

## USACHPPM

# HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

13 June 2003

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

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## HOT TOPICS

### Asian Americans at Risk for “Silent” Heart Disease

10 June – Reuters reported according to a study by Dr. Antonio Q. Chan of Stanford University Medical Center in California, Asian Americans are disproportionately affected by a painless heart condition that can lead to heart attack called [myocardial ischemia](#). In the study, the researchers reviewed the medical records of 973 patients from a largely Asian-American practice in the San Francisco Bay area, and those of 662 patients from a predominantly Caucasian practice in the Chicago area. Among patients with myocardial ischemia, only 30 percent of Asian Americans experienced chest pain, compared with 83 percent of Caucasian Americans. However, Asian Americans were more likely than whites to have other symptoms, including shortness of breath after exercise, fatigue, and heart palpitations. Chan reports that any Asian American who complains of shortness of breath after climbing a flight or two of stairs, gets tired easily, or is over age 45 should be examined for the presence of ischemic heart disease. This is especially important for people with high blood pressure, diabetes or a family history of heart disease, he added. [View Article](#)

### Contact Lenses Alone No Good for Protecting Eye

08 June – The Times of India reported a new study indicates that contact lenses are no longer protective gear for the eye and wearing them in an industrial environment does not alleviate the need for eye and face protection. The research conducted by the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine upholds that the use of contact lenses does not mean additional hazards to workers. It also recommends individuals wearing contact lenses in the workplace need to combine them with appropriate industrial eye protection. Workers who need corrective lenses may wear full-face respirators, since the lenses do not interfere with the face piece seal. [View Article](#)

### Cumulative Number of Reported Probable SARs Cases From: 1 Nov 2002<sup>1</sup> To: 11 June 2003

Country	Cumulative # of case(s) <sup>2</sup>	# of deaths	Date last probable case reported	Date of Last Update From Country
Australia	5	0	12/May/2003	05/Jun/2003
Brazil	3	0	09/Jun/2003	09/Jun/2003
Canada	230	32	10/Jun/2003	10/Jun/2003
China	5329	343	11/Jun/2003	11/Jun/2003
China, Hong Kong <sup>4</sup>	1754	290	10/Jun/2003	10/Jun/2003
China, Macao	1	0	21/May/2003	03/Jun/2003
China, Taiwan	687	81	11/Jun/2003	11/Jun/2003
Colombia	1	0	05/May/2003	05/May/2003
Finland	1	0	07/May/2003	20/May/2003

France	7	0	09/May/2003	22/May/2003
Germany	10	0	04/Jun/2003	11/Jun/2003
India	3	0	13/May/2003	14/May/2003
Indonesia	2	0	23/Apr/2003	11/Jun/2003
Italy	9	0	29/Apr/2003	10/Jun/2003
Kuwait	1	0	09/Apr/2003	20/Apr/2003
Malaysia	5	2	20/May/2003	09/Jun/2003
Mongolia	9	0	06/May/2003	02/Jun/2003
New Zealand	1	0	30/Apr/2003	11/Jun/2003
Philippines	12	2	15/May/2003	06/Jun/2003
Republic of Ireland	1	0	21/Mar/2003	23/May/2003
Republic of Korea	3	0	14/May/2003	11/Jun/2003
Romania	1	0	27/Mar/2003	22/Apr/2003
Russian Federation	1	0	31/May/2003	31/May/2003
Singapore	206	31	18/May/2003	10/Jun/2003
South Africa	1	1	09/Apr/2003	03/May/2003
Spain	1	0	02/Apr/2003	05/Jun/2003
Sweden	3	0	18/Apr/2003	13/May/2003
Switzerland	1	0	17/Mar/2003	16/May/2003
Thailand	9	2	07/Jun/2003	10/Jun/2003
United Kingdom	4	0	29/Apr/2003	11/Jun/2003
United States	71	0	10/Jun/2003	10/Jun/2003
Viet Nam	63	5	14/Apr/2003	07/Jun/2003
<b>Total</b>	<b>8435</b>	<b>789</b>		

Notes:

Cumulative number of cases includes number of deaths.

