

# HST Bulletin



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## ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

### **The effects of intimate partner violence on women's risk of HIV acquisition and engagement in the HIV treatment and care cascade: a pooled analysis of nationally representative surveys in sub-Saharan Africa**

*The Lancet HIV | December 2022*

*Salome Kuchukhidze, Dimitra Panagiotoglou, Prof Marie-Claude Boily, Souleymane Diabaté, Jeffrey W Eaton, et al.*

Sub-Saharan Africa has among the highest prevalence of IPV and HIV worldwide. We aimed to examine the effects of IPV on recent HIV infection and women's engagement in the HIV care cascade in sub-Saharan Africa. We did a retrospective pooled analysis of data from nationally representative, cross-sectional surveys with information on physical or sexual IPV (or both) and HIV testing, from Jan 1, 2000, to Dec 31, 2020. Relevant surveys were identified from data catalogues and previous large-scale reviews, and included the Demographic and Health Survey, the AIDS Indicator Survey, the Population-based HIV Impact Assessment, and the South Africa National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Behaviour and Communication Survey. Individual-level data on all female respondents who were ever-partnered (currently or formerly married or cohabiting) and aged 15 years or older were included. We used Poisson regression to estimate crude and adjusted prevalence ratios (PRs) for the association between past-year experience of physical or sexual IPV (or both), as the primary exposure, and recent HIV infection (measured with recency assays), as the primary outcome.

### **Free HIV self-test for identification and linkage to care of previously undetected HIV infection in men who have sex with men in England and Wales (SELPHI): an open-label, internet-based, randomised controlled trial**

*The Lancet HIV | December 2022*

*Prof Alison Rodger, Leanne McCabe, Prof Andrew Phillips, Fiona Lampe, Prof Fiona Burns, Denise Ward, et al.*

High levels of HIV testing in men who have sex with men remain key to reducing the incidence of HIV. We aimed to assess whether the offer of a single, free HIV self-testing kit led to increased HIV diagnoses with linkage to care.

## **HIV testing among incarcerated people with a history of HIV-related high-risk behaviours in Iran: Findings from three consecutive national bio-behavioural surveys**

*BMC Infectious Diseases* | 5 December 2022

*Fatemeh Tavakoli, Najmeh Parhizgari, Mostafa Shokoohi, Mehrdad Khezri, Ali Haghdooost, et al.*

Incarcerated people are at a higher risk of contracting or transmitting HIV than the general population, primarily due to their engagement in HIV-related high-risk behaviours (e.g., injection drug use, tattooing, and unprotected sexual practices) as well as the populated nature of prison settings. Incarcerated people could also be a bridging population and help transmit HIV to other subpopulations, such as their partners.

## **Care cascades for hypertension and diabetes: Cross-sectional evaluation of rural districts in Tanzania**

*Plos Medicine* | 5 December 2022

*Brianna Osetinsky, Grace Mhalu, Sally Mtenga and Fabrizio Tediosi*

The prevalence of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), especially cardiovascular disease and diabetes, is rising sharply in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) where the burden has increased 67% since 1990. It is estimated that over 125 million adults have hypertension, and 24 million adults have diabetes as of 2021, resulting in 2 million premature deaths every year in SSA. This rapid epidemiological transition in SSA requires transformations in health systems. There is a need to strengthen primary care and address the long-standing constraints of underfunding and focus on episodic care for acute conditions. While diabetes and hypertension can be effectively controlled with treatment, many health systems are currently underprepared to provide this care. The persistently low levels of awareness and treatment for these conditions throughout SSA results in low levels of control, particularly in rural areas.

## **Acceptability and usability of oral fluid-based HIV self-testing among female sex workers and men who have sex with men in Morocco**

*BMC Public Health* | 5 December 2022

*Amal Moussa, Oujidane Belhiba, Fatima Hajouji, Amina El Kettani, Mohammed Youbi, et al.*

In 2020, almost 20% of people living with HIV (PLHIV) in Morocco are still unaware of their HIV status. Under these circumstances, HIV self-test (HIVST) can be an efficient additional tool for improving the testing rates in Morocco and reaching the first objective of the UNAIDS 95–95–95 goal. ALCS, a Community-based organization, involved in HIV Testing since 1992, and the Ministry of Health of Morocco conducted, a study on the acceptability and usability of HIVST among Female sex workers (FSW) and MSM (men who have sex with men), using a salivary rapid test. To our knowledge, this is the first study in Morocco exploring these parameters.

