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CATEGORIES

[Academic and Peer Reviewed Articles](#)[Recent Public Health News](#)[Training and Resources](#)[Publications and Reports](#)[Conferences and Events](#)[Job Opportunities](#)

ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

The role of the social sciences and humanities in pandemic preparedness responses: insights gained from COVID-19, HIV and AIDS and related epidemics

African Journal of AIDS Research | 20 December 2024

Kaymarlin Govender, Judith King, Patrick Nyamaruze & Tim Quinlan

The COVID-19 pandemic, particularly from 2020 to mid-2022, debilitated the management of the HIV epidemic in Africa. The multiple effects included well-documented HIV service interruptions, curtailment of HIV prevention programmes, the associated marked increase in both the risk for HIV infection among key populations and vulnerability of sub-populations (e.g. adolescent girls and young women) who are the focus of these programmes and — as importantly but less well-documented — the diverse negative socio-economic effects that accentuate HIV risk and vulnerability generally (e.g. loss of earnings, gender-based violence, stigma, police harassment of people during “lockdowns”). The global biomedical response to COVID-19 was necessary and remarkable for mitigating the bio-physical impacts of the pandemic (e.g. wide-spread surveillance coupled with rapid updates on the epidemiology of infections, rapid development of vaccines and revisions of treatment)

Social Determinants of Health Among Persons Living with HIV Impact Important Health Outcomes in Michigan

Aids and behaviour | 5 January 2024

S. Karram, C. Sanger, C. Convery & A. Brantley

Addressing social determinants of health (SDOH) is a national priority for improving quality of life and addressing obstacles to accessing care for people living with HIV (PLWH). Utilizing the Oregon Social Determinants of HIV Health Index and CDC's Medical Monitoring Project, we examined the association between social determinants of health and various HIV clinical outcomes and quality of life indicators, including stigma and mental health, for people living with HIV in Michigan.

Effectiveness of a culturally tailored text messaging program for promoting cervical

cancer screening in Accra, Ghana: a quasi-experimental trial

BMC Women's Health | 5 January 2024

Adolphina Addoley Addo-Lartey, Harriet Affran Bonful, Ransford Selasi Sefenu, Timothy Agandah Abagre,
Despite breakthroughs in cervical cancer detection, resource-constrained countries continue to have a disproportionately high incidence and death rate. Mhealth has been identified as an important tool for increasing cervical cancer screening rates in Sub-Saharan Africa. We determined whether sending Ghanaian women culturally tailored one-way mobile phone SMS text messages about cervical cancer would encourage the uptake of the human papillomavirus (HPV) test.

Board game on sexually transmitted infections for imprisoned women

BMC Women's Health | 5 January 2024

Isaiane da Silva Carvalho, Rynne Carolynne Marques Gomes Mendes, Laís Helena de Souza Soares Lima, Gabrielle Pessôa da Silva, Monique de Freitas Gonçalves Lima, et al.

The board games is an educational technology that represents an appealing, active and playful pedagogical strategy and may be capable of motivating imprisoned women to learn about Sexually Transmitted Infections.

The promise of a “cure” for HIV: implications for the future of PEPFAR-supported HIV programmes

Journal of the international Aids society | 9 January 2024

Elliot Raizes, John Blandford, Joseph M. McCune, Mark Dybul

As we commemorate the 20th anniversary of the U.S. President's Emergency for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), there is much to celebrate: over 20 million persons with HIV are receiving life-saving antiretroviral treatment (ART) in over 50 PEPFAR-supported countries [1]. However, external financial support for HIV in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) remains flat, and overall resources are estimated to be at least \$8 billion short of the \$29 billion needed to reach the 2025 goals of 95-95-951 [2].

Advanced disease programming brings much needed attention and improvements to inpatient paediatric HIV care in Mozambique

Journal of the international Aids society | 9 January 2024

W. Chris Buck, Andreas Schindele, Elsa Taibo, Patricia Perez, Maria Inês Jorge Tomo de Deus, et al.

In the early response to the HIV epidemic in Mozambique, paediatric antiretroviral treatment (ART) was principally available in day clinics, located in referral hospitals, with strong linkages between the inpatient wards and outpatient ART clinics. In 2013, the Ministry of Health (MoH) launched an acceleration plan that prioritized decentralization and scale-up of ART services throughout the country [1]. The results of this effort have been remarkable with the comparison of key indicators from 2013 to 2021 demonstrating the percentage of health facilities offering ART increasing from 39% to 96%, the number of children on ART increasing from 41,400 to 99,169 and the estimated paediatric ART coverage increasing from 41% to 79% [2, 3].

