

20 December 2019

Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center

NOTICE: There will be no Army Public Health Weekly Update next week.

Publication will resume on 3 January 2020.



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NOTE:

If you are viewing the Army Public Health Weekly Update using Internet Explorer on a government computer with Windows 10, the external hyperlinks will be disabled per the [Security Technical Implementation Guide](#) (V-64927).

As a workaround, opening the Update using **Chrome** will enable the links.

We're sorry for the inconvenience.

Subscription or Comments

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U.S. MILITARY

Air Force warns Airmen of e-cigarette risks

16 December- With more than 2,000 reported cases of lung injury associated with electronic cigarettes nationwide, it is vital that Airmen understand potential impacts on their health. While restrictions exist, the Air Force, much like the civilian population, is seeing a decrease in traditional tobacco use, but an increase in e-cigarette use. Specifically, use is highest among younger, enlisted Airmen. "E-cigarette use has gone up to about 6.4% among the Total Force," said Col. Thomas Moore, chief, Air Force Health Promotions Branch. "When we first reported this, it was at 4% use." Air Force Health Promotions leadership stressed that the use of e-cigarettes does not come without risks. "The thing with inhaling these highly addictive nicotine products, especially ones that have been modified in some way or come from smaller, informal shops, is that you don't always know what you are inhaling and how much nicotine you are taking in," said Dr. Regina Watson, Air Force Health Promotions Branch program manager. Moore explains that many e-cigarette products also contain a higher concentration of nicotine. Not knowing how much nicotine an e-cigarette user is taking in also poses challenges to understanding its long-term effects. Because e-cigarette cartridges can vary from brand to brand, it is difficult to measure nicotine intake...According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the best way to avoid risks during investigations into the recent string of injuries is to consider refraining from the use of all e-cigarette products. The Air Force Medical Service continues to track tobacco use through the annual periodic health assessment, and, since 2016, e-cigarette use is being tracked. Targeted e-cigarette educational materials are also under development. [Health.mil](#)

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New way of teaching service members how to treat combat wounds vetted at Fort Benning

10 December- A new, standardized way of training combat troops of all services in how to give first aid to wounded service members has undergone intensive vetting here by experts, and a final draft will be delivered to the Department of Defense at the end of this month, officials said Dec. 9. Upon adoption by the Pentagon, the curriculum, known as Tier 2 Tactical Combat Casualty Care, would become the one official set of methods taught to certain service members in non-medical jobs, especially those close to combat, who might well be the only ones available to keep the wounded alive until they can get to a hospital, officials here said. Service members who will be given Tier 2 training will be at the discretion of the individual services...Once adopted, Tier 2 training will last one week and will teach service members a variety of skills that can prevent the most common causes of battlefield death – those involving bleeding and breathing, Miles said. Those skills include applying tourniquets and various types of bandages, and restoring breathing when a wounded service member's airway is blocked. [Health.mil](#)

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**An Ergonomic
Overview on
Exoskeletons,
Orthosis, and
Prosthesis: Potential
Impacts and Future
Research Directions**

For over 100 years, researchers and inventors have attempted to create devices that work in parallel with the body's muscles and tendons in order to augment them. The potential impact of recent Exoskeleton technology on decreasing Work Related Musculoskeletal Disorder (WMSD) injuries and their associated reduction of monetary costs is encouraging. With any new technology however, there are potential user risks involved with bionic exoskeletons that need to be addressed, specifically physical ergonomic and psychological human factor risks. This paper offers an overview on ergonomic risks on the future use of exoskeletons in an industrial environment.



Study looking at historical data says there's no clear link between combat and military suicide

16 December- A new study looking at historical data of soldier suicides suggests there is not a clear link between combat operations and military suicides. The findings are part of a study published Friday in the JAMA Network Open called "A Historical Examination of Military Records of US Army Suicide, 1819 to 2017." "The findings of the study suggest that suicides historically decreased during wartime, but that pattern has changed during prolonged wars in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. According to the authors, the study "represents the most extensive historical examination of suicides in the US Army to date. By taking a long-term historical approach to suicide among active-duty personnel in the US Army, this study affords future researchers a new analytical tool and an additional perspective from which to better differentiate long-term and historical trends from more short-term and temporary causal factors." A conclusion from the study is that "factors away from the battlefield may be associated with the change in suicide rates during active combat and among personnel in the U.S. Army." [WTKR](#)

