

**USACHPPM**

**HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE**



03 July 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

### Acute Flaccid Paralysis and West Nile Virus Infection

01 July – The journal of Emerging Infectious Diseases published an article where acute weakness associated with [West Nile virus](#) (WNV) infection has previously been attributed to a peripheral demyelinating process (Guillain-Barré syndrome). However, the exact etiology of this acute flaccid paralysis has not been systematically assessed. To thoroughly describe the clinical, laboratory, and electrodiagnostic features of this paralysis syndrome, the authors evaluated acute flaccid paralysis that developed in seven patients in the setting of acute WNV infection, consecutively identified in four hospitals in St. Tammany Parish and New Orleans, Louisiana, and Jackson, Mississippi. All patients had acute onset of asymmetric weakness and areflexia but no sensory abnormalities. Clinical and electrodiagnostic data suggested the involvement of spinal anterior horn cells, resulting in a poliomyelitis-like syndrome. In areas in which transmission is occurring, WNV infection should be considered in patients with acute flaccid paralysis. Recognition that such weakness may be of spinal origin may prevent inappropriate treatment and diagnostic testing. [View Article](#)

### Antidepressants Might Prevent Heart Attack

22 June – The New York Times reported a study that responded to evidence that depression, like diabetes and hypertension, is a risk to the heart. By middle age, studies show, [depression](#) triples or quadruples the risk of cardiac death. The most acute danger comes in the wake of heart attacks. After a first attack, depression raises the risk of recurrence dramatically — between two- and fourfold. The recent study enrolled about 1,800 patients who had suffered a heart attack in the past month and now met criteria for depression. Half the depressed patients received cognitive psychotherapy, a treatment aimed at reversing self-disparaging thoughts. The other half received "usual care," without psychotherapy. Despite the researchers' expectations, psychotherapy had no effect on the recurrence of heart attacks or on mortality. Therapy lowered the degree of depression early on; over time, the differences between the treatment and control groups vanished. Antidepressants were associated with an extraordinary reduction in death or heart attack recurrence — 30 to 40 percent. The treatment assignment was not random, which makes the result hard to interpret. But it was the more depressed, less responsive group who had gotten medication. [View Article](#)

## Baldness Drug Cuts Risk of Getting Prostate Cancer

25 June – SFGate.com reported a major study of nearly 19,000 men has found that a baldness drug significantly cut the risk of [prostate cancer](#), but its side effects may keep many from using it to prevent what has become the second leading cause of cancer death for American men. [Finasteride](#), sold in a low-dose form as Propecia when prescribed for hair loss, cut the incidence of prostate cancer by 25 percent among healthy men over age 55 who took the drug for an average of seven years. Unfortunately, among those who did develop cancer, the tumors displayed signs of being more aggressive than the cancers detected in men who took a placebo. The trial, which is the first to demonstrate a way to prevent prostate cancer, represents "a huge step forward for cancer research," said Dr. Peter Greenwald, director of the division of cancer prevention at the National Cancer Institute, which sponsored the study. It was halted a year early because officials felt the data collected so far was compelling enough to make it public. [View Article](#)

## Biological and Chemical Airborne Agent Simulation System

24 June – PRN Newswire reported 3D Pipeline Corporation announced BioChemFX, a field-deployable, real-time 2D/3D simulation system for predicting the dispersion of biological and chemical airborne agents within real-world urban environments. BioChemFX is designed as an intelligence tool for emergency response teams deploying in areas where biological or chemical agents have been released, whether as the result of a terrorist attack or an industrial accident. BioChemFX allows first-responders to predict where agents are most likely to propagate and settle, thus permitting safer deployment into and around affected areas. Emergency and rescue personnel can model 'what if' scenarios for evacuation planning." [View Article](#)

