

USACHPPM

HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

05 March 2004

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

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HOT TOPICS

Antibiotic Could Help with Spinal Cord Injury Paralysis

24 February – Science Blog reported researchers have found that a commonly prescribed antibiotic could be used to help prevent paralysis and other long-term functional deficits associated with a partial spinal cord injury (SCI). Researchers in the field have known that a significant proportion of paralysis and long-term functional disorders associated with SCI are triggered by post-trauma tissue loss. Administering the antibiotic, minocycline, to rats within the first hour after a paralyzing injury has been shown to reduce this tissue loss and ultimately enable more hind-leg function, the ability to walk with more coordination, better foot posture and stepping, and better support of body weight than untreated controls. [View Article](#)

Estrogen Trial Shows More Stroke Risk

02 March – Reuters reported the National Institutes of Health has stopped a trial of women taking estrogen replacement therapy after finding the pills not only failed to reduce the risk of [heart disease](#) but raised the possibility of a [stroke](#). It was the second large trial of hormone replacement therapy to have been halted in two years. In July 2002, women taking estrogen and progestin were told to stop because of the risk of heart attack, stroke and some forms of cancer. The estrogen-only trial was a separate arm of the study that looked at women over 50 who had hysterectomies and were taking Wyeth Co's., Premarin, made from the urine of pregnant mares. Already about half the 11,000 women in the trial had dropped out, the researchers said. The women had received letters in 2000 and 2002 warning them of the stroke risk. The NIH decided to stop the trial about a year early after getting enough information to decide that the benefits of estrogen did not outweigh the stroke risk. Details on the effects of estrogen-only therapy will be published in a major medical journal in April. The findings would not apply to young women who take estrogen after having hysterectomies. "The mean age of these women is about 70 years of age. We are talking about women of a certain age, a certain population," the director of the trial said. [View Report](#)

Fruit Reduces Heart Disease Risk

27 February – BBC News reported eating three apples a day can significantly cut the risk of death from coronary heart disease, say scientists. The fiber in apples and other fruits helps prevent [heart disease](#) by lowering cholesterol levels. The findings are part of a US study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine. It reinforces other research which has shown the health benefits of a diet rich in fiber. Scientists, who carried out the research, said people who eat 10 grams of fiber daily, reduce their risk of heart attack by 14% and their risk of dying from coronary heart disease by 27%. [View Article](#)

Heart Drug to be Used for Parasite Disease

24 February – Science Blog reported two Santa Barbara researchers have discovered that calcium channel blockers may prove to be an inexpensive alternative for controlling [schistosome](#) infection, a serious global health problem that afflicts more than 200 million people annually in developing nations. An estimated 200,000 people, many of them older children, die every year from schistosomiasis. Many more suffer chronic damage to vital organs, including the liver and bladder. A San Francisco company will use the drugs to treat schistosomiasis in Africa and elsewhere. [View Article](#)

Is There a Genetic Element to Leprosy?

01 March – The Lancet Infectious Diseases journal reported an international team led by Canadian scientists has identified a DNA region that renders people susceptible to [leprosy](#). (Nature 2004; 427: 636–40) This region contains part of two genes that have been linked to certain forms of Parkinson's disease, suggesting that both disorders may share some biochemical pathways. "Our results give an entirely novel view of the leprosy disease process", says lead author Erwin Schurr (McGill University, Montreal). Leprosy affects around 1 million people worldwide. The WHO has identified 91 countries in which leprosy infection is prevalent, while concerns have been raised that the disease may make a comeback even in places such as Canada. It has long been suspected that the disorder has a strong genetic component; a leprosy susceptibility locus to chromosome 6 region q25-q26 was recently discovered. [View Article](#)

