

USACHPPM

HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

19 March 2004

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

Around the Globe, Drug-Resistant TB is Rampant

16 March – The New York Times reported there may be as many as 300,000 new cases of drug-resistant [tuberculosis](#) a year in the world, and 79 percent of them are "superstrains," resistant to any three of the four first-line drugs, a World Health Organization survey has found. Patients in the former Soviet bloc countries are 10 times as likely to have drug-resistant strains as those elsewhere in the world, the survey said. The researchers said the drug-resistance problem might be much bigger than they could measure, particularly in countries like India and China, where they had surveyed only a few areas, and in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nigeria and others where they had done no surveys. Despite 10 years of effort, the organization has examined only about one-fifth of the world's cases. Some countries have been reluctant to participate, and setting up regional laboratories, a worldwide effort led by the Prince Leopold Institute of Tropical Medicine in Belgium, is expensive and time-consuming. The report highlights the need for new tuberculosis drugs, said a spokeswoman for the Global Alliance for TB Drug Development. [View Article](#)

Acupuncture Eases Migraines

16 March – The British Medical Journal reported that that acupuncture reduces [migraines](#), allowing patients to use less medication, take fewer sick days and visit their doctors less frequently compared with standard treatment. In a three-month trial of 400 patients, half of whom were treated with acupuncture, researchers found that those in the acupuncture group had 22 fewer days of headache a year. To be eligible for the trial, patients had to be diagnosed with tension-type headaches or migraines and to suffer at least two headaches a month. The study found that those given acupuncture used 15 per cent less medication, made 25 per cent fewer visits to their physicians and 15 per cent had fewer days off sick. The effects of the treatment also appeared to endure, with researchers noting that the acupuncture group was less likely to have had headaches for up to a year after the trial, even though many stopped the acupuncture. [View Source.](#)

Campaign Shields 80 Million People from Elephantiasis

16 March – The Chicago Sun Times reported four years into a 20-year international campaign against the disfiguring disease known as [elephantiasis](#), nearly 80 million people who are at risk have begun to be protected, raising hopes that the sickness can be eliminated. Studies have shown a simple two-drug, once-yearly treatment is 99 percent effective against lymphatic filariasis, or LF, the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis said. Two of the drugs are being donated by their manufacturers: GlaxoSmithKline is providing albendazole, and Merck & Co. Inc. is giving Mectizan. Both companies are members of the alliance. The company says it expects to donate \$1 billion in drugs and cash over the next 20 years. The World Health Organization, which is leading the campaign against LF, estimates that some 1 billion people in 80 tropical countries are at risk, while

120 million people actually carry the infection. It is spread by a microscopic parasitic worm -- transmitted by mosquitoes -- that invades the human lymphatic system. In some regions, the infection is found in up to 25 percent of children aged 4-6 years. The WHO says LF is endemic in 32 of the 38 least developed countries and more than 80 percent of those infected live in these countries. The full five-year treatment costs between 10 cents and \$2 per person. [View article](#)

Drug Helps Smokers Quit and Lose Weight

12 March – HealthDayNews reported that a new drug called rimonabant helped smokers kick the habit and even lose a little weight in the process. According to Dr. Lowell Dale, associate director of the Mayo Clinic Nicotine Dependence Center in Rochester, MN, the current study followed 787 smokers who were "motivated" to stop smoking. Almost 28 percent of those taking 20 milligrams of rimonabant were able to stop smoking during the study period. By comparison, only 15.6 percent of those taking the low dose of rimonabant were successful in their quit attempt, and 16.1 percent of those taking a placebo stopped smoking. Those on the high dose of rimonabant managed to lose slightly more than half a pound during the study period, while those given a placebo gained 2.5 pounds. Rimonabant is the first in a new class of drugs that target the EndoCannabinoid system which is stimulated by nicotine and possibly by overeating. When it's stimulated, dopamine -- a neurotransmitter -- is released, causing feelings of pleasure, which reinforces the behavior, he says. He says he believes the manufacturer of rimonabant will likely begin the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval process by the end of this year or early next year. [View Article.](#)

