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HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

20 June 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

Cumulative Number of Reported Probable Cases of SARS From: 1 Nov 2002¹ To: 18 June 2003

Country	Cumulative # of case(s) ²	# of deaths	Date last probable case reported	Date for which cases is current
Australia	5	0	12/May/2003	13/Jun/2003
Brazil	3	0	9/Jun/2003	9/Jun/2003
Canada	246	33	16/Jun/2003	17/Jun/2003
China	5326	347	11/Jun/2003	18/Jun/2003
China, Hong ⁴	1755	295	11/Jun/2003	18/Jun/2003
China, Macao	1	0	21/May/2003	12/Jun/2003
China, Taiwan	697	83	15/Jun/2003	18/Jun/2003
Colombia	1	0	5/May/2003	5/May/2003
Finland	1	0	7/May/2003	20/May/2003
France	7	0	9/May/2003	22/May/2003
Germany	10	0	4/Jun/2003	18/Jun/2003
India	3	0	13/May/2003	14/May/2003
Indonesia	2	0	23/Apr/2003	18/Jun/2003
Italy	9	0	29/Apr/2003	18/Jun/2003
Kuwait	1	0	9/Apr/2003	20/Apr/2003
Malaysia	5	2	20/May/2003	17/Jun/2003
Mongolia	9	0	6/May/2003	2/Jun/2003
New Zealand	1	0	30/Apr/2003	17/Jun/2003
Philippines	14	2	15/May/2003	12/Jun/2003
Republic of Ireland	1	0	21/Mar/2003	12/Jun/2003
Republic of Korea	3	0	14/May/2003	18/Jun/2003
Romania	1	0	27/Mar/2003	22/Apr/2003
Russian Federation	1	0	31/May/2003	31/May/2003
Singapore	206	31	18/May/2003	11/Jun/2003
South Africa	1	1	9/Apr/2003	3/May/2003
Spain	1	0	2/Apr/2003	5/Jun/2003
Sweden	3	0	18/Apr/2003	13/May/2003
Switzerland	1	0	17/Mar/2003	16/May/2003
Thailand	9	2	7/Jun/2003	16/Jun/2003
United Kingdom	4	0	29/Apr/2003	17/Jun/2003
United States	75	0	17/Jun/2003	17/Jun/2003
Viet Nam	63	5	14/Apr/2003	7/Jun/2003
Total	8465	801		

Notes:

Cumulative number of cases includes number of deaths.

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

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

2. A decrease in the number of cumulative cases and discrepancies in the difference between cumulative number of cases of the last and the current WHO update are attributed to the discarding of cases.

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

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

[SARS Travel Recommendations Summary Table - 18 June](#)

[View Source](#)

Dengue Fever Mystery Reported Solved

15 June – ABC News reported scientists now believe they know why while some diseases leave the patient with immunity against future attacks, people with [dengue fever](#) get sicker the second time around. And their finding may help lead to ways to fight the dangerous mosquito-borne illness. The problem is "original antigenic sin" on the part of the immune system, according to a team led by Gavin Screaton. There are four subtypes of dengue, and people infected with the disease mount an immune response to fight off the version that infects them. If a patient later acquires a different subtype, however, the immune system mounts an attack directed at the original form of the disease, the researchers found in a study of volunteers in Thailand. That means they produce immune cells that are less effective against the new form, which can then attack the victim more strongly, the team reports in a paper scheduled for the July issue of the journal Nature Medicine. Having the body respond to the wrong form of the dengue virus complicates the process of developing a vaccine. [View Article](#)

Erectile Dysfunction: Learn More Because It Could Save Your Life

14 June – Health Day reported [Erectile dysfunction](#) or ED -- the inability to have an erection or sustain one long enough for intimate relations -- is a condition that regularly affects some 30 million American men. While once believed to be a largely unavoidable rite of passage into the senior years, chronic erectile dysfunction is now showing up in much younger men, often beginning as early as 40 years old, experts say. "It's an important barometer of a man's overall health -- particularly the health of the blood vessels. So if a man is at risk for any type of [vascular disease](#), he is also at risk for ED, regardless of his age," says Dr. Andrew McCollough, director of Sexual Health, Fertility and Microsurgery at New York University Medical Center. [View Article](#)

