

**USACHPPM**  
**HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE**

12 December 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

### Alcohol Linked to Brain Shrinkage

05 December – MSNBC News reported low to moderate drinking may cause a loss of brain tissue in middle-age people, a study found. The researchers also found that such alcohol consumption does not lower the risk of a stroke — contradicting findings from previous studies. The new study appears in Friday’s issue of the American Heart Association journal Stroke. Researchers evaluated 1,909 patients, ages 55 and older, from North Carolina and Mississippi who were participants in a study on the buildup of plaque in the arteries. Researchers used information collected between 1987 and 1989 and followed up every three years until 1995. Using magnetic resonance imaging, or MRIs, researchers measured the patients’ ventricular and sulcal areas — voids of the brain containing only cerebrospinal fluid. Increased ventricular and sulcal size indicates a reduction in brain tissue, or atrophy. The findings showed that both voids grew larger the more people drank. [View Article](#)

### Animal Trials Raise Hopes of Vaccine against SARS

04 December – Reuters reported a genetically engineered vaccine against [SARS](#) has shown promising results in early tests in monkeys and could pave the way for a protective vaccine in humans, scientists said. Two weeks after researchers at the University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania injected six rhesus macaques with the vaccine, all of the animals showed a detectable immune system response against the coronavirus that causes Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). [View Article](#)

### Antioxidants May Curb HPV Persistence

10 December - Reuters reported women infected with human papillomavirus (HPV) may reduce the odds that the virus will persist by increasing the amount of certain carotenoids -- plant compounds with antioxidant properties - in their diets, a study suggests. Specifically, the study found that increasing dietary intake of lutein/zeaxanthin, beta-cryptoxanthin, vitamin C, and papaya appears to lower the risk of persistent HPV infection, a strong risk factor for cervical cancer. [View Article](#)

### Aspirin May Help Prevent Stomach Cancer

03 December – Reuters reported findings from a review of published studies suggest that use of aspirin and similar drugs may help prevent stomach cancer. Whether you should take aspirin or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) to prevent cancer may depend on where you live. Such drugs can have serious side effects and unless you live in an area where stomach cancer is common, like Japan, the risks may outweigh the benefits. As reported in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute, Dr. Benjamin Chun-Yu Wong, from the University of Hong Kong, and colleagues analyzed data from nine studies that looked at the link between NSAID use and stomach cancer. Collectively, the studies included

2831 patients with stomach cancer. Overall, NSAID use was tied to a 22-percent reduction in the risk of stomach cancer. The risk reduction seen with aspirin use was nearly identical to that of other NSAIDs, the researchers note. [View Article](#)

## CDC Report: U.S. Not ready for SARS

03 December – CNN News reported the United States is ill-equipped to handle a major outbreak of the deadly [SARS](#) virus, according to a report commissioned by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The study, conducted by University of Louisville researchers and submitted Monday, cites a lack of specialists who study diseases, along with cuts in state and local health department budgets. "The current shortage of epidemiologists, public health nurses and other personnel in the U.S. will reach a crisis stage in the event of an epidemic," the report says. "If these positions are not restored, an otherwise containable epidemic may spread rapidly." Though the most recent SARS epidemic was contained, health officials say it could re-emerge any time, possibly aided by an expected worse-than-normal flu season. [View Article](#)

## Children's Peanut Allergies Have Doubled

09 December – WebMD reported the number of children with peanut allergies has doubled over the past few years, a new study shows. It's a wake-up call for parents who may want to quit giving nuts to very young children, because their immune systems are not fully developed, say researchers. Roasted peanuts and nut-based or soy-based products also may be contributing to the problem, they say. Their report appears in this month's issue of the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*. Boys were more prone to developing peanut allergies, but researchers do not understand why. Because this allergy typically develops in childhood and is rarely outgrown, this trend means that a growing segment of the general population will have peanut allergies. Better strategies for prevention and treatment of peanut and tree nut allergies are desperately needed, the author concludes. [View Report](#)