Fat Drug Found to Retard Prostate Tumor Growth

16 March – The Age reported American scientists reported in Cancer Research that a drug commonly prescribed to treat obesity may also inhibit the growth of [prostate tumors](#). The scientists compared normal prostate cells with prostate cancer cells grown in mice. They discovered that the latter are affected by increased activity of an enzyme known as fatty acid synthase - the final enzyme in the body's cellular conversion from carbohydrates to fat. They identified the anti-obesity drug Orlistat as an inhibitor of the enzyme, and administered Orlistat to mice carrying prostate tumors. The drug was able to inhibit the tumor growth. [View Article.](#)

FDA Offers Guidance on Testing Drugs for Smallpox-Shot Side Effects

12 March – CIDRAP reported the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) this week published guidelines for the development of drugs to treat the side effects of [smallpox vaccination](#), an area in which the federal government is investing substantial research funds. The FDA said it wants to help commercial and research sponsors plan appropriate studies for developing such drugs. The vaccinia virus used in smallpox vaccine can cause rare but serious complications, such as a generalized rash, eye infection, encephalitis, and myopericarditis, the FDA noted. People with an increased risk of serious side effects include those with a weak immune system because of HIV or immunosuppressive drugs, those with a history of eczema or atopic dermatitis, and pregnant women. [View Guidelines](#) [View Article.](#)

Government to Stockpile New Anthrax Vaccine

12 March — The Associated Press reported that the US government is planning to stockpile enough doses of an experimental new [anthrax](#) vaccine to inoculate 25 million people. Studies designed to prove whether this new vaccine is safe are still in early stages. But the government is optimistic enough that this week it opened bidding for ultimate production of three times as many doses as initially planned, to stockpile in case of a bioterrorist attack. "You can't wait until you get all the data in" to make decisions about emergency stockpiles, explained Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institutes

of Health, who oversees bioterrorism-related research. The current anthrax vaccine works well, experts say, but it requires six shots over 18 months plus an annual booster, and it causes side effects. The 2001 anthrax attacks-by-mail prompted calls for a next-generation vaccine. This candidate, developed by federal scientists, promises to be a highly purified replacement that would cut in half the number of shots — with few side effects. The amount of doses to be stockpiled is based on an estimate of how much vaccine would be needed in case of a major anthrax attack on a city, and to have enough available to vaccinate emergency-response workers ahead of time if they desire, Fauci said. [View article.](#)

Mice Produce SARS Antibodies

15 March – HealthDayNews reports laboratory mice can produce antibodies that will fend off an attack by the SARS virus, a new study says. This means researchers developing vaccines that work by triggering antibodies, which is the simplest and most straightforward approach, are on the right track, scientists say. The researchers first infected mice with the [SARS](#) virus and discovered that while the virus did not make the mice sick, it did infect the cells lining the airways and lungs and reproduced itself. When these mice were given a second helping of SARS 28 days later, the mice produced antibodies so the virus was not able, this time around, to replicate itself. Finally, the researchers took the antibodies produced by the mice and injected them into another group of mice that had not yet been infected with SARS. When these inoculated mice were exposed to SARS, the virus was unable to replicate itself. In other words, the antibodies produced by the first group of mice were enough to ward off infection in the second group. This may also mean that humans who had SARS once will be protected from getting it again. [View Source.](#)