## Diabetics: Two Hours of Exercise a Week Reduce Death Rate by 39%

23 June — MSNBC News reported victims of [adult onset diabetes](#) who walk as little as two hours a week appear to significantly lower their risk of premature death, according to a study. Researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said they reached the conclusion after looking at 2,896 adults whose average age was between 58 and 59 and who on average had been diagnosed with diabetes 11 years earlier. Compared to inactive adults in the study, those who walked at least two hours per week had a 39 percent lower death rate from all causes and a 34 percent lower chance of death from heart disease specifically, the study said. In the study the lowest overall death rate was for people who walked three to four hours a week and for those who reported that their walking led to a moderate increases in heart rate and breathing rate. The study is published in the June issue of the Archives of Internal Medicine. [View Article](#)

## Effect of the Anabolic Steroid Oxandrolone on the Rate of Catabolism in Acute Necrotizing Fasciitis

16 June – A study published in the journal, Wounds, described the effects of Oxandrolone in [Necrotizing Fasciitis](#). A total of 21 patients with acute necrotizing fasciitis were enrolled in the study. All patients underwent aggressive surgical debridement within 24 hours of onset, systemic antibiotic management, and nutritional support. Ten patients were also given [Oxandrolone](#) 20mg/per day beginning on day 4 when nutrition status was adequate. Measurements of mortality, degree of lost body weight, nitrogen loss (g/day), and rate of wound

healing were obtained and compared between the two groups (ANOVA). Three of 21 patients died, all of sepsis and multiple organ failure, two in the control group. The variables reflecting the degree of catabolism were significantly improved with oxandrolone. Findings suggest the anabolic steroid, oxandrolone, significantly decreases the rate of catabolism and lean mass loss in patients with acute necrotizing fasciitis. [View Article](#)

## Growth Signal Discovery Prompts Pancreatic Cancer Hope

25 June – Health News reported a team from Baltimore’s Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center has discovered that a growth signal, which under normal circumstances is turned off in adult tissues, is turned back on again after damage to the pancreas. The ["Notch" pathway](#), when functioning normally, regulates embryonic development in a whole range of organisms, from fruit flies to humans. In adult tissues, the pathway becomes dormant as cells differentiate to perform specialized functions. However, the study’s authors explain that after looking at cancer cells from 55 patients, they observed little to no activity of the Notch pathway in normal pancreatic cells. But increased activity appeared in cancer cells and cells in the inflamed pancreas. The researchers found that, when the pancreas is injured or diseased, Notch signaling might be reactivated. This results in the conversion of adult pancreas cells to cells similar to those seen in the embryonic pancreas. The team discovered that in test tube studies it was possible to prevent the early cellular changes that lead to [pancreatic cancer](#). [View Article](#)

## New Cavity-Fighting Agent Shows Promise

26 June – Reuters reported an experimental cavity-fighting toothpaste may be better at preventing tooth decay and cavities than traditional fluoride toothpaste, according to a study. The new agent does not contain any fluoride, which has been the cornerstone of cavity prevention for decades. The product, called CaviStat, contains the amino acid [arginine](#) as well as calcium carbonate. The toothpaste may help fight cavities by promoting a higher pH in the mouth, according to Mitchell Goldberg, president of Ortek Therapeutics Inc., the company granted the licensing rights to the product by the Research Foundation of the State University of New York. After eating food, the bacteria trapped in sticky plaque inside the mouth metabolize sugars and release acid. Over time, this process can eat away at the enamel of the tooth and promote decay. The study suggests the calcium carbonate portion of the CaviStat might also remineralize teeth at a higher rate than fluoride, explained Goldberg in an interview. [View Article](#)

## Study: Hormones May Cause Higher Risk of Breast Cancer

24 June — MSNBC News reported estrogen-progestin pills may cause an aggressive form of [breast cancer](#) and make it harder to find tumors until they have reached a later, less-curable stage, according to one of the biggest, most authoritative analyses yet. The study is part of a run of bad news recently about the hormones routinely taken by millions of women after menopause. Some previous studies suggested tumors might be less aggressive in hormone users; other studies indicated the opposite. Previous research also suggested that hormones might make breast tissue denser, hindering the detection of tumors. To try to answer the questions more definitively, the researchers took a closer look at data from the government’s landmark Women’s Health Initiative study, which was halted last summer after it was found that estrogen-progestin pills raise the risk of heart attack, strokes and breast cancer. The findings appear in Wednesday’s Journal of the American Medical Association. [View Article](#)