## Ebola Vaccine Shows Promise in Mice

08 December – Reuters reported researchers have created a vaccine that completely protects mice against the deadly [Ebola](#) virus. The vaccine uses proteins called virus-like particles (VLP) that stimulate the body to mount an immune attack against Ebola. "Our data suggest that Ebola VLPs may represent a promising vaccine candidate for protection against Ebola virus infections and a much needed tool to examine the genesis and nature of immune responses to Ebola virus," note senior author Dr. Sina Bavari, from the US Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Disease in Frederick, Maryland, and colleagues. [View Article](#)

## Human Papillomavirus Tied to Oral Cancer

10 December – Reuters reported Human papillomavirus (HPV), a virus associated with cervical cancer, also appears to be involved in cancer of the mouth and oropharynx (the part of the throat that includes the lower part of the tongue and the tonsils), research suggests. The study included 1415 patients with cancer of the mouth, 255 with cancer of the oropharynx, and 1732 cancer-free controls. HPV DNA was found in tissue samples of close to 4 percent of cancers of the mouth and 18 percent of cancers of the oropharynx. Such findings were more common in subjects who reported having more than one sexual partner or who practiced oral sex. These findings suggest to the researchers that HPV appears to play a role in the development of many cancers of the oropharynx and possibly a small subgroup of cancers of the mouth. [View Article](#)

## New Global Health Council Report Highlights What Works in the Fight against Malaria

02 December - A new Global Health Council report, "Reducing Malaria's Burden: Evidence of Effectiveness for Decision Makers," highlights proven, feasible but underutilized strategies in the international fight against [malaria](#). The report, launched at the Global Forum for Health Research in collaboration with international health experts and leading public health scientists, details in one report the best available evidence on what works to prevent and treat malaria. [View Article](#) [View Report](#)

## New Scanner May Find Cancer Earlier Than Mammogram

04 December – Reuters reported a new scanner that uses gamma rays to see changes in live cells may find breast cancer even earlier than standard mammograms, U.S. researchers said on Thursday. If shown to work in large groups of women, it may help doctors catch and treat breast cancer at its earliest stages -- when it is easiest to treat. It would also be a more comfortable option for women, who now must suffer having their breasts pressed between cold, hard plates for mammograms. Martin Tornai, an associate professor of radiology and biomedical engineering at Duke University Medical Center, said he plans to start testing the device on women this spring. The camera should be especially useful for detecting tumors in large or dense breasts, which are difficult to image using traditional mammography because X-rays often cannot penetrate them, Tornai said. [View Article](#)

## Patient Education: Keep Germs at Arm's Length

07 December – Health Day News reported one of the greatest infection-fighting tools is handwashing. "Plain soap, plain water, 15 seconds of friction and you have a marvelous intervention to break the cycle of infection," says Judy Daly, secretary of the American Society for Microbiology and a professor of pathology at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. Hand washing is considered "the single most important means of preventing the spread of infection" by the U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention. National Hand Washing Awareness Week begins Dec. 7, and public health officials hope to use the event to draw more attention to the simple act that can keep you well. [View Article](#)

## Vitamins 'Help Treat Depression'

02 December – BBC News reported Vitamin B supplements may help people to fight depression, research suggests. Scientists found that people with depression responded better to treatment if they had high levels of vitamin B12 in their blood. They suggest taking vitamin B supplements may be a way to boost the effectiveness of anti-depressants. The research, by Kuopio University in Finland, is published in the journal BMC Psychiatry. The researchers monitored 115 outpatients who were receiving treatment for depression over a six-month period. They measured vitamin B12 levels in the patients' blood when they first came to the clinic, and again at their six-month check up. The patients who responded fully to treatment had higher concentrations of vitamin B12 in their blood at both the start and the end of the study than those for whom treatment was less effective. [View Article](#)