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

1. The start of the period of surveillance has been changed to 1 November 2002 to capture cases of atypical pneumonia in China that are now recognized as being cases of SARS.
2. A decrease in the number of cumulative cases and discrepancies in the difference between cumulative number of cases of the last and the current WHO update are attributed to the discarding of cases.
3. Includes cases who are "discharged" or "recovered" as reported by the national public health authorities.
4. One death attributed to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China occurred in a case medically transferred from Viet Nam. [View Report](#)

## Ensuring the Safety of First Responder Gas Masks

10 June – Eurekalert reported The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has teamed up with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and the U.S. Army Soldier and Biological Chemical Command to develop a full suite of gas mask standards for civilian workers. Masks worn by first responders must meet different standards from those designed for troops. Most military uses involve outdoor attacks where air currents would naturally disperse chemicals or other hazardous agents. The civilian testing procedures address release of a hazardous agent inside buildings or other closed environments. The standard will include a maximum penetration rate for hazardous substances and methods for testing the fit of gas masks for individuals. Scientists will begin live agent testing of masks this spring at the Army's Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland, one of only a few nationwide laboratories that can do such tests safely. The project is funded by the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [View Report](#)

## Healthy Eating Saves on Future Health Costs: Study

09 June – Reuters reported eating plenty of fruits and vegetables in middle age may lead to lower healthcare costs later in life, according to research reported. With 20 percent of the U.S. population estimated to be 60 or older by the year 2030, the potential to contain healthcare costs by adopting a healthy lifestyle and eating habits earlier in life has important implications for future containment of escalating healthcare costs, the study investigators note. The researchers found that middle-aged men with the highest intake of fruits and vegetables (at least 42 cups per month) had the lowest total annual Medicare charges (\$11,416) later on in life and the lowest charges specifically related to [heart](#)

[disease](#). In contrast, the men with the lowest intake of fruits and vegetables (fewer than 14 cups per month) had the highest total annual Medicare charges (\$14,655). The men in the middle group (14 to 42 cups per month) had total annual Medicare charges of \$12,622. These findings were independent of several cardiovascular risk factors, such as obesity, cholesterol, blood pressure and smoking. [View Article](#)

## Many Swimming Pools Have Health Violations

06 June – Reuters reported according to a study by the CDC, thousands of swimming pools in the U.S. may be operating in violation of public health codes. The rising numbers of [swimming pool-associated outbreaks of gastrointestinal illness](#) over the past decade prompted the CDC to conduct an investigation. Their findings are published in the [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 2003; 52:513-516](#). Approximately one in four of the outbreaks assessed in the report involved pathogens that are killed by adequate chlorination, suggesting that the pools had "inadequate pool maintenance and disinfection." Of the total amount of violations reviewed by the CDC, nearly 40 percent comprised water chemistry violations and a similar percentage of pools were found to have filtration and water recirculation violations. The agency adds that providing increased educational material specifically to pool operators and providing forms for simple monitoring of chlorine and pH levels may be ways to keep future outbreaks at bay. Even so, they stress that swimmers and pool owners need to take a [measure of precaution](#) and avoid swimming when they have diarrhea, not swallow pool water and practice good hygiene when using a pool. This includes having children take frequent bathroom breaks and changing the diapers of infants and toddlers often. [View Article](#)

## Men Don't Recognize Breast Cancer Until Late Stage

June – Science Blog reported [breast cancer in men](#) is usually detected when the tumors are bigger, have spread and may be more aggressive, compared to diagnosis of the disease in women, concludes the largest study ever conducted of male breast cancer. The findings, presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, suggest both that breast cancer in men may have some important biological differences from the female disease, and that men are seemingly less aware than they should be that they can develop breast cancer. [View Article](#)