Purine-Rich Foods, Dairy and Protein Intake, and the Risk of Gout in Men

11 March – The New England Journal of Medicine reported purine-rich foods and high protein intake have long been thought to be risk factors for [gout](#). Similarly, the possibility that the consumption of dairy products has a role in protecting against gout has been raised by metabolic studies. The authors prospectively investigated the association of these dietary factors with new cases of gout. During the 12 years of the study, 730 confirmed new cases of gout were documented. The multivariate relative risk of gout among men in the highest quintile of meat intake, as compared with those in the lowest quintile, was 1.41, and the corresponding relative risk associated with seafood intake was 1.51. In contrast, the incidence of gout decreased with increasing intake of dairy products. The level of consumption of purine-rich vegetables and the total protein intake were not associated with an increased risk of gout. The study concluded higher levels of meat and seafood consumption are associated with an increased risk of gout, whereas a higher level of consumption of dairy products is associated with a decreased risk. Moderate intake of purine-rich vegetables or protein is not associated with an increased risk of gout. [View Article](#)

Focus on Epidemiology

Brief Report: Azithromycin Treatment Failures in Syphilis Infections --- San Francisco, California, 2002--2003

12 March – CDC/MMWR reported the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) is investigating several clinical failures in [syphilis](#) patients treated with the macrolide antibiotic azithromycin. This report describes the use of azithromycin for syphilis treatment, recent treatment failures in San Francisco, and CDC recommendations for syphilis treatment. Clinicians should

exercise caution in using azithromycin for treating incubating syphilis or syphilis infection until the risk and mechanism of failure are better understood. [View Full report](#)

DoD-GEIS : Influenza

16 March - To date, 33 human cases of [avian influenza](#) (AI) A (H5N1) with 15 deaths have been reported: 11 in Thailand with 7 deaths and 22 in Vietnam with 15 deaths. AI A (H5N1) should not be confused with other influenza strains currently circulating; there have been recent outbreaks of AI A (H5N2) and (H7) reported in Asia, Canada and the U.S. No human infection has been reported to date with those strains. The World Organization for Animal Health provides a list of countries with [outbreaks](#) of various animal influenza strains. Epidemiologic investigation by WHO and affected countries continue regarding actual causes for human AI cases; no human-to-human spread has been documented. With regard to eggs, although ill birds will stop laying eggs, eggs laid in the early phase of the outbreak could contain AI virus in the albumen, yolk and/or on the egg surface. The virus can penetrate cracked or intact shells or contaminate egg containers; proper handling of egg products and adequate cooking has been recommended. Current human influenza vaccines do not provide protection against the A (H5N1) strain - no H5N1 vaccine is available. Reported [human influenza](#) activity has declined globally with only Japan reporting widespread and areas of Germany and Italy reporting regional activity. [CDC](#) reports that rates of influenza-like illness and for mortality from influenza and pneumonia remained below baseline rates. Only 5 of 713 (0.7%) specimens (U.S.) from week 9 laboratory-based surveillance were positive for influenza. Of these, 2 were influenza A (H3N2) and 2 were influenza B viruses. There were no reports of widespread or regional influenza activity from state and territorial epidemiologists. Two states reported local activity, 31 states reported sporadic activity and 17 states reported no activity. The FDA's Vaccine and Related Biologics Advisory Committee (VRBAC) will finalize next season's vaccine composition this week. For more information please visit: <http://www.geis.ha.osd.mil>

USEUCOM

Meningitis Kills 403 in Burkina This Year

16 March – Reuters reported more than 400 people have died of [meningitis](#) in Burkina Faso so far this year in an outbreak that has reached epidemic levels in two districts. Like its poor West African neighbors on the southern fringes of the Sahara, Burkina Faso is prone to meningitis outbreaks in the early months of the year and battles to get enough vaccine to combat the disease. From January 1 to March 7, Burkina Faso recorded 2,060 cases and 403 deaths, down from 4,248 cases and 626 deaths in the same period a year earlier, said Souleymane Sanou, the health ministry's head of disease control. Last year, 1,132 people died from meningitis while in 2002 1,743 died after a new strain, W135, appeared in the country. Sanou said the former French colony had 550,000 doses of vaccine to combat the more common A and C strains of the disease but only 30,000 doses of the vaccine against W135. Of the two districts in the country where the disease has hit epidemic levels, one was due to the A strain while the other was attributed to the W135 version of the disease. [View Article](#)

