

USACHPPM
HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

30 January 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

Bacterium that Causes Food Poisoning May Lead to Better Anti-viral Vaccines

21 January – Eurekalert reported a new vaccine formulation that utilizes an unusual protein derived from a bacterium that causes food poisoning — [Listeria](#) — could paradoxically be used to improve the safety and effectiveness of vaccines for a variety of viral diseases. These could include HIV, smallpox and influenza, according to researchers at the University of Michigan. Conventional vaccine formulations typically use live or weakened viruses to boost the immune response. The Listeria formulation uses viral protein components along with the bacterial protein, reducing the possibility of accidental viral infection. In preliminary animal studies, the new vaccine also appeared to boost the immune response better than a conventional vaccine, according to the researchers. [View Article](#)

Cumulative Stress Ups Risk of PTSD

23 January – Health Day News reported the amount of stress young adults have experienced in their lives may influence their susceptibility to [post-traumatic stress disorder \(PTSD\)](#) after a traumatic incident. That finding comes in a Florida State University study in the current issue of the American Journal of Orthopsychiatry. The researchers conclude that cumulative stress, even relatively ordinary problems that occur years before a traumatic event, is a factor in a person's risk for PTSD. Parental divorce or failing a grade in school are examples of life adversities that may affect a person's future risk for PTSD. The study may help explain why only about a quarter of people who suffer traumatic experience develop PTSD. [View Article](#)

Fears Grow as Drug Firms Quit Antibiotic Research

25 January – Reuters reported with "superbugs" stalking hospitals and old killers such as [tuberculosis](#) re-emerging, the world badly needs more powerful antibiotics. Yet the pipeline of new treatments is drying up as drug firms -- citing poor financial returns -- focus instead on chronic conditions, such as high cholesterol, where medicines are taken for years rather than curing patients in one or two weeks. The shrinking of the medical armory is a growing worry for healthcare officials and has sparked a debate between regulators and pharmaceutical companies over ways to kick-start investment. "The relative lack of research on anti-microbials is a matter of concern and it does relate partly to the financial returns on their use," said Richard Laing, an expert on medicine policy at the World Health Organization in Geneva. "There is clearly a potential risk, due to growing drug resistance, that there won't be any effective anti-microbials available in the future." Only nine new antibiotics have been approved since 1998, of which just two had a novel mechanism of action -- and the annual reports of major drug companies list a mere five new antibiotics in development out of more than 400 agents in total. [View Article](#)

Many Men Would Rather Cope with STDs than Use Condoms

22 January – Eurekalert reported some men may not be willing to use condoms regularly even after seeking treatment for a [sexually transmitted infection](#) and acknowledging their protective value, according to a new survey of low-income African-American clinic patients. Two-thirds of the men with

a primary sexual partner and one-third of those without a primary partner said they were not ready to use condoms consistently, say Diane Grimley, Ph.D., of University of Alabama at Birmingham and colleagues. The study was published in the American Journal of Health Behavior. Men in more intimate relationships were among the least likely to consider using a condom regularly, the researchers found. "The situation in which men reported the least confidence in using condoms with a main partner was the one in which they wanted their partner to know that they were 'committed to the relationship,'" Grimley says. Among men with no main partner, those who used drugs and alcohol were the least likely to use condoms consistently. [View Article](#)

Panic Attack Patients Lack Key Brain Receptors

21 January – New Scientist reported people who suffer from panic attacks lack a key neurochemical receptor in their brains, say US researchers. Their findings throw light on the molecular mechanisms that predispose a person to anxiety. The study, led by Alexander Neumeister, is the first to identify a deficit in the 5HT1A receptor in living humans with [panic disorder](#). Similar, but much smaller deficits have also been found in people with depression. The new work follows a study by Rene Hen of Columbia University, New York in 2002, which showed that knockout mice engineered to lack this type of serotonin receptor early in development show signs of anxiety in adulthood. Neumeister says that, together, the studies show the knockout mice could be useful as an animal model of panic disorder, on which to test potential drug treatments. [View Article](#)

Small-molecule Inhibitors of Anthrax Lethal Factor Identified

22 January - A team of scientists from the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) and other institutions has identified several compounds that block the activity of lethal factor, a key [anthrax](#) protein. The work represents an important first step in developing therapeutics to counter the disease. Anthrax is most deadly when exposure occurs through inhalation. In many cases, antibiotics may not be effective, so developing methods to inhibit toxin assembly and/or function is critical. [View Article](#)