## National Men's Week, 09 June – 15 June

National Men's Week is celebrated each year as the week leading up to and including Father's Day. Fathers, sons, brothers, husbands, uncles, and grandfathers all over are encouraged to utilize this week and become aware of their health risks and ways to prevent disease, disability, and injury. The goal of National Men's Health Week is to raise awareness of the importance of early detection and treatment in men. This week focuses on a broad range of health issues impacting men at work, home, and leisure. These health issues include heart disease, cancer, injuries, and stroke. It also provides men and their families with important information on how to prevent these and other health conditions. For more information on National Men's Health Week, visit <http://www.menshealthweek.org/>

## Study: Cholesterol-lowering Drugs May Cut Cancer Risk

03 June – CNN News reported [cholesterol](#)-lowering drugs -- already proven to reduce patients' risk for [heart attack](#) -- may also lower their risk for cancer, according to a Dutch study. The study, which was based on drug-dispensing records and hospital discharge records from eight Dutch cities, found that statin use was linked with a 20 percent reduction in cancer risk. Results of the study were presented at the American Society of Clinical Oncology. The author said [statin](#) therapy was protective after four years on the drugs and was especially helpful in cutting the risk for [prostate](#) and [kidney cancer](#). The doctors compared the use of statin drugs among 3,219 patients with cancer and 16,976 patients in a

control group. Graaf said other studies were needed before doctors begin recommending statins to prevent cancer. [View Article](#)

## Terrorism on the High Seas

05 June - The Bangladesh Daily reported Asian and Western intelligence officials are worried that terrorists may seek to emulate the pirates whose attacks on international shipping have tripled in the past decade. Al Qaeda and its affiliates have the potential to inflict enormous damage on maritime trade. Southeast Asia is the area most prone to acts of piracy, accounting for half of all attacks worldwide. Indonesia's waters are considered the world's most dangerous, particularly since the Indonesian Navy lacks the resources to patrol its waters. The other three worst affected countries are Bangladesh, India and Nigeria. The main focus of concern for officials guarding against possible terrorist attacks is the Strait of Malacca, a narrow waterway, 1,000 kilometers long (600 miles), flanked by Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. Since February, there has been a disturbing trend of pirates attacking chemical tankers. [View Article](#)

## USAID Announces Disaster Preparations for 2003 Hurricane Season

05 June - The U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) 2003 hurricane season preparations are well underway for what is expected to be an active hurricane season. Forecasts for the 2003 Atlantic hurricane season (June through November) indicate above average total activity, potentially triggering a humanitarian disaster of significant magnitude. USAID is prepared to respond to major hurricanes in Latin America and the Caribbean. USAID's comprehensive disaster preparations include contingencies for emergency, direct-action response, and risk-management training programs for Latin American and Caribbean countries. [View Article](#)

## USEUCOM

### Alert on Hemorrhagic Fever Outbreak in Guinea Bissau

05 June – ProMed reported cases of [hemorrhagic fever](#) occurring several days ago in Mansoa, approximately 65 km to the east of Bissau, were reported in the capital by Guinea-Bissau medical sources without specifying the number of cases reported. The health authorities have refused to comment on this "as yet we do not have all the information on this occurrence". The person responsible for planning in the Ministry of Public Health, Roberto Cacheu, declared that as of now there are no reasons for alarm. [View Report](#)

### Belarus: Newcastle Disease

04 June – ProMed reported on [Newcastle](#) outbreaks in Belarus. The outbreaks were located on private farms in Doubline, Gomel Region and Braguinsk district. 12,464 birds were destroyed. Other flocks have been vaccinated and quarantined and movement of flocks is being controlled inside the country. [View Report](#)

### Congo: Health Minister Declares End of Ebola Outbreak

06 June – IRIN News reported health Minister Alain Moka announced on Thursday an end to the latest outbreak of the [Ebola virus](#) in the Republic of Congo. He told reporters that there had been no deaths due to Ebola since 22 April. He said sufficient time had passed to allow an official declaration of the end of the outbreak that erupted at the beginning of 2003 in the Cuvette Ouest Region, 500 km

north of Brazzaville. Moka said a public information campaign conducted by his ministry and the ministry of communication helped prevent further spread of the disease. "However, more work remains to be done to consolidate the gains we have made so that in the event of future epidemics we will have a population and professional staff with a good understanding of how to react," he said. The latest outbreak was believed to have been caused by villagers eating primates infected by Ebola.