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GLOBAL

Alnylam gene-silencing therapy to treat kidney disorder succeeds in late-stage study

17 December- Alnylam Pharmaceuticals Inc's gene-silencing therapy for a rare kidney disorder met the main goal of a late-stage study on Tuesday, bringing the company a step closer to marketing the first approved treatment for the condition. The study tested Alnylam's experimental drug, lumasiran, against placebo in patients aged six and above with primary hyperoxyluria type 1 (PH1), a life-threatening condition that is estimated to affect one in 58,000 people globally. Alnylam plans to file for the drug's approval in the United States and Europe early next year and hopes to launch the drug before the end of 2020. The company's president, Barry Greene, estimates the market opportunity for PH1 treatments to be over \$500 million. Lumasiran works using a mechanism called RNA interference (RNAi) to target and "silence" the genetic material involved in making excess amounts of a chemical called oxalate. Excess oxalate builds up in the kidneys of patients with PH1, eventually leading to kidney and bladder stones. In severe cases, they may have to undergo dialysis, kidney or liver transplants. In the trial, lumasiran was found to significantly reduce the production of oxalate in patients taking a monthly dose for three months, followed by maintenance doses, compared to those administered with a placebo. Needham analyst Alan Carr had forecast global peak sales of between \$450 million and \$500 million for lumasiran in 2032, before the trial results were announced. Alnylam already has two gene-silencing treatments in the market for rare hereditary disorders. In 2018, Onpattro, Alnylam's treatment targeting a symptom of a potentially fatal condition called hereditary ATTR

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amyloidosis, became the first RNAi treatment to be approved in the United States. In November, the company received approval for Givlaari to treat acute hepatic porphyria, a rare disorder that can lead to severe pain and paralysis, respiratory failure and seizures.

[Reuters](#)

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Instagram bans vaping ads

19 December- The vaping industry just ran into another setback, days after several US states banned or restricted their sales. This time, Instagram is blocking vaping and tobacco companies from setting ads up on their platform. Instagram's parent company Facebook has long banned tobacco and vaping brands themselves from advertising on their platforms. However, a loophole was soon discovered: these companies could get influencers to advertise for them as influencers were not covered by Facebook's rules. This is all changing soon as Facebook is tightening its rules, making sure that influencers cannot promote content that is the same as the companies are banned from (besides vaping and tobacco, guns are also included here). As per Instagram's statement on their business blog: "Branded content that promotes goods such as vaping, tobacco products and weapons will not be allowed. Our advertising policies have long prohibited the advertisement of these products, and we will begin enforcement on this in the coming weeks." Instagram has also started implementing restrictions on certain other items, such as alcohol and dietary supplements. However, the details as to what these restrictions are unknown as of the moment. [Tech Times](#)

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Many at risk of flu this Christmas, experts say

16 December- Hundreds of thousands of people could have their Christmas ruined by flu, say England's top doctors, who are predicting a rise in cases. They say the flu season has started early this year, with lots of the virus circulating. GP consultations for flu-like illness were up by a quarter to nearly 7,500 visits in the week ending 8 December. Experts are urging anyone who has not yet had their flu vaccine to get immunised. Grandparents visiting their grandchildren could be particularly at risk, they say. Children are "super-spreaders" of flu and the over-65s are one of the "at-risk" groups that can develop health complications, such as pneumonia, if they catch it. [BBC News](#)

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Opioids may not be to blame for rise in U.S. suicides

