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HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

26 June 2003

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

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HOT TOPICS

Antioxidant Vitamins in Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease

14 June – The Lancet published an article where Deepak Vivekananthan and colleagues did a meta-analysis of randomized trials of Vitamin E and beta-carotene to assess their effect on long-term [cardiovascular](#) morbidity and mortality. Vitamin E provided no benefit in overall mortality, cardiovascular death, or cerebrovascular accident. Beta-carotene led to a small but significant increase in all-cause death, and a small increase in cardiovascular death. The researchers find the beta-carotene results especially concerning since the doses that produced this effect were within the range commonly used in over-the-counter preparations. The investigators also do not recommend the routine use of vitamin E to reduce cardiovascular risk. [View Article](#)

Computer Keyboards may Spread Pink-eye Bug

18 June – Reuters reported researchers who investigated a 2002 outbreak of [conjunctivitis](#), a type of eye infection also called "pink-eye," among students at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire said Wednesday that the germs may have spread, in part, through shared keyboards on university computers. In a letter to The New England Journal of Medicine, Dr. Cynthia G. Whitney of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta and her colleagues report that scans of 40 to 60 public keyboards performed during the outbreak showed no signs of the conjunctivitis-causing bacteria. However, in a laboratory experiment using more sensitive detection techniques, researchers placed bacteria on a keyboard and were later able to recover samples of bacteria from the tainted keyboard, Whitney told Reuters Health. She added that shared keyboards would be just as likely to spread germs as other surfaces. Many pathogens, such as those that cause diarrhea, skin infections, colds and other respiratory infections, are known to survive for some time on surfaces, Whitney noted. The original report appeared in the March 15, 2002, issue of the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. [View Article](#)

El Niño and Health

14 June – The Lancet published an article suggesting the irregular occurrence of El Niño and La Niña events (El Niño Southern Oscillation or ENSO) has implications for public health. On a global scale, the human effect of natural disasters increases during El Niño. The effect of ENSO on [cholera](#) risk in Bangladesh, and [malaria](#) epidemics in parts of South Asia and South America has been well established. The strongest evidence for an association between ENSO and disease is provided by time-series analysis with data series that include more than one event. Evidence for ENSO's effect on other [mosquito-borne](#) and [rodent-borne](#) diseases is weaker than that for malaria and cholera.

Health planners are used to dealing with spatial risk concepts but have little experience with temporal risk management. ENSO and seasonal climate forecasts might offer the opportunity to target scarce resources for epidemic control and disaster preparedness. [View Article](#)

Glycyrrhizin and Replication of SARS-associated Coronavirus

14 June – The Lancet published an article stating the outbreak of [SARS](#) warrants the search for antiviral compounds to treat the disease. At present, no specific treatment has been identified for SARS-associated coronavirus infection. The authors assessed the antiviral potential of ribavirin, 6-azauridine, pyrazofurin, mycophenolic acid, and glycyrrhizin against two clinical isolates of coronavirus (FFM-1 and FFM-2) from patients with SARS admitted to the clinical centre of Frankfurt University, Germany. Of all the compounds, glycyrrhizin was the most active in inhibiting replication of the SARS-associated virus. Findings suggest that glycyrrhizin should be assessed for treatment of SARS. [View Article](#)

Imaging Strategy Finds Cancer Cells in Lymph Nodes

18 June – Reuters reported new study findings suggest that an imaging technique involving miniscule substances that zero in on lymph nodes may represent a safe and relatively inexpensive means of measuring whether [prostate cancer](#) has spread. During the current study, Dr. Mukesh G. Harisinghani of the Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School in Boston and his colleagues compared the surgical technique to a strategy that combines MRI imaging with tiny particles that boost the abilities of MRI to find cancer cells in lymph nodes. During the study, Harisinghani and his team discovered that the nanoparticle technique correctly identified whether 80 patients with prostate cancer had cancer cells in any lymph nodes. Furthermore, the nanoparticle technique significantly improved upon the ability of MRI alone to determine whether each individual node contained cancer cells. [View Article](#)

