

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

8 October 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 as to its strategic or tactical impact on the US Army and should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available from the [Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center](#). The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

<b>HOT TOPICS.....</b>	<b>2</b>
Avian Flu Spreads in Thailand as U.S. Scientists Work .....	2
Flu Shots in Separate Seasons Still Protect Toddlers .....	2
Hypertension Hurts Brain Function in Young.....	2
Interim Influenza Vaccination Recommendations: 2004-05.....	3
More Chlamydia Screening Urged for Women .....	3
Nerve Damage Seen from Industrial Solvent.....	3
Obese Women Face Increased Breast Cancer Risk .....	3
Two American Scientists Bag Nobel Prize for Medicine .....	4
WHO Bird Flu Expert Urges Speeding Vaccine.....	4
<b>FOCUS ON EPIDEMIOLOGY.....</b>	<b>4</b>
DoD-GEIS: Influenza Vaccine Shortage .....	4
West Nile Virus Activity --- United States, September 22--28, 2004 .....	5
<b>USCENTCOM .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Egypt Finishing 'Elephantiasis' Campaign .....	5
Wastewater Reuse for Agriculture in Eritrea.....	5
<b>USEUCOM .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Aseptic Meningitis Outbreak Registered in Voronezh Region .....	6
Salmonellosis, Serotype Newport - UK.....	6
Shortage of Flu Vaccines Could Lead to Flu Epidemic.....	6
UK: Hepatitis A Outbreak in Men who have Sex with Men, Aug-Sep 2004 .....	6
<b>USNORTHCOM .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Cities Misrepresent Lead Levels in Water .....	7
Epidemic Linked to One Bug Strain .....	7
Flu-Like Virus Sickens Military Recruits.....	7
FluMist Maker Weighs Production Increase .....	8
Hantavirus in New Hampshire and California .....	8
Health-Care Racial Divide Hospital-Based .....	8
Mammoth Toxic Algae Bloom Sighted Off Washington State Coast .....	8
Minority Boys Short on Sleep .....	9
Most U.S. Malaria Deaths Could Have Been Prevented .....	9
Officials Work to Curtail Scabies Outbreak.....	9
Outbreak Largest in Four Decades.....	9
Unsaturated Fats Lower Gallstone Risk in 14-Year Study.....	10
US Fire Deaths Rose in 2003 .....	10
US Scrambles for Flu Vaccines after Contamination.....	10
Whooping Cough Reemerges in Upstate New York.....	10

<b>USPACOM .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Avian Influenza: Death of 16th case in Thailand .....	11
Bird Flu May be Spreading in Java .....	11
Genetically Modified Cotton and Farmers' Health in China .....	11
India: Sanitary Worker Strike May Cause Epidemic in Uttaranchal .....	11
<b>USSOUTHCOM.....</b>	<b>12</b>
Brazil: Two Deaths Due to Hantavirus Infection Confirmed.....	12
Child Cancer Rising Where ChevronTexaco Operated .....	12

## HOT TOPICS

### Avian Flu Spreads in Thailand as U.S. Scientists Work

1 October – The International Herald Tribune reported that [avian influenza](#) had spread to poultry in four more provinces. Now the disease has infected flocks of chickens and other birds in 35 of Thailand's 76 provinces. The Thai government dispatched thousands of volunteers and local officials to scour villages for sick birds and kill all domesticated fowl within a wide radius of any found. Officials say that the most important question about the woman's death is whether the virus had mutated and whether it had acquired human influenza genetic material that would make it easier for the virus to pass from person to person. Researchers at the centers' laboratories in Atlanta had already deciphered some sequences of the virus and were optimistic that they could decode the rest in the coming days. [View Article](#)

### Flu Shots in Separate Seasons Still Protect Toddlers

3 October – The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported that separate spring and fall [flu shots](#) for toddlers protect them from infection and are easier on parents than giving toddlers two shots, a month apart, in the fall. The researchers compared the immune response in children aged 6 to 23 months and found the children who received the fall-spring flu shots were as protected as those who received both their flu shots in the fall. The study also found that 66 percent of parents preferred the fall-spring flu shot schedule. Dr. Emmanuel Walter, an associate professor of pediatrics at Duke University Medical Center, said in a prepared statement, "I don't want practitioners to adopt this until the study is complete because we have not tested this schedule when the vaccine antigens (substances that stimulate immune response) changed from year to year. The key result will be what happens this year when the antigens change," Walter said. [View Article](#)

