

Almost 90 cases of screwworm (Myiasis) reported in Hidalgo (Mexico)

<https://www.noticiasenfasis.com.mx/confirman-89-casos-de-gusano-barrenador-en-hidalgo/>

This is a rather disgusting concept. A tiny larva burrowing under your skin and becoming a squatter while it is developing away into an adult! As it matures the infected individual feels movement under the skin and thinks it is an infected spot so squeezes it and the larva dies and disintegrates leading to an abscess! Covering the infected region with Vaseline would block its breathing tube and bring the creature to the surface to the wonder and excitement of all on lookers! If only they had known to iron all their clothes (and sheets and pillows etc) if they were dried outside which allowed the fly to lay her eggs in the first place.

Nine Pertussis related deaths reports in Honduras so far in 2026

<https://emisorasunidas.com/internacionales/2026/03/12/honduras-registra-nueve-muertes-por-tos-ferina-en-2026/>

As this report suggests the newer vaccine against pertussis (a toxoid) is not as reactogenic as the older whole cell version (which could be toxic) and so protection tends to wane much more quickly which is the reason why maternity hospitals have recommended cover against pertussis during the third trimester to help protect the baby against this truly awful disease.

63yo dies of Rabies two months after being bitten by a dog in Ho Chi Minh city while exercising in front of his house

<https://vnexpress.net/tu-vong-sau-khi-bi-cho-can-luc-tap-the-duc-5056004.html>

Apparently this unfortunate individual was bitten on the elbow and received four significant and deep wounds by a disturbed dog ~2 months before his symptoms of rabies started. He attended a hospital but they referred him to a higher-level facility as "he had underlying hypertension". However he did not attend that service and instead attended a local 'healer' who sought to 'extract the venom' which of course set him on the road to disaster. It should be noted that hypertension is definitely not a contraindication to receiving post exposure treatment for rabies especially in these circumstances. In fact there is no underlying medical condition which would have been a contraindication when the need for rabies cover is clearly necessary.

Cluster of Amoeba infections confirmed in a family living in Bacolod City (Philippines)

<https://visayandailystar.com/cho-clears-shellfish-poisoning-case-as-amoebiasis/?amp>

Initially it was thought that a meal of clam soup was the culprit for this family's abdominal problems (vomiting, diarrhoea) but examination of their stool samples confirmed the presence of amoeba so that moved across to become accepted as the cause. However what is not shown in the reports which are available is whether or not there actually was any confirmation that the amoeba found in their samples could just have been coincidental and that infection from the clams could easily be the problem. To confirm that the amoeba are pathogenic it is necessary to see engulfed red blood cells within the amoeba itself and not just blood within the stool sample which of course could be of viral or bacterial origin.

Over 200 ill with suspected food poisoning after festival meal in Bengaluru (Karnataka, southern India)

<https://newsfirstprime.com/bengaluru/200-fall-ill-in-bengaluru-rural-after-consuming-sri-rama-navami-prasada-at-temple-11435222>

The consumption of food at mass gatherings is just about always a risky business no matter in which part of the world you are partaking. However in a hotter climate the risk of food 'going off' is certainly higher than within our cooler northern & western European climate. Ungrateful as we are, our climate is the envy of many!

Concern as a number of rural Botswana as regions report an increasing level of Malaria cases

<https://neweralive.na/over-10-000-malaria-cases-recorded/>

Northern Botswana is definitely a risk region for malaria and especially during their rainy season (approx September to May). Travel within the Okavango is a very popular pursuit for those wishing to experience true Africa and so malaria prophylaxis is important as well as maintaining a sensible mosquito avoidance practice.

25 doctors infected with Lassa Fever in current Nigerian outbreaks

<https://sana.sy/en/health/2306205/>

Sad as it may be the way we know that there is a new outbreak of one of the haemorrhagic diseases (e.g. Ebola, Marburg, Lassa etc) it is because there is an unexpected rise in the death toll among the healthcare staff. Having to get up close and personal to examine an ill patient when they are exhibiting any evidence of bruising or of blood in their eyes, ears or nasal passages should always be an essential warning sign especially if you are based in regions where these diseases are most commonly encountered or your patient, at home in Western Europe, has recently arrived from overseas. However our recent history with the outbreak of Meningococcal Meningitis in Kent has just emphasised that these risks are not just found in deepest darkest Africa, in some cases these very serious and highly infectious diseases can be on our doorstep. With meningococci it is essential to remember that a carrier state can occur as the bacteria can inhabit the nasal passages of an infected but asymptomatic individual and available to be coughed and sneezed towards a susceptible one so very easily.

Nine deaths from Leptospirosis in Peru after recent flooding

<https://elcomercio.pe/lima/leptospirosis-en-peru-suben-a-9-los-muertos-y-se-reportan-mas-de-1200-casos-ultimas-noticia/>

I know rat's urine disease (aka Weil's disease or leptospirosis) has been discussed within these snippets previously but perhaps, as we head towards the summer months, it is worth reiterating the care which is needed if swimming or wading in fresh water when a heavy rainfall has occurred after weeks of scorching sunshine. The excessive water washes the bacteria into rivers and streams and that may put folks at risk of what can be an easily fatal illness.