Light-Sensitive Gloves Reduce Risk of Germ Transfer

03 March Eurekalert reported a new type of disposable glove emits chlorine dioxide when exposed to light or moisture, killing potentially harmful microbes and making it ideal for use among health care and food workers, according to a study in the March 15 issue of Clinical Infectious Diseases. The vinyl or polyethylene gloves contain microspheres that release chlorine dioxide, a water-soluble gas used to disinfect drinking water and processed foods. Chlorine dioxide can destroy a variety of microorganisms, including E. coli, staphylococcus and salmonella, reducing the risk of the glove-wearer transmitting bacteria encountered in medical or food-handling work. In addition, chlorine dioxide-impregnated gloves (which should not cost significantly more than regular gloves) won't lead to the advent of "super-germs" as antibacterial soaps and cleaners since chlorine dioxide does not breed resistance among microorganisms and has an incredibly broad spectrum of activity against viruses, bacteria and fungi. [View Report](#)

Old Diseases Fall off Public Health Radar

02 March – USA Today reported microbial killers such as drug-resistant [malaria](#), [tuberculosis](#), [HIV](#) and [syphilis](#) continue to ravage the world. Health experts say they know how to prevent and treat these diseases, but first they need to overcome a different kind of public health enemy: complacency. Public attention in the past two years has focused on new diseases, such as [SARS](#), and new threats, such as bioterrorism, but scientists here at the International Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases say the lack of attention to older diseases is allowing them to flourish. "HIV complacency" is partly responsible for rising rates of HIV in the southern USA and syphilis among men who have sex with men in large U.S. cities, researchers reported. In parts of the USA and other industrialized countries, "there is a perception that HIV is no longer a major threat," said Ronald Valdiserri of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and "many countries report a resurgence of unsafe behaviors" and outbreaks of sexually transmitted diseases since the introduction of anti-HIV drugs. [View Article](#)

Researcher Warns of Ear Piercing Infections

24 February – Reuters reported ear cartilage is more prone to a nasty infection than the earlobe during jewelry piercing, and can cause a disfiguring collapse of the ear as the cartilage dissolves, researchers said. An investigation into a two-month outbreak at a jewelry stand in an Oregon shopping mall found bacteria living in sinks that infected the ears of as many as 25 customers. Inexperienced employees spread the bacteria, [Pseudomonas aeruginosa](#), to a spray bottle that was supposed to hold disinfectant and contaminated the piercing equipment, said a report published in the Journal of the American Medical Association. [View Article](#)

Secrets of Inflammation Unveiled

27 February – BBC News reported scientists have unlocked one of the secrets behind how inflammation develops in the body. The team discovered that certain sugar molecules that form part of a protein known as CD44 have a vital role to play in regulating whether or not inflammation occurs. Scientists already knew that the protein, which is present in high numbers on the surface of white. Although it was understood that CD44 allows cells to move out of the blood stream and into tissues by helping them attach to a sticky substance on the wall of blood vessels, called hyaluronan, it was not clear exactly how cells switch CD44 on and off. The new study has solved this mystery by showing that the sugar molecules on the CD44 protein can actually block the site that binds with hyaluronan. It is the specific removal of these sugars that unblocks CD44, allowing cells to stick to hyaluronan and subsequently move into the tissues. The research is published in the journal Molecular Cell. [View Article](#)

Temper Tantrum Can Lead to Heart Woes, Study Shows

01 March – Reuters reported men prone to angry tantrums or sulky hostility are more likely to develop an [irregular heart rhythm](#) (atrial fibrillation), U.S. researchers reported. Having a type-A personality alone was not enough to predispose a man to heart disease, the researchers report in this week's issue of the journal Circulation. But men who described themselves as fiery- or quick-tempered, hot-headed, furious when criticized, or wanting to hit someone when frustrated were 30 percent more likely to suffer from atrial fibrillation, an irregular heart rhythm that can lead to sudden death. In fact, such men were 20 percent more likely to have died of anything during the study period than less-angry men, the researchers found. Men who said they shake with anger, get headaches or muscle tension also were more likely to develop atrial fibrillation, which affects an estimate 2 million Americans a year. [View Report](#)

Tooth Decay Afflicts 4 Out Of 5

24 February – CBS News reported five billion people — or nearly 80 percent of the world's population — suffer from tooth decay, the U.N. health agency said in a report on [oral health](#). Tooth decay, gum disease as well as oral and throat cancers are a global health problem in industrialized and increasingly in developing countries, the World Health Organization warned. Also, the loss of teeth usually leads to malnutrition — with people being unable to chew many foods vital to their health — and subsequently a host of other problems, the agency said. "Poor oral health can have a profound effect on general health and the quality of life," said Dr. Poul Erik Petersen, coordinator of WHO's Global Oral Health Program. "The experience of pain, endurance or dental abscesses, problems with eating, chewing and missing, discolored or damaged teeth, has a major impact on people's daily lives and well being." [View Article](#)

