill with [eastern equine encephalitis](#). The child is the state's second human case of the mosquito-borne disease. In Georgia, 32 horses and 10 birds have also been infected. Health officials in Florida said 2 children have become ill after contracting the virus, and 168 horses have been infected. [View Report](#) 30 July – The Baltimore Sun reported two horses on the Eastern Shore of Maryland have tested positive for eastern equine encephalitis, the first time in seven years that the often-deadly mosquito-borne disease has been found in animals or humans in Maryland. The confirmation of equine encephalitis near Pocomoke City in Worcester County sparked serious concern among both agricultural and health officials. The two horses in Worcester were found on separate farms outside of Pocomoke City that are about six miles apart, duPont said. After displaying neurological symptoms, both were euthanized. Tests of their brain tissue confirmed the diagnosis. Additional aerial spraying for mosquitoes is already being planned for the areas around the two farms, perhaps as soon as tomorrow night, said Cyrus Lesser, chief of the state Department of Agriculture's mosquito control division. [View Report](#)

Stillborn, Aborted, Deformed Foals May be Linked to West Nile Virus Vaccine

24 July – ProMed reported according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), there have been several dozen cases of deformities and stillborn foals throughout the nation. The USDA is investigating whether a new [West Nile](#) vaccine could be responsible for these defects. According to the USDA, they have received enough information to warrant an investigation. In 2002, a West Nile vaccine manufactured by Fort Dodge was approved and distributed. Nearly 7 million doses were given to horses the first year. In most cases the vaccine prevented or

minimized symptoms and has saved the lives of many horses. It appears that the problem is showing up in the foals of mares that were vaccinated while in foal. [View Report](#)

U.S. Launches New System to Track Spread of AIDS

27 July – CNN News reported amid signs that the battle against [AIDS](#) may be waning in the United States, federal health officials Sunday unveiled a new tracking system that they say will more accurately measure the spread of the virus that causes the deadly disease. The new surveillance strategy, which was announced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on the opening day of the 2003 National HIV Prevention Conference in Atlanta, was prompted by a need for more precise data on HIV infections, according to agency officials. An estimated 40,000 new HIV infections occur in the nation each year, according to the CDC. The cornerstone of the new tracking system is a blood test that can supposedly determine whether an HIV infection occurred in the previous six months. The test is run only after an initial HIV test is positive. [View Article](#)

Wyoming: 4th Fatal Case of Hantavirus Infection

25 July – ProMed reported a Lovell man has become only the 4th person in Wyoming to die of [hantavirus](#) infection. The man died on Sat [20 Jul 2003], but test results did not confirm hantavirus until Tuesday. Scott Seys, deputy state epidemiologist, planned to hold a meeting in Lovell on Thursday night to educate the public on the virus and ways to reduce exposure, department spokesman Ross Doman said. The Lovell man's death is the 4th in Wyoming since the disease was first detected in 1993. A Casper woman died in 2002, while the other 3 deaths were reported in Lincoln and Fremont counties. Up to the end of June 2003, 339 cases have been reported nationwide, with about 38 percent of these resulting in death. The disease has surfaced in 31 states, including Montana, where 2 people have died this year. [View Report](#)

USPACOM

Earthquake Aftershocks Rattle Nerves in Japan

28 July – Reuters reported thousands of people were set to spend a third night in makeshift shelters in northern Japan on Monday, as a series of aftershocks rattled an area where hundreds had been injured in more powerful earthquakes over the weekend. Around 500 people were injured and a similar number of homes damaged or destroyed in Saturday's quakes in Miyagi prefecture, 300 km (186 miles) north of Tokyo. The tremors also triggered landslides and power cuts. Residents' nerves were frayed by the continuing quakes, although there were no reports of further substantial damage. Japan is one of the world's most earthquake-prone nations, sitting on the junction of at least three tectonic plates. [View Article](#)

India: More Dengue Fever Cases Reported in Kerala

26 July – ProMed reported at least 8 cases of [dengue fever](#) were confirmed in serological tests conducted on inpatients at the SAT and General Hospital. The dengue cases included an 8-month-old child from Pangappara, who is under treatment at the SAT Hospital, and a 20-year-old woman patient from Pallichal whose report testing positive for dengue reached the

authorities after she had been discharged from the General Hospital. The other confirmed cases of dengue were reported from Vellanad, Vattiyoorkavu, Malayinkeezh, Poonthura, Maranalloor, and Balaramapuram. The patients are under treatment at the General Hospital. Meanwhile, serological confirmation is awaited in 8 cases of suspected dengue. The total number of [dengue] fever registrations at outpatient clinics at various health care institutions in the district on Tue 22 Jul 2003 was 1206, officials said. [View Report](#)