## **Effect of hybrid immunity and bivalent booster vaccination on omicron sublineage neutralisation**

*The Lancet Infectious Diseases* | 5 December 2022

*Markus Hoffman, Georg Behrens, Prerna Arora, Amy Kempf, Inga Nehlmeier, et al.*

Vaccination is the central strategy to control the COVID-19 pandemic. Vaccination-induced antibodies that target the viral spike (S) protein and neutralise SARS-CoV-2 are crucial for protection against infection and disease. However, most vaccines encode for the S protein of the virus that circulated early in the pandemic (eg, the B.1 lineage), and emerging SARS-CoV-2 variants have mutations in the S protein that reduce neutralisation sensitivity. In particular, the omicron variant (B.1.1.529 lineage and sublineages) is highly mutated and efficiently evades antibodies. Therefore, bivalent mRNA vaccines have been developed that include the genetic information for S proteins of the B.1 lineage and the currently dominating omicron BA.5 lineage. These vaccines have shown increased immunogenicity and protection in mice, but information on potential differences in the effectiveness of monovalent and bivalent vaccine boosters in humans is scarce.

## **Impact of an intensive facility-community case management intervention on 6-month HIV outcomes among select key and priority populations in Uganda**

*AIDS Research and Therapy* | 5 December 2022

*David Meya, Agnes Kiragga, Elizabeth Nalintya, Grace Banturaki, Joan Akullo, et al.*

Key and priority populations (with risk behaviours and health inequities) are disproportionately affected by

HIV in Uganda. We evaluated the impact of an intensive case management intervention on HIV treatment outcomes in Kalangala District, predominantly inhabited by fisher folk and female sex workers.

### **Impacts of intimate partner violence and sexual abuse on antiretroviral adherence among adolescents living with HIV in South Africa**

*AIDS | 6 December 2022*

*Lucie D Cluver, Siyanai Zhou, Mark Orkin, William Rudgard, Franziska Meinck, et al.*

We are failing to reach 95-95-95 for adolescents living with HIV (ALHIV). Sexual abuse and intimate partner violence (IPV) may impact ART adherence, with high rates of 17.4% and 29.7% respectively, across the southern Sub-Saharan African region. However, evidence on their associations with adolescent ART adherence remains limited, with only three cross-sectional studies globally.

### **Impact of SMS and Peer Navigation on linkage to care and ART initiation in South Africa: secondary results from a three-arm cluster randomized controlled trial**

*AIDS | 6 December 2022*

*Sheri A Lippman, Julia Dekadt, Mary J Ratthagana, Emily Agnew, Hailey Gilmore, et al.*

Results suggest SMS and peer navigation services significantly reduce time to HIV care linkage in sub-Saharan Africa and that SMS + PN reduced time to ART initiation among men and non-pregnant women. Both should be considered candidates for integration into national programs.

### **Vertical HIV transmission within 18 months' post partum among women on lifelong antiretroviral therapy for HIV in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: a prospective cohort study**

*The Lancet HIV | 7 December 2022*

*Goodluck Willey Lyatuu, Roseline Urrio, Helga Naburi, Peter Lyaruu, Brenda Simba, et al.*

We conducted a prospective cohort study in 226 health facilities across Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. Eligible participants were pregnant women of any age with HIV, and later their infants, who enrolled in routine health-care services for the prevention of vertical transmission. We prospectively followed up mother-infant pairs at routine monthly visits until 18 months' post-partum and extracted data from the care and treatment clinic (CTC2) database, a national electronic database that stores patient-level HIV care and treatment clinic data. The primary outcome was time from birth to HIV diagnosis, defined as a positive infant HIV DNA PCR or antibody test from age 18 months. We used the Kaplan-Meier method to estimate cumulative risk of vertical transmission by 18 months' post-partum and Cox proportional hazards regression with shared frailties to account for potential clustering in health facilities to evaluate predictors of transmission.

