

HST 60percent – 4 August 2023

Amid a Syphilis Spike and a Treatment Shortage, LGBTQ Health Centers Are Increasingly Prescribing DoxyPEP for STI Prevention



TheBody | 24 July 2023

In June, the drugmaker Pfizer announced that its long-acting injectable antibiotic Bicillin (penicillin G benzathine), the first-line treatment for the sexually transmitted infection (STI) syphilis, was undergoing a supply shortage that likely would not be fully resolved for a year. One of the reasons for the shortage, said the drugmaker, was the sharp increase in U.S. syphilis infections in recent years—up nearly 75% since 2017, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—which had increased demand for the drug. Amid the shortage, the CDC is recommending that Bicillin be used only for pregnant patients or infants who have been exposed to or diagnosed with the infection (there is no alternative treatment for these groups).

<https://www.thebody.com/article/lgbtq-health-centers-increasingly-prescribing-doxyep-sti-prevention>

Opinion: HIV investments remain no-brainers, but some things need to change



Spotlight | 25 July 2023

Making the case for governments and donors to pump money into the HIV response has become more difficult over the last decade. This is partly a result of the notable successes we've had – for example, in 2022, HIV-related deaths in South Africa were down to less than a fifth of what it was in 2005. There is clearly some justification for the point of view that HIV simply isn't the crisis it used to be.

<https://www.spotlightnsp.co.za/2023/07/26/statin-lowers-cardio-risk-in-people-living-with-hiv-large-study-finds/>

Rwanda: Global Initiative Founder on Championing Women's Reproductive Health Rights



allAfrica | 25 July 2023

In the ongoing battle for women's reproductive health rights and the fight against HIV, acknowledging the intersectionality of various issues is crucial. SisterLove, an international non-profit organisation with 34 years of experience, understands this need. The organisation has been making progress in tackling the intersections of sexual and reproductive health rights and justice for women and girls, especially those of African descent.

<https://allafrica.com/stories/202307260115.html>

HIV Vaccines, bNAbs and an Update from NIH's Office of AIDS Research



Poz | 26 July 2023

On Tuesday at the International AIDS Society's 12th Conference on HIV Science (IAS 2023), HIV.gov continued our conversations about research highlights, including a focus on the latest about HIV vaccines. We also heard an update from the NIH Office of AIDS Research. NIH's Carl Dieffenbach, PhD, Director of the Division of AIDS at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), spoke with Louis Shackelford, MPH, about HIV vaccine studies being discussed at IAS 2023 and potential roles for broadly neutralizing antibodies (or bNAbs). Louis is the Acting Director for External Relations at the NIH-supported HIV Vaccine Trials Network (HVTN) and COVID-19 Prevention Network.

<https://www.poz.com/blog/hiv-vaccines-bnabs-update-nihs-office-aids-research>

Final IAS 2023 Conversations: HIV & STI Prevention, Stigma, and U=U



Poz | 26 July 2023

As the International AIDS Society's 12th Conference on HIV Science (IAS 2023) drew to a close on Wednesday, HIV.gov continued our conversations about the latest research being presented, with

updates on post-exposure prophylaxis for STIs (Doxy PEP), implementation of HIV PrEP, and the effectiveness of U=U.

<https://www.poz.com/blog/final-ias-2023-conversations-hiv-sti-prevention-stigma-uu>

Coercive reproductive healthcare practices reported by many women living with HIV



Aidsmap | 26 July 2023

Women with HIV are at an increased risk of reproductive coercion by healthcare professionals across sub-Saharan Africa, eastern Europe and central Asia. Sex workers, women who use drugs and migrants who are also HIV positive are more likely to receive sub-standard and stigmatising reproductive care. This was reported by Dr Carrie Lyons from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health at the 12th International AIDS Society Conference on HIV Science (IAS 2023) in Brisbane, Australia.