India Sees Big HIV/AIDS Rise

25 July – The Global Health Council reported the number of people in India infected with the [HIV/AIDS](#) virus has risen sharply, according to figures released last week. More than 4.5 million Indians were infected by the end of 2002, India's National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) says. The figure for 2001 was below four million. ... "HIV/AIDS in India is not only confined to high-risk groups and in cities, but is gradually spreading into rural areas and the general population," said NACO director, Meenakshi Datta Ghosh. [View Article](#)

Influenza in Hong Kong, Special Administrative Region of China

28 July – WHO reported as of 28 July the Department of Health in Hong Kong SAR China has reported the occurrence of four institutional outbreaks of an [influenza](#)-like illness (ILI). Two in elderly homes and two in homes for the mentally ill including the Lai King Hostel. The number of affected persons in each of these outbreaks ranged from 7-24. As of 26 July, 31 patients from these institutions remain in hospital. All are in a stable condition except one who has a genetic condition and is in an intensive care unit. None of the laboratory tests conducted so far is positive for SARS. At least eight patients from the Lai King Hostel outbreak have positive laboratory results for influenza A. The Government Virus Unit of Hong Kong, SAR China has isolated 2 viruses from this outbreak which are further subtyped as similar to the reference strain A/Panama/2007/99(H3N2), the recommended strain for influenza vaccination for 2003-2004 influenza season by WHO. [View Report](#)

Philippines: Department of Health Warns Of Possible Dengue Outbreak

26 July – ProMed reported a Department of Health (DOH) official is warning the public of a possible outbreak of Dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF) with the coming of the rainy season. Assistant Secretary Dr. Rolando Enrique Domingo said health officials are now monitoring the whole country where flooding is prevalent. Flooding usually brings about an increase in the incidence of [dengue fever](#). Domingo said that as of the first week of June 2003, the DOH has recorded more than 4000 dengue cases nationwide, a 61 percent increase compared to the same period last year. There were 54 deaths recorded. Domingo disclosed that this year's records show that the disease has infected individuals with ages ranging from one month to 87 years. About 48 percent of the cases, Domingo added, belonged to the 1-9 years age group. A case fatality ratio of 1 percent and above was noted among age groups under one year and 1-9 years of age. The regions with the highest number of cases were the National Capital Region with 875 incidents, Central Visayas with 752 infected individuals, and Northern Mindanao with 634. There were no hotspots or outbreaks observed, he added. "However, clustering of cases was noted in Pinagbuhatan, Pasig, Metro Manila." [View Report](#)

USSOUTHCOM

Brazil (Sao Paulo) - Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever

25 July – ProMed reported 5 deaths from [Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever \(RMSF\)](#) have been confirmed in recent weeks from the cities of Campinas, Piracicaba, and Pedreira in Sao Paulo state, Brazil. The disease is transmitted by the tick *Amblyomma cajennense*, which is abundant during the current dry season. Main hosts of the tick are rodents such as the aquatic capybara and horses, according to veterinarian Eliane de Carvalho, of the Zoonoses Center in Piracicaba. One 54-year-old victim lived in the Monte Alegre district, on the banks of the Rio Piracicaba, where capybaras are found. In Campinas, 2 retirees aged 59 and 65 years, neighbors in the Jardim Santa Eudoxia, also died of the infection. The other 2 fatal cases were in Pedreira, according to the State secretary for Health. Household visits to explain the disease are being made, and ticks are being collected by the Superintendency for the Control of Endemics (Sucen) to test for rickettsia, the type of bacteria which causes the infection. [View Report](#)

Severe Tungiasis in Underprivileged Communities: Case Series from Brazil

01 August – Emerging Infectious Diseases journal published an article on [tungiasis](#), an ectoparasitosis endemic in economically depressed communities in South American and African countries. Tungiasis is usually considered an entomologic nuisance and does not receive much attention from healthcare professionals. However, during a study on tungiasis-related disease in an economically depressed area in Fortaleza, northeast Brazil, the authors identified 16 persons infested with an extremely high number of parasites. These patients had >50 lesions each and showed signs of intense acute and chronic inflammation. Superinfection of the lesions had led to pustule formation, suppuration, and ulceration. Debilitating sequelae, such as loss of nails and difficulty in walking, were constant. In economically depressed urban neighborhoods characterized by a high transmission potential, poor housing conditions, social neglect, and inadequate healthcare behavior, tungiasis may develop into severe disease. [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/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