Study Examines Cancer Risk from Hair Dye

28 January – CNN reported women who have been coloring their hair for 24 years or more have a higher risk of developing a cancer called [non-Hodgkin lymphoma](#), researchers reported. They said their study of 1,300 women could help explain a mysterious rise in the number of cases of the cancer that affects the lymphatic system. Writing in the American Journal of Epidemiology, they said women who dyed their hair starting before 1980 were one-third more likely to develop non-Hodgkin lymphoma, or NHL, and those who used the darkest dyes for more than 25 years were twice as likely to develop the cancer. Cancer experts note that a person's absolute risk of developing lymphoma is very low, so doubling that risk still means a woman who dyes her hair is very unlikely to develop lymphoma. The Yale University researchers did not find any larger risk of cancer in women who started using hair dye in 1980 or later. [View Article](#)

Epidemiology Update:

SARS: The Journal of Emerging Infectious Disease has dedicated their February online edition to [SARS](#) research and commentary. Articles address SARS origins, epidemiology, transmission,

infection control, laboratory studies, clinical studies, preparedness and response. They can be found at the journal [Site](#)

DoD-Global Emerging Infections Surveillance and Response

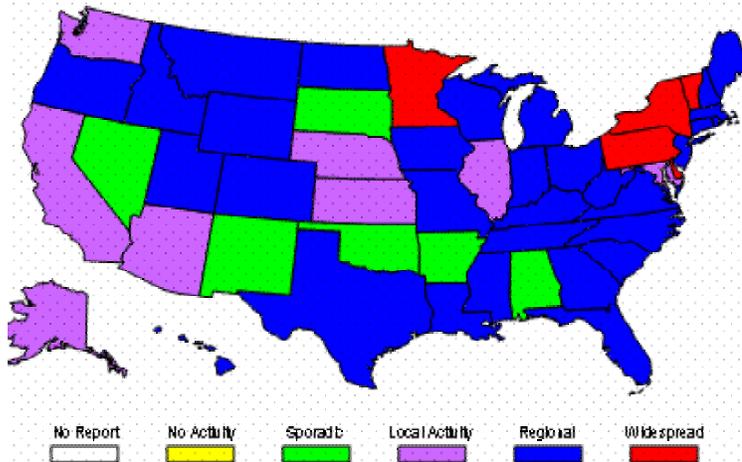
29 January – The HIO Update welcomes DoD-GEIS to this weekly update. Each week, issues dealing with emerging infections and surveillance will be discussed. The DoD-Global Emerging Infections Surveillance and Response System (DoD-GEIS) mission is to support and coordinate DoD's global surveillance, training, research and response capabilities against emerging microbial threats impacting Force Health Protection and national security. Specifically, DoD-GEIS supports outbreak preparation, detection, investigation, microbial agent identification, and communicable disease control and prevention, as described on web site <http://www.geis.ha.osd.mil> (point of telephone contact at 301-319-9921 or 301-319-9072). The Central Hub for DoD-GEIS is located at Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, and has many important partners within the Military Health System (MHS), including USACHPPM, that promote public health and Force Health Protection in a professional cooperative network. Other partners include the Air Force Institute for Operational Health (AFIOH), the Navy Health Research Center and the Navy Environmental Health Center; together these partners coordinate on health issues affecting the Army, Navy and Air Force, and provide special expertise, for example, in the surveillance and diagnosis of illnesses caused by influenza, adenoviruses and other agents that affect trainees in the uniformed services. In addition, AFIOH operates the DoD's Global Influenza Surveillance Program (formerly known as Project Gargle) as DoD Executive Agent. Several other excellent clinical and medical research laboratories are part of the DoD-GEIS network. These include the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, the Navy Medical Research Center, and the US Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases. These partners provide important capabilities and expertise in detecting outbreaks and diagnosing agents of disease through mortality surveillance, syndromic surveillance systems such as ESSENCE, an internet-based directory of DoD public health laboratory services, rickettsia and malaria resistance diagnosis and detection, and poxvirus, viral hemorrhagic fever and SARS testing. Most DoD-GEIS resources are dedicated to the support of global surveillance, outbreak detection and response capacities through DoD overseas laboratories and activities in Thailand (AFRIMS), Indonesia (NAMRU2), Kenya (USAMRU-K), Egypt (NAMRU3), Peru (NMRCD), and Korea (USACHPPM-Korea); the four priority areas for surveillance at the overseas laboratories are drug-resistant malaria, antibiotic resistant organisms causing gastroenteritis, influenza, and fevers of unknown origin, including dengue and hemorrhagic fevers. Medical professionals that work with DoD-GEIS are assigned to the WHO in Geneva and to the CDC, Atlanta. Together, this global network represents an excellent resource that can facilitate infectious disease cluster detection, diagnosis and outbreak response, and can assist in coordination with outside agencies such as state health departments, the CDC and WHO. DoD-GEIS, through the network of DoD overseas laboratories, MHS and global partners (a system of systems) pursues a strategy of preventive defense; that is, recognizing and containing microbial threats to health through global cooperation and collaboration in surveillance and response. This week, attention is brought to several priority diseases: [Influenza](#), [SARS and Avian Influenza Surveillance](#), [Leishmaniasis](#) and [Pneumonia](#).