## Malaria Vaccine Not “Just Around the Corner”

01 July - The International Society of Travel Medicine was warned that a licensed, effective [malaria](#) vaccine is still a long way off. Speaking at the society's eighth conference, Daniel J Carucci, a key researcher in the Plasmodium falciparum genome sequencing project and director of the malaria program at the US Naval Medical Research Center, Silver Spring, MD, USA, cautioned that: “It is such a complex parasite, with two hosts and more than 5300 genes with stage-specific expression of proteins, that it has coevolved with human beings and developed mechanisms to avoid and modulate the host immune system”. There is evidence that a malaria vaccine is an achievable goal as indicated by the naturally acquired immunity seen in African children, who, if they survive up to age 10 are unlikely to have severe disease. Furthermore, studies using [irradiated sporozoites](#) (the parasite stage that is transmitted from mosquitoes to people) have shown a 95% protection lasting for at least 9 months. Carucci said that although [genomics](#) and [proteomics](#) provide vast numbers of candidate antigens, “the key antigens may not yet be identified”. Vaccine developers need to identify targets of protective immunity and develop vaccine delivery systems capable of generating desired immune response. [View Article](#)

## 'Mediterranean Diet' Cuts Heart Attack, Cancer Risk

25 June – Reuters reported a study of more than 22,000 Greeks provided further evidence that the "Mediterranean diet" rich in cheese, nuts and olive oil can protect against heart disease and cancer. The study found that people who ate a Mediterranean-style diet had a 33 percent reduction in the risk of death from heart disease and a cancer death rate that was 24 percent lower compared to volunteers who ate other foods. The diet, which varies from country to country, often includes monthly servings of meat and weekly meals of poultry, eggs and sweets. Vegetables, fruits, nuts, legumes, unrefined cereals, olive oil, cheese and yogurt are eaten most days, as is fish. Wine is consumed in moderation. Although olive oil is widely credited with many of the benefits of the diet, the research team, led by Antonia Trichopoulou of the University of Athens Medical School, found that no specific food in the diet appeared to be responsible for the improvement in health. The study is published in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine. [View Article](#) [Read more on Nutrition](#)

## Researchers Urge 'Polypill' Against Stroke, Heart Attack

27 June – VOA News reported British medical researchers propose combining several widely used drugs into a single pill they say will slash the risk of [heart attacks and strokes](#). In the current issue of British Medical Journal, Professors Nicholas Wald and Malcolm Law say the creation of what they call a "polypill" would reduce the risks of the two diseases by more than 80 percent. The professors point to more than 750 studies involving 400,000 people in making their prediction. The drugs to be combined are known to be effective individually and to have few serious side effects. They are aspirin, folic acid, a cholesterol-lowering drug and three different blood pressure-lowering drugs, each at half the normal dose. [View Article](#)

## Results Mixed for Post-Lyme Disease Antibiotics

23 June – Reuters reported when it comes to lingering [Lyme disease](#) symptoms, intravenous antibiotics may not improve impaired thinking, two newly released studies suggest. But one study found the treatment may help ease the debilitating fatigue experienced by many with post-

Lyme syndrome, a condition in which symptoms continue even after initial treatment with antibiotics. In an interview with Reuters Health, a co-author of that study cautioned that it was too soon to say that IV antibiotics should be prescribed to treat fatigue in patients who continue to experience symptoms after initial treatment for the tick-borne disease. Even though the improvement in fatigue experienced by people receiving IV antibiotics "is provocative, this benefit needs to be weighed against the side effects of the treatment," said Dr. Leslie G. Hyman, a researcher in the department of preventive medicine at Stony Brook University Medical Center in Stony Brook, New York. [View Article](#)

