

## USACHPPM

# HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

25 April 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

### Cumulative Number of Reported Probable Cases of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) From 1 Nov 2002<sup>1</sup> To 23 Apr 2003

Country	Cumulative # Case(s)	# of Deaths	# Recovered <sup>2</sup>	Local Chain(s) of Transmission <sup>3</sup>
Australia	4	0	3	None
Brazil	2	0	0	None
Canada	140	13	65	Yes
China	2305	106	1231	Yes
Hong Kong <sup>4</sup>	1458	105	522	Yes
Taiwan	37	0	21	Yes
France	5	0	1	None
Germany	7	0	6	None
India	1	0	1	None
Indonesia	1	0	0	None
Italy	3	0	2	None
Japan	2	0	0	None
Kuwait	1	0	1	None
Malaysia	5	2	2	None
Mongolia	3	0	3	None
Philippines	2	1	1	None
Republic of Ireland	1	0	1	None
Romania	1	0	1	None
Singapore	189	17	114	Yes
South Africa	1	0	0	None
Spain	1	0	0	None
Sweden	3	0	0	None
Switzerland	1	0	1	None
Thailand	7	2	5	None
United Kingdom	6	0	5	Yes
United States	39	0	not available	Yes
Viet Nam	63	5	46	Yes
<b>Total</b>	<b>4288</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>2032</b>	

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. Includes cases who are "discharged" or "recovered" as reported by the national public health authorities.
3. National public health authorities report to WHO on the areas in which local chain(s) of transmission is/are occurring. These areas are provided on the list of [affected areas](#).

4. One death attributed to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China occurred in a case medically transferred from Viet Nam.

## Drink Tea to Stay Germ-Free: Report

21 April – Reuters reported drinking tea appears to boost the immune system, perhaps helping people fight off or blunt the effect of infections, researchers said. Non-tea drinkers who downed five to six small cups of black tea per day for two weeks appeared to be better able to fight off bacterial infections, according to the report. In human experiments, the researchers found that after drinking about 20 ounces of tea a day for two weeks, people's gamma delta T cells produced a wealth of anti-bacterial chemicals when exposed to bacteria. In contrast, people who drank coffee instead of tea during the study produced no disease-fighting proteins in response to bacteria. [View Article](#)

## Early West Nile Bird Death May Predict Human Cases

18 April - Reuters reported the presence of dead birds that have succumbed to the mosquito-borne illness [West Nile virus \(WNV\)](#) very early in the transmission season appear to greatly predict the likelihood of human cases of the disease, a new study has found. In the new study, scientists evaluated the timing of bird deaths during the WNV transmission season and looked for a correlation with human cases of the illness. Counties that report avian deaths from WNV early in the disease transmission year -- before August -- are more likely to report subsequent disease cases in humans, explained Guptill, who is with the U.S. Geologic Survey in Reston, Virginia. Early activity in the transmission season may indicate that WNV has sufficient time to escalate to high levels -- thus posing a greater risk to humans -- before the end of the transmission season, explained the researcher. Still, Guptill stressed that it is important to note that dead bird testing is not the only element of WNV surveillance -- collection and testing of mosquitoes and testing of humans and horses that have encephalitis are also important. [View Article](#)

## Hearing Loss Underdiagnosed

15 April – CBS News reported hearing loss in the elderly is easily treated but often underdiagnosed by doctors who in some cases wrongly consider it an inevitable part of aging, a study found. The most common cause of deafness in older adults is nerve damage, which is not reversible but can be substantially improved with hearing aids and sometimes surgery for severe cases, said Dr. Bevan Yueh, an ear specialist with a Seattle-area Veterans Affairs center and the University of Washington. But reversible hearing loss also occurs in older adults, caused by common conditions including infections that can be treated. Many patients and primary-care doctors are poorly informed about both types of hearing loss and consider it an untreatable effect of aging, Yueh said. In a report in Wednesday's Journal of the American Medical Association, Yueh and colleagues reviewed previous studies on methods to detect hearing loss and the effectiveness of treatments. They said research indicates that hearing loss affects up to 40 percent of adults aged 65 and older. It is strongly linked to depression and decreased quality of life, but the researchers said fewer than 10 percent of internists offer routine testing to older patients. [View Article](#)