Experts Okay Artemisinin Therapy for Malaria Cure

12 June – AllAfrica.com reported The World Health Organization (WHO) Expert Committee on Malaria has urged countries to urgently switch to combination therapy of [artemisinin](#) drugs and other effective schizonticides as a way of combating the increasing resistant of [malaria](#) to [chloroquine and other monotherapies](#). Artemisinin is derived from a Chinese herb and research has shown that it kills the malaria parasite very fast, ensuring the patient recovers rapidly and with very few side effects. Research showed that when two or more drugs with different biochemical targets in the malaria parasite are used in combination, the development of resistance to both drugs can be delayed. Artemisinin based combination therapies (ACTs) are said to have the highest therapeutic efficacy and the greatest potential to delay the onset of resistance. [View Article](#)

Hand-Held Scanner Designed to Detect Cancer

11 June – Reuters reported Italian scientists have developed and are testing a hand held scanner, similar to metal detectors used in airports, to diagnose cancerous tumors. In clinical trials of the device called Trimprobe, the scanner pinpointed 93 percent of [prostate cancer](#) tumors that were later confirmed by biopsies. "The development holds out the prospect of a mass-screening technology that is cheap, quick and non-invasive," New Scientist magazine said. The white plastic baton, which was developed by physicist Clarbruno Vedruccio of the University of Bologna and the Italian aerospace firm Galileo Avionica, is passed over the body. There is no need to undress.

[View Article](#)

Inhaled Insulin Product Proves Safe

16 June – Reuters reported a clinical trial showed its inhaled [insulin](#) product did not significantly hurt patients' ability to breathe, a safety concern that had delayed the drug's progress toward regulatory review. Nektar, previously known as Inhale Therapeutics, said the treatment, called Exubera, reduced blood sugar levels in [diabetics](#) more than a commonly used therapy in the late-stage, or Phase III trials. The inhaled product was originally expected to be submitted to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in 2002 or even earlier, but was delayed because of concerns that it might hurt lung function, or patients' ability to breathe. The results of the trial were presented at an annual meeting of the American Diabetes Association in New Orleans. [View Article](#) [View Related Journal Article](#)

Linking Weak Sperm and Pesticides

18 June – Newsday reported men with high levels of three common pesticides in their urine are more than 10 times as likely to have low-quality sperm than men who haven't been exposed to the chemicals, according to a new study. Researchers cautioned that the study by Shanna Swan of the University of Missouri at Columbia is far from definitive, and relied on a small sample size - just 86 men in Missouri and Minnesota. But they said her results were so powerful that many scientists will quickly seek to test her study's suggestion that the widely-used weed killers [alachlor](#) and [atrazine](#) and the insecticide [diazinon](#) may be affecting the fertility of men who drink water tainted with the compounds. The study adds new fuel to a decade-long controversy over whether toxic chemicals are responsible for the fact that male infertility is increasing in some parts of the world. It also comes at a time when atrazine, the nation's most heavily used pesticide, is under intense scrutiny by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. A study last year suggested that the weed-killer is making male frogs in the Midwest grow female gonads, prompting an ongoing EPA review. Atrazine, alachlor and diazinon have been found in drinking-water supplies throughout North America, including the Northeast, but the greatest contamination has tended to be in farm belt states like Missouri. [View article](#)

Manic-depression Gene ID'd

16 June - CNN News reported scientists say they have identified a flawed gene that appears to promote [manic-depression](#), or bipolar disorder -- a finding that could eventually help guide scientists to new treatments. A particular variant of the gene was associated with only about 3 percent of cases in a study, but researchers said other variants might be involved with more. Follow-up research might help reveal the mysterious underlying biology that makes some people susceptible to the disorder, and so help scientists devise new treatments, said the study's senior author, Dr. John Kelsoe of the University of California, San Diego. The work is reported in Monday's issue of the journal Molecular Psychiatry. [View Article](#)