Influenza Update

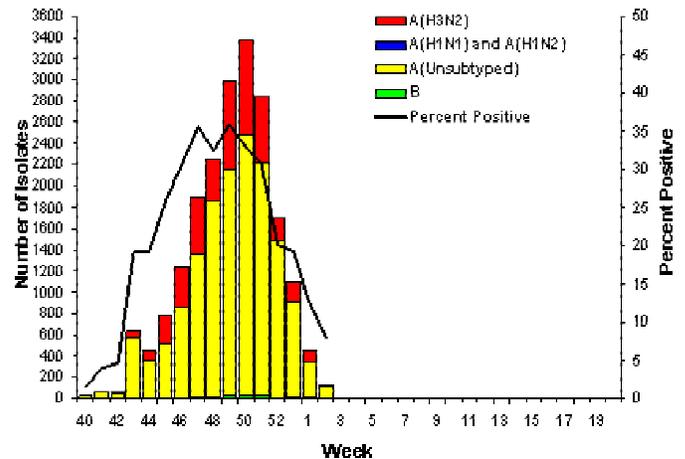
CDC Update

Weekly Influenza Activity Estimates Reported by State & Territorial Epidemiologists

Week ending January 17, 2004 - Week 2



WHO/NREVSS Collaborating Laboratories National Summary, 2003-04

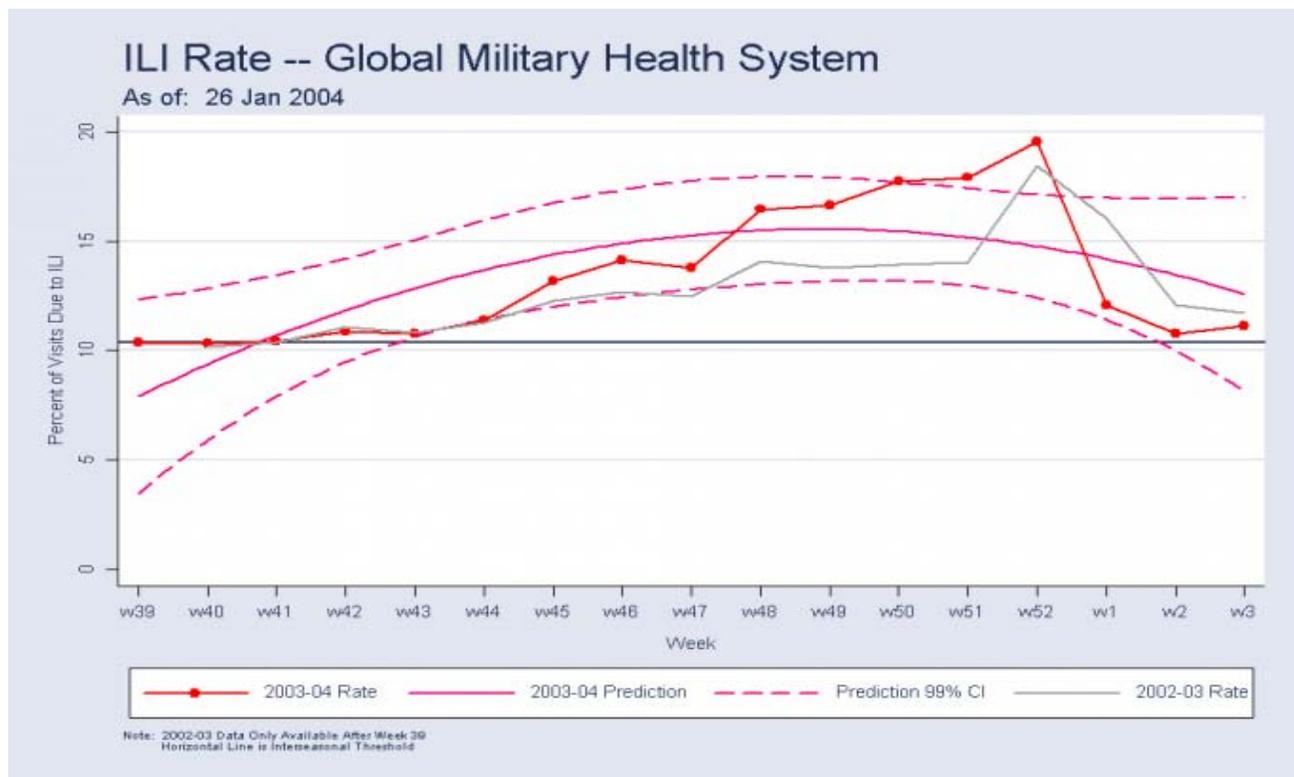


WHO Influenza Update

Since mid-December, outbreaks of H5N1 infection have been detected in the poultry populations of the Republic of Korea, Japan, Viet Nam, Thailand and Cambodia. Additional countries have detected deaths in poultry flocks, and the cause is currently under investigation. To date, only two countries, Viet Nam and Thailand, have reported laboratory confirmed cases of H5N1 infection in humans. The cases and deaths in humans coincide with outbreaks of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in poultry populations in these two countries and several others in Asia. The disease in poultry is widespread in both Viet Nam and Thailand. WHO teams, drawn from the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network are in both countries to support national authorities. Laboratories in the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network have been providing diagnostic and investigative support. WHO is collaborating closely with FAO and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). Laboratory testing has confirmed an eighth case of human infection with H5N1 avian influenza in Viet Nam. Altogether, Viet Nam has reported 8 laboratory-confirmed cases, 6 of which have been fatal. Two deaths in Viet Nam currently under investigation have been prematurely reported as laboratory confirmed. Test results are inconclusive. Further testing is under way at WHO influenza reference laboratories in Hong Kong. Information from these tests should allow conclusive identification of the causative agent. To date, highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza has been detected in poultry in 28 of the country's 64 provinces. Around 3.7 million poultry are reported to have died or been slaughtered as a result. The Ministry of Public Health in Thailand has confirmed a second death caused by human infection with the H5N1 strain of avian influenza virus. He was Thailand's third confirmed case of H5N1 avian influenza and the country's second death from this disease. The Ministry of Health in China has today confirmed the presence of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in poultry in the southern province of Guangxi. The H5N1 strain was detected in samples taken from a duck farm. Testing is under way of samples from poultry outbreaks in the adjacent Hunan and Hubei provinces. Ducks are involved in the outbreak in Hunan, and chickens are involved in Hubei. Strict measures to control all outbreaks, including culling and quarantine, have been undertaken. No cases of human illness linked to these outbreaks have been detected to date. [View Reports](#)