17 December- In a finding that suggests most opioid overdose deaths are accidental, new research shows suicide is associated with far fewer of these deaths than thought. "Our findings suggest that the current emphasis on the contribution of suicide to opioid-related deaths may be overstated, and that for most individuals who overdose on opioids, the primary clinical focus should be on substance use," said study leader Dr. Mark Olfson. He is a professor of psychiatry, medicine and law in the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University, in New York City. Olfson's team analyzed data on opioid overdose deaths nationwide among people 15 and older between 2000 and 2017, and found that the percentage of opioid overdose deaths attributed to suicide fell from 9% to 4% during that time. That's far below recent estimates of 20% to 30%, said the authors of the study published Dec. 17 in the Journal of the American Medical Association. The study did show that between 2000 and 2017, the rate of opioid-related suicide deaths more than doubled, from 0.27 to 0.58 per 100,000 people. But the rate of unintentional opioid overdose deaths rose more than sixfold, from 2.2 to 13.2 per 100,000 people. "It's likely that the increasing use of illicit fentanyl, which is approximately 50 times more potent than heroin, has contributed to the rapid increase in unintentional opioid overdose deaths," Olfson said in a university news release. Even though the study didn't find a close link between opioid overdose deaths and suicide deaths, the rise in opioid overdose deaths may still play at least some role in the rising suicide death rate in the United States, according to the study authors. More research is needed to understand the role of suicidal intent in opioid overdoses, the researchers said. "Considering the high risk of suicide after nonfatal opioid overdose, this information could be especially valuable in suicide prevention efforts," Olfson said. [U.S. News](#)

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People with depression are turning to pot for relief: Study

17 December- People suffering from depression are often desperate for anything to break them out of their debilitating mood disorder. But in their misery, many might be turning to a risky solution that's likely to make their condition even worse -- marijuana. People with depression are twice as likely to be using pot as those who aren't depressed, researchers reported in the current issue of the journal *Addiction*. "Cannabis use has increased rapidly among persons with depression, and this increase has been more rapid than among those without depression," said senior researcher Renee Goodwin. She's an adjunct associate professor of epidemiology at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, in New York City. In 2017, about 19% of people with depression said they had used pot in the last month, compared with about 9% of others, according to an annual government survey on drug use among Americans. Daily cannabis use occurred in 7% of people with depression compared to 3% of those without the mood disorder, the investigators found. The researchers said this might be happening because marijuana is gaining a reputation for

being harmless. Depressed people who see no risk linked to regular use of pot are much more likely to use it than those who consider it significantly risky -- 39% compared with about 2%, Goodwin said. "With increasing legalization in the U.S., previous studies have shown that perception of risk associated with use is declining overall," she said. "The results of this study show that this decline is even more rapid among this vulnerable population." Experts said the problem is that marijuana's effects actually are more likely to worsen depression than relieve it. "We have no evidence whatsoever that marijuana helps in these psychiatric disorders but, nevertheless, people believe it," said Dr. Andrew Saxon, a psychiatrist with the Veterans Affairs Puget Sound Health Care System, in Seattle. Symptoms of depression that might be heightened by marijuana include lack of motivation, listlessness and isolation as well as a lack of pleasure and interest in things people used to enjoy, said Dr. Scott Krakower, assistant unit chief of psychiatry at Zucker Hillside Hospital in Glen Oaks, N.Y. "People who are depressed may be more likely to take risks," Krakower said. "They will go out on a limb hoping this agent may help them." Saxon cautioned that this was an observational study, so the exact relationship between depression and marijuana use can't be fully understood from these findings. He said it might be that instead of turning to marijuana to relieve depression, cannabis use actually causes depression among typically healthy people. It also could be that people using pot enough to be dependent on it mistake symptoms of withdrawal as depression, Saxon added. These symptoms might include disturbed sleep, depressed mood or decreased appetite. Krakower and Saxon said they're most concerned about depressed teens who might turn to pot to help them. "There's no evidence marijuana is good for the teenage brain, and there's accruing evidence that it's bad for the teenage brain," Saxon said. "Depression or not, teens shouldn't be using marijuana." [U.S. News](#)

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Poorest countries facing both obesity and malnutrition

16 December- A third of the poorest countries in the world are dealing with high levels of obesity as well as under-nourishment, which leaves people too thin, according to a report in The Lancet. It says the problem is caused by global access to ultra-processed foods, and people exercising less. The authors are calling for changes to the "modern food system" which they believe to be driving it. Countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia are most affected. The report estimates that nearly 2.3 billion children and adults on the planet are overweight, and more than 150 million children have stunted growth. And many low and middle-income countries are facing these two issues at once - known as the 'double burden of malnutrition'. This means that 20% of people are overweight, 30% of children under four are not growing properly, and 20% of women are classified as thin. [BBC News](#)

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Scientists make 'exciting' advancement in certain breast cancer drugs