<https://www.aidsmap.com/news/jul-2023/coercive-reproductive-healthcare-practices-reported-many-women-living-hiv>

Namibia: PEPFAR to Continue Funding Namibia



All Africa | 27 July 2023

Head of the United States President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (Pepfar) John Nkengasong said the US will continue supporting Namibia to combat the spread of HIV-AIDS, despite the possibility of the country adopting an anti-gay marriage law as recently done in Uganda. His comments come at a time when everyone is waiting on president Hage Geingob to announce whether he will sign the anti-gay marriage bills passed by the parliament and tabled by ruling Swapo party backbencher Jerry Ekanjio. Nkengasong said they America have the same approach with Namibia as it did with Uganda, after both countries introduced anti-gay legislation recently.

<https://allafrica.com/stories/202307280095.html>

Addressing violence against women sex workers in Peru



UNAIDS | 27 July 2023

Ángela Villón Bustamante has been a sex worker and human rights activist for her community in Peru for almost 25 years. She has experienced first-hand the violence against sex workers. After she was beaten by a policeman in 1996, she began her activism. "I don't want anyone else to end up almost dead like I did. The organization Miluska Vida y Dignidad (Miluska Life and Dignity, in English) is the organisation I created almost 30 years ago to find justice for those of us violated by public forces", recalls Ángela. "It was the first sex workers' organisation in Peru, and its name is in honour of my dear friend Miluska, who died after being beaten by one of them." In the same years, transgender woman Alejandra Fang also was imprisoned for sex work, and a police officer asked her to have sex to be released. "I was forced into sex because, as a trans woman, I had no alternative. As a result of that traumatic situation, I decided to become an activist," says Alejandra.

https://unaid.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2023/july/20230727_Peru-sexworkers-plan

A wearable ultrasound scanner could detect breast cancer earlier



Medical Xpress | 28 July 2023

When breast cancer is diagnosed in the earliest stages, the survival rate is nearly 100%. However, for tumors detected in later stages, that rate drops to around 25%. In hopes of improving the overall survival rate for breast cancer patients, MIT researchers have designed a wearable ultrasound device that could allow people to detect tumors when they are still in early stages. In particular, it could be valuable for patients at high risk of developing breast cancer in between routine mammograms.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-07-wearable-ultrasound-scanner-breast-cancer.html>

[WATCH] Why do more teen girls than boys have HIV?



Bhekisisa | 28 July 2023

Teen girls and young women in Africa are up to eight times more likely to contract HIV than their male peers. This is because women's bodies increase their chances of getting HIV through sex. Teen girls are also still growing, so their cervixes have lots of soft tissue HIV can infect. Fewer girls than boys in Africa go to school. This increases their chances of getting HIV as adults, as they're less likely to find jobs. Find out more from the first of our five-part video series on key populations (groups with a higher chance of getting infected with HIV).

<https://bhekisisa.org/multimedia/2023-07-28-watch-why-do-more-teen-girls-than-boys-have-hiv/>

An agent-based model of binge drinking, inequitable gender norms and their contribution to HIV transmission, with application to South Africa

BMC Infectious Diseases

BMC Infectious Diseases | 29 July 2023

Leigh F. Johnson, Mmamapudi Kubjane, Alex de Voux, Julius Ohrnberger and Mpho Tlali

Binge drinking, inequitable gender norms and sexual risk behaviour are closely interlinked. Binge drinking is strongly associated with transactional, casual and condomless sex and multiple and concurrent partnerships. Inequitable gender norms are associated with male partner concurrency unprotected sex binge drinking and male perpetration of intimate partner violence (IPV). Indeed, binge drinking, IPV and HIV risk behaviour are often described as forming a 'Substance Abuse, Violence and AIDS' (SAVA) syndemic.

<https://bmcinfectdis.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12879-023-08470-y>

Why SA's breastfeeding rate is shockingly low



Cape Talk | 29 July 2023

Working parents are faced with immense challenges when they have a newborn baby. When it's time to get back to full-time work, the biggest question is what to do about infant feeding. This is one of the most common reasons why new moms don't even try or give up on breastfeeding. From the 1 to 7 August marks World Breastfeeding Week under the theme 'Enabling breastfeeding: Making a difference for working parents'. It's hoped this will drive home the message of breastfeeding support for mothers.