“International Response: Global Biological Security Guidelines Needed, Expert Says”

19 June — Global Security Newswire reported nations with scientific research facilities must develop new security guidelines to prevent terrorists from acquiring dangerous pathogens that could be used to develop [biological weapons](#), a leading nonproliferation specialist said. Without improved security measures, terrorists could try to obtain pathogens by stealing them from research facilities or by purchasing them under false pretenses, according to Jonathan Tucker, a senior fellow at the U.S. Institute of Peace. During a presentation at the institute’s Washington headquarters, Tucker cited several examples of poor security at research facilities, such as those found by a U.S. Agriculture Department investigation. At a minimum, according to Tucker, a new system of international guidelines should include the registration and licensing of research facilities that work with an agreed list of pathogens. The new guidelines should also include physical security requirements for facilities based on the perceived levels of theft risk, as well as pathogen inventory and collection audit procedures to prevent diversion, he said. [View Article](#)

Mixing Herbal Supplements, Migraine Medications Can Be Dangerous

19 June— ABC News reported an extensive review of existing research has led University of Utah researchers to conclude several popular herbal supplements may cause adverse, even deadly, reactions when combined with certain [migraine](#) medications. More than 40 percent of Americans have used herbal remedies, and 30 million suffer from migraines. It is not clear, however, how many migraine sufferers use herbal remedies. But the risks are real. The study found five of the 10 most popular herbal supplements may interact adversely with medications commonly prescribed to

alleviate migraine and cluster headaches. Among the herbal supplements that can interfere with the proper metabolism of certain migraine medications, causing levels of the drugs to reach toxic levels, are Gingko biloba, ginseng, echinacea, St. John's wort, and large amounts of garlic. [View Article](#)

Most Stroller Head Injuries are the Result of Falls

23 June – Reuters reported more than half of all stroller-related head and face injuries among children one year old and younger occur when children fall out of their strollers, new research shows. While some of those falls occur when children lean out of or stand in the stroller, some head and face injuries have resulted from falls that took place when the child was simply sitting in the chair, according to a Canadian researcher. These findings stress the importance of vigilance, even when a child appears securely strapped into a stroller, Steven McFaull of Health Canada in Ottawa told Reuters Health. McFaull said that when the stroller is lighter than the child -- as is often the case with the umbrella strollers -- the chair can topple over after simple shifting or leaning, even when the child is sitting and strapped in. A smaller proportion of stroller-related head and face injuries -- 13 percent -- happened when the stroller rolled down stairs or a sleep slope. A smaller percentage of accidents involved a motor vehicle. McFaull presented his findings last week during the 80th annual meeting of the Canadian Pediatric Society, held in Calgary. [View Article](#)

New Test Screens Blood for West Nile

18 June — MSNBC News reported Chiron Corp. said its test to screen donated blood for the potentially deadly [West Nile virus](#) would be available to blood centers in the United States this week. The biotechnology company, under an agreement with the Food and Drug Administration, said more than 80 percent of U.S. blood donations will be screened for West Nile using Chiron's new Procleix test by July 1. The FDA set July 1 as the date to have a West Nile blood-screening test in place. Procleix will be the first such test available, Chiron said. While the majority of West Nile cases are caused by infected mosquitoes, scientists confirmed last year that the virus can also be spread through blood transfusion and organ transplantation. The Procleix screening test for West Nile uses similar technology to Chiron's previously approved test for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. It can detect very low levels of the virus in blood, even before the body develops antibodies against the virus, the company said. [View Article](#)

Rested Workers are Better Workers, Study Finds

19 June – Reuters reported people who want to be more energized and effective on the job should avoid working late and just enjoy a relaxing evening, new research suggests. People who show up to work well-rested are more likely to be at the top of their game during the day than those who don't take time to unwind, according to a study in the June issue of the Journal of Applied Psychology. The study involved 147 German public-service workers, in such fields as justice and public security, who completed anonymous surveys at the beginning and end of each day for five consecutive days. Results showed that one's feelings of recovery from work could vary substantially from one day to another, depending on how much R&R the individual had the night before, the lead author Sonnentag said, and this affected job performance. Sonnentag said the amount of recovery time needed depends on the type of work a person does and how stressful it is for that individual. [View Article](#)