## Highly Educated May have Poorer Mental Health

21 April – Reuters reported a team of California researchers has found that highly educated workers may be more likely to have [mental health problems](#) in comparison to the general public. In the study, Koopman and her colleagues evaluated questionnaire responses from 460

employees at a large northern California worksite. More than half of the employees had a master's or doctoral degree -- a much higher percentage than in the general population. The respondents' average mental health score was lower than what has previously been reported for the general U.S. population. And its implications may extend beyond just the health of workers, Koopman suggested. It may also have an effect on their working ability because highly educated workers tend to be employed in intellectually demanding occupations in which poor mental health could be expected to directly affect their job performance. The researchers did not investigate why the study participants' mental health was worse than that found among the general population. [View Article](#)

## Key To Hepatitis Virus Persistence Found

18 April – Science Daily reported scientists at two Texas universities have discovered how the [hepatitis C](#) virus thwarts the immune system's efforts to eliminate it. The finding could lead to more effective treatments for liver disease caused by hepatitis C virus, says author Michael Gale, Jr., Ph.D. The investigators determined that one viral protease, NS3/4A, specifically inhibits a key immune system molecule, interferon regulatory factor-3 (IRF-3). IRF-3 orchestrates a range of antiviral responses. Without this master switch, antiviral responses never begin, and HCV can gain a foothold and persist in its host. The scientists also searched for ways to reverse the IRF-3 blockade. They applied a protease inhibitor to human cells containing modified HCV. This prevented the virus from making functional NS3/4A and restored the cells' IRF-3 pathway. Follow-up studies have shown that once restored, the immune response reduced viral levels to nearly undetectable levels within days. [View Article](#)

## Lost Viruses

17 April — ABC News reported dangerous strains of [cholera](#), [black fever](#), [HIV](#), [polio](#) and [hepatitis](#) may have been lost during the postwar looting of Iraq's key disease-control facility. Scientists at Baghdad's Central Public Health Laboratory are worried that an unknown number of viruses have been stolen. The U.S. military is worried they may be used as weapons. Scientists say looters took refrigerators full of the deadly viruses last Friday, but they're not sure what's actually missing. "They are in containers, all of these things taken together, cholera, AIDS and black fever," chemist Rasa Al-Alaq said. U.S. sources are concerned that polio and hepatitis may have been stolen, in addition to other viruses that may not be reflected in the official records in Baghdad. [View Article](#)

## Malaria Treatment 'Breakthrough'

22 April – BBC News reported scientists at a Scottish University claim they have made a breakthrough in finding a permanent treatment for [malaria](#). Researchers at Edinburgh University's Institute of Cell and Molecular Biology said they have isolated part of a protein that allows the disease to become resistant to new treatments. The team's findings, which have been published in the journal Nature Structural Biology, could lead to a new generation of drugs being designed to fight the condition. Scientists from Edinburgh University have been working with the Biotec Institute in Bangkok to study the protein responsible for drug resistance in malaria. They said the key lies in a protein called DHFR, which the parasite produces to keep itself alive. Tests using genetic engineering techniques have isolated the part of the protein that changes to protect itself against pyrimethamine - a chemical used in anti-malarial drugs. [View Article](#)

## Noise Exposure May Delay Brain Development

17 April - Reuters Health reported exposing rats to continuous "white noise" during the first weeks of life appears to delay normal brain development in regions linked to sound processing. The findings suggest that living near an airfield or in a busy city, where outside noises can drown out parents' voices and other helpful sounds, may delay brain development and language learning in some infants. The researcher added that based on the evidence, a delay in language learning would not be permanent and infants reared in a noisy environment would eventually catch up with their peers. He recommends that parents try to provide their infants with as many normal sounds -- like words or music -- as possible, to counteract the effects of the environmental noise. [View Article](#)