## Rotavirus Vaccine Shows Promise

01 July - The Lancet published an article where preliminary results on a phase 3 trial of Merck's rotavirus oral vaccine Rotateq provide evidence that the vaccine is efficacious and well tolerated in healthy infants. The results were presented at the Annual Meeting of the Pediatric Academic Societies by Timo Vesikari, Tampere University, Finland, and colleagues from USA and France. [Rotavirus](#) is the most common cause of severe diarrhea in infants and can rapidly produce life-threatening dehydration. The WHO attributes more than 125 million cases of diarrhea annually to rotavirus and 6% of deaths in children less than 5 years. The only rotavirus vaccine ever licensed, Rotashield (simian-human), was removed from the market by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) after it was associated with several cases of intussusception. [View Article](#)

## U.S. and Other Countries Outline Program to Curb Carbon Emissions

24 June — The New York Times reported an array of industrialized and developing countries agreed today on the outline of a cooperative research program aimed at capturing and storing carbon dioxide, the main smokestack emission linked to [global warming](#). The agreement came halfway through a three-day conference in McLean, Va., organized by the Bush administration, which has argued for more than a year that a technological breakthrough will be needed to stabilize levels of so-called [greenhouse gases](#) that trap heat in the atmosphere. A buildup of those gases has been blamed by many scientists for most of a 50-year warming trend that could raise sea levels and disrupt climate patterns if emissions are not reduced. Most industrialized countries have ratified the Kyoto Protocol, a binding treaty that would require reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases. It awaits ratification by Russia to take effect. [View Article](#)

## WHO Changes Last Remaining Travel Recommendation -- Beijing, China

24 June – The World Health Organization (WHO) removed its recommendation that people should postpone all but essential travel to Beijing, China. Beijing was the last area in the world to which this advice still applied. The recommendation to consider postponing all but essential travel to Beijing was issued on 23 April in order to minimize the international spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome ([SARS](#)). WHO is changing this recommendation as the situation in the Chinese capital has now improved significantly. [View Article](#)

# USEUCOM

## Foot-and-mouth Outbreak Hits Zimbabwe

24 June – ProMED reported an outbreak of [foot-and-mouth disease](#) in Chivi and Gutu districts in Zimbabwe's Masvingo province, forcing the Department of Veterinary Services to suspend the movement of livestock. The outbreak comes at a time when new farmers are still moving their cattle from their old homes has severely affected Chivi where farmers were allocated land outside the district. Chivi has no farms and all new farmers were resettled in Mwenezi, Zaka, Masvingo and Chiredzi districts. Chief animal health inspector in Masvingo Ben Tigere confirmed the outbreak on Monday, saying a critical shortage of vaccines was hampering efforts to control the disease. [View Article](#)

## Irish Scientist Discovers New Strain of AIDS Virus

30 June – Reuters reported an Irish scientist has discovered a new strain of HIV that may provide vital clues in the hunt for a vaccine. University researcher Grace McCormack came upon the previously unknown virus type while researching blood samples from Malawi, dating back from the early years of the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s. "It is very interesting because while we have found people infected with it in the 1980s, we haven't found any examples of it in the 1990s yet," said McCormack, a lecturer at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. "As a result, it might be a strain of the virus that has failed. Because of that it may give us information on how to defeat the virus." There are nine known strains of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS and infects 15,000 people a day worldwide. [View Article](#)

## Salmonella Control Programs in Denmark

01 July – The Journal of Emerging Infectious Disease published an article that describes [Salmonella](#) control programs of broiler chickens, layer hens, and pigs in Denmark. Major reductions in the incidence of foodborne human salmonellosis have occurred by integrated control of farms and food processing plants. Disease control has been achieved by monitoring herds and flocks, eliminating infected animals, and diversifying animals and animal food products according to determined risk. In 2001, the Danish society saved U.S.\$25.5 million by controlling Salmonella. The total annual Salmonella control costs in year 2001 were U.S.\$14.1 million (U.S.\$0.075/kg of pork and U.S.\$0.02/kg of broiler or egg). These costs are paid almost exclusively by the industry. The control principles described are applicable to most industrialized countries with modern intensive farming systems. [View Article](#)