### Hypertension Hurts Brain Function in Young

5 October – HealthDayNews reported that for years, experts have known that [high blood pressure](#) is related to poor cognitive performance in older adults and can lead to adverse changes in the brain. Now, researchers report that young adults with high blood pressure are just as susceptible to decreased mental function as are older people are. Younger people aged 18 to 46, as well as those above 47, had a decline in cognitive function as their blood pressures rose. "Although they perform better than older people in general, young people showed a decline over time in relation to rising blood pressure," said Merrill F. Elias, study co-author. Regardless of age, higher blood pressures over time correlated with a decrease in the ability to react and respond to novel information, what researchers call "visualization/fluid abilities." [View Article](#)

## Interim Influenza Vaccination Recommendations: 2004-05

5 October – The CDC set the following priority groups for vaccination with inactivated [influenza vaccine](#) this season:

- all children aged 6-23 months,
- adults aged 65 years and older,
- persons aged 2-64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions,
- all women who will be pregnant during influenza season,
- residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities,
- children 6 months-18 years of age on chronic aspirin therapy,
- health-care workers with direct patient care, and
- out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children aged <6 months.

Persons who are not included in one of the priority groups above should be informed about the urgent vaccine supply situation and asked to forego or defer vaccination. [View Article](#)

## More Chlamydia Screening Urged for Women

7 October – HealthDayNews reported that more thorough screening for [chlamydia](#), a sexually transmitted bacterium that is the most commonly reported infectious disease in the US, would probably reduce the incidence of the disease and be cost-effective as well. Currently, the CDC recommends that all women between the ages of 15 to 25 be screened annually for chlamydia, a largely asymptomatic disease with a nearly 100 percent cure rate if caught early. Last year, the CDC further recommended that women who have had the disease should be screened three or four months after their diagnosis for any reoccurrence. Researchers found that expanding the screening to women under the age of 30, and testing any woman who has had chlamydia every six months rather than only once after diagnosis, would increase health-care costs by an average of \$107 per woman but would be cost-effective in the long run. [View Article](#)

## Nerve Damage Seen from Industrial Solvent

5 October - Reuters Health reported that chronic exposure to high concentrations of [1-bromopropane](#) (1-BP) vapor is highly toxic to nerves. 1-BP is an industrial solvent widely used in the US and Japan to replace ozone-depleting chemicals. Dr. Jennifer J. Majersik of the University of Utah described six individuals who worked in a factory gluing foam cushions together who were exposed to 1-BP vapors from spray adhesives over several months. All six developed severe symptoms of nerve damage, including leg or foot pain and muscle weakness and spasms. Five had difficulty walking and two of the most severely affected individuals regained only minimal function 15 months after exposure and still require assistance walking. Three others continue to complain of chronic nerve pain. Air samples taken at the factory one day after use of the solvent was halted showed 1-BP air concentration of 130 parts per million (ppm), well above the safety level of 25 ppm currently set by the Environmental Protection Agency. [View Article](#)

## Obese Women Face Increased Breast Cancer Risk

6 October – The Scotsman reported that obese women with [breast cancer](#) are more likely to die from the disease than those of a normal weight. Researchers looked at information on more than 2,000 patients with early stage breast cancer between 1978 and 2003 who were treated with surgery and radiotherapy. They concluded that those who were classed as obese were more likely to die from breast cancer, despite it being diagnosed at an early stage. They were also more likely to experience

the cancer spreading to another part of the body – metastatic disease. Of the 2,010 patients, 452 were classed as of normal weight, 857 were overweight and 701 were obese. The five-year survival rates for both normal weight and overweight patients were 92%, falling to 88% among those who were obese. Five-year rates of metastasis were 7% for women of normal weight, 6% of overweight women and 10% for the obese patients. [View Link](#)

## Two American Scientists Bag Nobel Prize for Medicine

4 October – The Hindustan Times reported that US scientists Richard Axel and Linda Buck won the 2004 Nobel Prize for Medicine for work on the human sense of smell, Sweden's Karolinska university hospital said. They discovered a large gene family of "odorant receptors" helping to understand how humans "can consciously experience the smell of a lilac flower in the spring and recall this olfactory memory at other times," the institute said in its citation for the prize, worth 10 million Swedish crowns (\$1.38 million). [View Article](#)