17 December- Two new drugs for advanced HER2-positive breast cancer were tested in separate studies, and scientists say they've made progress in the development of new treatment options. This type of breast cancer tests positive for higher levels of a protein called HER2. One study, published in the New England Journal of Medicine last week, found that adding the experimental drug tucatinib to a chemotherapy regimen consisting of the drugs trastuzumab and capecitabine could improve survival for adults with advanced HER2-positive metastatic breast cancer. The other study, also published in the New England Journal of Medicine last week, found that the experimental drug conjugate called trastuzumab deruxtecan was able to substantially reduce tumor activity in patients with HER2-positive metastatic breast cancer. [CNN](#)

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Survey shows boom in marijuana vaping among school kids

18 December- About 1 out of 5 high school students in the U.S. say they vaped marijuana in the past year, and its popularity has been booming faster than nicotine vaping, according to a report released Wednesday. "The speed at which kids are taking up this behavior is very worrisome," said Dr. Nora Volkow of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the federal agency that pays for the large annual teen survey. Electronic cigarettes and other battery-powered vaping devices mostly heat a liquid containing nicotine into a vapor that's inhaled. In recent years, they have been increasingly used to vaporize THC, the chemical that gives pot its high. The University of Michigan survey asks students in grades 8, 10 and 12 across the country about smoking, drinking and drugs. About two-thirds of this year's 42,000 participants were asked about vaping marijuana. Vaping nicotine is still more popular: about 1 in 4 high schoolers said they had done it at least once in the previous year. But vaping marijuana grew more quickly: 1 in 5 high schoolers had done it at least once the year before. About 1 in 7 high school seniors this year were considered current users of marijuana vaping — they had vaped in the month before they took the survey. That's almost doubled from 1 in 13 the year before. Overall, marijuana use — in all its forms — is holding steady. It's not clear if students are switching to vaping or continuing to use other forms as well, said Richard Miech, who oversees the survey. Daily marijuana use rose in both middle school and high school kids in 2019, and "if you want to be a daily marijuana user, vaping makes it easier," he said. It's odorless and slips easily into a pocket. "You can just kind of graze on that all day," he said. The survey is in the Journal of the American Medical Association, which also published results of a different survey in 2018 that showed an increase in marijuana vaping among middle and high school students. Both have limitations: the surveys rely on what kids say, and it does not include teens who are not in school. Federal and state laws ban minors from using marijuana recreationally, and prohibits sale of vaping products to kids. The Michigan survey was conducted earlier this year, before reports

of a surge in cases of vaping-related lung damage, mostly in teens and young adults who used black-market THC products. Volkow said the illnesses "may scare some teenagers away" from vaping marijuana. The survey also found most other forms of teen drug use are flat or declining, including alcohol, ecstasy, heroin, cocaine, and meth. An exception was LSD, which has been increasing in 10th and 12th graders. About 3.6% of high school seniors said they'd dropped acid in the previous year. [ABC News](#)

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The hidden drug epidemic among older people

16 December- People in their 60s take an average of 15 prescription drugs a year. Combined with over-the-counter products, they may do more harm than good. While news reports focus on an epidemic of opioid abuse among young adults, another totally legal and usually hidden drug epidemic is occurring at the other end of the age spectrum: the fistfuls of remedies — both prescription and over-the-counter — taken by older adults. According to the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists, people aged 65 to 69 take an average of 15 prescriptions a year, and those aged 80 to 84 take 18 prescriptions a year. And that's in addition to the myriad over-the-counter drugs, herbal remedies, vitamins and minerals they may take, any of which — alone or in combination — could cause more problems than they cure. [The New York Times](#)

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Vaping nicotine linked to increased risk of chronic lung disease

16 December- The extreme cases of lung injury caused by vaping have raised awareness of the potential harms of electronic cigarettes. Since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention began tracking the problem last March, there have been 52 confirmed deaths and about 2,400 hospitalizations. Many of these acute illnesses are linked to black market THC products, but a growing body of evidence points to the risks associated with vaping nicotine. For starters, there's evidence that teens who use e-cigarettes are more likely to have increased coughing, wheezing and other short-term effects such as asthma flares. "Vaping can do a lot to the lungs," says Robert Tarran, a professor at the University of North Carolina's School of Medicine in Chapel Hill. Now there's evidence that people who use e-cigarettes have an increased risk of developing chronic lung disease, including conditions such as COPD, chronic bronchitis, emphysema or asthma. [NPR](#)