UN Agencies Begin Mass Immunization against Yellow Fever in Liberia

24 February – The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO) and several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) will begin a mass immunization campaign later this week to combat an outbreak of [yellow fever](#) in Liberia. WHO's Dr. Luzitu Simao said today from Monrovia, the Liberian capital, that the first immunization teams should start work on Thursday as part of a joint campaign with Liberia's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. WHO fears an epidemic is imminent in Liberia, which is trying to recover from 14 years of civil war and lies in West Africa's yellow fever belt. The expected arrival of the annual rainy season in April means the disease may soon find it even easier to flourish. There have been three confirmed cases of yellow fever so far, with another 11 suspected cases undergoing laboratory analysis in Abidjan in neighboring Côte d'Ivoire. The patients in the three confirmed cases have died. [View Article](#)

United Nations Food Agency Warns Drought, HIV/AIDS, Conflicts Contribute to World Food Shortage

02 March - The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is warning that although the overall global food production has improved compared to 2002, some 38 countries around the world are still facing serious food shortages. In its February bulletin of Foodcrops and Shortages, FAO said 24 of the seriously affected countries were in Africa, 7 in Asia, 5 in Latin America and 2 in the European zone. The report concludes that food shortages largely attributed to drought and conflicts are being compounded by the effect of HIV/AIDS on food production, marketing and distribution. In Africa alone, over an estimated 17 million people are facing food shortages including 7.2 million in Ethiopia, 1.9 million in Eritrea, 3.6 million in Sudan, 1.2 million in Kenya, 580,000 in Somalia, 1.6 million each in Tanzania and Uganda. [View Article](#)

Focus on Epidemiology

Updated Recommendations on the Use of Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine: Suspension of Recommendation for Third and Fourth Dose

02 March – CDC/MMWR reported on February 13, 2004, CDC recommended that health-care providers temporarily suspend routine use of the fourth dose of 7-valent [pneumococcal conjugate vaccine](#) (PCV7) when vaccinating healthy children. This action was taken to conserve vaccine and minimize the likelihood of shortages until Wyeth Vaccines, the only U.S. supplier of PCV7 (marketed as Prevnar[®]), restores sufficient production capacity to meet the national need. Since that recommendation, PCV7 production has been much less than expected because of continuing problems with the PCV7 vial-filling production line. Shipments have been delayed, resulting in spot shortages that might continue beyond summer 2004 and become widespread. Effective immediately, to further conserve vaccine, CDC recommends that all health-care providers temporarily suspend routine administration of both the third and fourth doses to healthy children. [View Report](#)

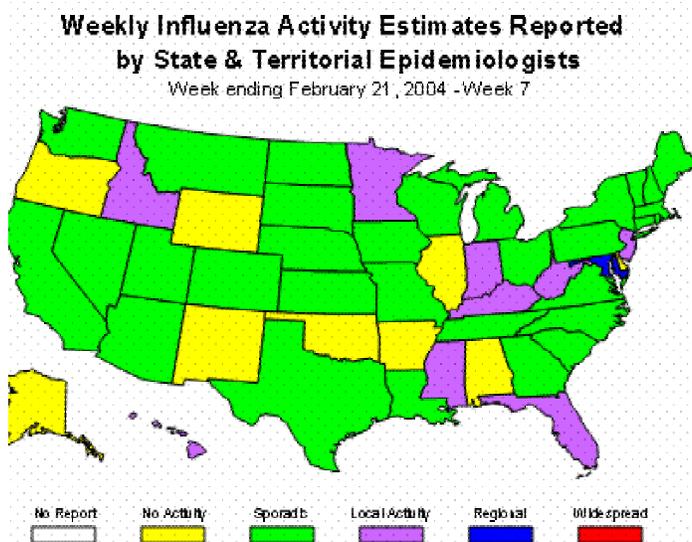
DoD-GEIS: West Nile Virus

02 March - West Nile virus (WNV) is established as a seasonal epidemic in summer and continues into the fall. In the US for 2003, 9186 cases of WNV were reported involving all but five states with 231 deaths; 6277 cases (68%) of WN fever (milder disease), 2739 (30%) WN meningitis or encephalitis (neuroinvasive disease) and 170 (2%) clinically unspecified cases. WNV affects the