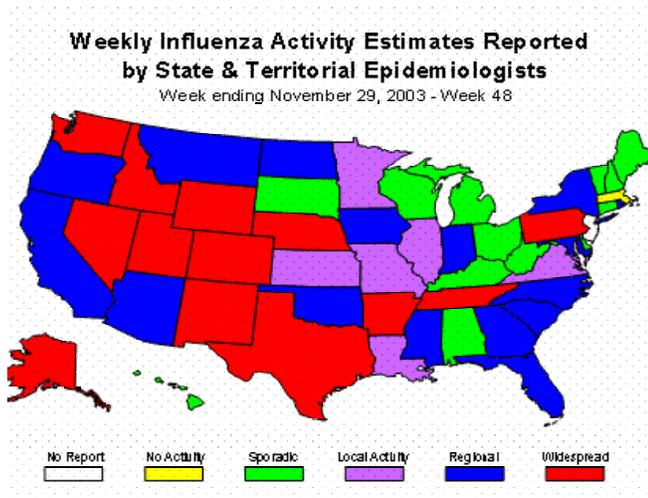
# Focus on Epidemiology

## Lassa Fever: Epidemiology, Clinical Features, and Social Consequences

29 November – The British Journal of Medicine reported on [Lassa fever](#), a viral hemorrhagic fever transmitted by rats, which is endemic in West Africa and may kill tens of thousands of people each year. Peak incidence was thought to be in the dry season (January to March), but data collected in Sierra Leone shows peaks in the overlap with the wet season (May to November). Many infections are subclinical; a high index of suspicion, given the difficulties of clinical diagnosis, is needed when travelers from West Africa present with a fever of unknown origin, with symptoms appearing up to 21 days after leaving the endemic area. The virus is excreted in semen for three months after infection; we do not know how frequently it may be transmitted through sexual intercourse. Attempts are being made to produce a vaccine using the yellow fever virus as a vehicle. The possibility that Lassa virus could be used as a biological weapon has raised the profile of the need for greater understanding of Lassa fever and for more effective control and treatment programs. [View Article](#)

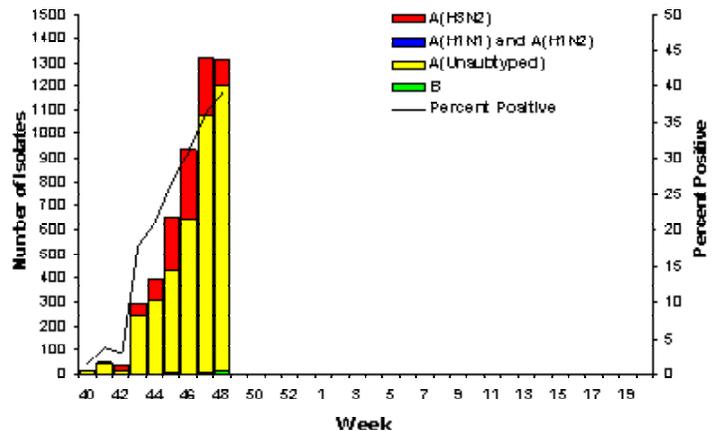
## [Influenza](#) Update:

### CDC Outbreak Report 10 December



[View Source](#)

### WHO/NREVSS Collaborating Laboratories National Summary, 2003-04



### WHO Influenza Outbreak Report 10 December

Significant increases in influenza activity associated with influenza A(H3N2) viruses continue in some countries in Europe (Finland, France and Norway) and North America (United States); in other European countries (Portugal and Spain), widespread influenza A(H3N2) activity persists. In some parts of Canada and United Kingdom (UK), where influenza activity was first noted this season, the number of cases has started to decline, although it is too early to predict the trend. A rising trend has also been observed in a number of European countries (Czech Republic, Denmark, Italy, Latvia, Russian Federation and Switzerland), although influenza activity remains low at present. Influenza B viruses are most frequently reported from Asia (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, Republic of Korea and Thailand); sporadic cases have been detected in Europe and North America. With the exception of an outbreak in Iceland between weeks 41 and 46, very few influenza A(H1) cases have been reported

worldwide. This season, most influenza outbreaks are being attributed to influenza A(H3N2) virus and most viruses antigenically characterized so far have been confirmed to be A/Fujian/411/2002-like, with the rest being A/Panama/2007/99-like. [View Source](#) [View WHO FluNet](#)