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INFLUENZA

APHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report

Week ending 07 December 2019 (week 49) - The proportion of specimens testing positive for influenza A in the Army in week 49 is 3.5%, which is lower than the historical average of 11.9% for the same week. All regional health commands (RHC), excluding RHC-P, had a percent positive rate lower than their respective historical average. Non-active duty (AD) individuals accounted for 67% of positive influenza A specimens in week 49, and RHC-A accounted for 47% of influenza A specimens. There were two hospitalizations reported in week 49, bringing the season total to 23. The majority of positive respiratory illness specimens were in younger populations; those under 18 years of age accounted for 65% overall of positive respiratory illness specimens in week 49. In AD Soldiers, 18 to 29 year-olds accounted for 43% of positive specimens. Influenza B was the most common type of positive specimen, accounting for 46% of total positive specimens. [APHC](#)

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CDC: Flu View - Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report

Key Updates for Week 49, ending December 7, 2019- Seasonal influenza activity in the United States has been elevated for five weeks and continues to increase.

Influenza-Associated Hospitalizations: The Influenza Hospitalization Surveillance Network (FluSurv-NET) conducts population-based surveillance for laboratory-confirmed influenza-related hospitalizations in select counties in the Emerging Infections Program (EIP) states and Influenza Hospitalization Surveillance Project (IHSP) states. A total of 1,139 laboratory-confirmed influenza-associated hospitalizations were reported by FluSurv-NET sites between October 1, 2019 and December 7, 2019. The overall hospitalization rate was 3.9 per 100,000 population. The highest rate of hospitalization was among adults aged ≥ 65 (9.4 per 100,000 population), followed by children aged 0-4 (7.5 per 100,000 population) and adults aged 50-64 (4.1 per 100,000 population). Among 1,139 hospitalizations, 627 (55.0%) were associated with influenza A virus, 499 (43.8%) with influenza B virus, 6 (0.5%) with influenza A virus and influenza B virus co-infection, and 7 (0.6%) with influenza virus for which the type was not determined. Among those with influenza A subtype information, 103 (70.5%) were A (H1N1) pdm09 virus and 43 (29.5%) were A (H3N2).

Pneumonia and Influenza (P&I) Mortality Surveillance: Based on National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) mortality surveillance data available on December 12, 2019, 5.0% of the deaths occurring during the week ending November 30, 2019 (week 48) were due to P&I. This percentage is below the epidemic threshold of 6.5% for week 48.

Influenza-Associated Pediatric Mortality: Four influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported to CDC during week 49. One death occurred during week 47 (the week ending November 23, 2019) and was associated with an influenza A virus for which no subtyping

was performed. Three deaths occurred during week 48 (the week ending November 30, 2019). One death was associated with an influenza B/Victoria virus, one was associated with an influenza B virus with no lineage determined, and one was associated with an influenza A (H1N1) pdm09 virus. A total of 10 influenza-associated pediatric deaths occurring during the 2019-2020 season have been reported to CDC. Six cases tested positive for influenza B; three of these cases had the lineage determined and all were B/Victoria viruses. Four cases tested positive for influenza A. Two of these cases had subtyping performed and both were A (H1N1) pdm09 viruses. [CDC](#)

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ECDC: Flu News Europe

Week 49/ 2019 (2-8 December 2019) - Influenza activity continued to increase across the region, with several countries reporting increases in intensity and geographic spread, including 2 countries with medium level intensity.

-The majority of reported influenza virus detections across the region was type A, although 6 countries reported type B virus dominance and 2 other countries co-dominance of types A and B virus.