DoD Global Influenza and Other Respiratory Viral Pathogens Surveillance Weekly Update Week 3 (18 Jan – 24 Jan)

Since the start of the influenza surveillance season (Week 40: 28 Sep to 4 Oct 03), the Epidemiological Surveillance Division (AFIOH/SDE) has received 2459 throat swab specimens as part of the influenza surveillance program. 2,359 (96%) of the specimens have been processed to date. Of those processed, 859 (36%) were positive for Influenza A virus and 4 were positive for Influenza B virus. Three hundred sixty-seven (43%) of the influenza A isolates were subtyped. Three hundred sixty-six (99%) of the Influenza A viruses subtyped were H3N2; one (1%) of the Influenza A viruses subtyped was H1N2. Two of the influenza B isolates have been subtyped as B/Sichuan-like. Subtyping was accomplished by either polymerase chain reaction (PCR) or hemagglutination-inhibition (HI).



[View Source](#)

Other Reports

21 January – Promed reported a dead peregrine falcon found near 2 chicken farms in Hong Kong had the [avian influenza virus](#), the 1st sign that the disease spreading in chicken flocks in Vietnam, South Korea, and Japan may also be present in China, agricultural officials said. Hong Kong said it would respond by stepping up the monitoring of chicken farms for the disease, with inspections continuing through the Chinese New Year holidays over the next 3 days. Hong Kong began actively testing wild birds in March 2003, after 2 residents became infected with H5N1 and one died. Agricultural officials have collected over 6000 samples from wild birds since then, and discovered no infections until the falcon. An agricultural worker found the falcon's body on Monday less than 11 kilometers (7 miles), from the border between Hong Kong, a special autonomous region of China, and Shenzhen, an adjacent Chinese city. But Lai Ching-wai, Hong Kong's assistant director for agricultural inspection and quarantine, said experts could not guess where the rare bird became infected. [View Report](#)

23 January – Reuters reported Cambodia has confirmed an outbreak of [bird flu](#) at a farm on the outskirts of Phnom Penh, a government official said. "So far the bird flu is only in one place," the Agriculture Ministry official told Reuters. He said the origin of the outbreak was still under investigation and the ministry was confident it had contained any further spread by sending technical staff across the country. The outbreak was confirmed through tests of dead chickens conducted by a laboratory in Paris. A World Health Organization official said there were no suspected human cases of bird flu in Cambodia. [View Article](#)