## Other Influenza News

05 December –The CDC reported The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in response to strong consumer demand for influenza vaccine is working with vaccine manufacturers, state health departments, medical professionals, and others to assess the status of the current flu vaccine supply in the United States. Current reports indicate that most available flu vaccine supplies have now been distributed to doctors, clinics, health departments and other providers, which is not unusual for this time of year. [View Report](#)

06 December – ProMed reported it was agreed that the current Influenza vaccine should give good protection against the virus strains in the vaccine it is also likely to give significant if not complete, protection against the new H3N2 strain. It is the best protection for those aged 65 and over and in at risk groups. Antibodies from people immunized with the current vaccine containing the Panama strain do cross react with the new drifted variant Fujian-like strain. It is also important to remember that the Panama strain is only one of 3 components to the vaccine. Also clinical experience so far does not point to the vaccine being ineffective. [View Report](#)

08 December — ABC News reported the nation's health agency plans to closely watch flu complications among children, who have swamped hospitals in some states and surprised doctors with the severity of their illnesses. A new concern is the rise of a common drug-resistant staph infection that is complicating efforts to treat children with the flu, an official with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. Dr. Tim Uyeki, epidemiologist with the influenza branch of CDC, said that some children have died from the staph infections a phenomenon the CDC has not seen before. Flu complications for children have always been dire: pneumonia, kidney and heart failure, possible brain damage. "We've just never seen them in the proportions we've seen them this year," said Dr. Steve Schexnayder, chief of pediatric critical care at Arkansas Children's Hospital in Little Rock. From Texas to California, children's hospitals have been swamped with sick children, many of them desperately ill. [View Article](#)

08 December — ABC News reported clinics and hospitals across Singapore have run out of flu vaccine because the worldwide supply of the jabs has been depleted by people seeking protection from outbreaks raging in the United States and Europe, the Health Ministry said. "More than 120,000 doses of the vaccine have been brought in within the last two months," a Health Ministry statement said. "However, because of the recent increased influenza activity in the West where influenza vaccines are in great demand, there is a worldwide shortage of vaccines," the ministry said. Ten private clinics and four hospitals had to turn away patients requesting the vaccine, but new stocks are expected to arrive this week, The Straits Times newspaper reported. [View Article](#)

08 December – ProMed reported the SVS [federal Secretariat for Health Surveillance] was notified by the Tocantins State Health Services on 17 Nov 2003 of cases of respiratory illness in Araguacena Township, and sent an epidemiological surveillance team to investigate. The preliminary report found 250 cases of acute disease characterized by high fever and cough (initially dry, later becoming productive), accompanied by arthralgia, joint pains, and headache. The most affected age groups were children and young adults. 5/17 (29 percent) of nasopharyngeal secretions collected were positive for influenza A by the indirect immunofluorescence test. Tests to identify the strain are in process. A second outbreak was notified from Pium township, with similar symptoms, but with some cases complicated by bronchopneumonia. 23 samples of respiratory secretions were collected and are being processed by the Evandro Chagas Institute (IEC). The epidemiological situation suggests an outbreak of influenza, but laboratory tests are continuing. [View Report](#)

09 December – ProMed reported a 5-year-old boy in Hong Kong has come down with bird flu [avian influenza A virus], but not the same virus that caused a deadly outbreak in Hong Kong in 1997, health officials said on Tue 9 Dec 2003. The boy was infected with a strain [serotype] of avian influenza virus known as influenza A(H9N2) virus but has fully recovered. It was a different illness from the influenza A (H5N1) virus outbreak that struck Hong Kong 6 years ago, killing 6 people, officials said. [View Report](#)