-Data from 23 countries or regions reporting to the EuroMOMO project indicated all-cause mortality was at expected levels for this time of the year. [European Center for Disease Prevention and Control/WHO](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Chicken soup recalled over undeclared allergens: officials

16 December- Chicken soup is said to be good for the soul, but maybe not a particular batch that's facing a recall over undeclared allergens. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) on Friday announced chicken soup products produced by a Canadian company but distributed "exclusively" in the United States are facing a recall over undeclared allergens, particularly wheat and soy. The affected products were produced by Canyon Creek Soup Co. Ltd, as per a public health alert from the FSIS. The company issued the recall following customer complaints while the FSIS issued the public health alert after the agency was contacted by officials with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency regarding the recall. The recall affects 16-ounce cartons of "H-E-B MEAL SIMPLE BUTTER CHICKEN SOUP" with a UPC code 0 41220 79872 8. The products were produced in January but have a "best by" date of Jan. 21, 2020. [Fox news](#)

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Multidrug-resistant *Campylobacter jejuni* outbreak linked to pet store puppies

18 December- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and public health officials in several states report investigating an outbreak of multidrug-resistant *Campylobacter jejuni* infections. To date, 30 people in 13 states have been sickened, including four hospitalizations. No deaths have been reported. Epidemiologic and laboratory evidence indicate that contact with puppies, especially those at pet stores, is the likely source of this outbreak. A single, common supplier of puppies has not been identified. Whole genome sequencing (WGS) analysis of 26 isolates from ill people predicted antibiotic resistance to tetracycline (26 isolates), ciprofloxacin (25), nalidixic acid (25), azithromycin (23), erythromycin (23), clindamycin (23), telithromycin (23), and gentamicin (18). In addition, testing shows that bacteria from people infected with *Campylobacter* in the current outbreak are related genetically to a 2016–2018 outbreak of multidrug-resistant *Campylobacter* infections linked to pet store puppies. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Victim of *E. coli* O157:H7 outbreak sues ALDI in federal court over poison romaine

13 December- A common grower with multiple romaine fields in California's Salinas growing region is likely responsible for all three current *E. coli* O157: H7 outbreaks. That was the word in a late Thursday update from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). FDA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and California state government are deploying a team to conduct a new investigation of the yet un-named grower to nail down the source of the contamination. Earlier the California Department of Food and Agriculture, California Department of Public Health, CDC, and FDA sent investigative teams to three farms in the Salinas area that were identified in the traceback investigation. An Iowa woman has sued Batavia, IL-based ALDI INC, the manufacturer, distributor and seller of an Asian Chopped Salad that made her very sick. Johnston, IA resident Cindy Day is one of more than 100 people in 23 states, and Canada infected with an outbreak strain of *E. coli* O157: H7 from eating romaine lettuce grown in California's Salinas growing region. Day purchased an Asian Chopped Salad containing romaine lettuce from an Aldi located at 8400 Douglas Ave. in Urbandale, IA, on November 2. She began experiencing symptoms of *E. coli* on November 7, including diarrhea and vomiting. Day sought medical care at a local clinic on November 9 and was treated with anti-nausea medication. She also tested positive for *E. coli* O157: H7 and was informed by the Polk County Health Department that the strain was a genetic match to the outbreak strain. [Food Safety News](#)

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WELLNESS

How parents can address the spike in tween depression

17 December- According to a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the suicide rate for children ages 10 to 14 nearly tripled from 2007 to 2017, while the number of 12- to 17-year-olds who experienced a major depressive episode in the past year increased by more than 50%...To help spot problems, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued updated teen depression guidelines in 2018 that call for universal screening for depression for kids ages 12 and up. Only about 50% of adolescents with depression get diagnosed, and as many as 2 in 3 depressed teens don't get treatment. Given the high stakes, parents and educators need to understand, spot and address tween depression. Here are four ways they can prevent kids from falling through the cracks:

- Gather clues
- Normalize asking for help
- Arm tweens with coping strategies
- Take even small, seemingly silly concerns seriously [U.S. News](#)

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USAFRICOM

DRC measles outbreak grows to 280K cases

16 December- UN health officials reported nearly an additional 10,000 measles cases in week 48 this year, bringing the outbreak total to 280,677, the most cases reported in any single country this year. During this week, most cases were reported from the provinces of Mai-ndombe (1459), Kwilu (1198), Tshuapa (1152) et Equateur (982). In addition, the measles death toll has risen to 5,604, an increase in about 175 in one week. In total, 246 (47%) of the 519 health zones across the 26 provinces of the country have reported a confirmed measles outbreak. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Yellow fever: 3-fold increase in Nigeria, Mali reports outbreak

17 December- The World Health Organization (WHO) is reporting a three-fold increase in yellow fever cases in 2019, compared to 2018. There have been cases reported in parts of the country that have confirmed cases for the first time since the outbreak started in September 2017. 4,189 suspected yellow fever cases were reported through Dec. 10 this year from all Nigerian states. Sixty-eight per cent (134 cases) of the total (197 cases) confirmed cases were reported from four states, including Bauchi, Katsina, Edo and Ebonyi.