25 January – ProMed reported new tests have turned up a disturbing problem with the [avian influenza](#) virus that is spreading in Asia: the strain appears resistant to one of the 2 main classes of drugs used to fight influenza viruses. Initial genetic tests showed that the A(H5N1) was resistant to the less expensive class of anti-influenza drugs. The class includes amantadine (Symmetrel) and rimantadine (Flumadine). Earlier studies by Dr. Malik Peiris of the University of Hong Kong showed that the resistance results from a single amino acid change. However, A(H5N1) is believed to be susceptible to the costlier class of anti-influenza drugs known as the neuraminidase inhibitors. Tamiflu (Oseltamivir) is the main drug in this class. [View Report](#)

27 January – CNN News reported Asian health officials say that the [bird flu](#) outbreak is spreading fast across the region and has now hit Pakistan, bringing the amount of countries affected to eight nations. At least 7 people have been confirmed dead from the disease, including the latest victim from Thailand. The other six confirmed deaths were all from Vietnam, which is the country that so far has been worst affected by the outbreak. Bird flu has so far hit Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Thailand and Indonesia. Health officials so far say that they believe that there has been no evidence of human-to-human transmission. However, experts have been warning that if the disease mutated enough to allow transmission that way, it could become a bigger health threat than Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The World Health Organization (WHO) says that a vaccine for the disease is at least some 6 months away because the virus appears to keep mutating and because it also appears to be resistant to cheaper anti-viral drugs used to treat regular influenza, CNN reports. Meanwhile, Thai officials say that the country will host a meeting this Wednesday (January 28) of senior health and agricultural officials on bird flu. Asian countries so far affected by the outbreak will send representatives, while Hong Kong, Singapore and the European Union, will also send officials as well. [View Article](#)

USEUCOM

Doctors Fear Untreatable Russia Tuberculosis Boom

25 January – Reuters reported [tuberculosis](#), long ago subdued by Western doctors, is not only rampant in Russia but increasingly mutating into terrifying new forms that even the most powerful new medicines cannot kill. It is spreading among the country's most vulnerable groups: around one in 10 prisoners in Russia's jails have it, and among homeless people the rate is broadly similar. And post-Soviet medical mismanagement, many doctors say, has already allowed the contagious, air-borne disease to mutate into strains that cannot be killed by even the most modern medicines. "The reservoirs of super-resistance will be huge, it will be impossible to treat," said Andrei Slavutsky of the medical charity Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF). [View Article](#)

Preliminary Report of an Outbreak of Lymphogranuloma Venereum in Men in the Netherlands, with Implications for Other Countries in Western Europe

24 January – ProMed reported in mid-December 2003, a cluster of 13 [lymphogranuloma venereum](#) (LGV) cases was reported to the Municipal Health Service in Rotterdam by the Erasmus Medisch Centrum sexually transmitted infections (STI) outpatient clinic. LGV is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by [C. trachomatis](#) serovars L1, L2 and L3. The incidence of LGV in the developed world is low, and incidental cases are considered to be imports from areas where LGV is endemic, such as West and East Africa, India, Southeast Asia, South and Central America, and some Caribbean islands. This is an outbreak of LGV in MSM [men who have sex with men], a majority of whom are HIV-infected, which may extend through a large part of western Europe. The ulcerous character of LGV favors transmission and acquisition of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases as well as other blood-borne diseases. Active case finding (for both LGV and HCV), registration and contact tracing have been intensified, and warning of networks of MSM who have sex with each other is ongoing. Medical professionals (STI clinics, general practitioners, HIV physicians, and gastroenterologists) are currently being informed of the situation. In view of the patients' international contacts, international warnings and alertness is needed. Concerted action of professionals in infectious disease control and curative care is called for. [View Report](#)

Republic of Buryatiya: 30 Cases of Hepatitis A in Ulan Ude

21 January – ProMed reported 30 people have been hospitalized as a result of a [hepatitis A](#) outbreak among children at the Solnishko tuberculosis sanatorium, which is located in Ulan Ude, the capital of the Republic. Altogether 40 people were infected in the sanatorium, 38 of them children. According to information from the State Epidemiological Surveillance Center, the condition of the hospitalized patients is mostly satisfactory. The sanatorium treats children 1-7 years old with tuberculosis from all regions of Buryatiya. Preliminary epidemiological investigation has shown that the disease was transmitted by close contact. The source of infection is unknown. [View Report](#)

Russia: Predicted Increase in HFRS Cases in Udmurtia in 2004

23 January – ProMed reported 2000 people in Udmurtia may contract [hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome \(HFRS\)](#) by the end of 2004. Infectious diseases specialists are warning that HFRS will reach a new peak in Udmurtia in 2004. There are currently 10 people hospitalized with HFRS in the city of Ijevsk, all of whom were working at the same construction site. Udmurtia has one of the worst records for HFRS in the Russian Federation. In the year 2001 a total of 1843 people contracted HFRS, 85 of whom were children. In 2000 there were 469 HFRS cases, of which 22 were children. In 2001 there were 11 deaths due to HFRS, giving a lethality index of 0.6 percent. [View Report](#)