Measuring Melanoma's Spread

16 June – Health Day News reported symptoms such as bleeding, pain, itching, lumps and a change in lesion size can be used by doctors to better assess the extent of [melanoma](#). The study included 369 people newly diagnosed with melanoma. Among other things, researchers collected data about the symptoms the study volunteers experienced before their initial visit. People who had bleeding were 7.5 times more likely to have either a thick versus intermediate melanoma or an intermediate versus thin melanoma, the study found. And the presence of pain, a lump or itching were all associated with deeper cancer invasion. Only change in color and skin breakdown were not associated with depth of cancer invasion. The study is published in the 15 June issue of Cancer. [View Article](#)

Miso Soup, Soy Compound Lowers Breast Cancer Risk

17 June – Reuters reported Japanese women who are frequent eaters of miso soup, a soy-filled staple of Japanese cuisine, and soy ingredients called [isoflavones](#) appear to be less likely to develop [breast cancer](#). Women in Asian countries have only a fraction of the risk of breast cancer seen in Western countries, and the current findings add to a growing body of evidence that suggests isoflavone intake might help explain why. In Japan, for instance, women typically consume approximately 700 times more isoflavones than U.S. whites. Still, more studies are needed to determine whether the soy ingredient does, in fact, reduce breast cancer risk, study author Dr. Seiichiro Yamamoto of the National Cancer Center Research Institute in Tokyo said. However, eating a little extra soy couldn't hurt, the researcher added. [View Report](#)

New Antibiotics 'Could Prove Deadly'

16 June – BBC News reported a new class of antibiotics offers massive benefits to today's patients - but could place future generations in danger, say experts. Some scientists say that the principle behind a new crop of drugs currently under development will make it far tougher for bugs to become resistant to them. This is because they work in the same way as many of the methods that the body itself has always used to rid itself of bacterial infections. But other researchers say that it is quite possible that bacteria will acquire resistance - and when they do, this will make life far more difficult, as our own defense mechanisms will be rendered far less potent. The new family of drugs, called "Ramp" antimicrobials, is being developed in response to growing resistance to existing antibiotic drugs. [View Article](#)

Scientists Build a Bridge for New Bone

16 June – The University of Toronto reported scientists have developed a biodegradable scaffold, similar in structure to a dish sponge that significantly speeds the rate of bone healing. The material, developed by an interdisciplinary team with expertise in engineering, biology, chemistry and dentistry, provides a building scaffold for bone growth. The scaffold, which eventually dissolves, increases healing rates and offers a potential new treatment for bone loss in cases such as trauma or spinal fusions. The study appears in the June 15 issue of the Journal of Biomedical Materials Research Part A. [View Article](#)

Suicide Rates Fall in Many Countries, Rise in Some

18 June – Reuters reported while [suicide](#) rates have declined in most of the world, the problem is on the upswing in countries such as Russia, Australia and Ireland, according to a new report. In the case of Russia, the situation has become so serious that suicide is the major cause of death among young males. "This indicates the importance and urgency of integrated medical, but mainly social, interventions in the prevention of suicide in these areas of the world," the report's lead author, Dr. Fabio Levi said. Levi and his colleagues updated global statistics on suicide, using World Health Organization data from the 1960s to late 1990s. A summary of their findings is published in the June edition of the European Journal of Public Health. [View Article](#)

USEUCOM

Cholera in Democratic Republic of the Congo

13 June – The WHO reported as of 8 June, the Ministry of Health, Democratic Republic of the Congo has reported a total of 13,452 cases of [cholera](#) including 380 deaths (case fatality rate, 2.82%) in the country. The most affected provinces are Sud Kivu (1387 cases including 26 deaths, case fatality rate, 1.87%), Katanga (7557 cases with 221 deaths, case fatality rate, 2.92 %), and Kasai Oriental (3,098 cases and 89 deaths, case fatality rate, 2.87%), with most of the cases occurring in the Tsilingue area. The epidemic seems to be spreading in Kasai Oriental as three new health areas were affected during the week of 1-8 June. There is also a high risk of spread to the neighboring province, Kasai Occidental. The Governor of Kasai Oriental province has organized a cholera task force meeting with partners including WHO to look at how to increase capacity in the cholera treatment centers and how to provide supplies for patients with severe dehydration. [View Report](#)