Poverty Gap for Cancer Survival Widens

13 March – [bmj.com](#) reported that the poverty gap for cancer survival in England and Wales widened throughout the 1990s, despite official efforts to help poor patients to access the best care. This is based on a government-backed analysis of patient records. The researchers found that poor men and women have a significantly lower chance of surviving almost two in three of the most common cancers

than their richer counterparts. And that gap is widening, according to the research, funded by the Office for National Statistics and leading cancer charity Cancer Research UK. Subdividing the cancers by sex showed that for 20 out of 33 types of cancer, living in a poor area reduced a patient's survival chances to a significant degree. Lead author Professor Michel Coleman, an epidemiologist from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine called for a colorectal screening program that targets poor people, more research to find out how accessible cancer services are for rich versus poor, and more training to help GPs to spot cancers earlier. The analysis shows the deprivation gap is widening to a significant degree for men with cancers of the esophagus, colon, rectum, larynx, or prostate and for women with colon cancer, rectal cancer, or myeloma. [View Report.](#)

Russia: Outbreak of Hepatitis A in the Autonomous Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia

12 March – ProMed reported 180 people, including 142 children, were diagnosed with [hepatitis A](#). The first cases were registered in December 2003 in the village of Zelenchukskaya, in the Autonomous Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia. Later hepatitis A cases were diagnosed in other parts of Karachayev-Cherkessiya. According to the Sanitary Epidemiological Surveillance Center, the cause of the outbreak was the unhygienic condition of drinking water sources in the aforementioned populated areas. The situation was worsened because of interruptions in the public electricity supply, which affected the water supply system and contributed to contamination by flood water. To limit the outbreak and prevent further spread of hepatitis A, vaccination of children and food production staff has begun. In Zelenchukskaya a drinking water pipeline is under reconstruction. [View Report](#)

Russia (Sverdlovsk Region): Outbreak of Rotavirus Enteritis Infection in Irbit

13 March – Promed reported in the city of Irbit (Sverdlovsk region) 154 people were hospitalized as a result of an outbreak of intestinal infection. Most of the victims are suffering with [rotavirus enteritis](#). The rise in intestinal infections has occurred since 9 Feb 2004. The outbreak of intestinal infection was due to contamination of the public drinking water supply spring flood water. Drinking water cleaning and chlorination measures were launched in the city. Physicians are recommending not using raw drinking water, but to use boiled water only and obey basic sanitary hygiene rules. [View Report](#)

Typhoid Fever Case was Registered in Komi, Russia

16 March – ProMed reported a case of [typhoid fever](#) was registered in the Siktikvar district of the Komi region in Russia. For Komi, it is an extremely rare disease. No cases were recorded for years, and only 2 cases were registered during 2003. The source of infection is not yet known; epidemiologists are currently investigating. According to preliminary data, a woman had contacts with relatives from Dagestan. Besides that, she works as a cleaner. At present, all people who had contacts with her are being checked, and the woman herself is undergoing treatment in the hospital. To prevent spread of infection, the following measures are being taken: market sanitary hygienic control and checking places where people from the southern regions of Russia reside. [View Report](#)

U.K. Restricts Blood Donations as a Precaution against Human Form of Mad Cow Disease

16 March — ABC News reported the British government said it would ban blood donations from anyone who had received a transfusion since 1980, as a precaution against transferring the human form of [mad cow disease](#). Health Secretary John Reid said anyone who had received a blood transfusion in the United Kingdom after Jan. 1, 1980 would not be allowed to donate. Reid said the

risk of transferring the fatal brain wasting illness was uncertain, but said the government was taking the measure, which will come into force on April 5, "as a precaution." He told the House of Commons that it was "generally accepted" that people in the United Kingdom had not been exposed to bovine spongiform encephalopathy, also known as BSE or mad cow disease, before 1980. The government announced in December last year the first reported case of a person dying from the human form of the disease after a blood transfusion from an infected donor. [View Article](#)