## Warning over BSE Infections

24 June – ProMED reported British cattle may never be free of [BSE](#) (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy) despite the introduction of strict animal feed controls, according to a leading expert. A report in The Sunday Times claims there are still fears the disease could be passed from cows to their calves. Figures show 54 cases of BSE have been recorded in cattle born after the 1996 ban on meat and bone meal being used in cattle feed. However, scientists still do not know the cause of the outbreaks, as each occurred on different farms across the country. According to Professor James Ironside, of the CJD Surveillance Unit in Edinburgh, one possible reason is that calves had been infected by their mothers. Professor Ironside said he questions

whether BSE can ever be totally eradicated. "Until we have a clear idea what the source of exposure is, it's possible we may see more of these cases and over a longer time scale," he said. "Cattle might be able to carry the disease for some time." There is growing pressure on the [Food Standards Agency](#) to relax the ban on beef from cattle over 30-months-old. [View Article](#)

## USCENTCOM

### Iraq: Insecurity in Basra Hospitals

30 June – IRIN News reported Basra doctors and medical staff continue to take great personal risk to save the lives of other Iraqis. It is not just the high number of gunshot wounds and stabbings that has made a Basra doctor's life so much more difficult in these uncertain days, but the fear of retribution by angry relatives. There have been many cases of armed gunmen threatening hospital staff with death if they do not save friends or fellow gang members brought in after the city's latest gun battle; and many hospital windows have been shattered by angry relatives after a patient's death. On the night of Sunday 22 June in the hospital's pediatric ward, female doctors were forced to seek refuge behind the heavy door of their residence from a mob of angry relatives who blamed them for the death of a 10-month-old baby, despite the doctors' repeated warnings that there had been nothing they could have done to save the child. [View Article](#)

### Kyrgyzstan: Flood and Emergency Preparedness in the South

30 June – IRIN News reported authorities in southern Kyrgyzstan have urged the government to declare the south an emergency area and develop a program to move people from disaster-exposed mountainous villages to more secure places. There have been more than 50 natural disasters in the region this year alone -floods, mudslides and earthquakes. In April, a landslide triggered by heavy rains and melting snow slammed into Karataryk, a village of between 200 and 300 people in Uzgen District about 100 km east of Osh, and killed 38 people. According to the local civil defense center, there was a lack of fuel and disinfectants to cope with such disasters. According to the Osh provincial civil defense center, in 2003 there have already been more than 50 floods, mud-slides and earthquakes - eight times more than during the same period the previous year. At least 39 people died, 110 houses were completely destroyed and 350 damaged, with telephone cables, electricity poles and roads all being washed away. In total, 4,000 people were been affected. Damage worth up to some US \$1.5 million was reported. More than 400 families are now due to be moved from dangerous areas. [View Article](#)

### Pakistan: First Reported HIV-positive Cases among Intravenous Drug Users

27 June – IRIN News reported Pakistan's National Aids Control Program (NACP) has confirmed nine new cases of HIV among drug users in the southern Sindh Province, the first to be detected among intravenous drug users in the country. "It is shocking, because this is the first time we have found HIV-positive people among drug users, and this is worrying," Sharaf Ali Shah, the head of the NACP in Sindh, told IRIN from the provincial capital, Karachi, on

Thursday. According to Shah, the cases were discovered following the testing of a prisoner who was using heroin in jail in Larkana, some 300 km north of Karachi. The police reacted to this one case by rounding up some 60 drug addicts and carrying out HIV tests on them over the past week. "The HIV- positive people will be taken to a rehabilitation center in Lahore [Punjab Province], where they can be taken care of properly," he explained. Aid workers estimate there are 80,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in Pakistan's population of 145 million. However, official figures are much lower. Towards the end of last year, 1,942 cases of HIV and 231 of full-blown AIDS were reported to the NACP. [View Article](#)