USCENTCOM

Afghanistan: Major Polio Campaign Aims to Vaccinate Five Million

26 January – IRIN News reported the Afghan Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) launched a three-day child vaccination campaign against [polio](#) by deploying 40,000 volunteers across the country. "This nationwide campaign will cover every district in the country except very few areas which are not accessible due to heavy snow," Abdullah Fahim, a spokesman for the MoPH, told IRIN in the Afghan capital, Kabul. Afghanistan is among seven countries in the world along with Nigeria, India, Egypt,

Niger, Somali and Pakistan that remain polio-endemic. The country is on the way to being polio free, having recorded just eight cases last year. MoPH officials said they were expecting to eradicate the virus by the end of 2004. "We were committed to ending polio in 2003, but unfortunately we are among seven countries that failed to reach this goal," Fahim maintained. [View Article](#)

Israel: Tiberias' Leishmaniasis Sufferers Sue their City

25 January – ProMed reported Paula 20 people recently decided to sue the Tiberias municipality and the Health Ministry for negligence, claiming that they did not move to eradicate the sources of [cutaneous Leishmaniasis](#) with which the 20 were diagnosed. The disease has been diagnosed over the past year in 95 Israelis, 24 of them Tiberias residents. The number of people suffering from Leishmaniasis rose by 150 percent in 2003 compared to 2002. The most dramatic rise was in Tiberias, where the Health Ministry registered 44 cases in the past 5 years. The "northern" variety of the parasite, which has caused the disease in Tiberias, is more resistant to treatment than its "southern" relative. The Health Ministry commented that over the past year, it has taken intensive measures to contain the disease in the Tiberias area. After an epidemiological survey and analysis, a steering team was set up in the ministry's northern district to supervise preventive steps, which included spraying in areas where the disease was detected, informing residents and doctors about the disease, and building a canvas fence soaked with pesticide around the infected quarters. [View Report](#)

USNORTHCOM

3 Cruise Ships Report Outbreaks of Intestinal Illness

27 January – ProMed reported a Princess Cruises ship arriving at Port Everglades 22 Jan 2004 has had an outbreak of intestinal illness that affected more 5 percent of the people on the ship. By the 4th night of the cruise, 33 people reported being sick with nausea, diarrhea, and other symptoms, Princess spokeswoman Tori Benson said. Over the course of the cruise, 133 passengers and 18 crew members were listed as ill. As the number of sick passengers rose, Princess began extra sanitizing and disinfection measures designed to limit the spread of the illness. Dave Forney, head of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control's Vessel Sanitation Program, said the illness is not linked to anything in food or water on the ship. Princess said the illness was caused by a [norovirus](#), a common source of intestinal illness that is spread by personal contact. The ship will be sanitized before it leaves on its next cruise. New passengers will be notified by letter of the norovirus outbreak and advised of precautions they can take to minimize the chance of getting sick. [View Report](#)

Brucellosis Latest Concern for U.S. Beef Producers

24 January – Promed reported the state of Wyoming has identified a 2nd herd of cattle that has tested positive for [brucellosis](#), an infectious bacterial disease that leads to spontaneous abortion in cattle. It's the 2nd time in 2 months the disease has been found in Wyoming cattle. The 1st herd was discovered in late December 2003. State Veterinarian Jim Logan called the discovery "devastating." The state is now under orders to restrict the movement of cattle and begin new testing. There are as many as 200 cases of brucellosis in the United States each year. Officials suspect the contamination in Wyoming may have come from a herd of wild elk. [View Report](#)

BSE Probe Finds No More Cases in Index Herd

21 January – CIDRAP News reported the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) says it has found no more cases of [bovine spongiform encephalopathy \(BSE\)](#) after testing 129 cattle from the herd that was the last home of the nation's only cow known to have the disease. Test results were still awaited for two more cows from the Mabton, Wash., herd where the diseased cow last lived (the index herd), the USDA said in an update today. The department also was awaiting results of tests on 39 euthanized animals from a herd at Mattawa, Wash. "Selective depopulation" of those herds has been completed, officials said. The USDA said it had traced the locations of 23 of 81 cows from the infected cow's birth herd in Alberta. The 81 cattle were all imported to the United States in September 2001 and are being traced because they could have BSE if they ate feed from the same source as the diseased cow. Besides the diseased cow, the USDA traced nine cows to the index herd, three to Tenino, Wash.; six to Connell, Wash.; one to Quincy, Wash., and three to Mattawa, Wash. [View Article](#)