## Nubby Shoe Insole May Up Foot Performance

18 April - Reuters reported adding a textured insole to athletic shoes may help athletes have greater foot control and possibly incur fewer injuries. Physiotherapy researchers Drs. Gordon Waddington and R. Adams hypothesized that the smooth surface of insoles that are commonly found in both athletic and ordinary footwear decreases foot sensitivity and compromises a person's ability to detect positioning. In contrast, the soles of bare feet detect sensory cues and transmit information important for balance and positioning. Smooth insoles in shoes may mask this input, the researchers believe. The preliminary findings suggest that a person's ability to maintain good foot control, and therefore balance, may be hindered by smooth soles in footwear, according to the report. [View Article](#)

## Researchers Claim Gene Therapy Could Cure Diabetes

21 April – The Guardian reported the race to find genetic therapies to cure [diabetes](#) heated up as researchers announced they had rid mice of the disease by tricking their livers into producing insulin. Experiments by US scientists employed a gene called neuroD to make mice's livers behave like healthy human pancreases and produce the hormone insulin that is vital to converting glucose in blood into energy. The team used an [adenovirus](#), one of a family of viruses responsible for colds, coughs, and other infections, but which had its toxic properties removed, to carry the gene into the liver. But the gene alone only partially corrected the disease. The new beta cells producing insulin and other hormones were aided by adding a special growth factor called Btc. This combination cured diabetes in mice for at least four months, according to the scientists at Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, Texas. [View Article](#)

## SARS Update

15 April – CNN reported researchers announced they sequenced the genome for the suspected cause of [SARS](#). Researchers can use the information to begin to target antiviral drugs, to form the basis for developing vaccines, and to develop diagnostic tests that can lead to early detection. [View Article](#) [View CDC Press Release](#) 17 April - ABC News reported a SARS patient with diarrhea infected other people in a Hong Kong apartment complex as the disease apparently spread into homes through a sewage pipe linked to poorly sealed water drains. More people who came down with SARS in Block E of the Amoy Gardens apartments also got diarrhea, creating huge amounts of contaminated feces that spread the virus through pipes. [View Article](#) 18 April - MSNBC reported the Food and Drug Administration advised blood banks to ask potential donors questions aimed at identifying people who could be infected with the virus that causes severe acute respiratory syndrome but are not experiencing symptoms. [View Article](#) 19 April – The CDC has published Interim Domestic Guidance on the Use of Respirators to Prevent Transmission of SARS. [View Guide](#) 23 April - WHO is now recommending, that

persons planning to travel to the Beijing and Shanxi Provinces of China and to Toronto, Canada, should consider postponing all but essential travel.

## Single Therapy May Treat Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Mad Cow

18 April – Science Blog reported researchers have discovered an important similarity in the causes of cell degeneration and death in diseases such as [Alzheimer's](#), [Parkinson's](#), [Huntington's](#), [type II diabetes](#) and [CJD](#), suggesting that a single therapy could combat these different ailments. University of California at Irvine molecular biologists Charles Glabe and Rakez Kaye found that small toxic molecules believed to trigger cell damage in these diseases have a similar structure. The study, which appears in the April 18, 2003 issue of Science, implies that these molecules (toxic soluble oligomers) share parallel functions, which makes them suitable targets for new drugs or vaccines that could halt progression of many degenerative diseases. [View Study](#)

## Suicide Rates Highest in Spring and Summer Months

16 April- Reuters reported despite reports of "winter blues" that appear to lift with the first signs of spring, new findings show that people tend to commit suicide more often during warmer months. Australian researchers discovered that, over a 10-year period, the rate of suicide peaked in spring and summer and fell to its lowest level during winter months. Suicide rates appeared to increase with increasing hours of daylight, and showed no connection to other meteorological factors such as changing temperature or rainfall. The study could not determine why there was an association between season and suicide. Previous research has shown that longer periods of sunlight may increase brain levels of serotonin, a chemical in the brain linked to depression. [View Article](#)