## USNORTHCOM

### FDA Approves OTC Version of [Prilosec](#)

23 June – Yahoo News reported the popular heartburn drug Prilosec received U.S. Food and Drug Administration clearance to be sold without a prescription, opening the way for a planned fall launch of the heartburn drug by Procter & Gamble Co., the company said. The approval comes after P&G, which holds the over-the-counter rights to drug, made changes to the labeling on the box at the behest of the FDA, so consumers could better understand when and how to take the drug, which will be called Prilosec OTC. Prilosec will come in the form of 20 mg tablets, the most commonly prescribed strength of the drug. [View Article](#)

### New GMU Graduate Program to Focus on Biodefense

26 June – The Washington Post reported during the Cold War, he helped to transform [anthrax](#), [smallpox](#) and [Ebola](#) into deadly weapons for the Soviet Union. After defecting to the United States, he told his secrets to Congress and the CIA. Now, Ken Alibek is using his knowledge to train a new generation of experts to defend society from the estimated 80 pathogens emerging and in existence worldwide today -- including some he helped to create as a deputy director of the Soviet bioweapons program. This fall, Alibek and Charles Bailey, former commander of the Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases in Fort Detrick, will lead a new graduate program in biodefense at George Mason University's Prince William campus. University officials are touting the program as the first of its kind in the world. The program will operate out of GMU's National Center for Biodefense, established in February 2002. At that time, GMU appointed Alibek and Bailey co-directors of the center, and each began teaching courses and workshops in biodefense. Previously, students would study microbiology, for example, and take a biodefense class or two. George Mason's graduate program is the first of its kind to offer a degree in the subject. [View Article](#)

### Safe Celebration

26 June—ABC News reported patriotism and pyrotechnics can be a dangerous mix when it comes to using illegal fireworks or legal ones improperly on the Fourth of July. In 2002, hospital emergency rooms treated 8,800 people for fireworks related injuries. This is down from 9,500 people in 2001, but still way too high for safety experts. Sparklers, a popular choice for people

of all ages, may seem harmless, but they are not, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. The dazzling, hand-held fireworks actually burn at temperatures of 2000 degrees Fahrenheit, hot enough to cause third-degree burns. They were the top cause of injuries last year — 50 percent higher than even firecrackers, CPSC officials say. The commission also warns against carrying around legal fireworks in your pocket, bag or on your body. Both intentional and accidental lighting of fireworks on or near your person can result in burns. M-80's, a type of firework that has been banned under federal law since 1966, pack a bunch of power, and are dangerous, to boot, especially if someone is trying to light one and throw it. They can blow your hand, foot and fingers right off, the CPSC says. In fact, loss of fingers and hands accounted for more than half of fireworks injuries. The burn rate of the fuse can vary from several seconds to just a few. Even if you think you have plenty of time to light one and toss, it, it could go off right in your hand. The even more powerful, and also illegal, M-1000 is equivalent to a quarter stick of dynamite. [View Article](#)

## Senators OK Criteria for Asbestos Victims

24 June – Reuters reported in a major step toward overhauling the way victims are compensated for sickness caused by [asbestos](#), a Senate panel agreed on the medical criteria under which claims against a proposed new fund would be judged. The panel is working on legislation that would take hundreds of thousands of asbestos injury claims out of the U.S. courts and instead set up a \$108 billion compensation fund that would be financed by industry and insurers. Still to be resolved are questions about how much money to pay victims in each of the 10 categories of lung scarring and cancer that were agreed upon, and how to prevent the fund from running dry. [View Article](#)

## Study: No Power Lines, Breast Cancer Link

25 June – CNN News reported a study that sought to explain the high rate of [breast cancer](#) on Long Island found no evidence to support fears that living near power lines causes the disease. Stony Brook University launched the study in 1996, after earlier studies indicated a possible connection between electromagnetic fields and cancer. Researchers believed at the time that the fields might hamper production of the estrogen-related hormone melatonin. The study examined 1,161 women on Long Island -- 576 who had breast cancer and 585 who did not. Researchers took spot and 24-hour measurements of magnetic fields in often-used rooms in their houses, such as bedrooms and living rooms, and the study mapped the power lines surrounding each home. They found no association between exposure to electromagnetic fields and breast cancer. The study will appear in the July 1 issue of the American Journal of Epidemiology. [View Article](#)