Warning over Drug-resistant HIV

20 June – BBC News reported the unregulated supply of [AIDS](#) drugs in the non-industrialized world threatens to accelerate the development of drug-resistant HIV strains. That is the conclusion of a study from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, just published in the British

Medical Journal. The study urges governments and international agencies to deal with the problem now. Drawing on evidence from Africa and Asia, the study shows that uncontrolled prescribing of anti-retroviral drugs is widespread and rising. Where the state sector cannot or will not provide drugs, patients who can afford them naturally purchase where they can - from doctors, pharmacies, market sellers, or relatives abroad. The study's author, Dr Ruairi Brugha, says that often patients do not take their drugs as they should. Dr Brugha also found that in some places patients are changing medication frequently, taking the wrong dose, or stopping treatment in periods when they cannot afford it. [View Article](#)

With the Mind in Old Age, It's Use It or Lose It

18 June – Reuters reported keeping up leisure activities such as reading, playing board games and dancing may help the elderly stay mentally sharp into their later years, researchers said. In a New England Journal of Medicine report, U.S. investigators found that people over 75 who engaged in leisure activities were less likely to show signs of dementia than others. But not all activities appeared equally effective in reducing [dementia](#) risk. For instance, people who reported frequently playing board games, reading, playing a musical instrument or doing crossword puzzles were less likely to develop dementia than those who said they engaged in those activities only rarely. However, frequently joining group discussions and writing appeared to offer no protection against memory-robbing diseases like Alzheimer's. [View Article](#)

USEUCOM

Algeria: Bubonic Plague

22 June – ProMed reported nine cases (1 fatal) of [bubonic plague](#) have been detected in a village close to Tafraoui, in Oran prefecture, 450 km west of Algiers, according to a source close to the Ministry of Health. The fatal case arrived late in the course of the illness at hospital mid-week, and could not be saved. The others are being treated and their condition is improving. [View Report](#)

Angola: Anti-Malaria Product to Be Presented

18 June – AllAfrica.com reported a product aimed at fighting the mosquito's larvae, called Larvex 100, will be presented today to the country's health authorities. A representative from South-African Regent Laboratories Company will carry out the product presentation. The Angolan company, Tecnoserve, organized the event. This product, which will be tested in some puddles located in Luanda city, avoids the reproduction of mosquitoes, which cause nearly 1,500 deaths per year in the country. [View Article](#)

DRC: Cholera Spreading in Kasai Oriental

16 June – IRIN News reported the World Health Organization (WHO) has expressed concern over the spread of [cholera](#) in Kasai Oriental Province, central Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where three new areas were affected 1-8 June. WHO reported that there was also a high risk of the epidemic spreading to the neighboring province, Kasai Occidental. The agency said that as of 8 June, the Ministry of Health had reported 13,452 cases of cholera, with 380 deaths across the country. [View Article](#)

Guinea: Bonfire Smoke Adds Misery to Life in Conakry

16 June – IRIN News reported a pall of heavy smoke from thousands of backyard bonfires lit to chase away an evil spirit has created a foul atmosphere in the Guinean capital Conakry. Health workers and environmentalists have appealed over the radio for people to put out the fires, which have clogged the air with pollution for several days. The foul smoke from burning litter and car tires has added to the misery already caused by six months of chronic water and power shortages in this port city of up to two million people. Many Conakry residents believe that smoke will confuse the spirit and keep it away from their own door, so fires have been lit in backyards across the city using any available materials. Appeals for them to be put out have been widely ignored. More than 90 percent of Guinea's estimated eight million population are Muslim, but a belief in traditional African witchcraft remains deep rooted. [View Article](#)