Georgia Finds Dirty Bomb Material in Taxi

16 June – Alert Net reported Georgian authorities have found highly [radioactive material](#) that could be used in a "[dirty](#)" [bomb](#) and a container of lethal [Mustard Gas](#) in a taxi in the capital Tbilisi, police said. Police searched the taxi on May 31 and found two metal boxes stuffed with [radioactive by-products of nuclear fission](#); [Cesium-137](#) and [Strontium-90](#). One container, inscribed in Russian and English, weighed at least 80 kg (170 lb). A separate container had Mustard Gas, or Yperite, an odorless chemical used in World War One and which can be lethal in small quantities. [View Article](#)

Kyrgyzstan: Health Experts Warn of Possible Malaria Outbreak

16 June - IRIN News reported health experts warn of a possible [malaria](#) outbreak in Kyrgyzstan, the south of which was affected by the disease last year. Whereas there had been only 28 officially registered cases of malaria in 2001, that number rose to 2,744 in 2002. According to the deputy director-general of the sanitary-epidemic inspection department of the health ministry, malaria had been largely confined to the southern provinces of Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken, most likely as a result of the disease's prevalence in Tajikistan and Afghanistan. [View Article](#)

Nigeria: Cases of Meningitis and Measles Recorded in Bauchi State

13 June – AllAfrica.com reported a total of 43 cases of [cerebro-spinal meningitis](#) have been recorded at the Federal Medical Centre (FMC), Azare, Bauchi State from February to April this year. The zonal health officer also said that 21 cases of [measles](#) were recorded at the center within the same period. He however, assured that all the cases of the killer diseases had been successfully treated, and therefore advised the public to report the outbreak of these diseases with dispatch to any health out post for prompt action. [View Article](#)

Spain: 2 New Outbreaks of Legionella

11 June – ProMed reported one person has died and 24 others have become infected as [legionellosis](#) has reappeared in the Autonomous Community of Valencia recently. The death of one person and the 10 cases of infection diagnosed since 28 May 2003 have revealed the existence of 2 new outbreaks. The first was an outbreak in Alcoy (the eighth since 1999) and nearby areas,

followed by an outbreak in Castellon that originated in the Oncology Department of the Provincial Hospital. The bacteria seem to be prominent in Valencia, and particularly in the industrial zone of Alcoy in the province of Alicante, where almost 300 cases of infection have been registered since the disease was first detected in 1999. Sources of the disease have been located and cleaning measures have been implemented. [View Report](#)

USCENTCOM

Pakistani Drug Addicts Await Afghan Crop

17 June – News Day reported [heroin](#) production is rising in Afghanistan following the ouster of the Taliban, despite efforts by the new government to crack down on production. This year -- after the best poppy harvest in 18 months -- Afghanistan is again expected to be the world's No. 1 producer of opium with a harvest of more than 4,000 tons, according to a U.N. survey. But that heroin still hasn't been processed, and it hasn't reached the streets of Karachi. About 1.5 grams of low-quality heroin powder now sells for up to \$1.60 on Karachi streets, up from 35 cents a year ago. While cheap by Western standards, it's a lot of money for Pakistan's poor. Authorities say they have helped keep prices high by aggressively stopping cross-border trafficking, but they acknowledge they don't stop all of it. Pakistan is not only a key route for the international narcotics smuggling from Afghanistan, but is also a big market -- with its estimated four million drug addicts. [View Article](#)