## Very Low Lead Levels Linked With IQ Deficits

17 April – Science Daily reported a new study suggests that [lead](#) may be harmful even at very low blood concentrations. The study, funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences of the National Institutes of Health, will appear in the April 17 edition of The New England Journal of Medicine. The five-year study found that children who have blood lead concentration lower than 10 micrograms per deciliter suffer intellectual impairment from the exposure. The researchers also discovered that the amount of impairment attributed to lead was most pronounced at lower levels. [View Article](#)

# USEUCOM

## Bird Flu Spreads in Europe, Human Health Concerns

17 April – Reuters reported a severe Dutch outbreak of [bird flu](#) is spreading across Europe, mildly infecting humans and prompting fears that a mutated version of the virus could spark a flu epidemic in people, authorities said. There is a danger that bird and human flu could mix in pigs and produce a mutation that humans have no resistance against. [View Article](#)

## Burkina Faso: Meningitis Death Toll Tops 900

18 April – IRIN News reported 908 out of 6,234 people infected with [meningitis](#) in Burkina Faso have died this year. The death rate is 14.57 percent, and in the 14th week alone, 438 cases were registered, while 61 people died, bringing the death rate to 13.93 percent. Most deaths are due to the killer W135 strain first detected in the country two years ago. The health minister has elaborated a strategy that has helped contain the epidemics. [View Article](#)

## Deaths Few, But Epidemic of HIV is Raging in Russia

20 April – SunSpot.net reported although the number of [AIDS](#) deaths is still low, an epidemic of HIV infection is raging in Russia, with up to 1.5 million citizens carrying the virus. Vadim V. Pokrovsky, head of the Health Ministry's AIDS Prevention and Treatment Center, made the statement at a news conference called to promote a battle against human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome in Russian prisons, where the disease readily spreads and is then transmitted to the broader society as inmates are released. Russia has 235,000 registered HIV/AIDS cases, but the actual number is estimated at 700,000 to 1.5 million, Pokrovsky said. That includes 37,000 inmates who are confirmed to be infected. The Russia-wide totals are up from 442 registered cases in 1990 and 1,080 registered cases in 1995. [View Article](#)

## H7N7 in The Netherlands; First Fatal Human Case

19 April – ProMed reported a 57-year-old veterinarian who visited a poultry farm affected by [HPAI H7N7 infection](#) (in Teefelen) died on 17 Apr 2003, as the result of acute respiratory distress syndrome and related complications. PCR analysis of pre and post mortem samples confirmed the presence of H7 influenza A virus. Serum samples collected on 11 and 17 April displayed a slight increase in H7-specific antibodies in hemagglutination inhibition [HI] assay. This result needs to be confirmed in additional serological tests. This first death of a previously healthy individual, for which H7N7 HPAI is the most likely cause, demonstrates that the HPAI outbreak in chickens, due to frequent transmission to humans and probably pigs, is a major concern to public and animal health. Vaccination against human influenza and prophylactic treatment with antivirals and culling of affected chicken flocks and pigs is of utmost importance to control this outbreak. It is important to note that no co-infections with H7N7 and human influenza A viruses have been detected so far. To date, no significant genetic changes have been observed in virus isolates from humans. The neuraminidase subtyping and genetic analysis of the influenza A virus detected in the deceased veterinarian will be important in determining whether this is a "normal" avian influenza virus or one with distinct genetic and biological properties. [View Report 1](#) [View Report 2](#)

## Volgograd Gas Leak Puts 93 in Hospital

21 April – The Moscow Times reported twenty more children in Volgograd sought hospital treatment for symptoms of gas poisoning, bringing the total number of people affected by a leak at an oil refinery to 93, officials said. The victims are almost exclusively children between the ages of 10 and 16, said Lieutenant Colonel Igor Mikhailov, a duty officer at the Emergency Situation Ministry's southern branch. A mix of [propane](#) and [butane](#) leaked Thursday from a damaged pipe collar at a LUKoil refinery in Volgograd, forming a poisonous gas cloud that temporarily hovered over the Krasnoarmeisky district, a neighborhood with numerous schools. Officials had said that the cloud had dissipated, but the past two days have seen the number of children seeking hospital treatment triple. It was not immediately clear why the numbers had increased so dramatically. [View Article](#)