Factors Associated with the First-time HIV Testing Among Chinese men who have sex with men Who Received HIV Self-tests from Partners or Friends

Aids and behaviour | 9 January 2024

Dongya Wang, Yi Zhou, Dan Wu, Joseph D. Tucker, Yuxin Ni, Ying Lu, et al

Secondary distribution of HIV self-testing (HIVST) among individual social networks was an effective approach to expanding HIV testing among men who have sex with men (MSM). However, understanding the factors associated with first-time HIV testing behaviors in the secondary distribution of HIVST programs is limited. Hence, this study aims to identify factors related to first-time testers in the secondary distribution of HIVST. Participants were recruited from five provinces in southern China through Blued, a geo-social gay networking app in China from January 2021 to December 2021.

Immunisation coverage and factors associated with incomplete immunisation in

children under two during the COVID-19 pandemic in Sierra Leone

BMC Public Health | 10 January 2024

Myrte Wassenaar, Augustin E. Fombah, Haily Chen, Kwabena Owusu-Kyei, Julian Williams, et al.

Routine childhood immunisation is one of the most important life-saving public health interventions. However, many children still have inadequate access to these vaccines and millions remain (partially) unvaccinated globally. As the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted health systems worldwide, its effects on immunisation have become apparent. This study aimed to estimate routine immunisation coverage among children under two in Sierra Leone and to identify factors associated with incomplete immunisation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hypertension among persons living with HIV/AIDS and its association with HIV-related health factors

Aids Research and Therapy | 11 January 2024

Mawulorm K. I. Denu, Ritika Revoori, Maame Araba E. Buadu, Oluwakemi Oladele & Kofi Poku Berko

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection remains a public health concern in many countries. The increased life expectancy in the post-Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) era has led to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and death among Persons Living with HIV (PLHIV). Hypertension remains a significant risk factor for cardiovascular disease among PLHIV. Some studies have suggested associations between hypertension among PLHIV and HIV-related health factors.

As COVID-19 Cases Surge, Here's What to Know About JN.1, the Latest SARS-CoV-2 "Variant of Interest"

Jama Network | 12 January 2024

Rita Rubin, MA

BA.2.86's spawn, JN.1, has become the dominant SARS-CoV-2 variant in the US, status its parent variant never achieved. Fortunately, although COVID-19 cases have surged, hospitalizations and deaths from the disease are still considerably lower than they were the same time a year earlier. When BA.2.86 joined the SARS-CoV-2 Omicron family last summer, it grabbed pandemic trackers' attention because it was so different from its progenitor, BA.2. Compared with BA.2, BA.2.86's spike protein carries more than 30 mutations, suggesting that it might spread more easily than its predecessors. But even armed with those new mutations, BA.2.86 failed to dominate the other subvariants. Through early January of this year, BA.2.86 never exceeded much more than a 3% share of circulating SARS-CoV-2 subvariants in the US, according to Nowcast estimates from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Incidence and predictors of loss to follow-up among Ethiopian children on antiretroviral therapy: a systematic review and meta-analysis

BMC Public Health | 13 January 2024

Molla Yigzaw Birhanu, Getamesay Molla Bekele, Getasew Yirdaw, Bekele Simegn Demissie, Genanaw Kassie Getahun & Selamawit Shita Jemberie, et al.

Loss of follow-up (LTFU) from ART regular follow-up is one of the key acknowledged causes for the development of ART-resistant virus strains currently. It becomes a major weakness for the successful implementation of HIV care and treatment programs mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa but also globally. About 20—40% of children on ART loss their regular ART follow-up annually. Because of the inconsistency of the prior publications' findings, policymakers, programmers, and healthcare providers find it difficult to intervene. Hence, this study was conducted to provide a pooled incidence and identify the predictors of LTFU among children on ART in Ethiopia.