## WHO Bird Flu Expert Urges Speeding Vaccine

1 October – Reuters reported that the top World Health Organization (WHO) influenza expert said drug companies and governments had to speed up production of [bird flu](#) vaccines or risk a pandemic which could kill thousands of people. Klaus Stohr, head of WHO's global influenza program, said the world was totally unprotected against the potentially lethal bird-borne virus, which experts fear could mutate and spread among humans, possibly as early as this winter. "Clinical testing is expensive and there is a shared responsibility by governments and public health authorities to compensate for an apparent lack of market forces," he said. Only Aventis Pasteur Inc and Chiron Corp -- with contracts from the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) -- are currently developing a human bird flu vaccine. Under the two deals, under which 2.4 million doses will be produced, NIH is paying for costly clinical trials. The WHO provided the prototype strain used to develop the vaccines. [View Article](#)

# Focus on Epidemiology

## DoD-GEIS: Influenza Vaccine Shortage

5 October - Chiron Corporation notified the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that its inactivated trivalent [influenza vaccine](#) (Fluvirin®) would not be available in the US during the 2004–05 influenza season. The UK's Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) (Chiron's Fluvirin vaccine is produced in the UK) has suspended the company's license to manufacture Fluvirin vaccine in its Liverpool facility for 3 months, thus preventing any release of Chiron's flu vaccine for the 2004-5 flu season. This action means that only one half the expected US supply of trivalent inactivated vaccine will be available. The expected US supply of inactivated influenza vaccine this season is approximately 54 million doses of Fluzone® manufactured by Aventis Pasteur, Inc. Approximately 30 million of these doses have already been distributed by the manufacturer. In addition, approximately 1.1 million doses of live attenuated influenza vaccine (FluMist®) manufactured by MedImmune will be available this season. CDC, in coordination with its Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices (ACIP), is issuing interim recommendations for influenza vaccination during the 2004–05 season. These interim recommendations were formally recommended by ACIP on October 5 and take precedence over earlier recommendations. The DoD Joint Preventive Medicine Policy Group meets 6 October to assess the current situation and make recommendations concerning this season's DoD influenza vaccine. DoD's Global Influenza Surveillance System operated by the AF Institute for Operational Health (AFIOH) conducts influenza surveillance throughout the year; the

September report is now available and weekly reports are routinely made available for the flu season. CDC also has begun weekly influenza surveillance for the flu season. Information on influenza (avian and human) including the DoD Global Influenza Program, WNV, Leishmaniasis and severe respiratory syndromes, including SARS, is available on the [DoD-GEIS website](#).

## West Nile Virus Activity --- United States, September 22--28, 2004

1 October – MMWR reported that during September 22--28, a 180 cases of human [West Nile virus](#) (WNV) illness were reported in the District of Columbia and 24 states. During 2004, 40 states have reported 1,784 cases of human WNV illness to CDC through ArboNET. Of these, 32% cases were reported in California, 20% in Arizona, and 225 13% in Colorado. A total of 58% of the 1,752 cases for which such data were available occurred in males; the median age of patients was 51 years. Illness onset ranged from April 23 to September 18; and 56 cases were fatal. A total of 157 presumptive West Nile viremic blood donors (PVDs) have been reported to ArboNET in 2004. Of these, 34% were reported in California and 24% in Arizona. Of the 157 PVDs, three persons aged 35, 69, and 77 years subsequently had neuroinvasive illness, and 36 people (median age: 53 years) subsequently had West Nile fever. In addition, during 2004, 4,400 dead corvids and 1,054 other dead birds with WNV infection have been reported in 45 states and New York City. Additional information about national WNV activity is available from the [CDC](#) and the [US Geological Survey](#).

### ***Other timely information can be found in:***

The current issue of the Army Medical Surveillance Activity's [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#) and this week's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#).