# USCENTCOM

## Iraq: Outbreak of Black Fever Hits Children

21 April – Gulf News reported on an outbreak of [Black Fever](#) (Leishmaniasis) and other diseases in Iraq. Children have been the biggest victims of these diseases caused by infected sandflies, a lack of clean water and health care, coupled with a breakdown of all civic services. The organization has received reports of six fatalities from Black Fever and an increase in the number of those infected all around the south of Iraq. A dramatic increase in [diarrhea](#) has also been recorded with 50 cases reported in one day alone in some parts of the country. In some children's hospitals, 70 per cent of patients are suffering from diarrhea in a country where half of the population is below 18 years. The situation is expected to worsen with the rising temperatures and the fact that the children of Iraq are inherently weak because of the years of sanctions, and after three wars in 20 years. [View Article](#)

## Eritrea: Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia

16 April – ProMed reported a group of approximately 600 adult male and female Raya-Azebo trade cattle that were imported illegally into Eritrea have been diagnosed with [Mycoplasma mycoides](#). The disease has only been detected so far in imported cattle at a slaughterhouse in Asmara municipal abattoir. Control measures include quarantine and movement control inside the country as well as a modified stamping-out policy. [View Report](#)

## First UN Food Convoy Reaches Baghdad, More to Come

20 April – AlertNet reported the first postwar convoy of U.N. food aid reached Baghdad on Sunday, opening an aid corridor from Jordan which U.N. officials say should keep the capital supplied with food when stocks run low in coming weeks. The 50-truck convoy, chartered by the World Food Program (WFP) from private Jordanian firms and carrying 1,400 tons of wheat flour, drove into a city center warehouse compound guarded by U.S. troops. The journey had taken four days, including a two-day layover while a suitable warehouse was prepared. Officials said the flour would be distributed early next month, when food is expected to become increasingly scarce. [View Article](#)

## Iraq: Multidrug Resistant (MDR) *Acinetobacter*

17 April – ProMed reported a Navy doctor has seen several cases of MDR [Acinetobacter](#) amongst Iraqi natives wounded by gunshots, shrapnel, burns or motor vehicle accidents. The isolates are from blood, CSF or wound cultures drawn within 2 hours of arrival on his hospital ship. Isolate sensitivities by the Kirby-Bauer method are resistant to ampicillin, ampicillin/sulbactam, TMP/SMX, gentamicin, cefoxitin, cefazolin, cefotaxime, ceftazidime, ticarcillin, and ciprofloxacin but sensitive to imipenem, amikacin and tobramycin. Review of the literature from the Marmara earthquake and Vietnam War suggests *Acinetobacter* species are fairly common pathogens in traumatic wounds, especially if they are dirty. The prior literature, however, does not cite multidrug resistance as a problem. [View Report](#)

## Kyrgyzstan: Landslide Kills Up to 38

21 April – IRIN News reported relief teams were still on the scene on Monday after a landslide ripped through a small village in mountainous southwestern Kyrgyzstan over the weekend. 38 people are missing and most likely are dead. The rescuers have already recovered five bodies. On Sunday afternoon, the landslide, triggered by heavy rains and melting snow, slammed into Karatarik, a village of between 200 and 300 people in Uzgen District, about 100 km east of Osh. According to officials, of those missing, 17 were under the age of 18, saying that relief workers, in coordination with local and government emergency teams, had already evacuated another 16 families from the area in view of the threat of another landslide. [View Article](#)