10 December – The Washington Times reported the CDC is considering buying hundreds of thousands of flu vaccine doses from a British company to help ease national shortages resulting from a particularly virulent influenza outbreak. [View Article](#)

## USEUCOM

### A Woman from Kazan is Hospitalized with Anthrax

03 December – ProMed reported a woman from Kazan (the capital of Tatarstan) was hospitalized with [anthrax](#). A further 97 people are currently under medical observation, according to the Chief of Infectious hospital Vakhit Samatov. According to the ITAR-TASS Agency, the woman's condition is moderately severe. All the patients consumed meat from the village of Konstantinovka in Visokogorskiy rayon. The meat was sold without a veterinary check. According to Tatyana Savizkaya, a physician at the State Epidemiological Surveillance Center, the lab analysis showed that the meat was infected with anthrax. [View Report](#) [View Report 2](#)

### Funeral Rites 'May Spread Ebola'

05 December – BBC News reported the current outbreak of [Ebola](#) hemorrhagic fever in northwestern Congo has killed at least 29 people. Funeral rites in the area include touching the deceased as a way of proving that you had nothing to do with the death. World Health Organization experts have traveled to the town of Mbomo to warn of the dangers. The team, which includes a medical anthropologist, will try to encourage people to honor their dead with a different ceremony which is normally used when someone dies abroad. Fadela Chaib, a WHO spokeswoman, said: "This illness incites a lot of fear and a lot of myths." [View Article](#)

### Ghana: Typhoid Fever Breaks Out at Obuasikrom

08 December – ProMed reported A reported [typhoid fever](#) outbreak at Obuasikrom and its surrounding villages in the Atwima district of Ashanti has killed 2 pupils of the local primary school. 20 other people, including school children, are reported to have been admitted to the Nyinahin and Bibiani Government Hospitals. Mr Justice Koranchie, assemblyman for the area, attributed the outbreak to the use of water from an unhygienic well that served as the only source of drinking water for the people. He said sometimes decomposed bodies of rodents and animals were found in the well. Mr Koranchie said medical officials of the 2 hospitals had confirmed that the cause of the disease was linked to the water source. He therefore appealed to the Atwima district assembly and non-governmental organizations to come to their aid by providing them with boreholes to save their lives. [View Report](#)

### Ill-health Dogs Europe's Workers

05 December – BBC News reported one-sixth of the European workforce has chronic health problems or is disabled, and the figure disguises extraordinary variations between countries. According to the

European Commission, one in three working-age Finns has long-term bad health, with high figures common around northern Europe. In Italy, that figure was just 6.6%. Experts say that lifestyle differences - such as a healthy diet and low alcohol consumption in southern Europe - account for some of the variations. But they also point out that varying welfare systems around the European Union can make a huge difference to the number of those registered as ill or disabled. The basic pattern of the figures is that richer north European countries have far higher health-problem figures than the poorer south. In general, southern Europe has comparatively good public health, thanks mainly to its low-fat diet. [View Article](#)

## Italy: Poisoned Bottled Water

09 December – ProMed reported in the last 2 weeks 10 people, including 2 small children, have been hospitalized after drinking bottled water bought from Italian supermarkets that was contaminated with acetone, bleach, or ammonia by injection under the plastic cap. On Monday 8 Dec 2003, 20 more cases of contamination of bottles of various brands have been reported. Cases have been found in 20 cities in all parts of the country, including Sicily, suggesting that a lot of them are copycat events. In most cases, the consumer noted the odor and informed the authorities. Nobody has claimed responsibility for the attacks, which are suspected to be the work of a radical anti-capitalist, environmentalist, or saboteur. Supermarkets withdrew thousands of plastic bottles from their shelves and installed security cameras at sales points. But cartons of fruit juices and milk are now being affected. [View Report](#)