Four cases (3 deaths) of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (tick borne Rickettsia) in Coahuila region of Mexico

<https://www.elsiglodetorreon.com.mx/noticia/2026/van-cuatro-casos-confirmados-de-rickettsiosis-en-coahuila.html>

Rocky Mountain (RMSF) is a rickettsial disease transmitted by ticks and can be really serious if the diagnosis is not considered early into the clinic presentation or, even worse, if the healthcare staff don't have the courage of their convictions and won't provide empirical treatment while awaiting the laboratory results to become available. During that window period it is perfectly possible and quite likely that the disease will multiply with hugely serious consequences for the poor patient. Within tropical medicine we frequently have to commence empirical treatment before the diagnosis is confirmed or else suffer the consequences both for the patient and also for yourself!

Hepatitis A still an active problem in Lazio, Campagna and Puglia regions of Italy

<https://lamilano.it/en/by-the-media/Hepatitis-A-is-on-the-rise-in-Italy--Lazio--Campania--and-Puglia--the-regions-with-the-most-cases/>

Having survived the 1960's perhaps we tend to think that diseases like hepatitis A are only a problem within the hotter tropical regions especially as it is one of the most commonly used vaccines within our practices. However, no, there are plenty of cases reported within temperate climates and typically linked to either an infected food handler or the consumption of bivalve filter feeding shellfish who have gobbled up human sewage. If these outbreaks of various diseases continue across our continent (e.g. salmonella & hepatitis A) perhaps we will need to start recommending all international travellers should be attending for a travel health related medical consultation!

Report on cases of Diphtheria in Northern Territory of Australia

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-03-26/respiratory-diphtheria-outbreak-in-nt/106495408>

Diphtheria can present with the cutaneous form (usually not a huge problem to deal with once the diagnosis is considered) or the respiratory form (frequently a very serious form with pronounced obstruction within the tonsillar platform). In many cases the infected individuals are either anti-vaxxers themselves or they have been subjected to that dangerous situation by their parents/guardians. Since the early 1990's cover against diphtheria has been linked with cover against tetanus. That all came about after a very significant outbreak of diphtheria within the newly independent States of the USSR and in Russia itself accounted for perhaps 200,000 cases. WHO then mandated that these two vaccines would be coupled to try to increase the cover against diphtheria and lessen the risk of another major outbreak. Just to mention, in case it has slipped out of the cerebral parking space, the childhood version of diphtheria contains approximately 5 times more strength than the adult version (which is against what might be expected) and during those early/mid 1990's days when the vaccine was in short supply and occasionally the childhood dose was administered to adults there were a number of anaphylactic reactions so that too still needs to be remembered to ensure that we don't give the childhood version to an adult by mistake.

Chagas cases in Macapa (Brazil) associated with consumption of acai berries

<https://agenciaamapa.com.br/noticia/34866/governo-do-amapa-intensifica-acoes-e-investiga-casos-de-doenca-de-chagas-em-macapa>

Chagas Disease (South American Trypanosomiasis) is one of those truly miserable diseases which we don't too frequently encounter within our standard patient cohorts. It is a disease of Central and South America although with its strange and prolonged life cycle it may be many years following exposure before the poor unfortunate patient arrives at your clinic. The disease is most typically spread by the reduviid bug which for all intents looks like a form of cockroach. It normally lives in poor quality mud walled homes and at night it comes out from the crevices and heads for its evening meal of blood from an unsuspecting animal or human. As it drinks it defecates and on awaking the victim scratches the irritation around the area of the faeces and/or rubs their eyes and thus the parasite gains access. 20% of those infected develop what can be very serious early cardiac symptoms but if that is not the problem then it can be decades later before any other symptoms may become evident. The parasite can affect the patient's parasympathetic nervous system and this is the process which keeps the bowel firm and to allow peristalsis to occur. Without the control of the parasympathetic supply the bowel expands and the intestinal muscles weaken and in a similar fashion the ureter's and oesophagus can significantly dilate (causing the so called mega syndrome) and weakness of the heart muscles can lead to aneurysm and on to a fatal rupture. Most of our travellers to these regions are not staying in accommodation like what is described above. Usually walls are plastered and so no suitable crevices are present for the reduviid to live. However the actual significant danger for our patients is if they are in a Chagas risk region and they drink a crushed sugar cane drink (or one with Acai berries as above) where the reduviid bug gets crushed into their drink without any sign showing and it is consumed causing oral Chagas which is far more severe than the standard form.

Carbon Monoxide poisoning sickens a family of eight in M'sila (Algeria)

<https://bit.ly/3PtNOTS>

There have been a number of reports of poisoning by carbon monoxide within our news feeds over the past years and of course as this is a 'silent killer' which can too easily kill both young and old. Perhaps we need to pack a CO detector for our holidays.

Monkey death in Trinidad and Tobago raises Yellow Fever alert

https://trinidadexpress.com/newsextra/health-ministry-confirms-yellow-fever-in-howler-monkey/article_2a2ca0ea-09d1-42f0-b565-2c1007dd6f10.html

We have known for many years that in endemic regions of the world the unexplained death of monkeys raises the alert over the potential for a yellow fever outbreak (similar situation as for the croaking of the canary deep in the mines and the build up of carbon monoxide will warn the workers).

Report on Cases of Bornavirus in Erding (Germany)

<https://www.landkreis-erding.de/presse-aktuelles/pressemitteilungen-archiv/bornavirus-fall-im-landkreis-erding>

So now, you just don't have Tick Borne Encephalitis and Lyme Disease to worry about in Germany, you now have Bornavirus to add to that list! This is a disease spread by contact with the shrew and infected humans can develop an encephalitis and other serious neurological signs and symptoms within a variable incubation which can be up to months or years after exposure.