Yellow Fever in Liberia - Update 2

11 March – WHO reported as of 9 March 2004, a total of 39 suspect cases of [Yellow Fever](#), including 8 deaths, were reported to WHO from eight counties. New cases were reported from Margibi, Grand Bassa, and Grand Gedeh Counties. Of the total cases, 4 were laboratory confirmed by Institute Pasteur Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Further testing on samples obtained from suspect cases is ongoing. As of 9 March 2004, 66% of the target population (47,763) have been immunized. Additional emergency mass immunization campaigns are planned to start in Nimba County on March 20. [View Report](#)

USCENTCOM

Army Treating Hundreds of Leishmaniasis Cases

13 March – ProMed reported that despite mass education campaigns, so far, more than 500 cases of [leishmaniasis](#) have been diagnosed in Soldiers who were deployed to Iraq. This is despite Leishmaniasis is caused by a parasite transmitted by the bite of a sand fly. Iraq's sand flies are most active during warm nights from March to October, so troops on the move during Operation Iraqi Freedom were right in the middle of "Sand fly Central." To put the current leishmaniasis outbreak into perspective, for Operations Desert Shield and Storm, the official number of leishmaniasis cases was 32. Because the disease is difficult to diagnose without a lab and experts equipped to look for it, all leishmaniasis smears are currently sent to the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research for confirmation. The institute, in fact, has the only leishmaniasis lab in the country that is accredited by the College of American Pathologists and is operated in accordance with the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act. [View Report](#)

Suspected Poisoning Due to Gastrointestinal Infections

15 March – ProMed reported 50 cases of gastrointestinal illness (rather than 300-400 cases as mentioned in the media) have been reported in Dohuk in northern Iraq. 27 percent of cases were reported from a housing complex in Khanak inhabited by a religious sect, the Yazedia. The clinical features shown were abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, fever (especially in children), dehydration, headache, and prostration. There has been one death from a heart attack in a doctor recovering from diarrhea. Stool sampling has been carried out and has shown a high incidence of [Entamoeba histolytica](#), moreover water samples taken from housing supplies in Khanak have shown the presence of [E. coli](#). The water supply network is in poor condition, and there is contamination with sewage. Measures have been taken to improve food hygiene and to treat domestic water supplies, and the frequency of cases is now declining. [View Report](#) [View Report of Poisoning](#)

Seychelles: Star Looks to Curb Dengue at Roadside Bin Sites

13 March – ProMed reported sanitation company Star Seychelles embarked on a campaign to clean waste bin sites across the country, partly in an effort to quell the recent bout of [dengue fever](#). Star

managing director Thomas Forgacs said that with a recently refurbished bowser fitted with a high-pressure water cleaner, the project would entail cleaning and disinfecting waste bin sites in Seychelles, which health officials believe to be common breeding grounds for mosquitoes that could be carriers of dengue fever. Initial plans call for a routine cleaning of each site twice a year. Star will begin in Victoria and work their way outwards from there. [View Report](#)

USNORTHCOM

Health Group Ranks 100 Metro Areas Worst for Asthma Sufferers

16 March – CNN News reported to bring awareness to the potentially fatal disease, the Allergy and Asthma Foundation of America developed a list of 100 metropolitan areas across the country that they term "[asthma](#) capitals." The group looked at the prevalence and mortality from the disease, outdoor air quality, smoking laws and the number of asthma medication prescriptions and specialists. While Knoxville takes the top spot, Arkansas' capital, Little Rock, and St. Louis, Missouri, follow as the most challenging places for asthmatics to live, according to the AAFA ranking. Madison, Wisconsin, and Louisville, Kentucky, come in at fourth and fifth, respectively. The remaining top "asthma capitals" are Memphis, Tennessee; Toledo, Ohio; Kansas City, Missouri; Nashville, Tennessee; and Hartford, Connecticut. [View Article](#)