## Securing Uzbekistan's Lethal Labs

05 December – BBC News reported US officials are beginning work to try and secure old germ warfare labs in Uzbekistan, once home to the largest biological testing ground in the whole of the Soviet Union. Officials state that they are acting to lessen the chances of [anthrax](#) and other pathogens being stolen as weapons by countries or groups it sees as hostile to American interests. Although Uzbekistan's major testing site has already been dismantled, there are believed to be numerous others that could present a risk. In particular, the State Department is concerned about viral diseases such as anthrax and [tularemia](#). The US is also concerned about the 4,000 specialist scientists in Uzbekistan. As a result, since the mid 1990s, Washington has spent half a billion dollars keeping former Soviet scientists employed. [View Article](#)

## Undiagnosed Disease Outbreak Among Students at Moscow State University

05 December – ProMed reported according to the "Stolichnaya" newspaper, a disease outbreak started at the end of November in a number of student hostels simultaneously. According to preliminary data the cause of the outbreak is a severe form of [pneumonia](#). A first-year freshman in the Mathematics and Cybernetics Department died from this unknown disease on 27 Nov 2003. Student Health Service Polyclinic no. 202 stated that the student did not seek medical attention early enough and only called the emergency service when it was too late. The polyclinic has not disclosed the final diagnosis of the student's condition. According to MSU students, another 10 students have been admitted in severe condition to the infectious disease departments of Moscow hospitals. According to other sources their number exceeds 20. The Student Health Service Polyclinic stated that: "Yes, we have a lot of students in hostels with flu and high fever; however it is ridiculous to say that we suspect atypical pneumonia. This outbreak may be a severe form of flu with associated high temperature, where an affected person might die in 3 days." [View Report](#)

## Unknown Infection is Affecting Beloyarsk Rayon of Yugra (Hanti-Mantiysk Autonomous District)

03 December – ProMed reported an unknown infection has affected approximately 80 people in the Beloyarsk region [Yugra in the Hanti-Mantiysk Autonomous District]. The symptoms of this infection include high fever, throat ache and exhausting cough. According to Informational Agency Tyumen linei it is not the only infection which is spreading in the Beloyarsk rayon. [View Report](#)

## USCENTCOM

### Iran Launches Mass Jab Campaign

06 December – BBC reported the biggest ever immunization campaign for [measles, mumps and rubella](#) has been launched in Iran. Over the next three weeks the government is hoping to vaccinate 33 million people - around one-half of the Iranian population. Iran has a good history of immunization, but health experts are worried the number of measles cases could be on the rise. [View Article](#)

### Skin Disease Strikes U.S. Troops in Iraq

8 December – ABC News reported the Army's 101st Airborne Division has sent 20 soldiers to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington for treatment for a skin disease transmitted by bites from sand flies in Iraq, the military said. Another 10 to 20 soldiers from the division stationed in Mosul in northern Iraq are under observation for the illness, called [Leishmaniasis](#), said Maj. Trey Cate, a division spokesman. The 101st Airborne Division is based at Fort Campbell, Ky. "We are concerned about the health and welfare of the soldiers, hence we have evacuated them to a major medical center where this disease that does not exist in the U.S. can be treated by the experts and studied in ways that are impossible in the field," Cate said Sunday in an e-mail to The Associated Press. The disease is known as "Baghdad Boil" to U.S. soldiers in Iraq, and can leave disfiguring lesions on the skin for months. [View Article](#)

## USNORTHCOM

### Clinical Guidance on the Identification and Evaluation of Possible SARS-CoV Disease among Persons Presenting with Community-Acquired Illness

03 December – The CDC has published a document which provides guidance on the clinical evaluation and management of patients who present from the community with fever and/or respiratory illnesses. Recommendations supercede those in the draft *Public Health Guidance for Community-Level Preparedness and Response to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)*, which is currently being revised and finalized. Recommendations also supercede other [SARS](#)-related web materials on relevant topics that are under review. [View Document](#)