Circulating blood biomarkers correlated with the prognosis of advanced triple negative breast cancer

BMC Women's Health | 13 January 2024

Xingyu Li, Yanyan Zhang, Cheng Zhu, Wentao Xu, Xiaolei Hu, Domingo Antonio Sánchez Martínez, et al.

Immune checkpoint inhibitors (ICIs) can improve survivals of metastatic triple negative breast cancer (mTNBC); however, we still seek circulating blood biomarkers to predict the efficacy of ICIs.

The impact of text message reminders on cryotherapy uptake among women testing positive for HPV in western Kenya: a prospective cohort study

BMC Women's Health | 13 January 2024

Yujung Choi, Saduma Ibrahim, Lawrence P. Park, Elizabeth A. Bukusi & Megan J. Huchko

Mobile health (mHealth) has become an increasingly popular strategy to improve healthcare delivery and health outcomes. Communicating results and health education via text may facilitate program planning and promote better engagement in care for women undergoing human papillomavirus (HPV) screening. We sought to develop and evaluate an mHealth strategy with enhanced text messaging to improve follow-up throughout the cervical cancer screening cascade.

Prevalence and risk factors of postpartum depression among women attending primary healthcare centers in northern of West Bank/ Palestine: a cross-sectional study, 2022

BMC Women's Health | 15 January 2024

Dina Wildali, Saja Nazzal, Suha Hamshari & Souad Belkebir

Postpartum depression (PPD) has a huge negative impact on the health of the mother and the family, both physically and mentally. Few postpartum depression studies have been done in Palestine. This study aimed to examine the prevalence and the most probable risk factor of PDD among Palestinian women in the northern West Bank.

Factors associated with SARS-CoV-2 infection in unvaccinated children and young adults

BMC Infectious Diseases | 15 January 2024

Sarah L. Silverberg, Hennady P. Shulha, Brynn McMillan, Guanyuhui He, Amy Lee, et al.

Pediatric COVID-19 cases are often mild or asymptomatic, which has complicated estimations of disease burden using existing testing practices. We aimed to determine the age-specific population seropositivity and risk factors of SARS-CoV-2 seropositivity among children and young adults during the pandemic in British Columbia (BC).

Self-reported cardiovascular disease risk factor screening among people living with HIV vs. members of the general population in Botswana: a community-based study

BMC Public Health | 16 January 2024

Onkabetse Julia Molefe-Baikai, Kago Kebotsamang, Pinkie Modisawakgomo, John Thato Tlhakanelo, Keneilwe Motlathedi, et al

Morbidity and mortality due to cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) are high and increasing in low- and middle-income countries. People living with HIV (PLWH) are more likely to experience CVD than members of the general population. Therefore, we aimed to assess whether PLWH were more likely to have previously been screened for cardiovascular disease risk factors (CVDRFs) than people without HIV.

Community cervical cancer screening and precancer risk in women living with HIV in Jos Nigeria

BMC Public Health | 16 January 2024

F. A. Magaji, M. I. Mashor, S. A. Anzaku, A. R. Hinjari, N. T. Cosmas, et al

High HIV prevalence, and lack of organized screening for the indigent population receiving care and treatment within HIV clinics in low-resource settings increases cervical cancer incidence. We sought to determine predictors of cervical precancer in women living with HIV and receiving cervical cancer screening in Jos, Nigeria.

Impaired humoral immunity following COVID-19 vaccination in HTLV-1 carriers

BMC infectious Diseases | 17 January 2024

Takuro Kameda, Atee Utsunomiya, Nobuaki Otsuka, Yoko Kubuki, Taisuke Uchida, et al

People with cancer have significantly increased morbidity and mortality from coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), compared with the general public. This is most apparent in patients with hematological malignancies, with a risk of severe course and/or death of 27–36%. In addition, although most of the general population and patients with cancer acquire anti-COVID-19 spike protein IgG (IgG-S) antibodies after receiving mRNA- or adenovirus-based COVID-19 vaccines, patients with hematological malignancies, particularly those receiving anti-CD20 immunotherapy, do not.

Misinformation, knowledge and COVID-19 vaccine acceptance: a cross-sectional study among health care workers and the general population in Kampala, Uganda

BMC Public Health | 17 January 2024

Maxine Atuheirwe, Richard Otim, Keneth Junior Male, Stella Ahimbisibwe, Joachim Dzidzor Sackey et al.

