

Global Health Newsletter

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Americas

One Millionth Transplant in the United States

On September 9th the US recorded its millionth organ transplant. The first transplant recorded was a kidney in 1954 when 23 year old Ronald Herrick donated his kidney to his twin brother Richard. In 2021 there were more than 40,000 transplants. 400,000 people are living with functional transplants in the US and 105,000 people are on the national list waiting for one.



<https://verdict.justia.com/2022/07/11/death-dignity-and-the-ethics-of-organ-donation-in-the-shadow-of-execution>

The United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) is a nonprofit that runs the national organ procurement and transplantation network in the United States. A study published in the Journal of the American Society of Nephrology found that many donated kidneys are discarded unnecessarily which is one of the reasons there is much criticism for how the UNOS is managed. In addition many claim that UNOS does an insufficient job tracking organ donations and causes people to die while waiting.

Further Reading

<https://unos.org/data/>

<https://apnews.com/article/science-health-organ-transplants-government-and-politics-308bfae0c70c3377d595b9a0a3a5a381>

<https://iasn.asnjournals.org/content/32/2/397>

Middle East/Northern Africa

Cholera Outbreak in Syria

On September 10th the Syrian Ministry of Health declared a cholera outbreak. This is the first outbreak of cholera since the conflict began in 2011. Cholera is spread via contaminated food and water and death is due to complications of dehydration. At this time there have been more than 2,000 cases of watery diarrhea reported in Syria with over 70 percent being located in Aleppo.

The cholera contamination is believed to have originated from the Euphrates River which is used to irrigate crops. It is estimated that over 5 million people rely on this river as their source of water. Cholera was also found in an ice factory which was subsequently shut down. In response, water chlorination has been scaled up to help disinfect the potentially contaminated water supply.



<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/cholera-outbreak-syria-poses-serious-threat-un-2022-09-13/>

Further reading

<https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/cholera-outbreak-syria-poses-further-risk-displaced-population>

Asia/Pacific

Japan's Says to Drink More Alcohol

Since the 1990s alcohol consumption in Japan has been declining. There are a few reasons for this according to Japan's tax agency such as the increase in aging population and declining birth rate. These population changes have led to a fewer number of people present to consume alcohol. In addition, COVID restrictions prevented people from visiting pubs. The government previously created a campaign to decrease alcohol consumption by focusing on societal and health problems linked to alcohol. However, now the government is changing its campaign to try and encourage alcohol consumption.



<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/lifestyle-culture/article/3189370/japan-launches-sake-viva-campaign-urging-younger>

To combat this decline in alcohol consumption Japan's National Tax Agency has created an online contest called, Sake Viva! This project asks for business plans to lure the new generation into drinking. The contest is open to people ages 20 to 39 years old and they must submit their business plan by September 9th. The final round of contestants will be judged in person in Tokyo on November 10th.

There has been backlash to this new campaign and people question how a government that previously had campaigns to prevent alcohol consumption is now sponsoring this contest.

Further Reading

<https://www.npr.org/2022/08/18/1118163173/japans-tax-alcohol-young-people-campaign>

Sub-Saharan Africa

Medical Xenophobia in South Africa

Primary healthcare services must provide free healthcare to all people in South Africa according to the National Health Act, including refugees. In 1988 the country's Refugee Act was created which stipulates that refugees and undocumented migrants are entitled to the same basic public healthcare as the citizens of the country, including maternity care. For higher levels of healthcare services the healthcare system must apply a principle, "progressive realization" which states that the state must provide as much as it can within the limitations that exist. The patient therefore may have to pay for some or all of these additional services provided.



<https://www.sapeople.com/2022/08/31/why-south-africans-are-fuming-that-migrants-have-access-to-healthcare/>

Medical xenophobia is a form of discrimination that describes negative attitudes of healthcare providers based on a patient's country of origin. Medical xenophobia has been identified as a problem in South Africa especially within metropolitan cities. This is often due to political scapegoating. A new anti-immigration movement named Operation Dudula (which means "push back" in Zulu) has been picketing outside a hospital in Atteridgeville. The protestors' message is that these non-nationals are overburdening the current healthcare system by using the resources. However, this is not actually the case. Non-nationals only contribute to 8 percent of the total population. The real reason for healthcare challenges are related to general shortages of both medical personnel and equipment.

Further reading

<https://bhekisisa.org/health-news-south-africa/2022-09-01-access-to-healthcare-for-migrants-in-south-africa/>

Europe

Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Plant on the Frontline

Zaporizhzhia is the largest nuclear plant in Europe and contains six of the 15 nuclear reactors in Ukraine. Prior to the war this plant supplied about 20% of Ukraine's total electricity. It has been occupied by Russian forces since the early weeks of the war. Zaporizhzhia has continued to be operated by Ukrainian technicians who are working under extremely stressful conditions. During the war the nuclear plant has fallen victim to shelling by military activity in the surrounding area threatening its structural integrity and placing the nearby population at risk. Fresh shelling, reported on September 6, has knocked out water and power in the town near the plant. The source of the shelling is unclear as both Ukrainian and Russian forces blame each other. The potential harm from this is a radiation disaster. The biggest risk to the plant is a drop in the water supply as pressurized water is used to maintain the temperatures of the nuclear fission of the Uranium. If there is a decrease or lack in water this could prevent the reactors to maintain their cool temperature and can cause hydrogen to be released and the destruction of the reactor leading to a nuclear disaster.



<https://www.dw.com/en/ukraine-un-head-calls-shelling-at-europes-largest-nuclear-plant-zaporizhzhia-suicidal/a-62698157>

Another concern is that Russia will try to redistribute the energy away from Ukraine and into now Russian occupied territories. This could leave many Ukrainians without electricity this upcoming winter.

In response, the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) sent inspectors to evaluate the state of the plant. They have been determining the functionality of the plant and the safety and security systems as well as the staff's working conditions and emergency response. They have also called for the creation of a security zone surrounding the nuclear plant.

Further reading

<https://graphics.reuters.com/UKRAINE-CRISIS/ZAPORIZHZHIA/mypmznjqvr/>