Mozambique: Cholera Kills 87 People

17 Jun – IRIN News reported eighty-seven people have died of [cholera](#) in Mozambique since the beginning of the year, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported. As of 15 June 2003, the Ministry of Public Health in Mozambique reported 11,796 cases. Maputo province in the south of the country registered the highest number of cases at 4,124 with 31 deaths. The report noted that the peak of the outbreak in Maputo province occurred at the same time as a cholera outbreak in Mpumalanga in neighboring South Africa, and northern Hohho in Swaziland, which also borders Mpumalanga. [View Article](#)

Sudan: Mass Vaccination Campaign Against Yellow Fever

20 June – IRIN News reported UN agencies and partners are planning to vaccinate half a million people against [yellow fever](#) in rebel-held areas of southern Sudan, following an outbreak in Eastern Equatoria last month. "The epidemic is so far under control, but we're not being complacent. We're making sure to continue with an enlarged [vaccination] plan to stop it," Ben Parker, the spokesman for the UN humanitarian coordinator in Sudan, told IRIN. A new shipment of vaccines had arrived in Kenya and it was hoped that by mid-July the enlarged campaign would be well under way, he said. So far, 24,000 people in Imotong, Ikotos and Tsertenya, in Torit County, have been vaccinated. Last week, only seven new cases were confirmed and four deaths, but unconfirmed reports were still being received about new cases and deaths around Ikotos, said Parker. [View Article](#)

Trials on Possible HIV Vaccine To Be Conducted in South Africa

20 June – VOA News reported human trials for a new HIV vaccine will begin in August in South Africa, which has more [HIV-positive](#) citizens than any other country in the world. HIV Vaccine Trials Network is conducting the trials. The study's principle researcher, Glenda Gray, says this is the first human trial of a vaccine specifically designed to protect against the sub-type C strain of the disease which is the most common in Africa. An estimated 3.5 million Africans were infected with the fatal disease last year alone. The new HIV vaccine was developed by the American biotech firm AlphaVax and uses new technology to deliver the vaccine to the human immune system. It combines part of a Venezuelan horse virus with a non-infectious gene from the HIV virus type common to South Africa. Researchers say it cannot infect a human with HIV. [View Article](#)

USCENTCOM

Cholera in Iraq - Update 3

19 June – The World Health Organization (WHO) reported from 28 April to 4 June 2003, a total of 73 laboratory-confirmed [cholera](#) cases have been reported in Iraq: 68 in Basra governorate, 4 in Missan governorate, 1 in Muthana governorate. No deaths have been reported. From 17 May to 4 June 2003, the daily surveillance system of Diarrheal disease cases in the four main hospitals of Basra reported a total of 1549 cases of acute watery diarrhea. Among these cases, 25.6 % occurred in patients aged 5 years and above. The water supply situation is critical. Short-term measures have been undertaken by UNICEF and local authorities to improve accessibility to safe drinking water and to limit the spread of water-borne epidemics. WHO is supporting local authorities in implementing an early warning communicable disease surveillance system, in strengthening laboratory capacity and in coordinating the cholera outbreak response. The surveillance system is being expanded to the whole Lower South (all 4 governorates) and weekly reports from all facilities have begun. UNICEF is also supporting the initiative by providing health education material in Arabic and chlorine tablets to all health directorates. [View Report](#)

Rise in Malaria Cases Blamed On Poor Waste Disposal

19 June – AllAfrica.com reported poor disposal of plastic and polythene has greatly contributed to the upsurge of [malaria](#) cases in the country. The Chief Public Health Officer, in the Ministry of Health A. K. Lang'at, said poorly discarded plastic and polythene wastes trap water in which mosquitoes breed. Lang'at said there was need for co-operation amongst manufacturers, packaging industries, Government agencies, development partners and the business community to promote the plastic industry in an environmentally sustainable manner. [View Article](#)