COVID-19 has greatly affected communities worldwide, more so in low- and middle-income countries. To successfully resolve the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccination coverage of more than 80% is required. However, misinformation has affected this by increasing COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy. Limited studies have assessed the effect of COVID-19 misinformation on vaccine acceptance, especially in Africa. This study assessed people's knowledge of the COVID-19 vaccine and the effect of misinformation on vaccine uptake among healthcare workers (HCWs) versus the general population in Uganda.

[\(Return to Top\)](#)

RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

Opinion: We can't simply close dental facilities during the festive period

Spotlight | 9 January 2024

On the 2nd of January 2024, Simphiwe*, needing emergency oral healthcare, turned to the Cala District Hospital in the Eastern Cape. However, she was confronted with a note on the door that read, "Dear Community Members, starting from the 18th of December 2023 to the 12th of January 2024 there is no dentist. The dentist will start working on the 15th of January 2024."

How taking ARVs daily stops those with HIV from transmitting the virus

Bhekisisa | 10 January 2024

Over the years ARVs have changed HIV from a death sentence to a chronic disease, but only if you take your daily dose. And that's not always easy. Nurse Mapaseka Mabena knows this first-hand because she's spent the last decade motivating people with the virus to start and stay on meds for life. She teaches them that ARVs help the body fight the virus and that when tests can't find HIV in their blood, it can't be spread to others. How does this concept, called U=U, work? Our Health Beat team visited The Aurum Institute's POP INN clinic in Kempton Park to find out.

HIV now at two-decade low for pregnant women

Juta Medical Brief | 10 January 2024

HIV prevalence among pregnant women attending government clinics in SA fell to 27.5% in 2022, reaching its lowest level in two decades, according to a report released yesterday by the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD). BusinessLIVE reports that NICD senior epidemiologist Tendesayi Kufa-Chakeza said the 2.5% percentage point drop in HIV prevalence since the 2019 antenatal HIV sentinel survey was "very significant", and had been anticipated from mathematical modelling of SA's epidemic. "However we think the decline would have been greater were it not for the Covid-19 related disruptions in HIV testing, (starting treatment), and Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PreP) services," she said. Peak HIV prevalence among pregnant women was recorded in the 2015 survey, at 30.8%. While the

overall trend is good news, the 2022 survey shows just over a quarter (25.9%) of pregnant women on HIV treatment weren't achieving viral suppression, raising the risk of transmitting the disease to their babies.

Stricter screening call after deaths and TB from contaminated bone grafts

Juta Medical Brief | 10 January 2024

The US Centres for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) says there is an urgent need to improve donor screening and product testing, after contaminated bone allograft material from a single manufacturer had led to five diagnosed cases of TB and two deaths so far. In July last year, clinicians in two states rapidly diagnosed and reported two cases of TB in patients who had undergone spinal surgical procedures using bone allografts, wrote Jonathan Wortham, MD, from the CDC in Atlanta, and colleagues in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR).

Remembering Dr. Ada Adimora, Distinguished HIV Researcher and Physician

Poz | 10 January 2024

The news of the passing of Dr. Adaora Adimora brought tears to my eyes. I had the honor of working with her while she served as an active and valued member of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (PACHA). During her tenure on PACHA, she thoughtfully shared her knowledge and perspectives as an esteemed physician, educator, mentor, and researcher to inform federal HIV programs and policies. Dr. Adimora served on PACHA from September 2013 until her term was ended along with all other members of the council in December 2017. A distinguished physician and HIV researcher, she dedicated her career to investigating the epidemiology of heterosexual HIV transmission among African Americans, highlighting the role of sexual network patterns in the spread of HIV, and underscoring the importance of social forces on racial disparities in the U.S. HIV epidemic.

Nearly 10,000 COVID deaths reported last month as JN.1 variant spread at holiday gatherings, WHO says

CBS News | 11 January 2024

World Health Organization director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus is pointing to holiday gatherings and a rapidly spreading variant as reasons behind a rise in COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths worldwide, with nearly 10,000 COVID deaths reported last month. "Although 10,000 deaths a month is far less than the peak of the pandemic, this level of preventable deaths is not acceptable," the head of the U.N. health agency told reporters Wednesday from its headquarters in Geneva. WHO says the JN.1 variant is now the most prominent in the world. In the U.S., the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated late last month that the variant makes up about 44.1% of COVID cases across the country.