## USCENTCOM

### Egypt Finishing 'Elephantiasis' Campaign

4 October – ABC News reported that Egypt is the first country to undertake a nationwide campaign to eliminate [elephantiasis](#), or lymphatic filariasis. This year it is distributing the final dosages of medication in a five-year program to halt its transmission. Elephantiasis infects about 120 million people worldwide. WHO says the prevalence of infection is on the rise because with the expansion of urban slums, breeding sites for mosquitoes are increasing. Egypt's campaign targets about 2.7 million people in eight provinces. In 1999, researchers found that 8.8 percent of people in certain communities in Kafr el-Sheik and 4.2 percent of people in parts of Giza were carrying the parasite though they had not yet suffered inflammations. Today the percentages in both places are zero. There is a tremendous social stigma attached to elephantiasis. The parasite inflicts even more damage internally, wrecking the kidneys and lymphatic system and weakening the immune system. While the parasite can be killed, the symptoms the disfiguring inflammation can only be reduced. [View Article](#)

### Wastewater Reuse for Agriculture in Eritrea

July/September 2004 – The International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health reported that the health impact of using raw domestic sewage for vegetable cultivation in the suburbs of Asmara, Eritrea, showed heavy contamination of vegetables by fecal coliforms and Giardia cysts as well as other pathogenic bacteria such as Shigella and Salmonella. Stool samples from 75 occupationally exposed farmers revealed that 45% of them were harboring Giardia cysts. Dietary

intake of raw greens (lettuce, cabbage) grown on the raw sewage appears to cause giardiasis, amebiasis, and diarrhea in the farming community as well as in the surrounding area. Comparison of hospital data from the affected area with data from other areas of Eritrea indicated that agriculture use of untreated wastewater was the major cause of the increase in giardiasis and other gastrointestinal diseases. [View Article](#)

## USEUCOM

### Aseptic Meningitis Outbreak Registered in Voronezh Region

5 October - Itar-Tass reported that a sharp rise in the incidence of aseptic [meningitis](#) and other kinds of enterovirus infection was registered in the Voronezh region. About 250 cases were reported in the region from July to September 2004 and that is five times more than last year, deputy chief doctor of the sanitary and epidemiological inspectorate Olga Gunina said. She added that it was mostly children of pre-school and primary school age that fell ill with aseptic meningitis. More than 90 percent of sick people live in Voronezh. [View Article](#)

### Salmonellosis, Serotype Newport - UK

4 October – ProMED reported that a [salmonella](#) outbreak has led health chiefs to identify lettuce as the unexpected source. The bacteria claimed 144 food poisoning victims throughout North East Lincolnshire in September 2004. Environmental health officer Steve Mercer said: "We have pinpointed the source as lettuce, which has never been regarded as a high risk food. "Mr. Mercer believes contaminated lettuce is responsible for similar, although smaller, outbreaks in Birmingham, Coventry, Northern Ireland, and the Isle of Man in the past few weeks. He is writing to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to advise them to issue national guidance on the storage and handling of lettuce, particularly in fast food outlets. "The last new case in this area was on 14 Sep 2004," he said, "so we have decided that this outbreak is over," said Mr. Mercer. [View Article](#)

### Shortage of Flu Vaccines Could Lead to Flu Epidemic

4 October – Scottish TV reported that thousands of patients could be left exposed to a potential [flu](#) epidemic because of a shortage of vaccines. Scotland is facing one of the worst outbreaks of the virus in 20 years, yet clinics are short of up to 150,000 doses of the vaccine. It comes the day before the launch of an annual campaign to raise awareness of the virus and encourage people to come forward for vaccinations. The problem stems from one of the major suppliers of the vaccine in the UK, Kyron Evans Vaccines. The company exports to the United States and some of those exports recently failed to meet the required standards. The hold up is being caused by additional precautionary testing of its other batches. [View Article](#)

### UK: Hepatitis A Outbreak in Men who have Sex with Men, Aug-Sep 2004

2 October – ProMED reported that an outbreak of [hepatitis A](#) in gay men in southeast London has been identified. Nine cases have so far been reported, all with symptom onset dates between mid-August and mid-September 2004. Five of the affected men reported visiting a gay pub in Southwark, southeast London, in the two months before they became unwell. One of the nine patients is a secondary case, who has a history of household contact with one of the five patients who had visited the pub. The pub is, in effect, a public sex environment that includes a dark room' where sexual

activities that carry a high risk of hepatitis A transmission occur. Of the eight patients whose vaccination status is known, none had previously been vaccinated against hepatitis A. Outbreaks of hepatitis A in men who have sex with men (MSM) have been reported from Denmark and the Netherlands in May 2004, and in France in 2000. [View Article](#)