central nervous system but symptoms vary: 1) no symptoms for most people (80%) based on seroprevalence 2) mild symptoms (20%), 3) serious disease (CDC estimates 1 in 150 people infected). Symptoms last weeks and neurological effects may be permanent. WNV is spread by infected mosquitoes (from infected birds) with subsequent spread to humans and other animals. WNV transmission due to transfusions, transplants and during pregnancy and breastfeeding is documented but there is no other evidence for person-to-person spread. Onset of symptoms is 3 to 14 days after the bite of an infected mosquito. No specific treatment for WNV infection is available. Standard preventive measures focus on avoiding mosquito bites. CDC (& others) hosted the fifth annual WNV surveillance meeting in February; many presentations and related material from this meeting are posted at [4th National Conference on West Nile Virus in the US](#). WNV information is available at [More Information](#)

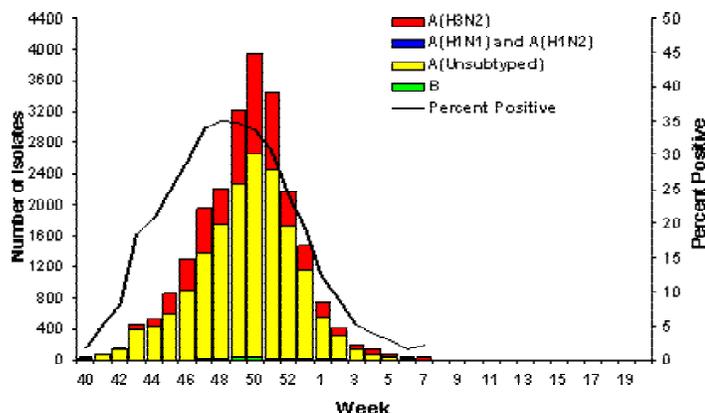
Influenza Update

CDC Update



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WHO/NREVSS Collaborating Laboratories National Summary, 2003-04



