

## HST 60percent – 1 September 2023

**Pregnant and postpartum women with mental health disorders more likely to use cannabis**



*News Medical Life Science | 25 August 2023*

Pregnant and recently postpartum women who suffer with mental health disorders may be vulnerable to using cannabis to self-medicate, according to a Rutgers-led study. In a nationally representative survey, Qiana L. Brown, an assistant professor at the Rutgers School of Social Work, examined the relationship between mental health disorders, cannabis use and cannabis use disorder (CUD) among pregnant and postpartum women in the US. The findings were published online in advance of print in the July 2023 issue of the journal Drug and Alcohol Dependence.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20230825/Pregnant-and-postpartum-women-with-mental-health-disorders-more-likely-to-use-cannabis.aspx>

### **MEET OLIVIA PHARO, THE NURSE WHO USED HER PENSION TO PROVIDE BETTER HEALTHCARE IN ATLANTIS**



*Health-e News | 25 August 2023*

When Sister Olivia Pharo retired from her job as a nurse at Wesfleur hospital in Cape Town in 2018 it was just the beginning. Most retirees look forward to putting their feet up and spending time with their families. But Pharo did something extraordinary. She used her pension payout to open her own private clinic in Atlantis, a neighbourhood she's lived and worked in for most of her life. "Wesfleur [hospital] covers a large area. It was supposed to be a day hospital. But because of the segregation act and the amount of people that were moved to Atlantis, it became a 24 hour casualty, maternity and in-patient facility with a community health centre attached to it."

<https://health-e.org.za/2023/08/25/meet-olivia-pharo-the-nurse-who-used-her-pension-to-provide-better-healthcare-in-atlantis/>

**OPINION: We are short-changing women with budget cuts, corruption, and underspending in health**



*Spotlight | 25 August 2023*

It is often said that when you educate a girl; you educate a nation. The same rings true for investing in women's health, which ultimately benefits our entire country. The World Economic Forum has described women's health as the cornerstone of economies and societies worldwide. While some progress has been made in ensuring access to quality healthcare for women in this country, gender inequality continues to negatively impact health outcomes. A public healthcare system that is both adequately funded and capable of ensuring that resources reach the intended beneficiaries is critical to advancing gender equity in the country.

<https://www.spotlightnsp.co.za/2023/08/25/opinion-we-are-short-changing-women-with-budget-cuts-corruption-and-underspending/>

#### **Top 5 HIV PrEP stories from IAS 2023**



*Aidsmap | 25 August 2023*

There were lots of new studies on using PrEP (regular medication to prevent HIV infection) at the recent 12th International AIDS Society Conference on HIV Science (IAS 2023) in Brisbane, including the use of tablets and injectables. Here are five highlights. Exposure to tenofovir-based PrEP in the womb does not affect children's bone density or stunt their growth, according to a new analysis. The bone mineral density of 40 PrEP-exposed and 71 matched unexposed children was measured using DEXA scans. Measurements were taken at the age of three. Whole body bone density and median height was similar for children with and without PrEP exposure in the womb. The study will continue to monitor the children with DEXA scans up to five years of age.

<https://www.aidsmap.com/news/aug-2023/top-5-hiv-prep-stories-ias-2023>

#### **CDC: Significant disparities seen in maternity care**



*Contemporary OB/GYN | 25 August 2023*

According to a recent report from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1 in 5 women experience mistreatment during pregnancy and delivery care. Maternity care data was obtained from the Porter Novelli View Moms survey, which was completed by 2402 individuals from April 24 to April 30, 2023. Most of these patients experienced satisfaction with maternity care, but mistreatment rates were high among those who did not experience satisfaction.