### Dual Action' Anthrax Vaccine Being Developed

04 December – US Medicine reported a new 'dual action' vaccine under development against [anthrax](#) was one of several topics on bioterrorism preparedness discussed at a conference at the RAND Center

for Domestic and International Health Security here recently....Dr. Shine said part of the concept of biosecurity is 'dual use,' which means that investments made for the development of biological vaccines and public health preparedness will help deter not only potential bioterrorist infectious events, but naturally-occurring diseases like SARS and monkeypox....The fear the public faces is the threat to the continuity of the government, Dr. Ursano said. The consequences of such terrorist acts play into people's preparation plans and the way distress is propagated throughout the nation. [View Article](#)

## Injections Said to Hamper Bioterror Fight

08 December – ABC News reported coming up with medicines that can be given in a nasal spray or by slapping on a patch rather than injections would be a big help in developing and stockpiling vaccines against major bioterrorism threats, an official involved in the government's Project Bioshield said. Trying to prepare and administer injections to the entire populations of even just major urban areas would be unwieldy and impractical, Dr. Philip K. Russell said in a talk wrapping up a meeting of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in Philadelphia. "That could crush the public health structure, if you needed a multi-dose vaccine," said Russell, an official in Health and Human Services Department's Office of Public Health and Preparedness. [View Article](#)

## New Mexico Health Officials Confirm Hantavirus Case, First One Since 2001

04 December – ABC News reported state health officials have confirmed the first case of [Hantavirus](#) in the state since June 2001. A 37-year-old Rio Arriba County woman hospitalized at the University of New Mexico Hospital here has the pulmonary disease, the state Department of Health reported. The state office of epidemiology is conducting an environmental investigation to determine potential exposure sites. The news brings New Mexico's total number of hantavirus cases to 60 since the illness was discovered in the Four Corners area in 1993, the Health Department said. [View Article](#)

## US Military Works on Better Uniforms

07 December – Yahoo News reported the US Defense Department is working on new field uniforms for US soldiers in order to make them lighter and more adaptable to changing environmental condition, the American Forces Information Service reported. "Our challenge is to provide greater protections and capabilities, but with less weight and bulk," Robert Kinney, director of the Individual Protection Directorate at the US Army Soldier Systems Center, is quoted as saying. According to the report, uniforms of the future will have built-in chemical and biological protection, electric wires and fiber optics that soldiers will be able to use on the battlefield. They will also be waterproof and flame-resistant, have built-in insect repellent, antibacterial agents that help stop open injuries from getting infected and even antimicrobial agents that keep odor in check, the report said. [View Article](#)

## West Nile Virus in Mexico: Evidence of Widespread Circulation since July 2002

01 December – The Journal of Emerging Infectious Diseases reported [West Nile virus](#) (WNV) antibodies were detected in horses from five Mexican states, and WNV was isolated from a Common Raven in the state of Tabasco. Phylogenetic studies indicate that this isolate, the first from Mexico, is related to strains from the central United States but has a relatively high degree of sequence divergence. [View Article](#)

## Whooping Cough on Rise in U.S. - Study

09 December – Reuters reported [Whooping cough](#) is on the rise in the United States, primarily among infants too young to have received the full series of vaccinations against the disease, a U.S. government study said on Tuesday. There were 19,798 cases of the disease reported in the 1990s, compared to

12,550 during the 1980s, an increase of 49 percent, according to a report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Almost all the increase was among very young infants younger than 5 months old. These infants were too young to be fully vaccinated against whooping cough. U.S. health officials recommend that infants be vaccinated against whooping cough, or pertussis, in three stages, at 2 months, 4 months and 6 months old. The researchers said the peril to very young infants could be addressed by trying to reduce exposure or increasing protection through educational efforts. They also said it may be necessary to accelerate the vaccination schedule for infants or to give them improved vaccines. [View Article](#)

