

## HealthMap Newsletter August 2009

This is a low-frequency newsletter from HealthMap.org. You are receiving this message because you subscribed via our Web site.

In this issue:

- New Features
  - o NEJM Influenza A (H1N1)
  - o New Languages
  - o Social Networks
  - o HM Community (Participatory Epidemiology)
  - o E-mail Alerts
  - o Data Sources
- Updates
  - o New Staff
- Publications & Presentations
- HealthMap in the News
- Opportunities

### New Features

(1) NEJM Influenza A (H1N1): HealthMap collaborated on an exciting project with the New England Journal of Medicine's H1N1 Influenza Center (<http://h1n1.nejm.org/>) in response to the H1N1 outbreak. HealthMap developed an interactive map of worldwide cases of H1N1 influenza (<http://healthmap.org/nejm>). Although the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) have stopped providing official case counts; we continue to update the map and provide weekly summaries in our blog (<http://healthmapblog.blogspot.com/>) with global case count information reported by unofficial sources.

As reported in Science Magazine, HealthMap provided one of the earliest sources of information on H1N1:

<http://blogs.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/special/swine-flu-timeline.html>

1 April HealthMap, a global disease alert system run by academics, flags a news story from Mexico about a strange respiratory outbreak in the state of Veracruz that has claimed two lives.

(2) New Languages: Arabic and Portuguese HealthMap are now available!

Infectious disease alerts are now being monitored in Portuguese and Arabic in addition to Chinese, Spanish, French, Russian, and English. HealthMap would like to especially thank Rita Rio, Luiz Jacintho da Silva, Jack Woodall, and the staff at Argus for their translation assistance, which made the addition of these two languages possible.

(3) Social Networks: Follow HealthMap on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/healthmap>) to receive breaking news updates on the Influenza A (H1N1) pandemic and health alerts of potential international significance. In addition, HealthMap is now on Facebook! Become a fan and take part in informal discussions on ongoing outbreaks, disease warnings, and/or other events of public health importance.

(4) HealthMap Community Participatory Epidemiology: HealthMap has added the ability for our site visitors to add outbreaks or health alerts to the map, available to the public via the "HealthMap Community" feed. More than 700 alerts have already been added using this feature since it went live in February. These contributions are extremely valuable to our service, and we thank everyone who has helped us to improve HealthMap. To join the users already contributing, enter the URL of the new health alert and your email address directly below the map on the main HealthMap page.

(5) Email Alerts: We continue to provide emails for health alerts of potential international significance, as determined by interpretation of the WHO Interim Guidance for the use of Annex 2 of the International Health Regulations (2005). If you are interested in signing up for these announcements, please click the link below. You will always have the option to later disable these messages.

<http://healthmap.org/admin/emailpref.php?f=2&tkd=d92c5>

(6) Data Sources: HealthMap is now monitoring disease alerts from the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and from ProMED's new East Africa network (ProMED-EAFR). For more information about ProMED's initiative focusing on emerging infectious diseases in East Africa please visit: <http://eafr.promedmail.org/>.

## Updates

(1) New Staff: The HealthMap team has grown yet again! Sumiko Mekaru, DVM, MPVM, MLIS is a veterinarian and epidemiologist interested in environmental factors contributing to infectious disease outbreaks. She joins us as a Researcher, as she is also working on completing her dissertation at Boston University's School of Public Health.

## Recent Publications

- Wilson K, Brownstein JS (2009) Early detection of disease

outbreaks using the Internet. Canadian Medical Association Journal. Mar 12.

<http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/rapidpdf/cmaj.1090215>

- Brownstein JS, Freifeld CC, and Madoff LC (2009) Digital Disease Detection — Harnessing the Web for Public Health Surveillance. New England Journal of Medicine  
<http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/NEJMp0900702>
- Brownstein JS, Freifeld CC, and Madoff LC (2009) Influenza A (H1N1) Virus, 2009 - Online Monitoring. New England Journal of Medicine  
<http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/NEJMp0904012>

#### Selection of HealthMap Articles in the News

- VOA News. (June 2009). Using the Internet to Track Disease Outbreaks.  
<http://www.voanews.com/english/Science/2009-06-05-voa25.cfm>
- Duncan Jefferies (2009). A web-crawling system is providing vital, up-to-date data on the global spread of disease – including swine flu. The Guardian.  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2009/may/07/information-outbreak-swine-flu>
- Josh Levs (2009). Josh Levs shows us where outbreaks of the swine flu are. CNN.  
<http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/health/2009/04/27/dcl.levs.swine.flu.cnn>
- Eric Bland (2009). Swine Flu Outbreak Tracked With Twitter. MSNBC Technology & Science, Discovery Channel News.  
<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/30454631/>
- Steven Levitt (2009). Google Will Save the World. The New York Times Freakonomics Blog.  
<http://freakonomics.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/03/17/google-will-save-the-world/?scp=1&sq=google%20canadian%20medical&st=cse>
- Thomas Jolicoeur, Canwest News Service (2009). Montrealer Helps Map Global Diseases. Canwest News Service.  
<http://www.canada.com/health/Montrealer+helps+global+diseases/1386934/story.html>
- Jacob Goldstein (2009). Google Searches as Early Warning for

Disease Outbreaks. The Wall Street Journal Health Blog.

<http://blogs.wsj.com/health/2009/03/13/google-searches-as-early-warning-for-disease-outbreaks/>

#### Opportunities

We continue to seek help from anyone with multilingual abilities and a background in epidemiology and/or public health. In particular, we are seeking individuals fluent in Vietnamese, Khmer, Thai, Lao, Burmese, and Mandarin. Please contact us at [info@healthmap.org](mailto:info@healthmap.org) if you are interested in helping us monitor outbreak news in these additional languages. We hope you find the new design and features of HealthMap useful. Please continue to let us know how we might improve HealthMap.

Best regards,

The HealthMap Team

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For questions, comments or to unsubscribe from this list please send an email to [info@healthmap.org](mailto:info@healthmap.org)  
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