Pakistani Injection Drug Users Twice as Likely to Donate Blood

17 June – Eurekalert reported thirty percent of [injection drug users](#) in Pakistan are paid to donate blood, which could contaminate the global blood supply and increase the spread of [HIV/AIDS](#) and hepatitis B and C, according to a study in three Pakistani cities conducted by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The study, "HIV/AIDS Risk Behaviors and Correlates of Injection Drug Use Among Drug Users in Pakistan," appears in the June 2003, issue of the Journal of Urban Health. Steffanie Strathdee, PhD, found that injection drug users were twice as likely to donate blood as non-injectors, which is not surprising since some blood donor clinics in Pakistan pay for blood donations. Unless appropriate screening of blood occurs, blood-borne infections could spread to the Pakistani general population like wildfire, as has been the case in other countries, like China." [View Article](#)

Stigma Fuels Spread of Tuberculosis

16 June – IRIN News reported while the shortage of adequate medical equipment and expertise continues to hamper the treatment of [TB](#) in northern Iraq, health-care workers say the associated social stigma has fuelled its spread. Against a backdrop of inadequate nutrition, poor water and lack of sanitation, TB continues to impose a heavy burden of ill health in three of Iraq's northern governorates - Dahuk, Arbil and Sulaymaniyah. Arbil's only TB clinic, funded by the World Health Organisation (WHO), struggles to keep up with the number of patients seeking treatment. [View Article](#)

UNICEF Wary of Post-war Child Trafficking in Iraq

13 June - ElectronicIraq.net reported noting a flurry of news reports indicating an increase in the number of children on the streets in Baghdad, UNICEF says the situation is ripe for exploitation of children. In the chaos of the post-war environment, normal community networks that protect

children are not fully functioning. That can leave children exposed to exploitation. Hundreds of thousands of children are trafficked each year around the world for brutal child labor and sexual abuse. UNICEF warns that while street children are a concern in Iraq, there is no overnight solution. The issue of street children is a very recent phenomenon in Iraq. Prior to the 1991 Gulf War, the problem simply did not exist, and it will take time to reverse this trend. [View Article](#)

USNORTHCOM

AMA Pushes Bioterror Preparedness Effort

17 June – Yahoo News reported The American Medical Association announced a new program that aims to standardize [bioterrorism](#) training for doctors and others nationwide who respond to [mass disasters](#). The voluntary program is designed to create a single playbook or training manual for all hospitals, doctors, public health officials and military officials to avoid chaos and confusion if a large-scale disaster strikes. Preparedness training is currently available on a more piecemeal basis without much consistency. The coursework was developed with input from the military and four medical institutions that will provide the training in person and eventually over the Internet. Coursework will include subjects like how to decontaminate people exposed to [biological or nuclear weapons](#) and setting up triage systems for determining what type of immediate care victims need. It will also seek to ensure that all emergency response personnel understand and use the same medical terms and triage systems, which sometimes vary in military and civilian medicine, officials said. [View Report](#)

Eye Melanoma Cases in White Men Rise Sharply: Study

11 June – Reuters reported new study findings suggest that the incidence of a type of eye cancer called [conjunctival melanoma](#) tripled in white men in the U.S. between 1973 and 1999. The trend is similar to that of skin melanoma, suggesting that the eye cancer is also related to sun exposure. If this is the case, it could help explain why women, who the authors speculate may be more likely to wear hats and sunglasses, did not experience a sharp rise in cancer rates, according to their report in the June 1st issue of the American Journal of Ophthalmology. The team searched a national registry of cancer patients to identify 206 cases of conjunctival melanoma that were diagnosed between 1973 and 1999. Nearly 94 percent of patients were white, and 87 percent were older than 40 years of age, the investigators note. Fifty-nine percent of patients were men. The researchers found that the incidence of eye melanoma among white males increased by 295 percent. In contrast, the rate remained relatively stable in white women. [View Article](#)

Monkeypox Outbreak Tests Bioterrorism Response Systems

12 June – Global Security Newswire reported U.S. efforts to prepare for a bioterrorist attack have enabled an effective response to this month's outbreak of [monkeypox](#) in the United States, according to health officials and public health experts. "State health departments have been actively involved in planning and preparing for the possibility of a bioterrorist event. We are now seeing that this level of preparation can also assist in unexpected, natural outbreaks," said Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson. Health officials are investigating a number of suspected cases of monkeypox in four states. Monkeypox was not mistaken for smallpox, health officials said, but the similarity helped detect the disease quickly and bioterrorism was quickly ruled out. [View Article](#)

Monkeypox: Report of Cases in the United States as of June 18, 2003.

