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Health Department concerned about South Africa's high teen pregnancy rate



SABC News | 5 January 2023

Over 100 teenage mothers in South Africa gave birth on Christmas and New Year's Day this year. This figure from the National Health Department has sounded the alarm for local healthcare authorities. Experts are debating whether poverty and a lack of sex education from an early age could be contributing factors to the country's high teenage pregnancy rate. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Social Development says teenage pregnancy cannot be viewed as isolation from the challenges of poverty and early school dropouts among pregnant teenagers.

Study finds higher prevalence of HIV among women experiencing intimate partner violence



News Medical Life Science | 5 January 2023

Women who experience recent intimate partner violence (IPV) are three times more likely to contract HIV, according to a new study led by McGill University researchers. In regions like Sub-Saharan Africa, women

face an intersecting epidemic of intimate partner violence and HIV. "Sub-Saharan Africa is among one of the regions in the world with the highest prevalence of both IPV and HIV. We wanted to examine the effects of intimate partner violence on recent HIV infections and women's access to HIV care in this region," he says.

HIV remains a leading killer in Africa despite medical breakthroughs – how to eliminate it



The Conversation | 8 January 2023

About 38 million people around the world are living with HIV. About 70% of them live in Africa. This shows that there is no solution to the AIDS pandemic without a solution in Africa. In 2021, there were 1.5 million new cases of HIV – just over 4,000 cases per day around the world. At the same time, close to 700,000 people died. The big challenge is to address the dual realities of people still dying from HIV in large numbers, and the large numbers of new infections. The upside is that there is a clear plan with clear goals on how to address this. In 2016, countries came together at the United Nations to agree on what the world's strategy should be. The goal is to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. We spoke with leading scientist Professor Salim Abdool Karim about how to close the gaps.

Study finds increase in women 65 and older dying of cervical cancer



EurekAlert! | 9 January 2023

A new study conducted by UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center researchers shows an alarming number of California women 65 and older are facing late-stage cervical cancer diagnoses and dying from the disease. This is despite guidelines that recommend most women stop screening for cervical cancer at this age. "Our findings highlight the need to better understand how current screening guidelines might be failing women 65 and over," the study's lead author, UC Davis senior statistician Julianne Cooley, said.

Cognitive behavioral intervention ups antiretroviral therapy adherence in adolescents, young adults



Medical Xpress | 9 January 2023

The Adherence Connection for Counseling, Education, and Support (ACCESS) peer-led, mobile health cognitive behavioral antiretroviral therapy (ART) adherence intervention improves adherence to ART for adolescents and young adults (AYA) with HIV infection, according to a study published online Dec. 27 in *AIDS and Behavior*. Ann-Margaret Dunn Navarra, Ph.D., from the Rory Myers College of Nursing at New York University in New York City, and colleagues developed and tested the ACCESS peer-led, mobile health cognitive behavioral ART adherence intervention. HIV-positive AYA, aged 16 to 29 years, with unsuppressed plasma HIV RNA were eligible for the five-session intervention. Sixteen participants received 78 peer-led remote videoconferencing sessions.

Scientists map cellular changes linked to endometriosis



The Guardian | 9 January 2023

Scientists have mapped the cellular changes linked to endometriosis to help improve therapeutic options for the millions of women affected by the disease. Roughly 1 in 10 women are affected by the condition, which is characterised by cells similar to those lining the uterus growing elsewhere in the body – most commonly on the ovaries, fallopian tubes and in the abdominal cavity. Patients with the disorder can experience chronic pain, infertility, headaches and fatigue, as well as bowel and bladder dysfunction. Despite it being so common, it takes an average of seven to eight years to be diagnosed with endometriosis because it is so poorly understood.

Call to address women's reproductive needs holistically

ScienceDaily®

Science Daily | 9 January 2023

The research, published in *The Lancet Public Health*, brought together a variety of different types of evidence -- including previous studies, new data on women's preferences, and case studies of existing practice across the globe -- to develop a model, which could be used to help design services in a way that better meets the needs of women and their partners. Researchers found that, currently, health services only view women to either be pregnant or not pregnant, and do not consider their health in the in-between stage -- before trying to conceive. This can have an important influence on both their chances of becoming pregnant and of having a healthy pregnancy as well as affect their own health in the short and long term.

'It's not a feminine thing. It's a family thing': How men can boost contraception use



Bhekisisa | 10 January 2023

Jessica Hinds spent her 28th birthday hunched over the toilet, the entire day. "Things were really bad. She lost a tooth," her partner, Grant Hinds, 38, remembers. Hinds was pregnant and experiencing hyperemesis gravidarum (HG), a rare but really bad form of nausea and vomiting that affects about 2% of expecting women. Unlike the milder form of morning sickness that commonly occurs in the first three months of pregnancy, HG can last well beyond the first trimester, and in some cases for the entire term.

Advancing Gender Equality: UN Women at Davos 2023



UN Women | 10 January 2023

It will take another 286 years to close the global gender gap. Almost 1 in 3 women have experienced physical or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime. Eighty-five per cent of Fortune 500 CEOs are men. Shining a spotlight on these issues, UN Women will be at Davos 2023, this year's annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, taking place from 16 to 20 January.

More Evidence COVID Vaccines Work Well for People with HIV



POZ | 10 January 2023

People living with HIV generally respond well to COVID-19 vaccines—especially if they receive booster shots—thereby dramatically reducing their risk of severe illness and death, according to several recent studies. But those with poorly controlled HIV or advanced immune suppression may not fare as well, underlining the importance of antiretroviral treatment. As previously reported, early studies of COVID vaccine response among HIV-positive people found that those with well-controlled HIV and an adequate CD4 count could achieve SARS-CoV-2 antibody levels and T-cell responses comparable to those of HIV-negative people, though they might need additional doses to achieve full protection.

Calling On Student Candidates for PhD and Masters Studies for the Cervical Cancer Prevention, Action and Control (CCPAC) Project in Zululand



HEALTH SYSTEMS TRUST

Funded by the Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation, the Cervical Cancer Prevention, Access and Control (CCPAC) Project is being conducted by a consortium including Health Systems Trust (HST), the Zululand Department of Health (ZDoH), the Cancer & Infectious Diseases Epidemiology Research Unit (CIDERU) of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and Genius Quality (GQ) in Zululand District, KwaZulu-Natal. The project will focus on education and awareness; screening, diagnosis and treatment, building on and harnessing existing resources; community and stakeholder involvement; strengthening health system structures; healthcare worker capacity-building, and integration with existing Primary Health Care (PHC) services to support sustainability on cervical cancer programmes. The main purpose for student enrolment

in master of medical sciences MMedSci or PhD is to ensure that all the activities implemented by the Consortium are rolled-out as needed and in time with adherence to appropriate methodologies, so that a strong evidence-based case for change can be proposed at the end of the project life. Most importantly, this approach contributes to capacity building, hence research projects will culminate into publications in accredited peer-reviewed journals, presentation at conferences (local and international), production of Masters and/ or PhD thesis and graduation throughput. The consortium seeks to nominate 1 PhD and 4 MMedSci students starting in year 2023 to participate in the academic activities of the project. We are calling on prospective students to submit their applications.

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