## Tajikistan: Heavy Rains Threaten Food Security

17 April - IRIN News reported heavy rains have threatened food security in parts of Tajikistan, as the banks of a river burst in an area near the capital, Dushanbe. The flood comes within days after heavy rains killed a child in the southeast of the country over the weekend. Although there is no food-security emergency, people will have needs. The five villages affected were Lenin, Komsomol, Sovnarkom, Alibegi and Tajikobod, in the Kolkhoz Russia region, 10 km southeast from Dushanbe, damaged after a 5-km strip of land between two rivers, the Kofernihon and Ilyak, some 10 km southeast of Dushanbe, was flooded. [View Article](#)

# USNORTHCOM

## CDC Adopts New HIV Prevention Strategies for a Changing Epidemic

18 April – Medscape reported Federal health officials with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced on Thursday an initiative designed to refocus their [HIV](#) prevention efforts. An estimated 200,000 people in the United States do not know they are infected with HIV and are not getting appropriate treatment. The CDC outlines the HIV prevention initiative in the [April 18th issue of its Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#). The new initiative takes advantage of the FDA-licensed rapid HIV test that can be performed in settings such as STD clinics, shelters, drug treatment centers, and correctional facilities. The fact that results are available in roughly 20 minutes means patients don't have to come in for a follow-up visit to get the test result. [View Article](#)

## Colorado: Cancer Risk Higher at Rocky Flats Plant

18 April – ABC News reported Rocky Flats employees who assembled nuclear weapons components and [inhaled radioactive particles](#) had an increased risk of [lung cancer](#), a new study found. The study found workers who dealt with plutonium were about two times more likely to develop lung cancer than those who were not employed at the plant. The study tracked 16,303 people who worked at the plant between 1952 and 1989. Researchers will study the data to determine if standards for handling plutonium should be changed. The study also found that Rocky Flats workers were 2.5 times more likely to develop brain tumors than other people. Researchers plan to examine those findings further. However, Doug Benevento, director of the state health department, said other factors have been shown to cause more of a risk of cancer. He also said the study did not definitively link worker's cancers to their employment at the plant, noting other factors, such as exposure to chemicals at home, lifestyle differences or pure chance could explain the elevated risk results. [View Article](#)

## Health Plans Search for Bioterror Symptoms

18 April – Global Security Newswire reported the CDC and a handful of health plans are about a year into a collaborative project whose aim is earlier and better detection of potential [bioterrorism attacks](#)-spotting disease outbreaks before emergency rooms are suddenly flooded with victims. In essence, the streams of data coming into health insurance plans—phone calls to nurse-help lines and doctors' diagnoses—are sifted by computer programs to look for disease and symptom patterns sorted by ZIP code. Such a system may already be proving valuable in tracking early signs of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS, as the dreaded and sometimes-deadly illness begins creeping into the United States. [View Article](#)

## In US, Life-Threatening Sepsis on the Rise

17 April – Reuters reported the life-threatening condition known as [sepsis](#) has increased nearly nine percent each year in the U.S. since 1979, according to a new analysis of hospital records. Sepsis is a dangerous immune reaction to infection or injury that can cause blood pressure to plummet and organs to fail. The condition typically kills 20 percent to 50 percent of patients who have a severe case. In the new study, Dr. Greg S. Martin and colleagues evaluated national hospital information about patients discharged between 1979 and 2000 in an effort to better understand trends in sepsis in the U.S. During that time period, they found that rates of sepsis increased 8.7 percent each year from roughly 164,000 cases in 1979 (about 83 cases per 100,000 people) to nearly 660,000 cases in 2000 (240 cases per 100,000 people). The good news is that even though more people were developing sepsis, the mortality rate associated with the disease declined. [View Article](#)

## New Test of Our Terrorism Defenses

22 April – Tribnet reported a mock "dirty bomb" will "explode" somewhere in Seattle next month, spreading a pretend spray of [radioactive debris](#) over part of the city. At about the same time, a staged [bioterrorism](#) assault will hit the Chicago area, testing the ability of officials there to handle a much different but equally sobering type of attack. Together, the scenarios are part of a congressionally mandated counterterrorism exercise known as Topoff 2, an acronym for Top Officials. It's only the second such exercise mounted in the nation and the first since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. It's also the first large-scale counterterrorism exercise since the creation of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. [View Article](#)