[View Article](#)

## Portugal: Adenovirus Type 3 Responsible for Deaths of 8 Children

09 June – ProMed reported the type of [adenovirus](#) responsible for the death of 8 children in the Guimaraes e S. Joao do Porto hospital since the beginning of 2003 was finally identified. Of the 49 serotypes of this virus that are known, one of the most aggressive is serotype 3. Having been identified in earlier years, it has not undergone mutations. Identification was made through collaborative work between epidemiologists and virologists of the Ricardo Jorge National Institute of Health, which concluded that adenovirus type 3 was the agent that caused all of the fatal acute respiratory infections in the Northern region in the past few months. All precautions have been taken to avoid the risk of intra-hospital spread of this disease. [View Report](#)

## Scotland: Loch Sealed Off as Dogs Die of Mystery Illness

05 June – ProMed reported a loch in Fife has been sealed off to the public after reports of 5 dogs dying from a mystery illness after swimming there at the weekend. An investigation was conducted into the incidents, and experts from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) have taken samples from Townhill Loch to check for pollution. The initial suspicions of poisoning by blue-green algae were proven groundless. Signs have gone up at the loch, located at Townhill Country Park, north of Dunfermline, warning the public to keep dogs on leads for the time being. [View Report](#)

# USCENTCOM

## Child Sickness 'Soars' in Iraq

08 June – BBC News reported the number of children in Iraq suffering from diarrhea and related diseases appears to have risen dramatically in the past year, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said. The incidence of diseases such as [cholera](#), [dysentery](#) and [typhoid](#) was 2.5 times higher this May than for the same month last year, said UNICEF spokesman Geoffrey Keele, quoting from a limited survey. The World Food Program (WFP) said that before the US-led invasion, one million Iraqi children had been malnourished as a result of diarrhea. But the war and the collapse of Iraq's infrastructure had worsened the health hazards, disrupting clean water supplies, damaging sewage systems and halting rubbish collections. The WFP has begun distributing food rations across Iraq but it warns that food is not enough if water supplies remain contaminated. [View Article](#)

## Safe Drinking Water Among Highest Concerns in Iraq

09 June – The State reported Iraqis are worried about everything from personal safety and long-term security to unemployment, salaries and whether they will have a voice in the yet-to-be-established interim government. But when asked what their No. 1 problem is, many Iraqis - particularly women - said the [safety of their drinking water](#). Iraq has had serious water and sanitation problems for a long time; not all of them are war-related. Under Saddam Hussein, the water system was centralized: Water treatment plants depended on a central authority to pay workers' salaries and provide chlorine and spare parts for equipment. But U.N. economic sanctions often made it hard to get replacement parts, and the infrastructure is in dire need of repair [View Article](#)

## Saudi Arabia: Campaign to Eradicate Foot & Mouth Disease

08 June – ProMed reported in a renewed move to control the spread of foot & mouth disease (FMD), Saudi Arabia will coordinate efforts with some Arab countries for a major eradication campaign this month. A group of Arab countries including Saudi Arabia will establish a laboratory for FMD diagnosis and produce suitable vaccines besides embarking on a drive to disseminate information. The campaign is directed to ensure a concerted approach for the eventual eradication of FMD in the region. Saudi Arabia detected more than 2417 cases of FMD at over 40 infected sites in different parts of the country during the last 2 years. The Agriculture Ministry in Riyadh alone identified a total of 13 infected sites. [View Report](#)