FDA Begins Crackdown on Supplement Andro

12 March – CNN reported federal officials announced a crackdown on the supplement andro, which gained fame after baseball player Mark McGwire used the product in his record-setting 1998 season. The Food and Drug Administration said that manufacturers of andro products will have to cease production unless the makers can prove it is safe. Although andro is not a steroid and is marketed as a dietary supplement, the FDA said the health risks are the same. The agency sent letters to 23 companies that distribute andro products, warning they could face government action if they didn't follow the recommendations. Andro, or androstenedione, is a hormone that is made naturally in the human body during the production of testosterone and estrogen. Some advocates say higher levels of testosterone will enable athletes to train harder, build bigger muscles and get results faster. But according to the Mayo Clinic, andro supplement use by males has been responsible for diminished sperm production, shrunken testicles, enlarged breasts, acne and decreased levels of the heart-friendly kind of cholesterol. [View Source.](#)

Nevada: Total of Norovirus Cases in Las Vegas Reaches 284

13 March – ProMed reported Nevada health officials recorded 49 cases of viral gastroenteritis in Las Vegas during the first 8 days of this month despite ramped-up cleaning efforts at the California Hotel and Casino. Dave Tonelli, spokesman for the Clark County Health District, yesterday said of the 284 cases reported between 3 Dec 2003 and Mon 8 Mar 2004, 37 people were sick in Dec 2003, 80 in January, 118 in February and 49 this month. Tonelli said health officials are continuing to search for the source of the [norovirus](#) infection. The focus has been on the California Hotel because most of the people who got sick stayed, ate or gambled there. Boyd Gaming Corp. spokesman Rob Stillwell yesterday said the hotel's stepped-up cleaning measures went into effect 2 weeks ago. He believes the case numbers are increasing as more people hear about the outbreak through news stories and call health officials to report their illness. [View Report](#)

Officials Seek Approval to Begin Wider Testing for Bird Flu

13 March— The Associated Press reported government and poultry industry officials intend to expand testing for [bird flu](#) to cover most of the poultry raised in the United States, possibly this month, an Agriculture Department official said Friday. The \$12.5 million program would focus on the most dangerous forms of the most common variety, low pathogenic avian influenza. These forms, known as H5 and H7, can be no worse than the chicken equivalent of the common cold. If left to spread, however, they can mutate into highly pathogenic varieties that can kill entire flocks in a day. Recent outbreaks of low-path bird flu in Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania led to a spate of bans which, after a separate high-path bird flu infected a flock in Texas, reached about 35 nations. [View Source.](#)

USPACOM

Bangladesh - 6 Children Die of Undiagnosed Disease in One Week

08 March – Bangladesh-Web.com reported Six children died of an undiagnosed disease and 17 others were affected with it at Parangaon and Bashanpur villages in Biswampur upazila during the past week. The 17 affected children have been undergoing treatment in Biswampur Upazila Health Complex. Among them, the conditions of 6 children are critical. A medical team from Sunamganj Sadar Hospital has been sent to the affected areas. Medical teams were sent to explore possible etiologies of this disease, however at this time no information was available. [View Article](#)

Confirmed Human Cases of Avian Influenza A(H5N1)

17 March –WHO reported on the number of confirmed Human cases of [Avian Influenza](#). The count is as follows

Country/Territory	Total cases	Deaths
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Thailand	12	8
<u>Viet Nam</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>15</u>
Total	34	23

[View Source](#)

Flu Sweeping Across Fiji

11 March - Pacific Islands Development Program/East-West Center reported [Human Influenza Type A virus](#) is currently affecting most parts of Fiji. Virus Laboratory chief medical officer Dr Joe Koroivueta says they have carried out tests and suspect the virus has been around for three weeks. Dr Koroivueta says they cannot determine the number infected at the moment, but agrees it's increasing. At the Suva Private Hospital alone, as many as 200 people come in with symptoms every day. The problem is compounded by the absence of medical officers who are also affected by the flu. [View Report](#)