<https://www.contemporaryobgyn.net/view/cdc-significant-disparities-seen-in-maternity-care>

**Medical gaslighting: Women's pain ignored and serious health problems left undiagnosed due to sexist healthcare system**



*Mail Online | 27 August 2023*

Ged Kearney knew there was a crisis simmering in Australian hospitals and GP clinics after her cousin's tragic death just hours after she was sent home by a doctor with some Panadol. Australia's Assistant Minister for Health was a nurse for 20 years before moving into politics. She says back then, women were systemically dismissed, accused of 'doctor shopping' for pills and girls as young as 12 put on birth control pills with very little consideration. Unfortunately, not a lot has changed.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-12391297/Ged-Kearney-medical-misogyny-women-share-trauma.html>

**Nigerians with HIV are stigmatised: study shows support from family and friends is crucial to well-being**



*The Conversation* | 27 August 2023

Sub-Saharan Africa is one of the regions most affected by HIV. In Nigeria alone, an estimated 1.8 million people are living with the virus. Antiretroviral therapy has made strong gains in reducing HIV-related deaths. But people living with HIV in resource-constrained settings, like Nigeria, still face psychological challenges and poor health outcomes that are attributed to HIV-related stigma.

<https://theconversation.com/nigerians-with-hiv-are-stigmatised-study-shows-support-from-family-and-friends-is-crucial-to-well-being-211021>

**Rwanda Biomedical Centre Relies on Youth Centres, Campaigns to Curb HIV in Eastern Province**



*allAfrica* | 28 August 2023

Officials at the Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC) are emphasizing community engagement, the utilization of youth centers, and parental involvement as key measures to counter the high spread of HIV in the Eastern Province. Information from the RBC indicates that the Eastern Province has the highest rate of HIV transmission in the country. For instance, between June 22 and July 21 of this year, 97 new cases were recorded in the province, compared to 52 in the Southern Province, 39 in Kigali City, 32 in the Northern Province, and 27 in the Western Province.

<https://allafrica.com/stories/202308290228.html>

## Body mass index and cervical cancer screening among women aged 15–69 years in Eswatini: evidence from a population-based survey



*BMC | 28 August 2023*

*Mfundu P. S. Motsa, Wanda Estinfort, Yohane V. A. Phiri, Maswati S. Simelane & Peter A. M. Ntenda*

Cervical cancer stands as one of the most prevalent cancer types among women, despite its preventable nature through early screening and vaccination strategies. The link between being overweight or obese and various adverse health outcomes, including an elevated cancer risk, is well established. Within this study, our central objective was to explore the correlation between body mass index (BMI) and cervical cancer screening (CCS) rates. Moreover, we sought to investigate whether socioeconomic status potentially modulates this relationship.

<https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-023-16520-y>

### **UCT professor working on radical technology for testing bacterial vaginosis, a key agent of HIV**



*News24 | 28 August 2023*

A University of Cape Town professor is developing technology to test for bacterial vaginosis and associated genital tract inflammation. Research shows that adolescent girls and young women aged 15 to 24 are at higher risk of HIV infection than their male counterparts as a result of genital inflammation being linked to sexually transmitted infection. Alarming rates of HIV infection among adolescent girls and African young women underscore the urgency of addressing underlying factors.

<https://www.news24.com/news24/health/uct-professor-working-on-radical-technology-for-testing-bacterial-vaginosis-a-key-agent-of-hiv-20230828>

### **Clinical studies bring GIFT of sexual health closer for women**



*Times Live* | 28 August 2023

A South African innovation designed to screen for inflammation associated with HIV infections and improve women's sexual and reproductive health has been manufactured and entered its first in-field clinical studies. Almost 700 women will be involved in the validation of the Genital Inflammation Test (GIFT) developed at the University of Cape Town (UCT).

<https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2023-08-28-clinical-studies-bring-gift-of-sexual-health-closer-for-women/>

#### **New online course: How data can help to end violence against women**



*WHO* | 28 August 2023

A new online course for public servants and policy makers on how to use data to end violence against women is now available, launched by the WHO-UN Women Joint Programme on Violence Against Women Data and Measurement, in collaboration with Apolitical and the UN Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP). The free to access course is being hosted on Apolitical's peer-to-peer learning platform, an online community for people working in government and closely supporting government.