The case fatality rate for all cases (including suspected, probable and confirmed) is 5.1%, and 12.2% for confirmed cases. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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USCENTCOM

Israel medical experts prepare for deployment to Samoa

7 December- A team of medical experts from Israel's Sheba Medical Center, Tel HaShomer is preparing for an emergency deployment to the Pacific island nation of Samoa following an urgent request from the World Health Organization (WHO) for humanitarian aid. Samoa is currently facing a deadly measles outbreak that is killing those who have not been vaccinated, especially young children and pregnant women. More than 4,000 people have been diagnosed with the measles so far, with hundreds more contracting the disease almost every day since the outbreak. Over 60 people have died during the outbreak, most of them infants and young children. The sheer number of patients requiring high dependency and intensive care treatment, including ventilation, has overwhelmed the capacity of the local hospital wards and staff. In response to this medical crisis, a team of experts from Sheba Medical Center's dedicated humanitarian unit, the Israel Center for Disaster Medicine and Humanitarian Response, are mobilizing to quickly provide much-needed relief. The team, which is leaving this weekend plans to stay for approximately two weeks, will be composed of six nurses and two pediatric specialists. The Sheba medical team to Samoa will be led by Dr. Itai Pessach, the head of Sheba's Edmond and Lily Safra Children's Hospital and Assaf Luttinger, RN, who is the Deputy Director of the Israel Center for Disaster Medicine and Humanitarian Response. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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USEUCOM

Q fever cases hospitalized in Spain

14 December- The Ministry of Health of the Government of La Rioja in northern Spain have reported four patients hospitalized with the bacterial infection, Q fever, according to a Moncloa report. The four people admitted would have been infected by contact with infected animals during their stay in the Cameros area of La Rioja. Q fever is caused by the obligate intracellular pathogen, *Coxiella burnetii*. The disease is usually transmitted to people through either infected milk or through aerosols. This disease is found on most continents with the reported incidence probably much lower than the actual because so many cases are so mild. Animal reservoirs of *C. burnetii* include sheep, cattle, goats, dogs and cats. In areas where these animals are present, Q fever affects veterinarians, meatpacking workers, and farmers. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Salmonella sickens dozens in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia

16 December- Salmonella was laboratory confirmed in 35 of 73 pupils of Wonderland kindergarten in Khanty-Mansiysk who were infected with acute intestinal infection, city administrators report. The Tass news service reports, "As of December 13, 73 cases were registered, four children were hospitalized in the children's infectious ward of the district clinical hospital, and 35 children were laboratory confirmed with Salmonellosis group D," Rimir Gimalov, the head of the public health department of the city administration, said in a statement. According to local authorities, all necessary anti-epidemic measures are being carried out in the kindergarten. The institution was closed for quarantine. Salmonella is an organism that can cause foodborne illness in a person who eats a food item contaminated with it. Symptoms of infection may include fever, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. The illness primarily impacts young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. Most healthy adults and children rarely become seriously ill after exposure to Salmonella. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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USINDOPACOM

Dengue is now 'endemic' in Bangladesh

15 December- Bangladesh saw the first dengue fever cases in 2000 and that time through 2017, the country reported from a few hundred cases a year to up to 6,000 a year. In 2018, the country reported more than 10,000 cases and 26 deaths. And then came 2019... Bangladesh has recorded some 101,000 dengue cases this year, including 133 deaths (officially). In a new report from BDNews24, they say that dengue may become a new normal, occurring more or less throughout the year. "The prevalence of dengue has increased steadily over the past few years. As the mosquitoes with dengue virus have spread throughout the country, the virus has also spread," said Kabirul Bashar, a zoology professor at Jahangirnagar University. Dengue is now "endemic" in Bangladesh, according to Meerjady Sabrina Flora, director of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research or IEDCR. "It may become a burden unless effective measures are taken to control mosquitoes outside Dhaka. "It happened not only in Bangladesh but also in the neighboring countries. Dengue may occur almost round the year from now," Bashar said. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Laos reports decrease in malaria this year