Indonesia Dengue Outbreak Slows

15 March – Yahoo News reported Indonesia's [dengue fever](#) outbreak, which has killed 452 people this year, is showing signs of slowing. The Health Ministry said the worst of the outbreak had passed and they expected to bring the disease under control within a few weeks. The Health Ministry said the worst of the outbreak had passed and they expected to bring the disease under control within a few

weeks. Thomas Suroso, director for animal-borne diseases at the Health Ministry, said the outbreak was not the result of a new strain of the virus, confirming earlier comments by the World Health Organization. The WHO has said the outbreak was part of a five-year cycle common in tropical countries. The disease strikes annually during the rainy season in Indonesia. [View Report](#)

Nepal: 16 Influenza Virus Infection Deaths in Mugu District

10 March – ProMed reported 16 people have died of [viral influenza](#) within one week in Mugu district. The disease has hit several villages of Ruhga VDC, but most of the casualties have been in Ward No.6. No health facilities are available in the area. Although the District Public Health Office of Mugu has said a medical team has been sent to the area, the disease, reports said, is finding more and more victims, especially children and the elderly. [View Report](#)

Pedigree Recalls Dog Food

11 March – ProMed reported the United States dog food maker Pedigree expanded the recall of its product from Taiwan to 9 other Asian countries after Thailand and the Philippines also reported dogs dying from kidney failure. The expanded recall comes one day after Pedigree inspectors found mildew on 2 kinds of ingredients for Pedigree dry dog food in its Thailand plant. The voluntary recall applies to Pedigree dry dog food, Whiskas dry cat food, Pedigree Dog's Delight Ringo, Pedigree Dog's Delight Tasty Bone, and Pedigree Puppy Biscuit dog treats, all made in Thailand. The products were sold in Taiwan, South Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, and Viet Nam. Kitekat dry sold in Thailand and Malaysia as well as Cesar Duo sold in Taiwan and South Korea are also to be withdrawn. The recall also covers products in Japan and Hong Kong. [View report](#)

UN Warns HIV Infections Increasing Rapidly Among Asian Women

08 March – The Utusan online reported the United Nations reported that [HIV](#) infection rates among Asian women are soaring and being married may be one of the factors as many women contract the disease from their husbands. Women's infection rates in the region had jumped 10 percent in the past two years and potentially could match that of men if the issue is not addressed. Women make up 30% of adult infections in Southeast Asia and in some countries this is moving towards 50%. In Papua New Guinea more than half of all new infections are among women. In Thailand 40 percent of new infections occur between spouses, with 90 percent of them from husband to wife – there is a similar trend in other countries such as India. [View Article](#)

Vietnam: Dengue Cases Double to 3,300

13 March – ProMed reported [dengue fever](#) has killed at least 5 people and infected 3,300 others in Vietnam so far this year doubling the number of infections in the same period last year. The disease is found mostly in southern Vietnam, with 93 percent of the patients from commercial hub Ho Chi Minh City and surrounding provinces in the Mekong Delta. Pham Ngoc Dinh, deputy director of the Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology in Hanoi, said so far Vietnam's northern region has not been affected, but health officials have been warned about the possible spreading of the virus. Dengue fever normally strikes Vietnam every year beginning in April, the start of the rainy season. [View Report](#)