## USNORTHCOM

### Cities Misrepresent Lead Levels in Water

5 October – HealthDayNews reported that cities across the US have manipulated data that shows unacceptable [lead levels in drinking water](#). Philadelphia and Boston discarded tests that showed high readings or avoided testing homes that were most likely to have high lead levels and New York City withheld hundreds of unacceptable test results over the past two years. The Environmental Protection Agency ordered utilities to fix violations in just 14 cases, less than one-tenth the number mandated in 1997. Government and utility records demonstrate that in dozens of cases, utilities clouded data that showed the extent of lead contamination, ignored warnings to fix problems, and failed to turn over required data to regulators. [View Article](#)

### Epidemic Linked to One Bug Strain

4 October – The Toronto Star reported that a strain of a common bug with properties linked to increased virulence has become predominant in several U.S. hospitals, prompting researchers to suggest it may be responsible for the sharp increase in cases and severity of disease in parts of the United States. It may also explain the exploding problem some hospitals in Canada are experiencing with the bug, [Clostridium difficile](#), said Dr. Clifford McDonald of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta. *C. difficile* is mostly contracted in hospitals or long-term-care facilities, where patients routinely take antibiotics. It has been blamed for nearly 100 deaths in Canada since 2001, with the vast majority of the cases in Quebec hospitals. "We have concerns that Quebec may be dealing with the same strain," McDonald said. His team looked at 169 isolates collected from seven hospitals that experienced *C. difficile* outbreaks between 2001 and 2004. They compared them to a database of more than 6,000 isolates from prior to 2001. Where historically one would have seen a wide variety of strains of the bacteria in isolates from each hospital, the team found a single strain made up 50 per cent or more of the samples from five of the seven hospitals, and 43 per cent in the sixth. The strain appears to have acquired additional resistance to antibiotics, which may be allowing it to flourish. [View Article](#)

### Flu-Like Virus Sickens Military Recruits

3 October – ABC News reported that four military recruits died in the past year and thousands others were sickened by an [adenovirus](#) virus that the military once had a vaccine program for but abandoned to save money. The respiratory virus now infects up to 2,500 service members each month or 1 in 10 recruits at the nation's eight basic-training centers. More than three decades ago, the Pentagon commissioned two pills to ward off the adenovirus, but defense officials abandoned the program in 1996 as too expensive. The vaccine's original manufacturer, Wyeth Laboratories, warned as early as 1984 that it would stop churning out pills costing \$1 each unless defense officials allocated \$5 million to repair a deteriorating production plant. Wyeth executives closed the facility in 1996. A military health budget later stated the program had been stopped "to pay higher priority items." The replacement vaccine has fallen behind schedule, making pills unavailable until at least 2007. Adenovirus can be spread through contact and thrives in confined places such as overcrowded

barracks. Most people rebound from the infection within days, but if untreated, fever, sore throat and labored breathing can quickly develop and lead to severe respiratory problems such as pneumonia and perhaps death. [View Article](#)

## FluMist Maker Weighs Production Increase

7 October – Yahoo! News reported that the maker of FluMist said it is looking into whether it can make more of the inhalable [flu](#) vaccine to help deal with a looming flu vaccine shortage. MedImmune had planned to make 1 million to 2 million doses for this flu season after selling less than 500,000 in the product's disappointing first season. MedImmune said the CDC asked whether it could increase FluMist production. MedImmune spokeswoman Jamie Lacey said the company was evaluating the request, but said making more doses would be difficult because the process involves growing live strains of the virus in eggs, and can take up to a year. [View Article](#)

## Hantavirus in New Hampshire and California

2 October – ProMED reported that a Dartmouth College employee has tested positive for [hantavirus](#). The male employee is believed to have contracted the disease after a stay in a Dartmouth-owned cabin in the Second College Grant in late August. If confirmed, it will be the first such case in New Hampshire, and one of the few confirmed cases in New England. The cabin where the patient stayed has been closed for decontamination at the recommendation of the state's Public Health Department and the CDC. San Diego County officials said a 65-year-old San Diego man had become the second person to contract the disease locally. County Public Health Officer Dr. Nancy Bowen said the man was "surviving," but that she could not give any other information about him. In June a 32-year-old woman became the first person to contract the disease in the county; she has since recovered. County officials said the man was believed to have contracted the disease in the Laguna Mountains in East County. Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome kills 36 percent of all people who contract the virus, according to the CDC. [View Article](#)