## USPACOM

### Indonesia: Outbreak of Chikungunya Fever in Mojokerto District of East Java

09 December – ProMed reported Chikungunya fever, a disease somewhat similar to dengue fever, has become epidemic in the Mojokerto district, 49 km south of Surabaya. At least 9 people in Mojokerto have contracted chikungunya virus infection and developed fever, he said, adding that his office has sent a team to investigate the cause of the illness. [View Report](#)

### More Dengue Fever Hits Cairns

05 December – ProMed reported the Tropical Public Health Unit has confirmed a 5th case of [dengue fever](#) in Cairns in far north Queensland. A spokeswoman says all 5 cases are connected to the suburb of Manunda, where the first 2 incidents of dengue were identified 2 weeks ago. Meanwhile, 110 cases of the mosquito-borne disease have been confirmed in the Torres Strait in the wake of the outbreak on Yam Island. It has now spread to Thursday Island, with 6 locally acquired cases of dengue, and authorities are working to eliminate breeding sites. [View Report](#)

### Scientists Crack Banana Worker Flu Disease

08 December – ABC News Online reported Australia's first genome project has isolated the genes of a deadly bacterium spread by infected rats. Monash University researchers are now looking at developing a vaccine to combat [Leptospirosis](#), which causes high fever and flu like symptoms. Professor Ben Adler from the University's microbiology unit says Leptospira is an occupational disease, prevalent in temperate climates. He says the disease is spread when the rats nest in tropical crops. "It's transmitted by infected animals via their urine to people so at the moment in northern Australia the group most affected is banana workers," he said. Professor Alder says although the disease is rarely fatal in Australia, mortality rates in developing countries can be as high as 20 per cent. [View Article](#)

### Talks held with Indonesia over dysentery

08 December – ProMed reported the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) has been helping health officials from Taiwan and Indonesia engage in bilateral talks in the wake of an outbreak of [dysentery](#) among Taiwanese tourists who visited the Indonesian resort island of Bali [during November 2003]. The number of confirmed dysentery cases among Taiwanese tourists returning from Bali increased to 99 Mon 1 Dec 2003, 55 more than when the dysentery outbreak among Taiwanese tourists was first reported on 23 Nov 2003. More than 300 tourists have been put under observation in the wake of reports of a rising number of suspected cases of dysentery among Taiwanese tourists who visited Bali 7-22 Nov 2003. Many of them have reportedly developed fever, diarrhea, and vomiting, with some cases having been

confirmed to be shigellosis. Despite the outbreak, the government decided recently not to issue a travel advisory for Bali. [View Report](#)

## USSOUTHCOM

### Brazil: Dengue Fever Update

05 December – ProMed reported from January through November 2003, Mato Grosso state has Registered 7470 confirmed cases of [dengue fever](#) and 23 of DHF. The Mato Grosso State Secretary of Health confirmed the presence of dengue virus type 3 by virus isolation throughout 2003 in the major urban centers of Cuiaba, Rondonopolis, Sinop, and Caceres, besides Diamantino and neighboring townships. The state has reported 4 deaths from DHF in the past, one each in 1995, 1996, 2000, and 2002. [View Report](#)

### Nicaragua: Potential Cholera Outbreak

08 December – ProMed reported Nicaragua is threatened by a cholera epidemic caused by the aggressive El Tor strain of [Vibrio cholerae](#), which was detected in the bodies of water and humid areas of Tipitapa, to the north of the capital, announced the Ministry of Health. The same authority announced earlier the possibility of a new outbreak "at any time" due to the deficient sanitary infrastructure, the lack of a sewage system, and limited access to potable water in rural communities. The health authorities of El Trapiche in Tipitapa continue strict monitoring in this popular tourist destination to avoid the resurgence of the disease. For 3 consecutive years no cases of cholera have been reported in Nicaragua. Nevertheless, the deficient sanitary infrastructure could favor a new outbreak. It was recommended that the population adopt measures of hygiene when preparing and consuming foods, as well as to maintain environmental prevention. [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/Hiouupdate/>.

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