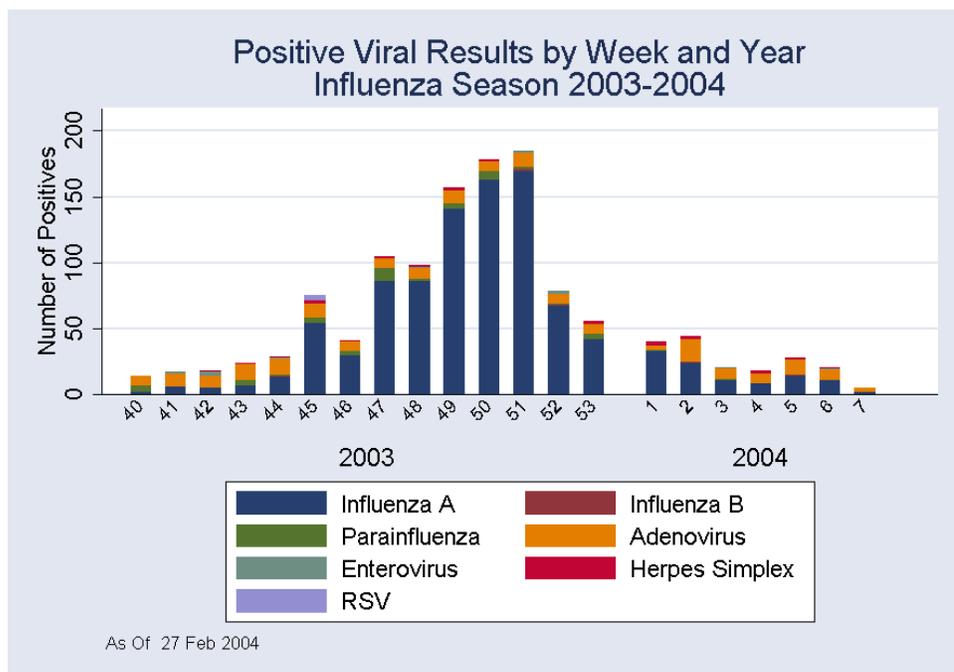
WHO Update

02 March – To date, Thailand has reported 10 cases, of which 7 have been fatal. To date, Viet Nam has reported 23 cases, 15 of which have been fatal. During last week's emergency meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, officials from FAO, OIE, and WHO drew attention to several unique features of the current outbreaks of H5N1 in poultry in Asia in particular its geographic distribution, rate of spread and severity of which are unprecedented. Prospects for rapid control are inconsistent with worldwide experience, over more than four decades, with previous outbreaks, which have all been much smaller in scope and inherently less challenging. Even in countries with good surveillance, adequate resources, and geographically limited outbreaks, control has often taken up to two years. For these reasons and others, WHO has cautioned against assumptions that the outbreaks can be controlled in the immediate future. [View Source](#)

DoD Global Influenza and Other Respiratory Viral Pathogens Surveillance Weekly Update Week 8 (22 Feb – 28 Feb)

Since the start of the influenza surveillance season (Week 40: 28 Sep to 4 Oct 03), the Epidemiological Surveillance Division (AFIOH/SDE) has received 2,804 throat swab specimens as

part of the influenza surveillance program. 2,746 (98%) of the specimens have been processed to date. Of those processed, 937 (34%) were positive for Influenza A virus and 5 were positive for Influenza B virus.



[View Source](#)

USEUCOM

British Doctors Revive Maggot Treatment

23 February – Reuters reported starting this month, British doctors will be able to prescribe maggots to patients with infected wounds, a hospital official said. He said the state National Health Service had realized that maggots were a cheaper and more beneficial way of treating wounds than using conventional medicine. Patients would be able to treat themselves at home and avoid the possibility of picking up a hospital infection. Maggots have been used for centuries to rid wounds of decaying flesh, but after the discovery of antibiotics their use went into decline. "People didn't like the thought of creepy-crawlies on their skin," said Tony Fowler, customer services manager at the Princess of Wales Hospital in Bridgend, Wales. "But now there is a renewed interest because of the problems caused by the over-use of antibiotics, and the NHS has seen the cost-effectiveness of maggots." Research at the Princess of Wales Hospital confirmed that placing sterile maggots on wounds could make them heal faster than conventional medicine. The creatures devour dead, infected tissue and kill off bacteria that could block the healing process without damaging surrounding tissue, since they cannot ingest healthy flesh. [View Article](#)

Cameroon: Poor Sanitation Causes Cholera Outbreak in Douala

24 February – AllAfrica.com reported more than 500 cases of [cholera](#) have been reported over the past seven weeks in Douala, the largest city in Cameroon, and at least 13 people have died of the disease, according to government statistics. However, health workers told IRIN that the real cholera infection rate in the heavily polluted port city of 2.5 million people could be much higher than official

figures suggest. They said many cholera victims were not registering with state hospitals, but were seeking treatment from private doctors and traditional healers instead. These people were not being captured by official statistics, they added. "There is really no drainage or sewage disposal system in Douala. Many people are using latrines which are barely two metres away from their toilets. So we virtually have the same water in both our wells and toilets," Jules Kamajou, an urban planner in Douala, told IRIN. [View Article](#)

Cough and Cold Kits Could Stem Antibiotic Use

29 February – Reuters reported offering patients in health clinics kits with over-the-counter cough and cold medicines appears to significantly reduce unnecessary antibiotic use, according to a new U.S. study. Researchers from the Minnesota Antibiotics Resistance Collaborative found patients with upper respiratory illnesses or acute bronchitis who visited clinics that distributed the kits were significantly less likely to fill a prescription for antibiotics within three days. Upper respiratory illnesses and acute bronchitis are generally caused by viral rather than bacterial infections. The overuse of antibiotics, which only work on bacteria, have been cited as one of the major causes of the emergence of drug resistant strains of disease. [View Article](#)