## Health-Care Racial Divide Hospital-Based

6 October – HealthDayNews reported that racial and ethnic disparities in health care are at least partially due to differences in care between hospitals and not racism on an individual level. Previous studies had indicated that patients who belonged to racial and ethnic minorities took longer to receive lifesaving blood-clot-dissolving therapy, as well as percutaneous coronary intervention or angioplasty. The former is known as door-to-door time and the latter as door-to-balloon time. "We found marked discrepancies in the treatment of patients based on their race and ethnicity," senior study author Dr. Harlan Krumholz, a professor of medicine at Yale University School of Medicine said. "In the case of treatment with angioplasty, it was as much as a 20-minute difference." At the same time, these differences were significantly reduced after accounting for differences in average times to treatment for individual hospitals. Door-to-balloon time between black and white patients was reduced by 33 percent, while the difference between Hispanic and white patients was reduced by almost 75 percent. However, taking hospitals into account didn't eliminate disparities completely. [View Article](#)

## Mammoth Toxic Algae Bloom Sighted Off Washington State Coast

3 October – ProMED reported that a toxic algae bloom 30 miles wide has been detected 15 miles off the northwest coast of Washington state, the largest and most potentially lethal yet found by scientists in the region. Pseudo-nitzschia algae in the Juan de Fuca eddy can release potentially deadly [domoic acid](#), which accumulates in the tissue of razor clams and other shellfish and, if ingested by humans, attacks areas in the brain responsible for learning and memory. Concentrations of the poisonous

algae are as high as 11 million cells per liter, compared with about 200,000 cells per liter in 2003. "Within the next week, if there's a major storm, it's possible it might hit the beach," said Barbara Hickey, a University of Washington oceanographer. On the other hand, fair weather over the next couple of weeks could reduce the bloom and help keep it from approaching land, Hickey said. State officials test coastal waters twice a week for the presence of domoic acid.

## Minority Boys Short on Sleep

6 October – Forbes.com reported that minority boys get the least amount of sleep among children aged 8 to 11. The study of 755 elementary school children found that 11 to 12 percent of them experience daytime sleepiness and 18 percent to 21 percent suffer fatigue during the school day. The average sleep duration for all children was 9.63 hours, but minority (black, Asian, Hispanic, Native American or biracial) boys sleep much less than white boys and minority and white girls. The study found 43 percent of minority boys aged 10 to 11 years old reported less than the nine recommended hours of sleep, compared with 5 percent to 26 percent of children in other age, gender and minority groups. Overall, minority children were nearly four times more likely to go to bed later than 11 p.m. The study noted that sleepiness may impair children's academic performance and lead to increased aggression and other behavioral problems. [View Link](#)

## Most U.S. Malaria Deaths Could Have Been Prevented

5 October - Reuters Health reported that most of the people who die of [malaria](#) in the U.S. probably wouldn't have died if they had taken preventive medicines properly, or received earlier diagnosis or treatment. Although malaria can be prevented with medications, less than 6 percent of the people who died appeared to have taken the appropriate drug consistently and correctly while visiting infected areas. Everyone traveling to an area with malaria should visit a healthcare provider between 4 and 6 weeks before they leave, to ensure they take the right steps to prevent illness. Researchers reviewed the medical records of 185 people who died of malaria between 1963 and 2001 in the U.S. More than two-thirds were American travelers, mostly to Africa. The countries that produced the most fatal infections included Kenya, Nigeria and Liberia. Half of malaria victims waited at least 5 days after they developed symptoms before going to the doctor. Almost half of the people who died did not take any anti-malaria medicine during their visits to infected countries. And 30 percent of the people given the right drugs did not take them correctly, researchers report. Overall, they conclude, approximately 85 percent of these malaria deaths could have been prevented. [View Article](#)