State	Cases Under Investigation
Illinois	19
Indiana	24
Kansas	1
Missouri	1
Ohio	4
Wisconsin	44
Total	93

For more information, visit the CDC [Monkeypox web site](#). [View Source](#)

Rabies Kills Northern Virginia Man

13 June – ProMed reported a northern Virginia man is dead from [rabies](#), the state's first fatal case in nearly 5 years. The man died in mid-March 2003, but the diagnosis wasn't confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control until this week. The Virginia Department of Health won't say exactly where in northern Virginia the man was from, or give the precise date of death. Spokeswoman Lucy Caldwell says health officials are now working with people who'd been in close contact with him. They're also trying to figure out how he got rabies, which Caldwell says a person can have and not realize. [View Report](#)

South Carolina: First Case of Human West Nile virus Infection Reported

15 June – ProMed reported state health regulators say an upstate outdoorsman is South Carolina's [& North America's] [first human case](#) of [West Nile virus](#) this year. The state Department of Health & Environmental Control (DHEC) says an Oconee County man bitten by mosquitoes while fishing was recently hospitalized with the disease. DHEC Commissioner C. Earl Hunter said the man is improving and was released from the hospital. [View Report](#)

Tests Don't Indicate Human-to-human Monkeypox Spread

16 June – CNN News reported preliminary tests on two suspected cases of human-to-human transmission of [monkeypox](#) have proved negative, a Wisconsin public health official said. Although final test results could take weeks, "it's looking less and less" like human-to-human transmission occurred. The two suspected cases were a medical assistant and a nurse who became ill after coming into contact with patients with monkeypox. The nurse's boyfriend also came down with symptoms. Bostrom said there was no need to test his blood unless the nurse tested positive for the virus. [View Article](#)

Two People Dead from Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever

13 June – ProMed reported on the death of two individuals from [Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever](#) (RMSF). The first case was in a 38 year old Jackson County, Alabama man. The man died on 21 May 2003 after being declared brain dead and taken off a respirator. The second case was in woman in North Carolina. The 19-year-old college junior died 27 May 2003 after returning home to Panama City, FL, after the spring semester. She likely contracted the disease in the Chapel Hill area. Rocky Mountain spotted fever, a tick-borne disease, is 3 times more common in North

Carolina than in any other state. Deaths from RMSF are unusual. Since the advancement of antimicrobial treatments in the 1940s, the disease is fatal in only 3-5 percent of reported cases. Prior to the discovery of drugs to treat the disease, the death rate was about 30 percent. In both cases the disease was not diagnosed quickly enough to implement proper treatment. These cases illustrate the point that clinicians must continue to be on the lookout for endemic diseases when appropriate epidemiological factors exist. [View Report](#) [View Report 2](#)