Fourth Nigerian State Withdraws from Mass Polio Immunization Program

24 February – BBC News reported a fourth state in northern Nigeria has reportedly withdrawn from a mass [polio immunization](#) program in 10 West African countries until the vaccine is allegedly confirmed safe. The state of Niger joined its neighbors, Bauchi, Kano and Zamfara. Kano had suspended the immunizations in October 2003 after Muslim clerics said that the vaccine was contaminated with an anti-fertility agent as part of a US plot to make Muslim women sterile. Some studies have shown that the vaccine is safe, but one report last month found traces of the reproductive hormone estrogen. The World Health Organization (WHO), which denies the clerics' claims, had called an urgent meeting last month to persuade countries where polio is still endemic to take part in the drive. Pakistan, India, Niger, Nigeria, Egypt, and Somalia, are seven other countries where polio is still endemic. Nigeria accounts for nearly half of all new polio cases, mostly in northern Nigeria. Last year, six countries that were previously declared polio-free were re-infected. [View Article](#)

Liberia: Rapid Response Launched to Contain Yellow Fever Emergency

25 February – ProMed reported International health agencies announced that they were joining forces with the Liberian government to combat a [yellow fever](#) emergency. The World Health Organization and UNICEF are launching an emergency mass immunization campaign together with Liberia's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. The UN agencies appealed today for US\$ 1.3 million to help contain the outbreak and keep it from exploding to larger populations in displaced persons camps and urban areas. [View Report](#)

Morocco Quake Toll Edges near 600

24 February – BBC News reported the death toll in a powerful earthquake that shook north-east Morocco has risen sharply, with nearly 600 people now known to have died. Thousands of survivors spent the night in the open, fearing more tremors. Rescuers have been digging through rubble with pick-axes, while others dug with their bare hands. A rescue operation involving the army and the Red Crescent is under way, but they have had difficulty reaching remote mountain villages. The Moroccan Health Minister Mohamed Cheikh Biadillah said at least 564 people were killed in the quake which struck rural areas around the Mediterranean city of Al Hoceima early on Tuesday morning. [View Article](#)

Solar Energy Project Brings Drinking Water to Rural Tanzania

27 February – VOA News reported a pilot program in Tanzania is using solar energy to bring clean drinking water to rural, isolated areas. Project organizers say this is a first step in their plans to bring clean water to some of the world's poorest countries. It's called "One Village at a Time," bringing safe drinking water to rural areas by harnessing the sun's energy. Using a portable solar-powered water purification machine, the pilot project is being carried out at a coffee-producing cooperative in Tanzania. The results so far have been impressive. The water purification system uses solar panels to convert energy from the sun into electricity, which in turn runs an ultraviolet water purification process capable of producing between 300 and 750 gallons of fresh drinking water per day. That, organizers say, can meet the demands of hundreds of rural villagers, considering that people in developing countries typically consume two gallons of water per day. [View Article](#)

USCENTCOM

Afghanistan: Mysterious Disease Killing Children in Badakhshan Province

25 February – ProMed reported more than 300 children have died of an unidentified disease in the northern Afghan province of Badakhshan within the last month. Shamsur Rehman, the province's deputy governor, said the malady appeared to be a respiratory disease that began with flu-like symptoms and then stopped children from breathing. The number of casualties may be higher, Rehman said, but getting exact numbers was difficult because of the remoteness of some parts of the province. He appealed to the World Health Organization and other aid groups to help avoid what he called a "human catastrophe." [View Report](#)

U.S. Says Iraq's Health Care System Improving

02 March – Alert Net reported Iraq's health-care system -- suffering first from neglect and then from war damages -- is starting to show signs of life, a U.S. government official said. U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson, who returned from a two-day visit to Iraq on Monday, said renovated hospitals and clinics, better doctors and an influx of cash were starting to improve Iraqis' health. "Things are getting better," Thompson told reporters. Iraq's Ministry of Health, which recently finished the \$1.7 million reconstruction of its headquarters, was also likely to become the first Iraqi ministry to be run without any help from the U.S.-led coalition, according to Thompson. Former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein "starved the medical system," providing \$16 million -- or 68 cents per person per year -- for health care in 2002, Thompson said. This year's health budget for Iraq is \$950 million, funded mostly from the country's oil sales. A Department of Defense report released last week also said the ministry plans to teach new medical skills to 2,500 medical staff by early April. Next week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention plans to send a team to Iraq to set up a computer-based disease monitoring system. Thompson said U.S. officials are also working to establish a hospital records administration system to help create patient records, which don't exist. [View Article](#)