## Officials Work to Curtail Scabies Outbreak

5 October – The Detroit News reported that Wayne County health officials are scratching their heads over a rare outbreak of [scabies](#) in two Dearborn elementary schools. Eight confirmed cases were reported at Salina Elementary School, and three confirmed cases at the West Village Academy charter school. Additional cases showed up among members of two Dearborn families, said Anahid Kulwicki, Wayne County director of public health. "This is a very strange year," Kulwicki said. "It's very common in poorer countries where there is high population density and hygiene is not very good, but it's very unusual here." The disease is common in Third World countries, with about 300 million cases per year around the globe. [View Article](#)

## Outbreak Largest in Four Decades

30 September – The Antioch Review reported that [whooping cough](#) cases in Illinois are at their highest since 1967, two years before the state began requiring immunization against it for school children. Illinois reports 545 cases of whooping cough so far this year, the highest number since the

551 cases reported in all of 1967. Illinois Public Health Director Eric Whitaker said more than 500 of this year's cases are in Cook, Lake, McHenry, Kane and DuPage counties. Eighty percent of this year's cases have been among 10- to 15-year-olds, Whitaker said, the age at which children begin losing immunity from childhood inoculations. Children receive their final vaccination for whooping cough between ages 4 and 6, and immunity begins to wane from three to 12 years later. [View Article](#)

## Unsaturated Fats Lower Gallstone Risk in 14-Year Study

4 Oct — A Mediterranean diet rich in vegetable oil, nuts and fish may help fend off more than heart disease and diabetes: It appears to prevent [gallstones](#), too. Men who ate more of the unsaturated fats found in such foods lowered their risk of gallstones by nearly one-fifth, according to a 14-year study published in Tuesday's Annals of Internal Medicine. Gallstones affect up to one in four Americans at some time in their lives. In some cases, the stones can cause abdominal pain and vomiting, and the gall bladder has to be removed. [View Article](#)

## US Fire Deaths Rose in 2003

4 October – HealthDayNews reported that [deaths from fires](#) jumped 16 percent in 2003, reversing a trend of steady decline over the prior two decades, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) said. Somewhere in the United States, fire occurs an average of once every 61 seconds. A civilian is hurt in a fire every 29 minutes, and dies every 134 minutes. And four out of five fires start in the home. Americans tend to underestimate their risk of being hurt or injured in a fire. While 31 percent of Americans polled said they felt most at risk for tornado and 27 percent named fire, fire poses a far greater risk. Tornadoes kill an average of 70 people annually, while 3,925 people died in fires last year. The NFPA reminded people to test their smoke detectors, emphasizing that the alarms aren't working in an average of one in five American homes. [View Article](#)

## US Scrambles for Flu Vaccines after Contamination

6 October – Yahoo! News reported that US health officials began a search for extra [flu vaccines](#) on Wednesday after one of only two major manufacturers, Chiron Corp., lost its entire year's production to contamination. A million extra doses were coaxed out of vaccine maker Aventis-Pasteur. US officials were also speaking to British regulators who revoked Chiron's flu vaccine license to confirm whether all 48 million doses would be kept off the market. Chiron's surprise announcement that British regulators had found widespread problems at its Liverpool vaccine plant meant the US lost nearly half its anticipated influenza vaccine supply for the 2004-2005 flu season just starting now. [View Article](#)

## Whooping Cough Reemerges in Upstate New York

2 October – The Ithaca Journal reported that after several years, [whooping cough](#) is making a comeback in New York. The number of New Yorkers affected by the highly contagious respiratory illness passed the 1,000 mark for the second straight year, prompting health officials to step up efforts to stave off the disease. Earlier this year, the state Health Department posted a bulletin to community health departments and health care providers about the recent trend. A similar alert was sent in June to directors and nurses at summer camps, where whooping cough is not uncommon. Tioga and Broome counties have reported elevated cases of whooping cough, or pertussis, among the general population since mid-August. So far this year, there were 1,448 confirmed cases of whooping cough, up from 388 in 2000. The average is 300 cases annually. Onondaga County, which includes the city of Syracuse, normally has 10 cases of pertussis annually. So far this year, the county is leading the state with the highest number of cases at 128, according to state Health Department figures. [View Article](#)