<https://www.who.int/news/item/28-08-2023-new-online-course--how-data-can-help-to-end-violence-against-women>

#### **Thriving or just surviving? The State of Women's Mental Health**





*Plos Blogs* | 28 August 2023

Why women's mental health matters? An important facet of optimal healthcare is improving patient reported and clinical outcomes in physical and mental health care offered. Mental illness in particular remains complex and, a preference to receive non-invasive treatments as well as early diagnosis has become important to patients and clinicians alike. The World Health Organization (WHO) indicates a need for differing approaches to promote wellbeing among men and women as the needs are profoundly different.

<https://yoursay.plos.org/2023/08/thriving-or-just-surviving-the-state-of-womens-mental-health/>

#### **UNEMPLOYMENT, SUBSTANCE ABUSE DRIVING GBV IN BOTSHABELO**



*Health-e News* | 28 August 2023

Police and community members say the growing cases of gender-based violence (GBV) in the Seloseshu cluster in Botshabelo east of Bloemfontein is likely the result of substance abuse and high unemployment rates. Speaking at a community dialogue in August police spokesperson and visible policing office delegate Lefu Masiza says more cases are being reported at the Botshabelo police station than other parts of the cluster.

<https://health-e.org.za/2023/08/28/unemployment-substance-abuse-driving-gbv-in-botshabelo/>

#### **Analysis of the Mediation Effects of Adverse Mental Health Outcomes in HIV-Infected Women of Childbearing Age from Multiple Perspectives Including Discrimination Perception**



*Dovepress | 29 August 2023*

*Zheng Y, Li X, Xia Y, Li X, Yang G, et al.*

HIV infection (Human immunodeficiency virus) has become a manageable chronic disease. Research across several disciplines has sought to inform the development of new HIV prevention and treatment efforts. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome reports that by 2020, an estimated 37.7 million people worldwide will be living with HIV, of whom more than half (53%) will be women aged 15 years and older. The same report also shows that women in sub-Saharan Africa have a high rate of HIV infection, with girls and women living with HIV accounting for 63% of total infections in the region.

<https://www.dovepress.com/analysis-of-the-mediation-effects-of-adverse-mental-health-outcomes-in-peer-reviewed-fulltext-article-PRBM>

### **Cervical cancer awareness and women's health equity**



*The New Times | 29 August 2023*

The international Women Deliver conference that was held in Kigali last month, was a platform for discussions surrounding women's health, technology in vaccine development, community health workers, and overall SRHR. However, discussions were not solely focused on advancements in medicine. The alarming cervical cancer related deaths was a topic that stayed with me. In countries such as the Philippines, Guatemala, and Burkina Faso, cervical cancer takes over 11 women's lives daily, over 500 annually, and records 1130 new cases per year, respectively. These alarming numbers remain a poignant reminder that education and awareness about the importance of early screening and treatment is desperately needed.

<https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/10275/opinions/cervical-cancer-awareness-and-womens-health-equity>

### **Transforming Women's Health: Four Key Pillars of Empowerment**



*Euromonitor International | 29 August 2023*

Women's Health has been identified by industry leaders and through Euromonitor International's global analyst network as one of the most commercially relevant themes across a wide range of consumer-facing industries, including health, beauty, nutrition, feminine care and lifestyle sectors.



Euromonitor International's introductory women's health and wellness framework enables the mapping of potential investment spaces through an all-encompassing view of care and their relevance by life stage.

<https://www.euromonitor.com/article/transforming-womens-health-four-key-pillars-of-empowerment>

**Health Beat #11 | Why do more Black SA women get cervical cancer than any other race in the country?**



*Bhekisisa | 29 August 2023*

The United Kingdom and Australia have virtually wiped out cervical cancer with jabs. But in South Africa thousands of women, particularly Black women, still die of the disease each year. The human papillomavirus (HPV), which is mostly contracted via sex, causes cervical cancer. HPV jabs are over 90% effective. That's why state schools in South Africa give girls the jabs for free — but we've fallen behind. This month on Health Beat, we find out why this vaccine drive has hit a snag and we meet a nurse who is convincing parents to get their daughters vaccinated. Mia Malan finds out why cervical cancer is a political disease and talks to the National Institute for Communicable Diseases about the impact of COVID-19 on parents' willingness to get their kids vaccinated.