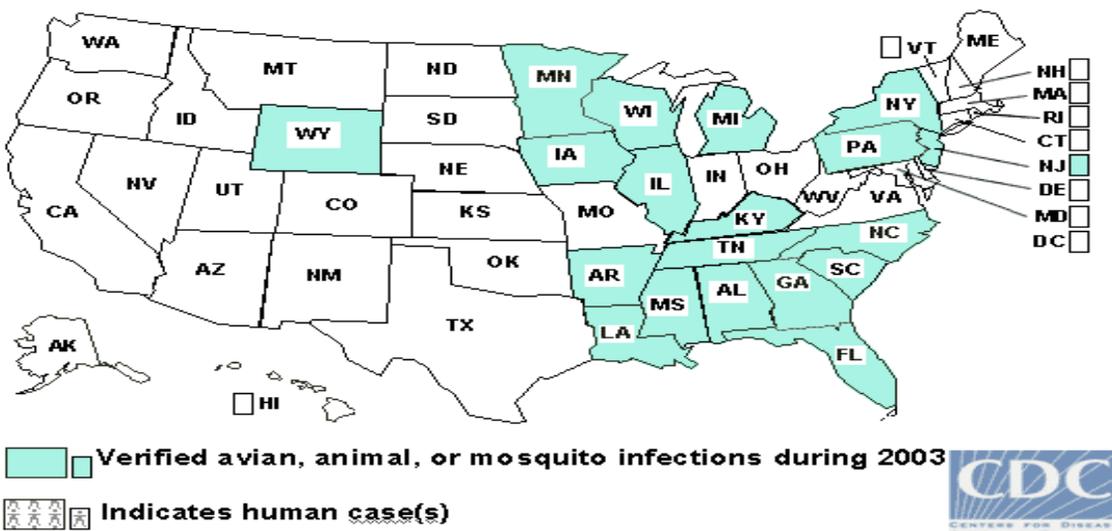
US Approves Nasal Spray Flu Vaccine

18 June – VOA reported the U.S. government has approved a nasal spray vaccine that offers the first alternative to [flu](#) shots. The Food and Drug Administration says the vaccine mist, called FluMist, can be used by healthy people between the ages of five and 49 - a population of about 160 million Americans that typically avoids [flu shots](#). The drug's manufacturer (MedImmune) says the vaccine will be available to the public ahead of the upcoming flu season, which starts in November. Officials say the new drug is not suitable for children under five and patients over 50. The spray is also not recommended for people with asthma or other respiratory diseases. The Centers for Disease Control advises people in both categories to seek flu shots. [View Article](#) [View FDA Report](#)

U.S. Officials Concerned by Chickenpox Deaths

12 June – Reuters reported officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said they are concerned that deaths due to [chickenpox](#) continue to occur in the U.S., despite the availability of a vaccine. A virus called varicella causes chickenpox, and a varicella vaccine has been available since 1995. In the [June 13th issue of its Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#), the CDC describes two of nine fatal cases of varicella -- one in an adult and one in a child -- reported to the agency during 2002. Both patients were susceptible, unvaccinated, and exposed to unvaccinated children chickenpox. Both patients had also been previously healthy. In addition, there continues to be "substantial underreporting" of varicella-related deaths, despite a mandate in 1999 that such deaths be reported to the National Immunization Program. Preventing chickenpox-related deaths is a "public health priority," Dr. Mona Marin of the CDC's National Immunization Program said. [View article](#)

West Nile Virus in the United States as of June 11, 2003



[View Source](#) [View CDC WNV Site](#)

USPACOM

China: Deadly Dust

18 June – The New York Times reported China has emerged as Asia's leading exporter of manufactured goods to the United States, but the workers who produce those goods are victims of a surge in fatal [respiratory, circulatory, neurological and digestive-tract diseases](#) like those American and European workers suffered at the dawn of the industrial age. China in that sense is not only recreating the industrial transformation that brought prosperity to Europe, the United States and some East Asian nations, it is also reliving its horrors. Even by its official count, China already has more deaths from [work-related illnesses](#) than any other country or region, including the industrialized economies of the United States and Europe combined. Last year, 386,645 Chinese workers died of occupational illnesses, according to government data compiled by the International Labor Organization. The statistics may understate the situation in China's thriving east coast industrial centers, where tens of millions of migrant workers produce the bulk of China's exports for well under a dollar an hour without employment contracts, health care plans or union representation. [View Article](#)