USNORTHCOM

Army, Emisphere to Study Oral Anthrax Vaccine

19 June – Smart Money reported the U.S. Army will test Emisphere Technologies Inc.'s (EMIS) drug delivery method as a potential way to administer the [anthrax](#) vaccine orally rather than as a series of shots, the biopharmaceutical company said. The Tarrytown, N.Y., company has signed a cooperative research and development agreement with the Army's Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases, the lab charged with doing bioterrorism research for the Department of Defense. As part of the deal, Emisphere will combine a vaccine based on a recombinant protein antigen and combine it with its eligenT delivery agents, molecules that help larger macromolecules such as proteins as they are transported across membranes through which they don't naturally flow, such as the intestine. The studies are being conducted solely to determine if it is possible to take an anthrax vaccine orally. [View Article](#)

Burn Hazard Prompts Recall of 233,000 Crib Mobiles

19 June – Reuters reported Fisher-Price is voluntarily recalling 233,000 mobile crib toys due to the risk of burns from leaking batteries, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) announced. The CPSC recommends that consumers stop using the recalled products immediately

to avoid injury. If the batteries used in the product, sold under the name Sparkling Symphony, were to leak, "the caustic liquid can seep out of the battery compartment, posing a risk of chemical burns to babies," according to a CPSC statement. Made in China, the crib toys consist of four star and moon characters that hang over the crib. The toy attaches to the crib rail and contains lights and music that can be activated via remote control. The recalled products have a model number of 71985 found on the lower arm of the mobile and the back of the remote control. A detailed photo of the mobile is currently on view at www.cpsc.gov. The mobiles were sold for approximately \$25 between December 1999 and December 2001 at discount department stores and toy stores nationwide. The recalled toys were manufactured between October 1999 and November 2000, and a date code is present on the mobile's upper arm and the back of the remote control. Mobile owners can call Fisher-Price at (800) 357-9460 or check www.service.mattel.com to determine if their model is included in the recall. [View Article](#)

CDC Releases New TB treatment Guidelines

20 June – The CDC has published updated recommendations to guide the treatment of [tuberculosis](#) in settings where mycobacterial cultures, drug susceptibility testing, radiographic facilities, and second-line drugs are routinely available. [View recommendations](#)

CDC: Tungsten Not Main Cause of Nevada Cancer Cluster

18 June – CNN reported [tungsten](#) probably is not the main cause of a [Fallon leukemia cluster](#) that has sickened 16 children and killed three since 1997, federal scientists said. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that the metal shows up in elevated levels all over Nevada, including areas where leukemia cases are within normal ranges. Tungsten had been suspected of causing the Fallon outbreak because it turned up in unusually high levels in the area's population. Tests this year also showed high levels of tungsten in residents of Yerington, Pahrump and Lovelock, but the communities have shown normal levels of leukemia cases. Despite the findings, government scientists did not rule out tungsten as a contributing factor in the Fallon outbreak. [View Article](#)

FDA Approves First Nasal Mist Flu Vaccine

18 June – CNN reported most people who avoid [flu](#) shots because they fear needles will not have that excuse this season. The Food and Drug Administration has approved a [flu vaccine](#) that is delivered by a squirt up the nose instead of a shot in the arm. The vaccine, called FluMist, was approved by the FDA for healthy people age 5 to 49, but not for people who often are in most need of protection from the flu: toddlers, the elderly and people with asthma or some other chronic diseases. For children from 5 to 8, the first exposure to FluMist requires two doses six weeks apart. Patients from 9 to 49 need only one dose, the agency said. [View Article](#)

FDA Approves Nerve Agent Antidote for Kids

20 June – Reuters reported the Food and Drug Administration said it had approved a child's dose of [AtroPen®](#) to counteract exposure to [nerve agents](#) or pesticides. The drug, an injectable form of atropine made by a subsidiary of Bristol, Tennessee-based King Pharmaceuticals, has been approved for adults for decades. Each pre-filled auto-injector has a dose of the antidote atropine, which prevents victims from choking by reducing secretions and relieving constriction and spasm of respiratory passages. It may also work against muscle paralysis. [View Article](#) [View FDA Report](#)