## Preliminary FoodNet Data on the Incidence of Foodborne Illnesses --- Selected Sites, United States, 2002

18 April – The CDC released a report that describes preliminary surveillance data for 2002 and compares them with 1996--2001 data. The data indicate a sustained decrease in [major bacterial foodborne illnesses](#) such as [Campylobacter](#) and [Listeria](#), indicating progress toward meeting the national health objectives of reducing the incidence of foodborne infections by 2010 (objectives 10-1a to 10-1d) (3). However, the data do not indicate a sustained decline in other major foodborne infections such as [Escherichia coli O157](#) and [Salmonella](#), indicating that increased efforts are needed to reduce further the incidence of foodborne illnesses. [View Report](#)

## Prevalence of Salmonella in U.S. Decreases

18 April – Reuters reported Elsa Murano, undersecretary of food safety, said that a new report shows the incidence of [Salmonella](#) decreased last year even as inspectors increased sampling.

Of the 58,085 samples of meat and poultry tested for salmonella last year, 4.3 percent had the germ that can cause food poisoning. That's down from two years ago when 5 percent of 45,941 samples of meat and poultry tested positive. Murano said the decline was due to a government meat safety program that began in 1998. Despite officials touting an overall decline, ground chicken alone saw an increase in the prevalence of salmonella. Out of 429 samples taken from ground chicken last year, 29.1 percent tested positive, according to the department's report. That's an increase from two years ago when inspectors found 19.5 percent of 262 samples had salmonella. In addition, broiler chickens saw a fairly steady incidence of salmonella, with 11.5 percent of 9,183 samples testing positive last year compared to 11.9 percent of 5,659 chicken samples in 2001. [View Article](#) [View USDA Report](#)

## Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Report of Cases in the United States

Data reported to the World Health Organization on April 21, 2003.

State	Total Cases	Suspect Cases	Probable Cases	State	Total Cases	Suspect Cases	Probable Cases
Alabama	1	1	0	Nevada	2	2	0
Arizona	1	1	0	New Hampshire	1	1	0
California	46	34	12	New Jersey	3	2	1
Colorado	8	6	2	New Mexico	1	0	1
Connecticut	4	2	2	New York	26	21	5
Florida	14	14	0	North Carolina	6	6	0
Georgia	3	3	0	Ohio	11	8	3
Hawaii	5	3	2	Oregon	1	1	0
Illinois	3	12	1	Pennsylvania	6	5	1
Indiana	1	1	0	Rhode Island	1	1	0
Kansas	1	0	1	South Carolina	2	2	0
Kentucky	2	1	1	Texas	7	7	0
Maine	2	2	0	Utah	5	4	1
Massachusetts	12	11	1	Vermont	2	2	0
Michigan	3	3	0	Virginia	6	4	2
Minnesota	7	7	0	Washington	23	21	2
Mississippi	2	1	1	Wisconsin	1	1	0
Missouri	2	2	0	<b>Total</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>39</b>

\*[Case definition](#) For more information, visit this CDC [SARS web site](#).

## Second Round of Smallpox Vaccinations Begins

22 April – USA Today reported federal health officials are pressing forward with phase two of the [smallpox](#) vaccination program, vaccinating up to 10 million emergency "first responders" and expanding the program significantly by asking states to prepare not just for bioterrorism, but for all forms of terrorism, including [chemical](#), [radiological](#) and conventional weapons. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is issuing guidelines as soon as today to urge state health departments and hospitals to widen their medical detection and response activities to include chemical and nuclear events and to set up labs capable of handling and analyzing chemicals that might be used by terrorists. [View Article](#)

## Syphilis on the Rebound in Mass.

21 April – The Boston Globe reported syphilis is rebounding dramatically, with cases of the [sexually transmitted](#) condition nearly doubling in the past two years. More troubling than the disease itself, public health authorities fear the resurgence could foreshadow an explosion of new HIV infections. Although the number of patients is relatively small -- 197 people tested positive for infectious syphilis last year -- disease specialists and community groups and clinics are so alarmed that they have united in a statewide campaign to halt the infection. The outbreak in Massachusetts, which is concentrated in Boston, follows a reemergence of syphilis in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York, with the bacterial disease especially evident in gay communities. [View Article](#)