## USNORTHCOM

### Blood Supply to Be Tested for West Nile

10 June – The New York Times reported by midsummer, nearly all of the country's blood supply will be undergoing tests for [West Nile virus](#), companies that make blood tests and the American Red Cross said. The tests are experimental and even if successful will not eliminate the threat of the virus, which is spread mostly by mosquito bites. Last year, more than 4,100 people became seriously ill with West Nile, and 284 of them died. Only about 30 of the infections are thought to have come from transfusions or transplants. [View Article](#)

### California: Domoic Acid along Southern Coast

04 June – ProMed reported a naturally occurring but deadly toxin produced by sea algae is killing record numbers of dolphins and sea lions along sections of California's southern coast. The animals are being poisoned by [domoic acid](#), a nerve toxin produced by a certain species of microscopic algae. The exact cause is a mystery, but scientists speculate that the algae may be thriving on nutrients from agricultural runoff or sewage. Weather patterns could also play a role. Eating small fish that have ingested the toxin can poison marine animals and seabirds. Filter-feeding animals like mussels and small fish like sardines feed on the toxin-laced algae. Domoic acid can cause human illness or even death, and the California Department of Health Services warns each year not to eat self-harvested mussels or shellfish between 1 May and 31 Oct. Elevated levels of domoic acid have been detected in mussels, oysters, sardines, and anchovies from Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, and Orange Counties. [View Report](#)

### CDC: Flu Season Milder Than Year Ago

06 June – CNN News reported federal health experts Thursday described the 2002-2003 [flu](#) season in the United States as mild, noting that deaths due to pneumonia and influenza had likely declined from last year. Influenza, which is marked by respiratory inflammation, fever, muscular pain and intestinal tract irritation, kills about 20,000 Americans and hospitalizes 114,000 every year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said data collected from state and local health authorities indicated that the percentage of flu-related deaths never exceeded epidemic thresholds in any week during the past flu season. In comparison, deaths rose above epidemic levels for five consecutive weeks at the height of the 2001-2002 flu season. [View Article](#)

## FBI Draining Pond, Still Searching in Anthrax Probe

09 June – Reuters reported the FBI said on Monday it was draining a pond in a forest near Frederick, Maryland as part of its investigation into the 2001 deadly [anthrax](#) attacks. The FBI is in the process of searching public land located near the city of Frederick, just 50 miles from Washington, D.C., to try to determine who sent anthrax-laced letters mailed in September and October 2001, which killed five people. There is no indication of any threat to public health or safety associated with our search activities. [View Article](#)

## Hotel Guests Sickened with Cruise Ship Virus

08 June – CNN News reported a hotel at Washington Dulles International Airport remained closed and was being scrubbed Sunday after 60 guests at two wedding parties contracted the same intestinal illness that has sickened hundreds of people on cruise ships. Tests confirmed that the guests at the Hyatt Dulles were infected a week ago with the highly contagious [norovirus](#), which causes vomiting and diarrhea. The hotel closed to new guests so staff could begin scrubbing it with a chlorine-based cleaner. The virus can spread through person-to-person contact and through contaminated food and surfaces. The origin of the virus has not been determined, health officials said. [View Article](#)

## More Visitors, But Fewer ERs

04 June – CBS News reported more people are seeking care in U.S. hospital emergency departments in the last decade but there are fewer departments to treat those in need, the CDC said. Emergency department visits increased by 20 percent in 2001 (107.5 million visits) compared to 1992 (89.8 million visits). Yet emergency departments have shrunk by 15 percent during the same time period because of hospital closures, mergers or lack of profitability. As a result, more patients have sought help in the remaining emergency rooms still open. That's resulted in longer waits for non-urgent care and more ambulances diverted to other hospitals, McCaig said. [View Article](#)

## OSHA To Propose Revised Respiratory Protection Standards

05 June – The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) will publish two proposed rules in the 06 June Federal Register to enhance worker protections from [respiratory hazards on the job](#). OSHA is seeking comments until Sept. 4, 2003, on its proposals to amend the Respiratory Protection Standard to include a new fit testing procedure and incorporate new Assigned Protection Factors (APFs) for respiratory protection programs, that are expected to prevent approximately 4,000 injuries and illnesses and prevent about 900 deaths annually from cancer and other chronic diseases. [View Article](#)