CDC Plans Biodefense Testing

23 January – GovExec.com reported health officials are developing scenarios to test regional smallpox defenses and [bioterrorism](#) preparations by late 2004, a senior official at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. The "federal standards-based exercise scenarios," will be used to measure how state and regional public health and emergency departments have adopted CDC guidelines and how they would respond to a biological terrorist attack, including one involving smallpox, according to CDC Associate Director for Terrorism Preparedness and Response Joseph Henderson. The tests are part of the CDC's 2004 action plan for boosting smallpox defenses, Henderson said during a speech to a Health and Human Services Department advisory council. CDC officials also are planning a campaign to raise awareness of the smallpox threat and assuage fears about the vaccine. [View Article](#)

EPA Urges Home Testing for Radon to Reduce Lung-Cancer Risk

21 January – The EPA announced with an estimated 21,000 radon-related lung-cancer deaths per year, they urge Americans to test their homes for radon now. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer. Do-it-yourself radon test kits cost around \$25. Most homes found to have high levels of radon can be mitigated to reduce the gas from their homes at a modest cost. For more information visit the [EPA web page](#) or to see the state-by-state EPA map of radon levels visit [map](#).

Rare Rabies Death Prompts U.S. Bat Warning

22 January – Reuters reported a rare [rabies](#) fatality involving a bat prompted U.S. health officials on Thursday to urge Americans to avoid direct contact with the winged mammals and seek prompt medical care if bitten by one. The warning comes four months after a 66-year-old California man died of rabies contracted when he was bitten in bed by a bat, according to a report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The unnamed man washed his wound but did not seek medical care for more than a month, by which time he was suffering from drowsiness, chronic headache, malaise and severe pain shooting through his right arm and across his chest. He received two rabies shots while hospitalized, but died on Sept. 14, according to the CDC report. Tests confirmed that he had been infected with a rabies strain carried by the silver-haired bat. [View Article](#)

SARS-associated Coronavirus Transmission, United States

01 February – The Journal of Emerging Infectious Diseases published a study where to better assess the risk for transmission of the [severe acute respiratory syndrome](#)–associated coronavirus (SARS-CoV), researchers obtained serial specimens and clinical and exposure data from seven confirmed U.S. SARS patients and their 10 household contacts. SARS-CoV was detected in a day-14 sputum specimen from one case-patient and in five stool specimens from two case-patients. In one case-patient, SARS-CoV persisted in stool for at least 26 days after symptom onset. The highest amounts of virus were in the day-14 sputum sample and a day-14 stool sample. Residual respiratory symptoms were still present in recovered SARS case-patients 2 months after illness onset. Possible transmission of SARS-CoV occurred in one household contact, but this person had also traveled to a SARS-affected area. The data suggest that SARS-CoV is not always transmitted efficiently. Routine collection and testing of stool and sputum specimens of probable SARS case-patients may help early detection of SARS-CoV infection. [View Article](#)

Study Slams Biodefense Plan

23 January – The Boston Globe reported the Pentagon's efforts at creating new vaccines and drugs to combat biological weapons are poorly organized, underfunded, and unlikely to produce successful results in the near term, if ever, according to a congressionally mandated study. According to the report, the United States has not developed any vaccines and "only a few drugs as medical biodefense countermeasures" since the 1991 Persian Gulf War, when the specter of biological warfare against US troops was first brought to the public consciousness. The study, by the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council, recommended that Congress establish a new Medical Biodefense Agency to direct Defense Department research and development of medicines for dealing with biological warfare attacks as well as regular infectious diseases." [View Article](#)

U.S. Agent Orange Study Finds Raised Cancer Risks

22 January – Reuters reported Air Force veterans exposed to [Agent Orange](#) during the Vietnam War have a higher-than-average risk of [prostate](#) and [skin cancer](#), military researchers reported. The ongoing study of 2,000 Vietnam veterans shows for the first time an elevated risk of melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer. Previous studies have found increased risks of prostate cancer, chronic lymphocytic leukemia and also diabetes. [View Article](#)

USA: Suspected Norovirus Outbreak at University of North Carolina

27 January – ProMed reported an outbreak of an illness that sickened nearly 300 University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill students appeared to be tapering off on Sat 24 Jan 2004, when only a few victims sought medical treatment. The illness's behavior suggests it was caused by [norovirus](#) infection. Tests to establish the source were being run by the Orange County Health Department. Once a cause is established, school officials will be able to take precautions to avoid a repeat. [View Report](#)