## Update: Adverse Events Following Civilian Smallpox Vaccination

18 April – The CDC reported during January 24--April 13, 2003, [smallpox](#) vaccine was administered to 32,644 civilian health-care and public health workers. This report updates information on all vaccine-associated adverse events among civilians vaccinated since the beginning of the vaccination program and among contacts of vaccinees, received by CDC from the [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System \(VAERS\)](#). As of 13 April, a total of 10 cases of myopericarditis have been reported. During the same period, one new case of generalized vaccinia and seven new cases of inadvertent inoculation were reported. During April 5--13, eight other serious adverse events were reported. Discharge diagnoses for these events were atypical chest pain (n =6), hypertension (n =1), and pneumonia (n =1). Surveillance for adverse events during the civilian and military smallpox vaccination programs is ongoing; regular surveillance reports will be published in *MMWR*. [View Report](#)

## USPACOM

### Quake Hits North-west China

17 April – BBC News reported China's northwestern region of Qinghai was struck by a magnitude 6.6 [earthquake](#), authorities say. A local official said the epicenter was located near the town of Delingha, northwest of the provincial capital Xining. "Reports from Delingha and the surrounding area haven't said there are any casualties or damage yet," the official told Associated Press news agency. He added that the tremor could be felt in Xining, some 300 miles from the epicenter. [View Article](#)

### Study Raises Estimate of How Much Agent Orange and Other Defoliants Sprayed During Vietnam War

17 April — ABC News reported scientists have increased their estimate of how much [Agent Orange](#) and other [dioxin-tainted defoliants](#) the U.S. military sprayed during the Vietnam War. But researchers say it remains unclear whether the new estimate means some U.S. veterans and Vietnamese face increased risks of cancer and other illnesses. By re-examining military records, including the logs of pilots who flew spraying missions, public health researchers at Columbia University determined that nearly 2 million additional gallons of the herbicides were sprayed from 1961 to 1971. The new figure adds about 10 percent to the 19 million gallons previously known to be sprayed. About 55 percent was Agent Orange and about 25% were other herbicides, such as Agent Pink and Agent Purple, which were closely related to Agent Orange but even more potent. The total amount of dioxin left in Vietnam's forests, fields and mangrove swamps could be four times higher than previously estimated. [View Article](#)

## Water Coolant Leak at Rokkasho Nuclear Fuel Plant

22 April – Japan Today reported another leakage of [radioactive water](#) has been found at a spent fuel storage pool at a nuclear fuel reprocessing plant in the village of Rokkasho, Aomori Prefecture, its operator said. Japan Nuclear Fuel Ltd said some 10 liters of water was found in a pit surrounding a conduit connecting storage pools for the fuel, adding that the cause is believed to be welding defects. [View Article](#)

## USSOUTHCOM

### Brazil: Epidemic of *P. falciparum* Malaria in Manaus

19 April – ProMed reported the Amazon capital Manaus registered 16,944 cases of [malaria](#) in the first 3 months of this year, 815 percent higher than the same period last year, which had 1,850 cases. It is the biggest epidemic reported in the city -- having its peak in March 2003, when 6908 persons (about 223 cases per day) were affected by the illness, transmitted by a parasite of African origin *P. falciparum*. The deforestation carried out by homeless persons who invaded previously undisturbed areas of the city, the intensification of rains, and the suspension of fumigation at night in neighborhoods considered endemic are all factors considered for the outbreak of malaria. Yesterday, Secretaria de Estado da Saude (SUSAM) decided to intensify the action plan to combat malaria, hiring 86 epidemic control agents and increasing the number of diagnostic sites. The mayor's office put physicians from the program Medicos da Familia at the disposal of the plan. [View Report](#)

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

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