## Public Health Investigation Uncovers First Outbreak of Human Monkeypox Infection in Western Hemisphere

07 June - Public health officials from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the states of Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana have reported the first outbreak of human infections with a [monkeypox](#)-like virus to be documented in the Western Hemisphere. Thus far, cases have been reported in Wisconsin, Northern Illinois and Northern Indiana. All patients who have become ill reported direct or close contact with ill prairie dogs. CDC is advising physicians, veterinarians, and the public to report instances of rash illness associated with exposure to prairie dogs, Gambian rats and other animals to local and state public health authorities. CDC also has issued interim recommendations for infection control calling for health care personnel attending hospitalized patients to follow standard precautions for guarding against airborne or contact illness. Veterinarians

examining or treating sick rodents, rabbits and such exotic pets as prairie dogs and Gambian rats are advised to use personal protective equipment, including gloves, surgical mask or N-95 respirator, and gowns. [View Article 1](#) [View Article 2](#) [View Article 3](#) [View article 4](#) [View CDC Info on Monkeypox](#)

## Some Birth Defect Rates Higher in Gulf War Vets' Kids

04 June – CNN News reported children of veterans of the first Gulf War are more likely to have three specific birth defects than those of soldiers who never served in the Persian Gulf, a government study has found. Researchers found the infants born to male veterans of the 1991 war had higher rates of [two types](#) of [heart valve defects](#). They also found a higher rate of a [genital urinary defect](#) in boys conceived after the war to Gulf War veteran mothers. In addition, Gulf War veterans' children born after the war had a certain [kidney defect](#) that was not found in Gulf War veterans' children born before the war. The researchers said they did not have enough information to link the birth defects to possible exposures to poisonous gases, pesticides and other toxic substances, which many Gulf War veterans suspect are culprits of their mysterious illnesses and their children's health problems. They also did not have access to parents' family histories and job exposures. The study by the Department of Defense Naval Health Research Center and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention examined birth defect data from 1989-93. [View Article](#)

## U.S. Airlines Lack Air Quality Data

05 June – Reuters reported experts called for systematic testing of air quality aboard U.S. passenger jets, saying there is a lack of data to explain ongoing health complaints among airline workers and some passengers. Several government researchers urged Congress to order the testing, as an ongoing debate continues between flight attendants and airline companies over whether cramped conditions and hours of breathing re-circulated air pose a risk of exposure to toxic chemicals, infectious diseases and other problems. The call comes as lawmakers consider legislation authorizing operations at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for the next few years. Some studies have suggested there are higher-than-average levels of [carbon dioxide](#), [ozone](#), and [cosmic radiation](#) on aircraft. Others have suggested, inconclusively, that flying elevates the risk of respiratory infections by up to 400 percent for passengers and crew. The National Academy of Sciences recommended a program of widespread environmental testing as part of a report it issued last year. FAA officials said they have already begun moving to implement the measure and several other of the report's recommendations. [View Article](#)

## USDA: Companies Must Share Listeria Plans

05 June – ProMed reported months after a deadly outbreak of [Listeria monocytogenes](#), the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) says it will require 2500 companies that make hot dogs and deli meats to come up with plans for preventing the harmful bacteria from contaminating their products. Companies also must test areas such as walls, equipment, and countertops and share the results with inspectors. Inspectors could shut down plants that don't comply. Under the regulations, companies will have flexibility in their prevention efforts. They are allowed to add germ-killing ingredients such as sodium lactate to the meat or to use a hot wash. Those that do both can tout it on their product label. Those that do only one procedure will face greater testing by government officials. Federal inspectors will continue to randomly test plants for *L. monocytogenes*. Companies aren't allowed to use irradiation to kill germs on such meats because the Food and Drug Administration has not approved it for those products. The technology, which involves using gamma rays or electricity to sanitize meat, is allowed on ground beef. [View Report](#)