Cholera cases soar globally amid shortage of vaccines

The Guardian | 11 January 2024

Cholera cases soared last year, according to preliminary data from the World Health Organization, which recorded 4,000 cholera deaths and 667,000 cases globally. The numbers surpassed that of 2022, and the WHO has classified the global resurgence of cholera as a grade 3 emergency, its highest internal health emergency level. Outbreaks were deadliest in Malawi and Haiti, where the number of deaths reached 1,771 and 1,156 respectively, making it the worst outbreak in Malawi's history. "The unprecedented rate of cases and deaths is terrifying, and utterly overwhelming the health systems of these countries," said Machinda Marongwe, the programme director of Oxfam in Southern Africa. "The outbreak is spiralling into an uncontrollable health crisis."

Women Living With HIV Could Have Tooth Loss After Menopause

AJMC | 11 January 2024

Women who are postmenopausal and living with HIV could have greater tooth loss due to the deterioration of the alveolar trabecular bone microarchitecture, according to a study published in BMC Oral Health. The use of antiretroviral therapy (ART) has improved periodontal outcomes and increased life

expectancy in people living with HIV (PWH). Bone loss is a natural part of aging that more frequently affects older women who experience menopause compared with the rest of the population. However, women living with HIV have accelerated skeletal long bone loss, which led the researchers to evaluate periodontal disease and alveolar bone microarchitecture in women who have been through menopause, both those living with HIV and those not living with HIV.

Multi-country outbreak of cholera, External situation report #10 - 11 January 2024

WHO | 11 January 2024

Preliminary data from Member States indicate that the number of cholera cases reported in 2023 as of 15 December has surpassed that of 2022, with over 667 000 cases and 4000 deaths. These figures must be interpreted with caution given the varying surveillance systems and capacity across countries, which means that 2023 data are not directly comparable to reports from previous years. Since the publication of the last situation report on the multi-country outbreak of cholera on 7 December 2023 (which included data up to 15 November), and as of 15 December 2023, one new country (Togo) has reported an outbreak of cholera or acute watery diarrhoea (AWD). In total, at least 30 countries have reported cases since 1 January 2023.

Global deaths from fungal disease have doubled in a decade – new study

The conversation | 12 January 2024

Eleven years ago, my colleagues and I estimated that about 2 million people around the world were dying from fungal infections annually. My latest estimate puts the figure today at nearly double that: around 3.8 million deaths. To put this in perspective, it accounts for around 6.8% of total global deaths. Coronary heart disease is probably responsible for 16% of the world's total deaths, followed by stroke at 11%. Smoke-related lung disease (COPD) comprises 6% of total deaths, with fungal infection being responsible for about one-third of these 3,228,000 deaths.

LACC trial sparks surge in open abdominal hysterectomy for cervical cancer

Contemporary OB/GYN | 12 January 2024

Publication of the Laparoscopic Approach to Cervical Cancer (LACC) trial led to an increase in the open abdominal approach for managing invasive surgical cancer, according to a recent study published in *The American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology*. In 2020, 604,000 new cases and 342,000 deaths from cervical cancer were reported. It is the fourth leading cause of cancer mortality in women and is treated in early stages using radical hysterectomy with bilateral pelvic lymph node staging.

Hybrid immunity in pregnancy increases COVID-19 protection for infants

Healio | 12 January 2024

Hybrid SARS-CoV-2 immunity in pregnancy — immunity from a prior infection plus vaccination — is associated with a greater likelihood of protection at delivery for mothers and infants compared with a prior infection alone, a study found.

Global Fund Approves US\$9.2 Billion in New Grants to Accelerate Fight Against HIV, TB and Malaria in More than 70 Countries

Reliefweb | 12 January 2024

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has approved US\$9.2 billion for grants starting in 2024. 152 new grants will begin implementation this month, supporting more than 70 countries to continue their lifesaving work to end the three epidemics and build sustainable and climate-resilient systems for health over the 2024-2026 period.