Fire Hazard Prompts Light and Extension Cord Recall

20 June – Reuters reported Homier Distributing Co. Inc. is voluntarily recalling 150,000 extension cords and 234,000 lights due to concerns over the risk of fire and electrocution. The extension cords contain wiring problems that can cause the product to overheat, "posing a shock and fire hazard to consumers," the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) said. The extension cords were sold under the name HDC Brand Outdoor Extension Cord. The recall includes both 50- and 100-foot cords, with catalog numbers 04247 and 04521, respectively. In the case of one of the recalled lights, sold as the HDC Brand Handyman's Trouble Light (catalog numbers 04299 and 04109, with and without a 25-foot cord), wiring problems pose similar risks, the CPSC reports. The other recalled light, which also contains wiring problems that pose shock or electrocution risks, was sold under the name HDC Brand 16-inch AC/DC Fluorescent Work Light, catalog number 04070. Images of the products are currently on view at www.cpsc.gov. The agency advises consumers to stop using them immediately. The items were sold between January 2000 and May 2003 at traveling sales shows, online at www.homier.com, and at the company's retail stores in Indiana. Product owners can obtain a refund by mailing the items to Homier Distributing Co., Service Center, 100 Commerce Drive, Huntington, IN 46750. The refund includes the cost of shipping. [View Article](#)

Flap Over Free Snuff for GI's

18 June - CBS News reported the nation's leading snuff maker flouted military policy and tried to attract new customers by sending free samples to Marines stationed in Iraq. Reps. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., and Bill Janklow, R-S.D., said the giveaway and subsequent marketing by U.S. Smokeless Tobacco Co. amounted to an irresponsible attempt to return to the days in which service members were given free cigarettes in their ration kits, which ended in 1975. Waxman and Janklow cited a Navy and Marine Corps policy that forbids distribution of free tobacco samples to personnel on property controlled by those services. The lawmakers say they became aware of the company's actions from a U.S. Smokeless Tobacco Co. newspaper ad that showed Marines holding cans of snuff and displayed grateful letters from the Marines to the tobacco company. Mike Bazinet, a spokesman for the tobacco company, said it sent free snuff to members of all the armed services. He said the company was not trying to attract new customers but was responding to requests from people who already use the company's products. The Air Force also has a policy prohibiting distribution of tobacco samples on Air Force installations. The Army does not have such a policy. [View Article](#)

Georgia: First Human Case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis in 2003

24 June – ProMed reported an elderly man in southeast Georgia is the first person in the nation this year to get infected with [eastern equine encephalitis](#) (EEE), state health officials said. The unidentified man went into a coma at one point since his infection, which was confirmed on Fri 20 Jun 2003, said Dr. David Page of the Coastal Health District. In Georgia, there have been 13 confirmed cases of EEE in animals this year, according to the health department. [View Report](#)

Health System Unprepared For Water Terrorism

19 June – Hoover News reported U.S. public health experts suggest that front-line health care responders are not adequately prepared to identify and control major outbreaks of [water-borne disease](#), including outbreaks resulting from acts of terrorism. According to Dr. Patricia Meinhardt, a water-borne disease expert from New York, "Health care providers may not be able to prevent the first cases of illnesses resulting from intentional acts of water terrorism, but they can play a critical role in minimizing the impact of such an event by practicing medicine with a heightened level of suspicion that such an attack can occur. With prompt diagnosis, proper management, and

collaboration with public health and water authorities, prepared health care professionals may make the difference between a controlled response to an act of water terrorism vs. a public health crisis." The conclusions were reported at a conference convened by the American College of Preventive Medicine on water-borne disease and acts of water terrorism. [View Article](#)

Mexico: Outbreak of Cutaneous Anthrax

22 June – ProMed reported the Governor of Michoacan, Lazaro Cardenas Batel, has stated that there is no risk that the outbreak of skin [anthrax](#) detected in a community of that state will propagate to the rest of the population. It is not a large outbreak and there is no cause for alarm as it has been confirmed that the individuals affected acquired the infection through contact with a dead animal. The state health department reported that the 4 victims registered are in stable condition in hospitals of Morelia and Patzcuaro. Cardenas Batel confirmed that the outbreak originated in the community of Santa Rita, in the municipality of Salvador Escalante. According to the official report, the host animal was a calf that was skinned by 6 members of 2 local families. State health workers visited the area where the outbreak originated and confirmed that there are no additional cases of infection. [View Report](#)