Nepal: Outbreak of "Viral Influenza" Affects 700 People

16 June – ProMed reported as of Sun 15 Jun 2003, more than 700 people have been affected by [viral influenza](#) in 17 Village Development Committees (VDCs) and there is an acute shortage of medicines to deal with the situation, according to officials at the Dadeldhura District Public Health Office (DPHO). DPHO chief Dr Lokraj Paneru said that the disease has affected people in remote VDCs such as Bhageswor, Gankhet, Rupal, Kailpalmandu, and Asigram. He added that around 300 people have been infected with the contagious disease in southern Ragun Valley alone. He said that the situation would turn worse if adequate medicines were not made available in the affected areas. [View Report](#)

New Caledonia: Death Toll From Dengue Now 14

16 June – ProMed reported the [dengue fever](#) epidemic in New Caledonia has claimed another life this week, bringing the death toll to 14 since January this year. There are now about 4,500 known cases of dengue fever in the French Pacific territory. Health authorities are again saying the official figures do not reflect the real situation. They say the actual number of cases could be 2 to 3 times higher. [View Report](#)

Philippines: Dengue Fever Alert

16 June – ProMed reported the Department of Health on Mon 9 Jun 2003 warned Filipinos about the increasing incidence of [dengue fever](#) in the country with the onset of the rainy season. At a press briefing on Monday, health secretary Manuel Dayrit said that Filipinos must guard against the disease, especially since at least 4026 cases have been reported since 2 Jun 2002. This figure, he said, is 61 per cent higher than the number in the same period last year. The government also confirmed 54 dengue-related deaths. Last year, the health department recorded 12,670 dengue cases nationwide, including 153 deaths. [View Report](#)

Police in Thailand Seize Radioactive Material

13 June – The New York Times reported authorities in Thailand, acting on information from American investigators, seized a large amount of [radioactive material](#) from a Thai man, breaking up a plot to sell it to terrorists. He was peddling it for use in so-called [dirty bombs](#), according to American law enforcement officials. American officials said the seized material — which Thai authorities said was [cesium-137](#), a radioactive byproduct of nuclear power plants commonly found in medical equipment — was believed to have originated in Russian stockpiles and been taken to Thailand via Laos. It could easily have been used in terrorist weapons, the officials added. Law enforcement officials and terrorism experts said they were alarmed that so much of the material — as much as 66 pounds, according to initial reports — was apparently available for sale on the black market. Even a ‘dirty’ bomb with only a few grams of cesium would be deadly, the experts said. It is particularly troubling that the material turned up in Thailand, which Al Qaeda has long used as a hub in Southeast Asia. [View Article](#)

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Argentina: Outbreak of Leptospirosis Due to Floods

09 June – Alertnet reported provincial Argentine governor Carlos Reutemann is one of dozens to contract [leptospirosis](#) while spearheading cleanup after floods. The floods that devastated Santa Fe province in late April killed 23 people. [View Article](#)

Brazil: Dengue Fever Update

16 June – ProMed reported the state health secretary of Alagoas, confirmed the first 2 deaths from [dengue Hemorrhagic fever](#) (DHF) in the state. Between January and June 2003, 29 cases of DHF have been notified, including the 2 deaths; 5 cases have been confirmed, 23 are being investigated, and one was excluded. During the same period, 516 cases of classic dengue have been confirmed and 637 are under investigation. The state health secretary stated that 3 types of dengue virus are circulating. In the Bahia State, the Central Laboratory confirmed fifty-five cases of dengue fever. The Ceara State has had 14,214 cases of dengue confirmed in 2003. This is almost equal to the total registered in 2002. There were 1063 cases in just one week; 30 per cent of the cases were in the capital, Fortaleza, with 4309 confirmed cases, 605 more than the previous week’s cumulative total. There have been 177 cases of dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF), with 12 deaths. [View Report](#)

Costa Rica: 2163 Cases of Dengue Reported This Year

16 June – ProMed reported up to Sat 7 Jun 2003 the Ministry of Health has reported 2163 cases of [dengue fever](#) in Costa Rica, most in Guanacaste (44 per cent) and Puntarenas (35 per cent), according to the director of epidemiological surveillance of the Ministry of Health. [View 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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