Saudi Arabia: A Fatal Case of AlKhurma Virus Infection

02 March – ProMed reported a 46-year-old female patient presented to our hospital with fever, 5 days after attacks of vomiting. One day before admission she became confused. She was admitted to the intensive care unit where she died of symptoms typically seen in viral hemorrhagic fevers. Testing the

sample for [Alkhurma virus](#) by RT-PCR was positive. The growth pattern and the RT-PCR indicated that the infectious agent is Alkhurma virus. Alkhurma virus cases are usually detected around the time of the Hajj (when pilgrims visit the holy city of Mecca) because there is increased animal movement and slaughtering. [View Report](#)

USNORTHCOM

Cysticercosis-related Deaths, California

01 March – The Journal of Emerging Infectious Diseases published a study where data from California death certificates for the 12-year period 1989–2000 were examined. A total of 124 [cysticercosis](#) deaths were identified, representing a crude 12-year death rate of 3.9 per million (95% [CI] 3.2 to 4.6). 66% of the case-patients were male; 34% were female. The median age at death was 34.5 years. Most patients (86.3%) were foreign-born, and 72.6% had emigrated from Mexico. 13.7% deaths occurred in U.S.-born residents. Cysticercosis death rates were higher in Latino residents of California (13.0/106) than in other racial/ethnic groups (0.4/106), in males (5.2/106) than in females (2.7/106), and in persons >14 years of age (5.0/106). Cysticercosis is a preventable cause of premature death, particularly among young Latino persons in California and may be a more common cause of death in the United States than previously recognized. [View Article](#)

DOD Practices Prevention through IT

23 February – FCW reported the Defense Department's state-of-the-art medical information system not only will improve health care but will also help DOD spot outbreaks of illness caused by biological or chemical weapons. Senior military health officials approved deployment of the Composite Health Care System (CHCS) II late in 2003 after a yearlong operational trial in nine military hospitals. The rollout, which includes training for doctors, nurses and other medical personnel who will use it in the 75 military hospitals and 461 clinics worldwide, will continue until mid-2006. A portable version is at work in Iraq and Kuwait. [View Article](#)

OSHA Signs Alliance with Health Physics Society

24 February - The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has joined with the Health Physics Society (HPS) to highlight safety and health issues for workers exposed to radiological hazards. The Alliance unites HPS and OSHA on efforts to assist employers and employees in developing a preventive focus for radiological safety and health hazards in workplace environments, particularly related to emergency preparedness. [View Article](#)

Study: Half of Young Americans to Get Sex Diseases

25 February – Reuters reported half of all young Americans will get a [sexually transmitted disease](#) by the age of 25, perhaps because they are ignorant about protection or embarrassed to ask for it, according to several reports. The reports, publicized by two nonprofit sexual and youth health groups, said there were 9 million new cases of STD among teens and young adults aged 15 to 24 in 2000. They said the U.S. government's policy of preferring abstinence-only education would only increase those rates. "For the 27 million young Americans under the age of 25 who have had sex, the stakes are simply too high to talk only about abstinence," James Wagoner, president of Advocates for Youth, said in a statement. "Given the prevalence of STDs, young people need all the facts -- including

medically accurate information on condoms." The reports, released jointly by Advocates for Youth -- a nonprofit group advocating for sex education, and the sexual health-oriented Alan Guttmacher Institute, pull together information from several different publications. [View Article](#)

Substitute Blood, without Consent

20 February – CBS News reported paramedics are testing an experimental blood substitute on severely injured patients without their consent in an unusual study under way or proposed at 20 hospitals around the country. The study was launched last month in Denver and follows similar research that was halted in 1998, when more than 20 patients died after getting a different experimental blood substitute. Supporters say the current product, PolyHeme, made by Northfield Laboratories of Evanston, Ill., is safer and could save many of the nearly 100,000 people who die of bleeding injuries each year nationwide. Because severely bleeding trauma patients often are unconscious or in shock, they are unable to give the consent required for experimental treatment. As a result, the researchers in this case are being allowed to bypass the consent rules under a 1996 federal exemption that applies to emergency, potentially lifesaving research. The Food and Drug Administration has approved about 15 such no-consent studies since the exemption was added. [View Article](#)