<https://bhekisisa.org/bhekisisa-tv/2023-08-29-health-beat-11-why-do-more-black-sa-women-get-cervical-cancer-than-any-other-race-in-the-country/>

**Are we failing to bridge the gap in HPV vaccine coverage globally?**



*News Medical Life science | 29 August 2023*

Cervical cancer is among the five most prevalent cancers among women and also one of the major causes of cancer mortality, with statistics from 2020 reporting over 600,000 new cases and close to 350,000 deaths worldwide. In about 36 countries, it is associated with the most significant number of cancer mortalities, with low- and middle-income countries having the highest burden of cervical cancer. Currently, there are six approved vaccines against HPV, with one nonavalent, two quadrivalent, and three bivalent vaccines. Some are effective against the most prevalent cancer-causing genotypes, while others are more effective against the high-risk HPV genotypes. Based on various clinical trials, the World Health Organization (WHO) has modified its HPV vaccine dosing regimen since its introduction in 2006, with the current recommendations consisting of a single or two-dose regimen for girls between the ages of nine and 14 years and women between the ages of 15 and 20 years, and a two-dose regimen for women over the age of 21 years.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20230829/Are-we-failing-to-bridge-the-gap-in-HPV-vaccine-coverage-globally.aspx>

### **In-depth: Mental health needs of GBV survivors are not being met – what to do?**



*Spotlight | 30 August 2023*

A year or so ago, a young woman arrived at the St Anne’s Homes Women’s Shelter in Woodstock, Cape Town, so traumatised after a brutal sexual assault that she wept, alone, in her room for a week. “We have a counsellor at the shelter, but this woman was not able to open up about what had happened to her. She needed expert help,” says Oslynn Macounie, the manager at St Anne’s.

<https://www.spotlightnsp.co.za/2023/08/30/in-depth-mental-health-needs-of-gbv-survivors-are-not-being-met-what-to-do/>

### **Teens and depression: A back-to-school concern**



*Medical Xpress | 30 August 2023*

With many teens heading back to school, peer pressure and academic expectations are once again a reality. These added pressures can cause ups and downs during what can be an already tumultuous time of life. For some teens, though, the lows are more than just temporary feelings. They're symptoms of depression.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-08-teens-depression-back-to-school.html>

**“We went back to the community and told them it didn’t work” – lessons learned from a trial of youth-friendly health services**



*Aidsmap | 31 August 2023*

A large cluster randomised trial which offered community-based health services to young people in Zimbabwe failed to demonstrate improvements in the HIV care cascade but did showcase the positive impact of integrated health services. Results were presented at the 12th International AIDS Society Conference on HIV Science (IAS 2023) in Brisbane last month.

<https://www.aidsmap.com/news/aug-2023/we-went-back-community-and-told-them-it-didnt-work-lessons-learned-trial-youth>

### **Breastfeeding while hungry – Is enough being done to support mothers in the Free State?**



*Spotlight | 31 August 2023*

Earlier this month, from 1 to 7 August, the world celebrated breastfeeding week under the theme – “Enabling breastfeeding: making a difference for working parents”. This global campaign aims to create support and awareness about the benefits of breastfeeding among women who are physically able to do so. Exclusive breastfeeding for babies within the first six months of life is encouraged – also in South Africa – because breast milk contains all the nutrition that a baby needs. To improve infant nutrition by 2025, the World Health Organization (WHO) set targets to eliminate malnutrition and increase breastfeeding rates to at least 50% – targets South Africa also subscribes to.

<https://www.spotlightnsp.co.za/2023/08/31/breastfeeding-while-hungry-is-enough-being-done-to-support-mothers-in-the-free-state/>

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



## **PHASA**

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!

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- 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](https://phasa.org.za/index.php/get-involved/membership) 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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