## Washington State: Franklin County Case Diagnosed as St. Louis encephalitis

06 June – ProMed reported preliminary tests by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have identified a Franklin County man's illness as infection with [St. Louis encephalitis virus](#). If confirmed, it would be the first identified case in Washington State in more than 30 years. It was previously suspected that the man was suffering from the first case of West Nile Virus reported in Washington State (as indicated in 06 June HIO Update). Since then, tests at the state Health Laboratories have been negative for West Nile virus, and preliminary tests results from the CDC have identified the illness as St. Louis encephalitis. [View Report](#)

## USPACOM

### Anthrax Kills Hong Kong Boy, but No Link to Terror Seen

10 June – The New York Times reported health officials announced here tonight the death of a 2-year-old boy from [anthrax](#), but said that the case did not appear to involve biological terrorism. The anthrax appears to have entered the boy orally, first affecting the back of his throat, and does not appear to have been inhaled, said Dr. Tse Lai-yin of the Hong Kong Health Department's disease prevention and control division. Terrorists would be more likely to disperse anthrax in such a way that victims would inhale it, not ingest it, she said. Anthrax is sometimes found in livestock but is rare in industrialized areas, with only three cases reported here in the last two decades. The source of the dead boy's infection is a mystery, with the boy's family and day care center teachers and playmates showing no symptoms, Dr. Tse said. The boy lived in a high-rise apartment building and had not visited any farms or zoos or traveled outside Hong Kong recently. [View Report](#)

### Australia: Hepatitis A Outbreak Sparks Warning

06 June – ProMed reported an outbreak of [hepatitis A](#) spanning 3 states has prompted a federal public health warning. The Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA) said it was believed 6 cases from Tasmania, 2 from Victoria, and 2 from Queensland were exposed to the liver virus while on tour in the Northern Territory from 24 to 27 Apr 2003. Hundreds more may have been exposed to the disease, which is spread through person-to-person contact or from water or food that has been inadvertently contaminated by an infected person. [View Report](#)

### Bengal: Mystery Disease is Bronchopneumonia

08 June – ProMed reported the mystery fever that has claimed 32 children's lives in Murshidabad district of West Bengal in the last week was on Friday diagnosed by a team of medical experts as [bronchopneumonia](#). District acting CMOH Dr Pinaki Ghosh said that the team of experts visiting the remote villages in Lalgola block, which has been affected by the disease, had reported that the disease had been identified on symptomatic observations. On why the disease had struck only children, he said that children were generally more susceptible to any disease than adults. High temperatures in the district could have aggravated matters, he said. The epidemiologist team and another expert team from the National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Diseases (NICED) were still verifying the reason and magnitude of the disease in the Gram Panchayat areas. [View Report](#)

### India: Malaria and Dengue Increase in Kerala State

05 June – ProMed reported faced with a rising incidence of [malaria](#) and [dengue fever](#) cases in Thiruvananthapuram, the Health authorities have chalked out an exigency plan to effectively tackle

the 2 mosquito-transmitted diseases. While malaria cases had surfaced at Valiathura, Beemapally, and Shankhumukhom areas, there had been an outbreak of dengue cases across the city. The Director of Health Services had convened an urgent meeting on 2 Jun 2003 to discuss measures to counter the twin menace. The Government is launching a month-long malaria eradication campaign from June 15. An intensive prevention program would be launched against malaria and dengue with the extensive participation of local bodies. [View Report](#)

## India: Outbreak of Kyasanur Forest Disease the Most Serious in Years

06 June – ProMed reported in its highest incidence in recent years, the summer scourge of the Malnad region, [Kyasanur Forest Disease](#) (KFD), or monkey fever, has claimed 10 lives and left 253 people ill. Deaths of a large number of monkeys have also been reported. Nearly 70 villages in Chikmagalur, Shimoga, Uttara Kannada, and Dakshina Kannada districts have been afflicted by the disease, which is known to thrive under prolonged periods of dryness. As many as 800 people in 170 villages are in the suspect list as of Wed 14 May 2003, according to the statistics gathered from various taluks [an Indian revenue district]. Last year's poor monsoon and the continuing dry spell is being blamed by state health officials for the outbreak of the tick-borne disease. Efforts are on to get everyone in the area vaccinated. Insecticides are being sprayed in a 5-km radius around monkey deaths. [View Report](#)