### **Human immunodeficiency virus in the Russian Federation: mortality, prevalence, risk factors, and current understanding of sexual transmission**

*AIDS | 7 December 2022*

*Zlatko Nikoloski, Elizabeth J King and Elias Mosialos*

Over the past 20 years, the Russian Federation has experienced a rapid increase in HIV-associated mortality in both males and females. Our findings revealed significant heterogeneity, with higher rates of HIV-associated mortality reported in oblasts in the Siberian and Ural Federal Districts. There is a strong correlation (0.8) between HIV-associated mortality and virus prevalence. These findings confirm that there are regional disparities in access and adherence to antiretroviral therapy (ART), as indicated by the low correlation (-0.4) between virus prevalence and access to ART coverage. The results from our modeling analysis revealed that, in addition to the factors most commonly associated with this disease (e.g., intravenous drug use), knowledge about sexual transmission of HIV in the general population has a broad impact on its prevalence at the oblast level.

### **Effect of a ward-based outreach team and adherence game on retention and viral load suppression**

*Southern African Journal of HIV Medicine*

*Sanele Ngcobo, Steve Olorunju, Tshifhiwa Nkwenika and Theresa Rossouw*

Only 66% of South African people living with HIV (PLWH) are virologically suppressed. Therefore, it is important to develop strategies to improve outcomes. Fifty-seven clinics were randomised into four arms: Ward-based primary health care outreach teams (WBPHCOTs); Game; WBPHCOT+Game in combination; and Control (standard of care). Sixteen clinics were excluded and four re-allocated because

lay counsellors and operational team leaders failed to attend the required training. Seventeen clinics were excluded due to non-enrolment. A total of 558 participants from Tshwane district were enrolled. This study demonstrated that an adherence game intervention could help keep PLWH in care.

## **Anemia and opportunistic infections in hospitalized people living with HIV: a retrospective study**

*BMC | 8 December 2022*

*Bo Xie, Wei Huang, Yanling Hu, Yanyun Dou, Luman Xie, et al.*

There is a high prevalence of anemia among people living with HIV in Guangxi, China. Therefore, we investigated anemia and opportunistic infections in hospitalized people living with HIV and explored the risk factors related to anemia in people living with HIV to actively prevent anemia in people living with HIV. We retrospectively studied people living with HIV admitted to Guangxi Chest Hospital from June 2016 to October 2021. Detailed information on the sociodemographic and clinical features of the participants was collected. The X2 test was used to compare the prevalence between the anemic and non-anemic groups. The logistic regression analysis was applied to exclude confounding factors and identify factors related to anemia.

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## **RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS**

### **Health inequities lead to early death in many persons with disabilities**

*World Health Organization | 2 December 2022*

A new report by the World Health Organization shows evidence of a higher risk of premature death and illness among many persons with disabilities compared to others in the society. The Global report on health equity for persons with disabilities published today shows that because of the systemic and persistent health inequities, many persons with disabilities face the risk of dying much earlier—even up to 20 years earlier—than persons without disabilities. They have an increased risk of developing chronic conditions, with up to double the risk of asthma, depression, diabetes, obesity, oral diseases, and stroke. Many of the differences in health outcomes cannot be explained by the underlying health condition or impairment, but by avoidable, unfair and unjust factors.

### **Measles Outbreak Risk Is Rising as Vaccination Rates Drop, CDC Says**

*Everyday Health | 2 December 2022*

Measles vaccination rates fell to the lowest level in more than a decade during the COVID-19 pandemic, complicating efforts to prevent outbreaks, according to a new report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Globally, a record high of nearly 40 million children missed a measles vaccine dose last year, including 25 million kids who didn't get the first of two recommended doses, and an additional 14.7 million who missed their second dose, according to the report, which was issued jointly with the World Health Organization (WHO) November 23. "The record number of children under-immunized and susceptible to measles shows the profound damage immunization systems have sustained during the COVID-19 pandemic," said the CDC's director, Rochelle Walensky, MD, MPH, in the report.

### **New HIV Vaccine Trial Shows Extreme Promise**

*Plus | 3 December 2022*

A small, phase 1 trial testing a new HIV vaccine delivered positive results in 97 percent of recipients. The vaccine was created from an engineered version of a protein within the HIV virus. This particle, according to an article on Science Alert, was designed to get the body ready to produce the neutralizing antibodies thought to be critical for HIV immunity. Forty-eight participants received either the vaccine or a placebo, while 35 of the 36 dosed with the vaccine showed an activation of antibody precursor B cells that could pave the way to immunity.