African women living with HIV have an effective option to prevent malaria during pregnancy, clinical trial finds

Medical Xpress | 12 January 2024

In women living with HIV, preventive treatment with DHA-PPQ is a safe and effective strategy to prevent malaria during pregnancy, according to the final results of MAMAH, a clinical trial coordinated by the Barcelona Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal). The study, published in the *Lancet Infectious Diseases*, could help protect the health of the estimated one million pregnant women who suffer from a double infection with malaria and HIV every year.

DoxyPEP did not reduce STIs among women, probably due to low adherence

Aidsmap | 15 January 2024

Taking doxycycline as post-exposure prophylaxis after sex – known as doxyPEP – did not reduce the likelihood of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among cisgender women in Africa as it does for gay and bisexual men, according to recently published study results. Actual use of the antibiotic was found to be low, however, suggesting doxyPEP might still work for women if adherence is higher. “Our findings emphasize the need for preventive options for STIs that are effective and acceptable among women,” Dr Jennell Stewart of the Hennepin Healthcare Research Institute in Minneapolis and colleagues concluded. “Further trials investigating doxycycline PEP among persons who had been assigned a female sex at birth are warranted. Adherence to preventive medicines needs to be better understood and supported for biomedical prevention to be effective.”

Opinion: This is how SA can meet its HIV targets

Spotlight | 15 January 2024

“The path to ending AIDS is clear,” states a recent UNAIDS report. “HIV responses succeed when they are anchored in strong political leadership, have adequate resources, follow the evidence, use inclusive and rights-based approaches, and pursue equity. Countries that are putting people first in their policies and programmes are already leading the world on the journey to ending AIDS by 2030,” it reads.

COVID Vaccines in European Region Reduced Mortality by 57%; WHO Warns of Waning Vigilance Regarding Virus Threats

Health Policy Watch | 16 January 2024

COVID-19 vaccines reduced deaths due to the pandemic by at least 57%, saving more than 1.4 million lives in the WHO European Region between December 2020 and March 2023, according to a report published in medRxiv, a pre-print platform for health sciences, on Tuesday. Most of the lives saved were those of people aged 60 or older, who were at the highest risk of severe illness and death from the SARS-CoV-2 virus, said Hans Kluge, Director of WHO's European Regional Office in a press briefing, aired simultaneously.

Energy-starved breast cancer cells consume their surroundings for fuel, research suggests

Medical Xpress | 16 January 2023

Breast cancer cells ingest and consume the matrix surrounding them to overcome starvation, according to a new study published January 16 in the open access journal *PLOS Biology*, by Elena Rainero of the University of Sheffield, UK, and colleagues. The finding elucidates a previously unknown mechanism of cancer cell survival, and may offer a new target for therapy development.

Cervical Cancer Awareness Month: What are my options for prevention and treatment?

myGRV.com | 16 January 2024

Cervical cancer is the fourth most frequent cancer in women, with an estimated 604,000 new cases worldwide in 2020. Of the estimated 342,000 deaths from cervical cancer in 2020, about 90% of these occur in low- and middle-income countries. Cervical cancer is a disease that strikes over 14,100 American women each year. “Although cervical cancer is a significant health concern affecting women worldwide its impact can be mitigated through a proactive approach focused on regular screenings, and early

detection,” said Anabel Arellano, Director Patient Relations at DHR Health Oncology Institute.

E-cigarettes help pregnant smokers quit without risks to pregnancy, trial finds

Medical Xpress | 17 January 2024

A new analysis of trial data on pregnant smokers, led by researchers at Queen Mary University of London, finds that the regular use of nicotine-replacement products during pregnancy is not associated with adverse pregnancy events or poor pregnancy outcomes. The PREP 2 study used data collected from over 1,100 pregnant smokers attending 23 hospitals in England and one stop-smoking service in Scotland to compare pregnancy outcomes in women who did or did not use nicotine in the form of e-cigarettes (EC) or nicotine patches regularly during their pregnancy.