## New Zealand: Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning

04 June – ProMed reported levels of the [Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning \(PSP\)](#) toxin have risen above the Ministry of Health's safe limit, prompting a Bay of Islands shellfish-gathering ban on Thursday. It is the second time since April 2003 that a ban has been placed on Bay of Islands shellfish. Northland Health had issued a warning on 14 Apr 2003, after the PSP toxin had been found at more than 3 times the safe health limit. The toxin, which can cause paralysis and death, was attributed to a PSP-producing phytoplankton. The first warning was lifted on 2 May 2003. Health officials believed the latest PSP levels were probably due to the toxic algae *Alexandrium tamarense*. [View Report](#)

## Philippines: Dengue Fever Cases 61 Percent Higher Than 2002

09 June – ProMed reported Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit warned yesterday of increasing [dengue fever](#) cases, with Metro Manila now having the highest number of reported cases. Although there were no "hotspots" or outbreaks observed, Dayrit said 875 cases were reported in the National Capital Region, more notably from Pinagbuhatan, Pasig City. On the other hand, Central Visayas reported 752 cases of dengue while 634 were recorded in Northern Mindanao. The Department of Health (DOH) has reported 4026 dengue cases nationwide as of Mon 2 Jun 2003. This figure is 61 percent higher compared with the same period in 2002. There were 54 deaths recorded. Ages of cases ranged from one month to 87 years. 48 percent of the cases belonged to those aged 1 to 9 years. Case fatality ratios of one percent and above were noted among age groups less than one year and 1-9 years. [View Report](#)

## WHO Recommends Close Disease Surveillance in Flood Affected Areas in Sri Lanka

4 June – The WHO reported Sri Lanka is facing a heightened risk of communicable disease outbreaks in the wake of the severe floods and landslides that have affected the country recently. The most likely outbreaks include [Diarrheal diseases](#) and [vector-borne diseases](#) caused when mosquitoes and other insects breed in dirty and stagnant water. The WHO is moving quickly to support the country to prevent large-scale outbreaks. The WHO is assisting the Ministry of Health to strengthen disease surveillance. By providing logistics support, the WHO is assisting in the timely and comprehensive

collection of data and early detection of outbreaks. The WHO is also helping to ensure drinking water quality in rural areas by distributing water purification tablets. In addition, standard emergency health kits have been provided to the health authorities in the affected districts along with oral rehydration salts, essential vaccines and insecticide-treated mosquito nets. A further shipment of water quality testing kits and essential medical supplies to the flood affected population in Sri Lanka is under way. [View Report](#)

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### Brazil Steps up Leprosy Fight

09 June – BBC News reported Brazil has stepped up its efforts to eradicate [leprosy](#). Health chiefs have launched a major public awareness campaign telling people how to spot early signs of the disease. They are also training doctors and nurses to diagnose the condition early. Brazil has one of the highest rates of leprosy in the world and continues to suffer despite the fact that giving patients a powerful cocktail of antibiotics can cure leprosy. Brazil is not alone. Figures from the World Health Organization show that 524,000 people in 103 countries were diagnosed with leprosy last year. [View Article](#)

### Vietnam: Dengue in Southern Mekong Delta Region

09 June – ProMed reported about 8000 people have been infected with [dengue fever](#) in Vietnam in the first 5 months of 2003, a 50 percent rise over the same period in 2002. The health ministry says that 16 of those struck down with the disease have died. The worst affected provinces are in the southern Mekong Delta region, where moist and humid conditions provide ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes. The region has accounted for more than 90 percent of cases. [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/>.

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