# USPACOM

## Avian Influenza: Death of 16th case in Thailand

4 October – ProMED reported that the Ministry of Public Health in Thailand confirmed a further case of human infection with H5N1 [avian influenza](#) A virus. The case, which was fatal, was a 9 year old girl from the northern province of Phetchabun. She developed symptoms on 23 Sep 2004, was admitted to hospital on 27 Sep 2004, and died of severe respiratory disease on Sun 3 Oct 2004. Investigation of the case has identified exposure to diseased chickens as the most likely cause of infection. Following the death of chickens in the child's household, she assisted in preparation of the birds for cooking, including the plucking of feathers. WHO stresses the importance of educating populations in affected countries, especially those living in remote rural areas, about the danger of contact with diseased birds. Since the beginning of 2004, Thailand has reported 16 laboratory-confirmed cases of H5N1 infection, 11 of which have been fatal. Four of these cases have occurred during the past 4 weeks. [View Article](#)

## Bird Flu May be Spreading in Java

7 October - The Jakarta Post reported that [bird flu](#), which last week killed hundreds of chickens in Grobogan regency, Central Java, is suspected to have spread to several other areas across the province in what is believed to be a new outbreak. The provincial health office has dispatched a team to examine the Grobogan breeders' health to determine if they were contaminated by the deadly virus. Central Java husbandry office head Sugiyono Pranoto said that his staff had sent samples of dead chickens from the neighboring regencies of Brebes and Kendal to the province's veterinary agency to determine their cause of death. A total of 16,237,635 birds were killed in at least 104 regencies and cities in 16 provinces during the August 2003-July 2004 period, according to the ministry's report or 9 percent of all domesticated fowl in those provinces. [View Article](#)

## Genetically Modified Cotton and Farmers' Health in China

July/September 2004 – The International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health reported on a study that provides the first evidence of a direct link between the adoption of a genetically modified (GM) crop and improvements in human health. Estimation of the impact of *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) cotton adoption on pesticide use from data from a survey of cotton farmers in northern China, 1999–2001, showed that Bt cotton adoption reduced pesticide use. Assessment of a health-production function showed that predicted pesticide use had a positive impact on poisoning incidence. Taken together, these results indicate that the adoption of Bt cotton can substantially reduce the risk and the incidence of poisonings. [View Article](#)

## India: Sanitary Worker Strike May Cause Epidemic in Uttaranchal

27 September – Asia-Pacific Disease Outbreak/Surveillance Report stated that medical experts are warning that a severe epidemic could follow an indefinite strike by over 6,000 sanitary workers in Uttaranchal, which has already accumulated thousands of tons of rubbish. Because of the strike, which is already into its second week, nearly 12,000 tons of rubbish has accumulated in the state. Health department officials say that if the rubbish is not removed from Dehradun and other cities immediately, the situation may precipitate an epidemic. Doctors and medical experts in Doon hospital and other medical centers also say there is no arrangement to dispose of medical waste which is

rotting in parts of Dehradun. [View Article](#)

## USSOUTHCOM

### Brazil: Two Deaths Due to Hantavirus Infection Confirmed

2 October - The Epidemiologic Surveillance Unit of Ribeirao Preto confirmed two deaths due to [hantavirus](#) infection in the region. One case occurred in Cravinhos, more than a month ago. It is suspected that the case had been infected in the rural zone of Bonfim Paulista. The second case was from Jaboticabal in May 2004 and also died from hantavirus pulmonary syndrome. A third case was reported in Batatais; this patient survived. [View Article](#)

### Child Cancer Rising Where ChevronTexaco Operated

30 September – Yahoo! Finance reported that a study released during a \$6 billion trial in Ecuador against ChevronTexaco found that 91 children have died from cancer where Texaco (now ChevronTexaco) dumped millions of gallons of toxic waste in the South American country from 1971 to 1991. The study also found that children under the age of 15 are three times more likely to contract [cancer](#) in the area where Texaco operated than in other areas of the country, and that rates of cancer in the area studied were highest among children under the age 4. [View Article](#) [View Study](#)

Please contact us to comment on or suggest improvements to this report. This report is also available on the [USACHPPM website](#).

Eileen Resta  
[eileen.resta@amedd.army.mil](mailto:eileen.resta@amedd.army.mil)

Tyson Grier  
[tyson.grier@amedd.army.mil](mailto:tyson.grier@amedd.army.mil)

Approved:  
[Kevin Delaney](#)  
Chief, Health Information Operations  
(410) 436-5217 or DSN 584-5217