“It's about our health and our future”: Ensuring sexual and reproductive health support in northern Mozambique

Reliefweb | 17 January 2024

Early in the morning, queues begin to form outside the Lichinga health centre in Mozambique's northwest Niassa province, as staff prepare to treat patients. Nearby, health workers offer HIV tests and information about family planning options – a crucial commitment to service provision as communities across the region grapple with violence, insecurity and a series of health crises.

Study finds vaccination against COVID-19 consistently reduced the risk of long COVID symptoms

News Medical Life Science | 17 January 2023

The severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the virus responsible for COVID-19, has infected over 800 million individuals worldwide since March 2020. Since the start of the pandemic, concerted efforts throughout the world led to the rapid development of numerous vaccines and subsequent vaccination of large parts of the global population, particularly the elderly and those at high risk of severe COVID-19 due to the presence of comorbidities. These global vaccination efforts successfully reduced the transmission and severity of SARS-CoV-2 infections, thereby significantly lowering mortality rates.

Cancer is the Leading Cause of Death in HIV-Positive Individuals

Managed Healthcare Executive | 17 January 2024

In those with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), there is a 10-fold higher cancer risk than in the general population, according to the annual Cancer Facts and Figures report from the American Cancer Society published today. Cancer rates in HIV-positive individuals have decreased since the introduction of highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART). Since HAART became available in 1996, there has been a 70% drop in Kaposi sarcoma and a 50% drop in non-Hodgkin lymphoma in those with HIV.

Are People With HIV at Greater Risk for Long COVID?

Poz | 17 January 2024

People living with HIV may be more prone to develop long COVID, the wide range of symptoms that can last for months or years after SARS-CoV-2 infection, according to a growing body of evidence. While HIV-positive people have several risk factors that may make them more susceptible to long-term problems after a bout of COVID-19, much remains to be learned.

Is Covid guilty of 'immunity theft'?

Juta Medical Brief | 17 January 2024

Since 2021, children, globally, have been afflicted with respiratory illnesses earlier and in greater numbers than usual, the surging case numbers fuelling an ongoing debate about how the Covid pandemic has contributed to rates of other infectious diseases. While no one yet knows for sure, much of the discussion

has centred around immunity debt and immunity theft, terms born of the pandemic and not found in textbooks.

Cape Verde reaches malaria-free milestone

Juta Medical Brief | 17 January 2024

Cape Verde has been declared malaria-free for the first time in 50 years, after not having reported a single case of local transmission in three years, a major achievement for the region. Experts have described this as a major achievement. Malaria is a huge killer on the continent. In 2022, 580 000 people in Africa died from the disease, amounting to 95% of fatalities worldwide. Situated off the coast of West Africa, Cape Verde has taken years to reach this point by strengthening its health systems and increasing access to diagnosis and treatment of cases.

A Reactive Measles Campaign: More Than 2 Million Children To Be Vaccinated

MENAFN | 17 January 2024

The Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI), with a technical and financial support of partners including WHO and UNICEF is conducting a measles outbreak response vaccination campaign in 58 outbreaks affected woredas. This reactive measles vaccination campaign was started from 29 December 2023, and it will be ongoing until mid-January 2024. Most of the woredas have completed the campaign and few of them are still ongoing. The prioritized 58 outbreak affected woredas are from eight regions including Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Gambella, Oromia, Sidama, Somali, South Ethiopia, and Southwest Ethiopia Peoples' region.

Call on parents to have children vaccinated as required

IOL | 17 January 2024

The Department of Health has called on parents to follow through with immunisation for their little ones. Childhood immunisation services form an integral part of primary health care in the Western Cape, and can be accessed for free at all primary healthcare facilities. However, the department says it has seen a concerning decline in the number of immunisations over the past two years.

[\(Return to Top\)](#)

TRAINING AND RESOURCES

Subscribe to the Health Systems Trust Bulletin

The Health Systems Trust (HST) produces a weekly bulletin on Fridays focusing on key public health news, peer-reviewed journal articles and other important primary healthcare resources.

Subscribe to the Health Systems Trust 60percent

HST produces a weekly online publication, 60percent, which keeps subscribers abreast with the latest news and developments pertaining to HIV-related maternal, adolescent, child and youth health. The name 60percent signifies that southern Africa is responding to a feminised HIV/AIDS epidemic, with at least 60% of those living with HIV being women. Subscribe to 60percent by simply visiting HST's website (<https://www.hst.org.za>), scroll to the bottom of the page, hit the SUBSCRIBE button, and follow the prompts. Let's keep you posted!