NIAID Offers 'SARS Chip' Free to Researchers

23 June – Eurekalert reported to spur research on [severe acute respiratory syndrome \(SARS\)](#), the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) announced a free distribution program for a new "SARS chip" that will enable researchers to rapidly detect tiny genetic variations among different SARS virus strains. Today's announcement is the result of an alliance of government, not-for-profit and industry partners. NIAID has purchased several hundred SARS microarrays- essentially a reference strain of the SARS coronavirus embedded in a quartz chip- and will distribute the arrays at no cost to qualified researchers worldwide. The NIAID's Pathogen Functional Genomics Resource Center (PFGRC) will coordinate distribution of the GeneChip® brand SARS Array, made by Affymetrix, Inc. The PFGRC is operated by The Institute for Genomic Research under a contract from NIAID. Any researcher can request the SARS Array using a simple Web-based application process. [View Article](#)

Women in the Dark on Sexual Health

19 June – MSNBC reported American women are dangerously unaware of the facts and risks associated with their sexual health, a new survey finds. Half the women polled in a survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation, in partnership with Self magazine, had never talked about [HIV, AIDS](#), or other [sexually-transmitted diseases](#) (STDs) with their doctor. Nearly half of the respondents had not talked with their partners about getting an HIV test. And 60 percent had never suggested that their partner get tested for other STDs. Women said they felt too embarrassed to talk about their sexual health, and worried their doctors would judge them. Four in five women surveyed underestimated — or simply did not know — the rates of STD infection in the United States. In addition, 15 to 20 percent of those polled thought they had been tested for certain STDs even though they had not requested tests from their doctors, because they felt they were routine. The author stated doctors can also be uncomfortable talking about certain things with their patients, because they have not been taught how to broach the subject effectively. [View Article](#)

USPACOM

China: Outbreak of Japanese Encephalitis in Guangdong Province

22 June – ProMed reported an outbreak of [Japanese encephalitis](#) has killed 18 children and infected more than 200 others in Guangdong Province, south China where rice paddies provide a breeding ground for mosquitoes that carry the disease. Hong Kong media have noted anxiously that the reported death toll has risen more than 20-fold since Wed 18 Jun 2003, when officials reported only one death. The sudden increase in the death toll has prompted the Guangdong provincial government to launch an emergency vaccination program. Many victims are children of migrant workers, who often aren't covered by the government health program, which includes vaccinations for encephalitis, according to local newspaper reports. Cases have been reported in areas throughout Guangdong, including 7 in the provincial capital of Guangzhou. [View Report](#)

Dengue Fever Update for PACOM Countries

24 June – ProMed reported on the following [dengue](#) outbreaks: Health authorities have declared a dengue outbreak in Paracelis, Mt. Province following 107 cases of dengue fever recorded from January to May this year. The number of cases continues to increase. The Ministry of Public Health of Thailand has reported over 24,000 cases of dengue fever so far this year (June 2003). Authorities in Thailand are predicting a deadly wave of dengue fever this year, the third consecutive year the kingdom has been hit hard by the mosquito-borne disease. The public health ministry said that so far this year there have been 24,004 registered cases of dengue fever, with 23 deaths. But it warned that infections would rise during the approaching rainy season. This is the third consecutive year that dengue fever has hit hard in Thailand, and not every two years which is the normal dengue fever cycle. Several cases of dengue fever had been reported from six districts in Kerala, India. The Health Minister said dengue fever had been reported from Thiruvananthapuram, Kottayam, Alapuzha, Kannur and Thrissur. A total of 279 cases had so far been reported, of whom 16 persons had died. A special response team had been constituted in the affected districts and extra funds allotted. In Laos an epidemic of dengue fever has killed seven people and infected about 1100 others in Vientiane, the capital. [View Report](#)