### **Well-Known Activist Living With HIV for 9 Years Shares Glowing Photo, Smashes Stigma and Inspires Mzansi**

*Briefly | 4 December 2022*

Well-known HIV activist, Nozi Qamngana-Mayaba, is on a mission to destroy the negative perceptions



people may have about the virus. Taking to the socials, the author of two books, entitled *I Am Still Zuri* and *I Am Still Me*, shared that she's been living with HIV for the last nine years and hasn't allowed the virus to change the person she is.

## **Exercise may increase the effectiveness of your Covid-19 vaccine, a new study found: Here's how to get the most benefit**

*Make It | 4 December 2022*

Having the most protection from severe outcomes following Covid-19 infection is largely attributed to vaccination. But, the shot's effectiveness may be enhanced by physical activity, a new study found. Elevated levels of physical activity appeared to be associated with higher effectiveness from the primary series of the Covid-19 vaccination, according to new research published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*.

## **Commemorating World Aids Day 2022 in Amajuba District**

*Health Systems Trust | 5 December 2022*

Commencing the Provincial Government's commemoration of World AIDS Day (WAD) in Amajuba District, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube led a contingent of Members of the Executive Council (MECs) on household visits in Ward 12 of Danhauser Sub-district, to gain a first-hand understanding of the community's challenges and needs. Premier Dube-Ncube (second from right) is accompanied by provincial MEC for health, Dr Nomagugu Simelane, on household visits in the Danhauser ward 12 community. (photo credit: KZNOnline).

## **World Aids Day: 'Aids is still a reality, and it kills'**

*IOL | 5 December 2022*

The people of Inanda, eThekweni District and the surrounding areas were advised to be always aware that Aids is still a reality, and that it kills. These warning words were echoed by Aids activist Phume Ngcobo as she addressed the crowd gathered at JL Dube Sports field in Inanda on Sunday.

## **Cultural Barriers Are Preventing Women in Eswatini From Accessing HIV Care**

*The Body | 5 December 2022*

Eswatini (formerly Swaziland), a tiny country of just over a million people in Southern Africa, has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world. As of 2021, UNAIDS reported that 27.9% of people aged 15-49 within the country are living with the virus. According to the Global Fund—an international financing partnership that works to eliminate HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria—63% of the people living with HIV (PLWH) in the country are women, who continue to be disproportionately affected by the virus. For example, the fund reported that in 2020, women and girls accounted for 63% of all new HIV diagnoses.

## **Is an HIV Catastrophe Coming to Europe?**

*Plus | 5 December 2022*

Europe has seen a rise in undiagnosed HIV infections — the World Health Organization (WHO) and European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) reported that between at least 2018 to 2021, there have been more HIV infections than diagnoses.

The full report showed that testing rates fell during the COVID-19 pandemic and has hindered progress toward eliminating new HIV transmissions by 2030.

## **Health Expert Voices: Reflections on 20th Anniversary of PEPFAR**

*Project Hope | 5 December 2022*

PEPFAR – or the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief – was conceptualized by Dr. Anthony Fauci in 2003 after a White House meeting with then President George W. Bush who challenged him to think big. Over the last twenty years, PEPFAR has invested more than \$100 billion in the global HIV/AIDS response, effectively saving 25 million lives, preventing millions of new HIV infections, and serving as a platform that has helped to combat avian flu, Ebola, and – more recently – COVID-19. Growing up in the 80s and 90s, I heard horrifying stories of kids losing their parents and it made such an impact that once I completed my Epidemic Intelligence Service Training at the CDC in 2008, I began my career working in PEPFAR, including roles at the CDC and USAID.

## **Aspen urges ViiV to licence injectable HIV drug to African generic manufacturers**

*Business Day | 5 December 2022*

SA's biggest pharmaceutical manufacturer Aspen Pharmacare has urged ViiV Healthcare to licence African generic drug makers to produce cheap copies of its long-acting cabotegravir injection, which offers protection against HIV. The debate about access to cabotegravir has taken on new impetus after the SA Health Products Regulatory Authority (Sahpra) announced it had registered the drug, administered every two months, for preventing HIV infection.