USPACOM

India (Tamil Nadu): Leptospirosis Outbreak

26 February – ProMed reported 2 persons were found to have been affected by [leptospirosis](#) at P. Tottiyankulam in Tiruchuzhi block of the district on Fri, 20 Feb 2004. A. Mohammed Aslam ordered the Health department to take preventive steps so as to keep the disease under control. A total of 44 persons in the village have developed fever, body ache, and eye congestion over 4 days. 2 persons, a male and a female, tested positive during a serum test conducted on 5 patients. All precautionary measures were taken to control the zoonotic disease from affecting more people in the village. All the affected persons are being treated, and their contacts were given preventive treatment. Blood samples will be taken from all fresh cases of fever until it is completely brought under control, he added. The people were advised to use boiled water, and the local authorities were instructed to chlorinate drinking water properly. [View Report](#)

Indonesia: Incidence of Chikungunya Fever during 2003

26 February – ProMed reported [Chikungunya fever](#) attacked 8068 people in 29 regencies/cities in 9 provinces of Indonesia during 2003. The minister has issued an instruction to regency/city administrations to take prompt action to eradicate the disease by destroying the breeding places of the mosquito vector especially during the rainy season, thereby preventing outbreaks of chikungunya fever, dengue fever, and malaria. The 9 provinces which were the first to be attacked by chikungunya fever in 2003 include Central Java, Yogyakarta, Banten, West Java, East Java, Bali, West Nusas Tenggara, East Nusa Tenggara, and Lampung. [View Report](#)

Viet Nam: Undiagnosed Illness, Bovine

28 February – ProMed reported dozens of healthy bulls and cows in Viet Nam's central Phu Yen province have suddenly died within one hour after being stricken by an unidentified disease. The

disease was detected in the province's Song Chinh district, where 17 bulls and cows of a farmer have died. The animals had difficulty in breathing for one hour, and then died with blood appearing on their eyes, noses, ears, and anuses. The provincial authorities killed affected pigs, banned transport of cattle in contaminated areas, vaccinated healthy hoof cattle, and tightened control over slaughterhouses and meat markets. [View Report](#)

USSOUTHCOM

Outbreak of Diarrheic Disease from Rotavirus in El Salvador

27 February – The Epidemiologic Infectious Disease Weekly Update reported a review of the information available on acute diarrheic syndrome in El Salvador showed the incidence of diarrhea is less than it was in 2002 and 2003. On the other hand, taking into account that the number of samples analyzed by the Central Laboratory has not varied significantly with respect to 2003, we can observe an increase in the percentage of positive results for rotavirus. Up to Epidemiological Week (EW) 7 (21 February 2004), the Central Laboratory studied 233 samples and obtained positive results for [rotavirus](#) in 48.4% of them. During EW 7 alone, 133 samples were analyzed, resulting in 53% of those positive for rotavirus. A total of 108 confirmed cases have been reported of diarrhea from rotavirus, of which 86% have occurred in children under two years of age. The departments most affected have been Santa Ana (with 58.3% of the cases) and San Salvador (with 20.4%). To date, no deaths have been reported. To deal with this situation, epidemiological surveillance had been strengthened through the daily monitoring of hospital admissions and deaths from acute diarrhea. Efforts are underway to provide reagents for the diagnosis and identification of the strain currently in circulation. [View Report](#)

Peru: Dengue Fever

26 February – ProMed reported for the last few weeks, [dengue](#) has been spreading in the northeast of Peru. So far 1,100 cases have been recorded and at least 3 cases of DHF. Localities affected are the departments of Lambayeque (north) and Pucallpa (east, on the frontier with Brazil), which are classified as epidemic, and Loreto (east), Tumbes (north, on the frontier with Ecuador), San Martin, and Huanuco (northeast), classified as endemic. [View Report](#)

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