USPACOM

Bangladesh: Mysterious Deadly Disease

25 January – ProMed reported 2 more people died of a mysterious disease in Goalundo on Friday and Saturday, raising the death toll from the yet-unidentified malady to 12. Symptoms of the disease are high fever, headache, tendency to vomit, diarrhea and body convulsions, physicians said. District Civil Surgeon Dr Motiur Rahman said that although the disease was initially diagnosed as "Viral Encephalitis", medical teams from ICDDR-B and IEDCR from Dhaka are testing the blood of domestic animals like cattle and poultry birds to identify the source of the disease. The unidentified disease has so far claimed 8 lives in Kazipara and Juran Mondoler para in Goalundo municipal area alone. Most of the victims were children and adolescents. Panic-stricken people have already started leaving the affected areas, while special prayers were being held in mosques and shrines. A team of experts on communicable diseases have collected tissue samples from several other victims of the disease in Goalundo, the BBC Bangla Service reported yesterday. Dr Jahangir Hossain of ICDDR-B (International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh) and a member of the visiting team of experts said the samples will be sent to Atlanta, USA, for diagnosis at the Center for Disease Control (CDC). [View Report](#) [View Report 2](#)

Dengue Fever Update

21 January – ProMed reported Dengue fever has killed at least 3 three people in Yogyakarta, Indonesia since last week, while 7 others remain hospitalized. Yogyakarta district office head Choirul Anwar said at least 503 cases of [dengue fever](#) in Yogyakarta were recorded by the end of last year [2003], while in 2002 the number of patients was only 374. The area worst hit by the disease was Umbulharjo subdistrict, home to 10,000 people. In addition, Health authorities have declared a dengue epidemic in Tonga. This follows the confirmation that a 74-year-old man in the Nuku'alofa area has been diagnosed with the most dangerous type of dengue -- dengue hemorrhagic fever. Health authorities are advising the public to destroy mosquito-breeding places and to remove water catchments such as old tires, empty cans, and tins. They are also urging people to use mosquito coils, nets, and repellents and to keep the environment clean. [View Report](#)

High Incidence of Eye Cancer in India

23 January – The Times of India reported cancerous tumors in the eye are considered to be rare but of late, there has been an increase in the number of [eye cancers](#) being reported in India. The country accounts for nearly 25 per cent of the total reported eye cancers across the world, said Dr Carol Sields, a member of the International Society of Ocular Oncology. A majority of these eye cancers are found in children, especially newborn. Of the 5,000 cases reported worldwide, nearly 1,500 are in India. [View Article](#)

Indonesia: Human Anthrax

21 January – ProMed reported blood tests by Bogor health agency officials have confirmed that 3 residents of Pisang village, Karadenan subdistrict, Sukaraja regency, Bogor, have been infected with [anthrax](#). It is believed they contracted the disease from goat meat they ate. A 32-year-old man still had lesions on the palm of his left hand and right calf, while his son (10 years old) and nephew (17) have been certified cured. The agency's director of communicable diseases, Sudadi, said the 3 had been infected on 25 Dec 2003, after consuming meat from a sick goat that the 32-year-old man had slaughtered. Karadenan subdistrict head Nana Mulyana said that the infected man had refused to

have the goat vaccinated against anthrax. Livestock in the area are supposed to be vaccinated every 6 months. The affected man was quoted as admitting that he slaughtered the sick goat and distributed the meat to 3 families, totaling 15 people. It was not clear whether the 12 others had fallen ill. [View Report](#)

Pakistan: Leishmaniasis Outbreak in Sind Province

24 January – ProMed reported hundreds of people in Dadu district are being disfigured by the painful parasitic disease [Leishmaniasis](#) as a consequence of the renewed multiplication of the sandfly which carries the parasite. Lack of proper treatment facilities by health department authorities aggravated the situation in the talukas of Mehar and Johi, which are particularly under attack by the sandfly, which has about 30 species. Health department authorities did not take immediate measures to contain the disease. Unofficial reports said there were more than 200 victims of the disease in Mehar taluka alone. In Johi the number was reportedly far higher. Reports said health department officials were engaged in the 3-day anti-polio campaign and were less interested in countering the new epidemic. The vaccine on the market is very expensive, so most victims resort to traditional therapies, which include ineffective herbal cures, or amulets. [View Report](#)

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Colombia: Yellow Fever

21 January – ProMed reported A young man has died in Bogota [the capital], Colombia, of [Yellow Fever \(YF\)](#) contracted during a family visit to Parque Tairona [a rural area, presumably forested, with monkeys] during the first week of January 2004. On his first hospital admission on 13 Jan 2004 the diagnosis was salmonellosis, but this was soon changed to YF, and he died on 19 Jan 2004. He may have been the 4th victim of YF this month [January 2004], because a 32-year-old woman has died in the intensive care ward of another clinic with similar symptoms, but an autopsy was refused by the family. In view of 11 confirmed cases of YF in the past month, the Environment Ministry has temporarily closed the following [national] parks in the area: Tairona, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Isla Salamanca & Santuarios de Fauna & Flora Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta & Los Flamencos. [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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