17 December- The Laos Ministry of Health has reported more than 5,600 malaria cases in 2019, a significant decrease from 2018, according to a Vientiane Times report. No deaths have been reported. In 2018, there were 8,084 malaria cases nationwide, including six deaths, a 30.73 percent reduction compared to 2018. Malaria prevention and control is a priority of the Ministry of Health with a substantial budget allocated to undertake control activities against mosquitos that spread malaria. Last year, health officials focused their efforts on malaria prevention and to control, surveillance, analysis, and health education campaigns in at-risk provinces. Dr. Viengxay Vanisaveth said "This year we have successfully carried out many activities under the strategy to prevent and control malaria infection, especially the effective diagnosis and treatment of patients in rural communities who have received early treatment. "We also ran health education campaigns in the targeted villages reducing malaria, and no deaths were recorded this year," he said. Earlier this month, the World Health Organization released the World Malaria Report that showed number of malaria infections recorded globally has fallen for the first time in several years. WHO estimates that there were 228 million reported cases in 2018, a decrease of around 3 million from the previous year. In particular, the drop can be attributed in large part to fewer cases in southeast Asia, specifically—countries across the Mekong River basin — Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. From 2010 to 2018, malaria cases dropped by 76% in these countries, and malaria-related deaths fell by 95%. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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USNORTHCOM

U.S.: College of Charleston- Mumps outbreak rises to 75 cases

18 December- The College of Charleston has reported mumps cases since September 17 and today school officials report 75 people have been diagnosed with mumps. Information has been provided to students, faculty and staff regarding the prevention of mumps which includes checking your vaccination status and following guidance about vaccination. Monitoring for additional cases is also ongoing. Secondary cases of mumps are possible through at least early January 2020. Mumps is an infectious virus passed through saliva and respiratory secretions. While the incubation period is 12 to 25 days, symptoms often appear 16 to 18 days after exposure. Symptoms of mumps may include: swollen and tender salivary glands under the ears on one or both sides, fever, headache, muscle aches, fatigue, and loss of appetite, testicular swelling and pelvic pain. Mumps virus may most commonly be known for causing puffy cheeks and a swollen jaw. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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U.S.: Measles advisory issued for LAX Airport

16 December- Los Angeles County health officials reports investigating three non-resident measles cases that traveled through Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) while infectious and is also looking to identify others who are at risk for measles and may have been exposed to these persons. Other people may have been exposed to measles since a public location was visited by the person with measles while infectious. The potential public exposure location, day and times were as follows:

-December 11, 2019, LAX Airport, Terminal 4 and 5, 6:50 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

There is no known current risk related to measles that exists at this venue at this time.

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USSOUTHCOM

Argentina measles: Most cases from Buenos Aires Province

14 December- Health officials have reported a total of 85 confirmed cases of measles in Argentina through the first week of December. Of this total, 83 were detected in Argentina and 2 in Spain. Of the cases detected in Argentina, 7 were imported or import-related and 76 have no travel history or epidemiological link with imported cases. Fifteen cases were reported in the city of Buenos Aires and 61 are residents of Buenos Aires Province. Sixty-one of the confirmed cases were not vaccinated or had an unknown vaccination history. In late November, the Ministry of Health acquired additional doses of triple and double viral vaccine to cope with the outbreak, which started in September. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Brazil dengue: 75 of the 79 cities in Mato Grosso do Sul report high incidence, face epidemic

17 December- The State Department of Health in Mato Grosso do Sul state in central-west Brazil is reporting that 75 of the 79 cities in the state have reported a high incidence of dengue cases, according to a Correio do Estado report. With an incidence of 2,453.2 cases per 100,000 inhabitants, the state faces an epidemic of the disease. The World Health Organization (WHO) considers epidemic when a site has an incidence of 300 cases per 100,000 people. São Gabriel do Oeste has the highest index in the state, with 1,530 reported cases and an incidence of 6365.7 cases per 100,000 inhabitants. Campo Grande has 25,346 reported cases and an incidence of 3045.1. In addition, 27 deaths have been reported in the state with Campo Grande and Dourados each confirming eight deaths. [Outbreak News](#)

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