Top news stories from AMA Morning Rounds®: Week of July 25, 2022

Read AMA Morning Rounds®’ most popular stories in medicine and public health from the week of July 25, 2022–July 29, 2022.

Nearly 54% of young U.S. adults deal with at least one chronic health issue

HealthDay (7/28) reports, “Obesity, depression, high blood pressure, asthma: These are just a few of the chronic health conditions that are now affecting almost 40 million Americans between the ages 18 and 34,” investigators concluded. Federal data from 2019 “found that more than half of young adults (nearly 54%) now deal with at least one chronic health issue,” with “the most prevalent conditions” being “obesity (25.5%), depression (21.3%), and high blood pressure (10.7%).” The findings were published online in the CDC’s Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

Burkholderia pseudomallei bacteria detected in U.S. soil, water samples for the first time

NBC News (7/27) reports, “A potentially deadly type of bacteria previously found only in parts of Southern Asia, Africa or Australia has been detected for the first time in soil and water samples in the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Wednesday.” This “bacteria, Burkholderia pseudomallei, can cause an illness called melioidosis that has proven fatal in half of cases worldwide.”

The AP (7/27, Stobbe) reports, “The bacteria was found on the property of a Mississippi man who had come down with the disease, melioidosis.” Physicians “should consider melioidosis even in patients who haven’t traveled to other countries, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in a health alert.”

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MedPage Today (7/27, Ingram) reports that “it’s likely the bacteria has been present since at least 2020, and modeling data suggest the area is well-suited for continued growth, the agency warned.”

New website launched to help address extreme heat in U.S.

NBC News (7/26, Chow) reports that on Tuesday, the administration “unveiled a new website designed to help keep Americans safe from extreme heat.” The “Heat.gov site will provide maps, data and other information to help the public and local officials prepare for heat waves, understand the health risks and identify who is most vulnerable.”

The AP (7/26, Borenstein, Wildeman) reports the site “follows other Biden Administration action on heat, including financial aid to help on air conditioning for low-income residents, grants to build new cooling centers, upcoming rules for workers outside in the heat and help for cities to cool urban heat islands with more tree cover.”

People with long COVID experience wider set of symptoms than previously thought

HealthDay (7/25, Thompson) reports, “People with long-haul COVID experience a wider set of symptoms than once thought...British researchers report” in an “analysis of electronic health records for 2.4 million U.K. residents.” The patterns of such “symptoms tended to be grouped mainly as respiratory or brain symptoms, alongside a third category representing a broader range of health problems, including hair loss and erectile dysfunction,” according to the results published in Nature Medicine.

MedPage Today (7/25, George) reports that “overall, 62 symptoms were significantly associated with a history of SARS-CoV-2 infection after 12 weeks, reported” researchers. The analysis also identified risk factors for long COVID, including “being part of an ethnic minority group, socioeconomic deprivation, smoking, obesity, and a wide range of comorbidities.”

WHO declares monkeypox outbreak global health emergency

The Washington Post (7/23, A1, Nirappil) reported, “The World Health Organization on Saturday declared the international monkeypox outbreak a global emergency, a decision that underscores concerns about rapidly spreading infections sparked by the virus.” The decision “to label the outbreak
a Public Health Emergency of International Concern...is expected to marshal new funding to fight the outbreak and to pressure governments into action.” The “announcement was accompanied by recommendations to bolster a coordinated global monkeypox response designed to intensify surveillance, accelerate research into vaccines and therapeutics, and strengthen infection control in hospitals.”

Bloomberg (7/23, Hipwell, Baschuk) reported, “WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus personally intervened after nine members of the expert committee were against declaring the monkeypox outbreak an emergency, while six were in favor.”

Reuters (7/23, Grover, Revill, Rigby) reported Tedros “said the risk of monkeypox...was moderate globally, except in the Europe, where the WHO has deemed the risk as high.”

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