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 country
- 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.

[\(Return to Top\)](#)

PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS: South African Health Review

The editors of the 2024 *South African Health Review* (SAHR) invite the submission of abstracts that aim to address the challenges facing mental health care in South Africa, including how to **improve access to quality mental health services, and address current gaps in mental health service provision at all levels of the health service from community through primary and tertiary care levels.**

For more information kindly go to https://www.hst.org.za/media/Pages/SAHR-Call-for-Abstracts_2024.aspx/

The 2022 South African Health Review is available!

We are pleased to release the 25th edition of the South African Health Review (SAHR). Entitled 'health systems strengthening after COVID-19', the journal provides valuable insights and recommendations on how to improve the response to the pandemic and build more resilient health systems.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the world, and the health sector has been at the forefront of the response. Curated as a supplement to the 2021 edition, which addressed the response of government and the broader health sector to COVID-19, the 2022 South African Health Review provides a platform for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to share their experiences and insights on how they navigated this crisis and build more robust health systems for the future.

The journal encompasses a diverse array of subjects, including reflections on the work of the Ministerial Advisory Committee during COVID-19 and the knowledge gained and lessons learned from these processes. Additionally, it explores the ramifications of COVID-19 on maternal, women, and child health and highlights the gendered implications of the pandemic, revealing that women experienced more pronounced effects of stress, fear, and depression during the lockdown period compared to men.

Commenting on its release, CEO and co-editor of the Review Dr Themba Moeti said that “This edition of the South African Health Review offers promising examples of COVID-19 response, mitigation and recovery strategies for us to use the emerging lessons to enhance our health system resilience and better prepare for future pandemics.”

Strong messages emerging from this edition emphasise that in order to effectively promote national vaccination programmes, it is imperative to equip healthcare workers (HCWs) with comprehensive, relevant, and current information. This will enable them to enhance patient communication and increase vaccine acceptance. Subsequent chapters delineate an inventive collaboration between the public and private sectors aimed at mitigating the accumulated volume of elective surgical procedures at Groote Schuur Hospital and reflect on the importance of consulting, involving and deploying community based organisations such as clinic committees in public health emergencies from the outset.

The crucial importance of inter-country collaboration is emphasised in mitigating disease transmission and impact, with authors advocating for a more coordinated approach to managing cross-border health measures.

Additionally, the Review highlights the intersection between climate change and health systems and reinforces the imperative to prioritise health within the framework of a 'just transition' and to enhance the capabilities of healthcare systems to be low-carbon and climate-resilient as crucial focal points for improving pandemic preparedness.

For more information on the journal and to access the latest edition, visit <https://www.hst.org.za/publications/Pages/SAHR2022.aspx>

[\(Return to Top\)](#)

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

When: 8 – 9 February 2024

Where: Cape Town

For more information: <https://10times.com/e1rx-36r4-9frd>

HIMSS 2024 Global Health Conference & Exhibition

The 2024 HIMSS European Health Conference & Exhibition brings together over 30,000 healthcare industry professionals, innovators, and educators from around the world to connect, learn, and experience innovative tech products and solutions that support the transformation of the health ecosystem through information and technology.

When: March 11-15, 2024

Where: Orlando, FL | McCormick Place Convention Center

For more information: <https://healthcaretransformers.com/healthcare-business/healthcare-conferences/healthcare-conferences-2024/>

3rd Edition of International Public Health Conference

The theme for this year's conference is “Restraining Pandemics Through Exploration of Trends and Public Health Challenges.” With over 40 scientific sessions, attendees are sure to gain insights across a wide range of topics including infectious diseases, preventative medicine, chronic diseases, clinical trials and research, global health, health economics, and more.

When: March 21 – 23, 2024

Where: Singapore

For more information: <https://healthcaretransformers.com/healthcare-business/healthcare-conferences/healthcare-conferences-2024/>

[\(Return to Top\)](#)

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Call for Proposals: Community-Based Organisations

Closing date: 19 January 2024

<https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Call-for-Proposals-Community-Based-Organisations.aspx>

[\(Return to Top\)](#)



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