<https://www.capetalk.co.za/articles/480264/why-sa-s-breastfeeding-rate-is-shockingly-low>

A broader vision for women's health

THE LANCET

The Lancet Editorial | 29 July 2023

At the 2023 Women Deliver Conference on July 17, an event that seeks to champion gender equality, the UN Women Executive Director, Sima Bahous, said “Our hopes and aspirations for a brighter, more sustainable, more equal, and more peaceful planet hang by a thread”. This warning comes amid a relentless pushback against women's rights in many countries. Progress has come to a standstill—and in some cases, has even been reversed, from Afghanistan, where the Taliban has banned women and teenage girls from participating in many aspects of public life, to the USA, where access to abortion is increasingly being restricted. Geopolitical tensions, a climate emergency, and the global economic crisis post COVID-19 have added new challenges to achieving gender equality and to elevating the status of women in society. The under-recognition of the value of women reflects outdated vision of women's health: a vision too focused on the reproductive role of women.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(23\)01570-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(23)01570-2/fulltext)

People with HIV remain at higher risk of dying from COVID-19 in the Omicron era



Aidsmap | 31 July 2023

Deaths from COVID-19 have fallen much less sharply in people with HIV compared with the rest of the population since the arrival of the Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported last week at the 12th International AIDS Society Conference on HIV Science (IAS 2023) in Brisbane. The study found that one in five people with HIV admitted to hospital with COVID-19 died during the Omicron wave compared to one in ten people without HIV. The Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2 emerged in late 2021 and swiftly replaced other variants as the cause of almost all hospital admissions for COVID-19. Although more transmissible than any previous variant of SARS-CoV-2, it became apparent within weeks of its emergence that Omicron was less likely to cause severe illness than the preceding Delta variant.

<https://www.aidsmap.com/news/jul-2023/people-hiv-remain-higher-risk-dying-covid-19-omicron-era>

Here is what transgender women across Asia want in PrEP



Aidsmap | 31 July 2023

If PrEP were free, injectable, had no side effects, could be accessed through peer-led community clinics every 6-12 months, and STI testing was offered as an additional service at the clinics, the uptake among transgender women in Asia could increase to up to 87%. This was reported by Warittha Tiesapjaroen from the Melbourne Sexual Health Centre at the 12th International AIDS Society Conference on HIV Science (IAS 2023) in Brisbane last week. As of 2021, 15.6% of people living with HIV were in the Asia-Pacific region, with 260,000 new diagnoses reported. Trans women are particularly vulnerable, with a 66 times higher risk of acquiring HIV than the general population. It is therefore urgent to create appealing PrEP programmes for them.

<https://www.aidsmap.com/news/jul-2023/here-what-transgender-women-across-asia-want-prep>

Adherence counselling reverses viral rebound on dolutegravir in 95% of cases

Aidsmap | 1 August 2023



Ninety-five per cent of people who experienced viral load rebound while taking dolutegravir in a large clinical trial in South Africa were able to re-suppress viral load with the help of adherence counselling and did not need to switch treatment, Dr Andrew Hill of the University of Liverpool reported last week at the 12th International AIDS Society Conference on HIV Science (IAS 2023) in Brisbane, Australia.

<https://www.aidsmap.com/news/aug-2023/adherence-counselling-reverses-viral-rebound-dolutegravir-95-cases>

Fewer Women Believe Pregnant Women Get Quality Care



Gallup | 1 August 2023

Although maternal mortality rates are down sharply from where they were 20 years ago, a recent United Nations report shows the world's progress toward reaching the UN's sustainable development goal of reducing maternal mortality has stalled. Further, there is evidence that rates may be heading in the wrong direction. In 2020, the global maternal mortality ratio was 152 deaths per 100,000 live births, up from 151 deaths per 100,000 live births the year before.

<https://news.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/509033/fewer-women-believe-pregnant-women-quality-care.aspx>

Africa's High Cancer Deaths Can Be Addressed by Improved Access to Key Medicines



Health Policy Watch | 1 August 2023

Africa has one of the highest cancer death rates in the world, yet this could be markedly improved by better access to treatments already widely available in high-income countries for the continent's biggest killers – breast, cervical, lung and prostate cancers and Kaposi sarcoma. This is according to a recent study by the Botswana-Rutgers Partnership for Health, which researched which cancer treatments that are effective in other regions could have an impact in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) – but are not available or hard to get.