## Tularemia in Nebraska

25 June – ProMed reported two men who mowed over a nest of rabbits, killing some of them, and another who cleaned the mower developed [tularemia](#), authorities said. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has launched an investigation into the incident. The disease is generally treatable with antibiotics. The illness is caused by a bacterium found in wild animals, particularly rodents and rabbits. People can become infected through bites from infected animals or infected insects [such as deer flies and the arthropod tick, handling carcasses, eating contaminated food or, in rare cases, inhaling the bacterium. It is not transmitted person-to-person. The CDC became interested because one of the 3 people appears to have the rare,

inhaled form of the disease, said Lancaster County health official Tim Timmons. The United States averaged 124 cases of tularemia in 1999 and 2000, according the CDC, and 3-4 cases a year are typical in Nebraska. [View Article](#)

## Update: Multistate Outbreak of Monkeypox

27 June – The CDC and state and local health departments continue to investigate cases of [monkeypox](#) among persons who had contact with wild or exotic mammalian pets or persons with monkeypox. As of 25 June, a total of 79 cases of monkeypox had been reported to CDC from Wisconsin (39), Indiana (20), Illinois (16), Missouri (two), Kansas (one), and Ohio (one) (Figure); these include 29 cases laboratory-confirmed at CDC and 51 cases under investigation by state and local health departments (Table). A total of 19 cases were excluded from those reported in the previous update because they met the exclusion criteria outlined in the updated case definition (2), and 11 were added. Of the 79 cases, 37 (47%) were among males; the median age was 28 years (range: 1--51 years). Age data were unavailable for two patients. Among 75 patients for whom data were available, 19 (25%) were hospitalized. Two patients have had a serious clinical illness. [View Update](#)

## USPACOM

### Dropsy Epidemic Feared, 150 Ill : India

29 June – ProMED reported more than 150 people have fallen ill in the Shivpuri district of Madhya Pradesh in the last 3 days due to the sudden outbreak of a mysterious disease with dropsy-like symptoms. [Dropsy](#) spread in New Delhi a few years ago due to consumption of contaminated mustard oil. District hospital superintendent SC Goyal said patients with swelling body parts started pouring in the district hospital since Thursday. All those affected have been suffering from excessive swelling of hands, legs, face and stomach after eating food cooked in mustard oil. The disease will be confirmed after tests are complete. Meanwhile, the District Magistrate Kanta Rao has ordered that mustard oil samples be collected from shops in the district. 10 teams have been constituted for the purpose by the food department. 3 oil mills in the area have been sealed, while oil samples from other places were being collected. [View Article](#)

### Flood Waters Cause Havoc

01 July – BBC News reported more than one million people have been stranded by monsoon floods in Bangladesh and north-eastern India and Bangladeshi officials expect the waters to rise further. At least ten villagers have also been killed, bringing the death toll in the past week to almost 60, as torrential rains cause rivers to swell. Nearly a third of Bangladesh's 64 districts have been affected by flooded roads and damaged crops. Floods and mudslides in India have killed at least six people and displaced more than 450,000. Many people in low-lying areas have been stranded their flooded homes. There are widespread health fears as flood waters submerge wells used for drinking water. [View Article](#)

## India – Anthrax

24 June – ProMED reported [anthrax](#), which has claimed 3 lives, has been confirmed in Lamtaput block of Koraput district. Specimens of skin lesions found on the patients had been sent to the Christian Medical College (CMC) at Vellore who confirmed it as anthrax, Dr. Manoj Jacob, the treating physician at Asha Kiran Hospital at Lamtaput said. "The lesions were typical of anthrax and we sent it to CMC for confirmation", he said. Jacob said that the hospital, which had a tie-up with CMC, had not received such patients of late except the one who came on Mon, 23 Jun. "We are treating him for anthrax", he said. He said that the people got infected while skinning dead cattle and the lesions, if not treated, led to septicemia. Anthrax could develop in the intestine or lungs if rotten cattle flesh was eaten without proper cooking, Jacob said. Describing the disease as highly infectious, he said that a patient chose to go to the disari (village quack) who pretended to treat him by blowing into his face. The next day, the disari himself landed in the hospital with similar symptoms. There have been 14 suspected cases from Jan 2003 to until this outbreak and one death, he said. [View Article](#)