## **WATCH | Goal is to get price as low as possible, says HIV jab producer as Sahpra registers drug**

*Times Live | 5 December 2022*

South Africa's medicine regulator, Sahpra, has registered CAB-LA, a new anti-HIV jab. But for how much will drugmaker ViiV Healthcare sell it to the government? The Bhekisisa Centre for Health Journalism asked them in their TV programme Health Beat. Bhekisisa editor-in-chief Mia Malan spoke to Dr Kimberly Smith, head of research and development at ViiV Healthcare, about the drug's pricing, clinical trials and availability.

## **Intersectional approach needed to end gender-based violence and femicide**

*Mail & Guardian | 5 December 2022*

As we join civil society, the media and government during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign, not forgetting LGBTQIA+ people, we are reflecting on our role in perpetuating this social ill. At the second Presidential Summit on gender-based violence and Femicide (GBVF), held on 1 and 2 November, President Cyril Ramaphosa committed to eradicating this violence and reported on the steps taken to achieve this. We note that there is not much effort being put into investigating the unique experiences of people with disabilities, sex workers, LGBTQIA+ people and migrants, who are disproportionately affected by GBVF.

## **Some Free State patients only given lifesaving antiretrovirals for two weeks at a time**

*Daily Maverick | 5 December 2022*

While the Free State health department is denying that clinics in the province are experiencing stockouts of antiretroviral medicines, some healthcare users and HIV activists working in communities claim otherwise. The department does however acknowledge that some people are given only a two-week supply at a time.

## **Exploring effects of COVID-19 pandemic on neurodevelopment and mental health in adolescents**

*News Medical Life Science | 5 December 2022*

In a recent study published in Biological Psychiatry: Global Open Science (BPGOS), researchers examined the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic on adolescents' neurodevelopment and mental health. The COVID-19 pandemic, caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), has been a significant adversity worldwide. A meta-analysis observed that the prevalence of internalizing problems doubled in youth since the pandemic began; still, the potential ramifications of the pandemic for the neurodevelopment of children remain unknown.

## **COVID-19 Disrupted HIV Testing and Prevention**

*POZ | 5 December 2022*

The nation's ability to prevent HIV was "dealt a hard blow" early in the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) analysis published on December 1, World AIDS Day. However, according to the CDC, a rapid rebound in services "is a testament to quick, resourceful local innovations that, if scaled up and sustained, could help reach national HIV prevention goals."

## **Turning A Diabetes Diagnosis Into A Success Story**

*Longevity | 5 December 2022*

What does it feel like to be diagnosed with diabetes? And is there a way to turn this kind of diagnosis into something positive? For Nicholas Caracandas, the answer was learning to own it as part of his identity. After being diagnosed with Type I Diabetes about 30 years ago, he figured out how to help other T1Ds achieve their exercise and nutrition goals and ultimately self-manage their diabetes. Nicholas shared his insights with Longevity for Wellness Wednesday.

## **Load shedding leaves woman in labour stranded**

*Health-e News | 5 December 2022*

A clinic in Mathibestad in the North West is on the verge of collapse while it battles to keep its lights on during load shedding, leaving patients in need of emergency care stranded. The 24-hour clinic services more than five villages and struggles to stay open during the ongoing blackouts. Up to six hours are lost daily. Mantwa Gobene was turned away from the clinic while in labour. The 25-year-old had no referral letter from the Jubilee District Hospital in Hammanskraal in Gauteng. Once she arrived at the clinic, she was told there was no generator and couldn't be admitted.

## **Sex and relationships: It's time to simplify the talk**

*Health-e News | 5 December 2022*

Take a moment to think about the people in your life and the types of relationships you have. The platonic relationship with your friend, the sexual relationship with your partner, and the working relationship with your colleague. Relationships come in all shapes and sizes. They can be positive or negative, difficult or easy, and involve sex or not – but all of them have a powerful impact on us. Many of us are taught very different things about sex at home, at school, through the media and other venues. Still, for many people, that sex education focuses on the moral aspects of sex or the repercussions of unprotected sex like unwanted pregnancies, STIs or HIV. What far too many of us aren't taught about are relationships and sex.

## **If we want HIV vulnerable group to listen, we must understand their wants and desires, and speak to them – not at them**

*IOL | 6 December 2022*

It doesn't matter whether they're positive or negative, easy or difficult, sexual or not, they all have a powerful impact on us. We are taught very different things about sex. For many people, sex education focuses on the moral aspects of sex or the repercussions of unprotected sex, such as unwanted pregnancies, STIs or HIV. What far too many of us aren't taught about is relationships and sex, as well as the physical and emotional side of sex. Zonja Penzhorn, head of communications at Shout-It-Now, says too few of us are taught that any relationship with another person should leave you feeling good about yourself; that you can and should walk away if a situation makes you uncomfortable; and that relationships should be a complement to your life, not a complication.