<https://healthpolicy-watch.news/africas-high-cancer-deaths-can-be-addressed-by-improved-access-to-key-medicines/>

US Consolidates Efforts to Address Pandemics, HIV and Other Global Health Threats into Single Bureau



Health Policy Watch | 2 August 2023

The US has consolidated its efforts to address global health threats into a single structure, the Bureau of Global Health Security and Diplomacy, which was launched on Monday. Renowned Cameroonian health expert Dr John Nkengasong, appointed last year to lead the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), leads the new structure and will report directly to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

<https://healthpolicy-watch.news/us-consolidates-efforts-to-address-pandemics-hiv-and-other-global-health-threats/>

Injectable HIV treatment unlikely to be arriving soon in the global south

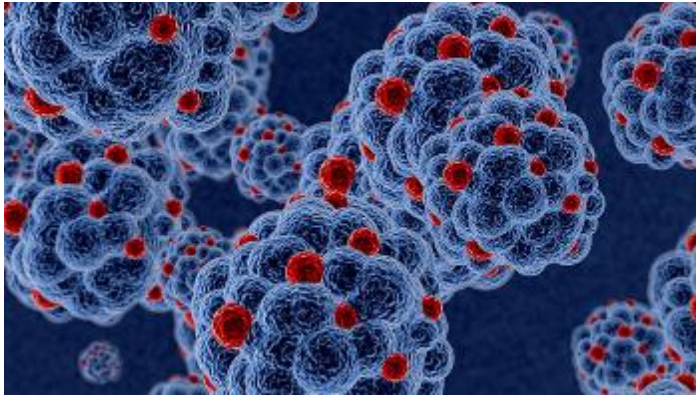
Aidsmap | 2 August 2023



While there is a path to injectable PrEP becoming available in the next five years, the widespread use of injectables to treat people living with HIV in low- and middle-income countries is unlikely in the near future. The combination of injectable cabotegravir and rilpivirine has only been approved by a handful of countries, it's not clear whether rilpivirine will be available as a generic, and the regimen has complexities which make it less attractive than the preferred oral regimens.

<https://www.aidsmap.com/news/aug-2023/injectable-hiv-treatment-unlikely-be-arriving-soon-global-south>

Geneva Patient likely first to be cured of HIV through standard stem cell transplant



IOL | 3 August 2023

In a groundbreaking medical achievement, a man known only as the "Geneva patient" has become the latest individual to be cured of HIV after undergoing a stem cell transplant as part of cancer treatment. This remarkable case marks the sixth known instance of an HIV cure, with previous patients achieving long-term remission, but the Geneva patient's treatment stands out as the first successful cure without the requirement of a rare gene mutation called CCR5, which typically blocks HIV from infecting cells.

<https://www.iol.co.za/lifestyle/health/geneva-patient-likely-first-to-be-cured-of-hiv-through-standard-stem-cell-transplant-e858554d-f867-43df-8887-a3e0a3b4693b>

The Public Health Association of South Africa (PHASA) – calling all public health champions!



PHASA is a voluntary organisation of individuals passionate about population health improvements and the reduction of health inequities, and whose work focuses on the prevention of disease, the promotion of health, and the improved functioning of the country's health care system. Are you passionate about improving the health and wellbeing of communities? Do you want to expand your professional network and stay current in the field of public health? Do you want to be part of the movement to improve Public Health? Then join the Public Health Association of South Africa today to make a difference and enhance your career!

As a member, you will:

- Gain access to cutting-edge research, resources, and best practices
- Connect with public health professionals from around the world
- Participate in educational events and conferences
- Contribute to shaping the future of public health
- Have access to mentors in the field
- Be at the forefront of advocacy initiatives.

To become a member, simply visit our [website](#) and complete the membership application. Don't miss this opportunity to advance your career and improve public health.

<https://phasa.org.za/index.php/get-involved/membership>

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