## Japanese Encephalitis Surveillance and Control Enhanced: China

25 June – ProMED reported the recent outbreak of epidemic encephalitis B [[Japanese encephalitis](#)] in parts of Guangdong Province has aroused the concerns of some citizens, worrying whether this infectious disease will affect Beijing as did the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak. Regarding this, an expert with Beijing Center for Disease Control and Prevention pointed out in an interview that epidemic encephalitis B [Japanese encephalitis] will not occur in Beijing. He Xiong, Deputy-Director with the Beijing center mentioned above, said his center is keeping a careful watch over the situation of the outbreak in parts of Guangdong and is intensifying monitoring of Beijing. [View Article](#)

## Japan Imposing Tough Rules on Cigarettes

02 July – ABC News reported in the first revision of cigarette warning labels in 14 years, Japanese tobacco companies will be required to more clearly state the dangers of smoking on their packaging, government officials said. Eight new warning labels have been approved that directly address the risks of lung cancer, heart disease and stroke, according to a statement released by the Finance Ministry. They also point out the dangers to pregnant women and children, and highlight the risks of nicotine addiction. "This is long overdue," said Takashi Shiraishi, adviser at the private Japan Non-Smoking Association. Japan's government has a strong financial interest in tobacco sales, and has long been accused by anti-smoking groups of putting its own fiscal gain over public health. [View Article](#)

## Laos Opens Up to World and AIDS Threat

24 June – Reuters reported landlocked, communist Laos has its isolation to thank for keeping the global [AIDS](#) epidemic at bay while its Southeast Asian neighbors struggle with some of the highest HIV infection rates in the world. But the United Nations fears attempts by the country to adopt a market economy and open up to the outside world could spark a surge in transmissions of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. "Laos has been the quiet achiever at keeping the spread of HIV at bay, but this could all change," Tony Lisle, a top UNAIDS official in Southeast Asia, told Reuters in an interview. "The country is facing the same issues that its neighbors have faced in the past, and the threat of HIV/AIDS is as big as ever. As the pace of development increases,

so does the AIDS risk." A UN-World Health Organization report at the end of 2001 said Laos had an HIV infection rate of 0.04 percent of adults between the ages of 15 and 49 -- a fraction of the equivalent rate of 2.7 percent in Cambodia and 1.8 percent in Thailand. [View Article](#)

## USSOUTHCOM

### Hantavirus Prevalence in the IX Region of Chile

01 July – The journal Emerging Infectious Diseases published an article where an epidemiologic and seroprevalence survey was conducted to assess the proportion of persons exposed to [hantavirus](#) in IX Region Chile, which accounts for 25% of reported cases of hantavirus cardiopulmonary syndrome. Serum samples were tested for immunoglobulin (Ig) G antibodies by enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay against Sin Nombre virus N antigen by strip immunoblot assay against Sin Nombre, Puumala, Río Mamoré, and Seoul N antigens. Samples from six patients were positive for IgG antibodies reactive with Andes virus; all patients lived in the Andes Mountains. Forestry was also associated with seropositivity; but not sex, age, race, rodent exposure, or farming activities. Exposure to hantavirus varies in different communities of IX Region. Absence of history of pneumonia or hospital admission in persons with specific IgG antibodies suggests that infection is clinically inapparent. [View Article](#)

Please contact the below-listed POC for suggested improvements and/or comments regarding this report. This report is also available on the USACHPPM website at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/Hiupdate/>.

POC: Rachel Gross, PhD  
[Rachel.Gross@APG.amedd.army.mil](mailto:Rachel.Gross@APG.amedd.army.mil)

Lorraine Bell, DrPH, MSN  
[Lorraine.Bell@APG.amedd.army.mil](mailto:Lorraine.Bell@APG.amedd.army.mil)

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