India: Suspected Human Anthrax

23 June – ProMed reported three people were killed and over 20 others affected by a disease termed by local officials as "[anthrax](#)" in Lamtaput block of Koraput district over the last 15 days. No institute of repute has, so far, confirmed the diagnosis as anthrax. The deaths occurred in a private hospital at Lamtaput where the victims had been admitted for treatment. The health authorities rushed medical teams to the area to contain the spread of the disease. The outbreak had been reported from Dhadi, K.Maliput, Charaguda, Kangrapad, Solipada, Mahadeiput, Chopadi and Andipoda villages, the sources said. [View Report](#)

Researchers Warn AIDS in India Could Become as Dire as in Africa

19 June – UC Berkeley News reported the epidemic of [HIV/AIDS](#) in India is following the same pattern as that of sub-Saharan Africa in the 1980s, and it could become just as devastating unless preventive action is taken now, according to researchers from the University of California, Berkeley, in a paper to be published in the British Medical Journal. According to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, 20 percent of people over 15 in some sub-Saharan African countries are HIV-positive, and 70 percent of them will eventually die from AIDS. Recent estimates indicate the

HIV prevalence rate in India, which has a population of 1 billion people, is less than 1 percent, but the low rate belies the looming pandemic on the horizon, according to the paper's authors. Part of the change comes from the shifting demographics of India over the past few decades. Like in Africa, large numbers of men in rural areas are migrating to the cities for work and being exposed to changing cultural values, the researchers say. [View Article](#)

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Brazil: Dengue Cases Escalate in Sao Paulo State

24 June – ProMed reported in spite of the mass prevention campaign, the number of cases of [dengue](#) reported in 2003 has already passed the total for 2002 in 2 cities in the interior of Sao Paulo state, Hortolandia and Ribeirao Preto. In Hortolandia, the number of cases of dengue was 112 in 2001, 59 in 2002, and already 77 in the first 5 months of 2003. In Ribeirao Preto, the number of cases has almost tripled, from 238 in 2002 to 715 already in 2003. [View Report](#)

Brazilians Killed by X-ray Drug

21 June – BBC News reported the Brazilian authorities are investigating the deaths of at least 21 people, thought to have been caused by a contaminated drug. The patients died after being given a Brazilian brand of a dye called Celobar - which is sometimes used in radiology examinations. In a separate case, government inspectors are blaming hospitals for using a gel in eye operations, which resulted in five patients becoming blind. Doctors are demanding tighter controls of locally produced medicines. In the investigation into Celobar, police and health authorities say lethal levels of a toxic ingredient were found in a number of patients who died after being given the drug. In total, the product is thought to have caused 21 deaths in different parts of Brazil. [View Article](#)

Honduras: Total of Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever Deaths Rises to Nine

24 June – ProMed reported the Minister of Health, Elias Lizardo, confirmed the death of one person from [dengue hemorrhagic fever \(DHF\)](#) in the township of Trinidad, Santa Barbara. This brings to 9 the number of cases of DHF in 2003, 4 of them in San Pedro Sula. People who do not clean up their vacant properties, or who have mosquitoes breeding in their homes, will be fined. During 2002, the Health Secretary recorded 3096 cases of dengue; in 2003, 2096 cases have been reported nationwide so far. But the peak of the epidemic in 2002 fell in weeks 26-38 [July through September]. [View Report](#)

Typhoid fever in Haiti

17 June – The World Health Organization (WHO) reported As of 30 May, the WHO Regional Office and the Ministry of Health of Haiti have reported 200 cases of [typhoid](#) and 40 deaths for the Americas (PAHO). Three cases have been laboratory confirmed. The outbreak started in April during the dry season and affected remote villages in the Grand Bois Area, bordering the Dominican Republic. These villages lack access to health care facilities and to safe water; all water points in the area showed a maximum level of *E. coli* pollution. Most of the deaths occurred in persons who had no access to health care facilities. In May, PAHO and the Ministry of Health sent a team to investigate and control the epidemic, including: sampling water points, establishing mobile clinics, laboratory testing of cases, providing health education, and organizing the response at the local level. [View Report](#)

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

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