Vietnam Says Hopes to Declare Country Free of Bird Flu by End of Month

12 March - Agence France-Presse (AFP) reports that Vietnamese officials are hoping to declare the country free of [bird flu](#) by the end of this month. Vietnam has been the worst hit from the disease out of the 10 Asian countries that have been affected by bird flu. Fifteen people have died from the

disease in Vietnam. Officials say that affected localities can declare themselves free of bird flu if they have no new infections for 30 days and meet strict hygiene conditions. However, AFP reports that so far only 4 localities have formally announced that they are free of the disease. Some 57 of the country's 64 provinces have been affected by the H5N1 avian flu outbreak. More than 38 million birds amounting to some 15 percent of the country's poultry population have died from the disease or been culled in efforts to prevent further spread of the disease. H5N1 infections have also broken out in Cambodia, Laos, China, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea. Taiwan and Pakistan, as well as parts of the United States and Canada, have reported weaker strains of avian influenza. [View Source.](#)

USSOUTHCOM

Dengue Fever Update

13 March – ProMed reported The State Health Secretary of Minas Gerais, Brazil registered as of 2 Mar 2004, 1,502 cases of [dengue fever](#) in 2004, including 6 cases of DHF. This compares with 646 cases of dengue in the first 2 months of 2003. The most affected regions are Leste and Triangulo Mineiro. In Venezuela, in the first week of 2004 there were 901 cases of dengue, including 82 (9.1 percent) cases of DHF. Cases are increasing, and according to the national endemic service, the situation is classified as an outbreak. The population under 15 years old represents 50.2 percent of total cases. Most cases are from the Capital District. The morbidity rate is 3.5 per 100,000. Only 1 death is related to dengue. The circulating serotypes are DEN-1, DEN-2, DEN-3 & DEN-4. In 2003 there were a total of 26,996 cases of dengue (8.3 percent were DHF) and the morbidity rate was 105.7 per 100,000. [View Report](#)

United Nations Addressing Emergency Health Needs in Haiti

16 March – Relief Web reported UN humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners are scaling up their operations to meet the emergency health needs of Haitians affected by the recent crisis there. On 15 March, the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) replenished the reserves of the hospitals in Gonaïves which had been looted. A convoy from the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and several NGO partners is scheduled to travel to the north coast city of Cap Haïtien to deliver food and medicines later this week. An assessment of vaccine stocks is now ongoing countrywide. WHO and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) are continuing distribution of 10,000 health kits for two hospitals in Port-au-Prince. More medicines and medical supply are also on the way to a pediatric hospital in the capital. WHO and PAHO are also delivering fuel to some public health institutions in Port-au-Prince. Overall, the situation in Haiti is calm, but still volatile. Security remains a priority concern. There is still sporadic shooting and looting. Sporadic demonstrations in the streets continue, particularly in Port-au-Prince. [View Article](#)

Update on Yellow Fever in Colombia

14 March – ProMed reported following the 2 epidemic peaks occurring on the Colombian-Venezuelan border in 2003 during January and July which affected the states of Zulia, Norte de Santander, and Cesar, authorities began to detect in December 2003 some new cases of [Yellow Fever](#) originating in the region of Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, departments of Cesar, Magdalena, and La Guajira. This new outbreak brought the total number of cases to 28 with 11 deaths, bringing the fatality rate to 39 percent. The 1st cases of this new outbreak were reported during epidemiological week (EW) 51 [2003]. The highest incidence for this outbreak was during EW 1 (2004), with the last case reported

during EW 2. The municipalities most affected were Santa Marta (with 14 cases), Valledupar (7), and Dibulla (5). By 16 Feb 2004, the Virology and Pathology Laboratories of the National Institute of Health had received a total of 850 samples from suspected human cases, of which 28 were positive for yellow fever. Following the outbreaks in Colombia in 2003 and early 2004, there has been a strengthening of epidemiological surveillance and laboratory diagnosis, with diagnostic training workshops being held and new sentinel centers opened. As a preventive measure to avoid reemergence of the urban form of the disease, there has been a strengthening of vector-control measures in the affected municipalities. There is a need to maintain these actions and their sustainability and to continue to incorporate PAHO recommendations into activities to prevent and control JYF and to deter its possible re-urbanization. [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/Hioupdate/>.

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