## **Experts call for better screening and treatment of TB during pregnancy**

*Spotlight | 6 December 2022*

Busisiwe Beko, from Khayelitsha in the Western Cape, was diagnosed with drug-resistant tuberculosis (DR-TB) while she was pregnant. She remembers it as a very difficult period in her life. "The time that I was diagnosed with TB was the time that I found out I had HIV. In that period, it was really a struggle for me, because I also found out I was pregnant. It was so unfortunate that I couldn't produce sputum so that I could be tested for TB. That was the first challenge for me," says Beko, who now works for Doctors Without Borders (MSF). Beko shared her experience during a session on maternal TB at the recent Union World Conference on Lung Health.

## **UNAIDS World Aids Day report finds 'we are leaving children behind'**

*People's Post | 6 December 2022*

The UNAIDS World Aids Day report shows that only urgent action to tackle inequalities can get the world's Aids response on track. At a United Nations (UN) General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Aids held in New York in June last year, member states adopted a political declaration to get the world on track to end Aids as a public health threat by 2030.

## **Could these new treatments mean children won't need hand-me-down cancer drugs made for adults? We launch campaign to find gentler drugs for children**

*Daily Mail | 6 December 2022*

Cancer is not one illness — there are at least 100 different forms of the disease — and cancer in children is not the same as in adults, and often evolves through a completely different biological pathway. Yet almost all the drugs currently used to treat tumours in children have been developed and tested based on how cancer behaves in adults.

## **Drug companies must address 'chronic neglect' of women**

*Health-e News | 6 December 2022*

Drug companies must make fundamental changes to their core business to address Research and Development (R&D) gaps and access to existing medicines for women's sexual and reproductive health in lower-income countries, global health equity advocates urge. Despite progress in women's health and rights in the last 50 years, stark inequalities remain in access to contraceptives, health services to support safe pregnancy and birth, and treatment of sexual and reproductive diseases, the Access to Medicine Foundation highlights in a special report presented to industry representatives last week.

## **Eighth child dies after Strep A infection - as parents warned to watch out for symptoms**

*Sky News | 6 December 2022*

A young child has died after being diagnosed with Strep A - the eighth to have been killed by the bacterial infection in recent weeks. The latest victim was a pupil at Morelands Primary School in Waterlooville, Hampshire. An invasive form of the Strep A bacterial infection has spread across the UK in recent months, with No 10 warning parents to be "on the lookout" for symptoms.

## **Blood on the floor, drips in the dark: Johannesburg is crumbling. Here's how it affects hospitals**

*Bhekisisa | 6 December 2022*

At night, Palesa Mgazi\*, a doctor at Lenasia South District Hospital in the south of Johannesburg, regularly puts patients on drips in complete darkness. She has to think on her feet — and fast. There's no beeping from machines that check vital signs in the emergency department where she works — because they don't work without electricity. Many patients coming through the doors need to be hooked up to machines that monitor their body temperature, pulse rate, blood pressure and oxygen levels. Others need to be put onto a ventilator (a machine that breathes for them).

## **Flu and COVID-19 Push Hospitalizations Higher as RSV Cases Rise**

*Everyday Health | 7 December 2022*

Hospitalizations due to the flu are at the highest they've been in a decade, according to a telebriefing by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Monday. With COVID-19 hospitalizations on the upswing as well, health authorities are concerned that hospitals may be overwhelmed in the weeks ahead. Since the beginning of October, about 78,000 people have been hospitalized with the flu. The number of flu hospitalizations for the week ending November 27 (19,593) was almost double that of the week before. There have already been 8.7 million illnesses and 4,500 deaths from flu, including at least 14 children, per the CDC.

## **HIV Vaccine Candidate Prompts Immune Response in Early Human Trials**

*Everyday Health | 7 December 2022*

An experimental vaccine designed to prevent HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) has produced promising results in a preliminary study involving a small group of volunteers. The vaccine candidate showed success in stimulating production of rare immune cells needed to start the process of generating antibodies against the fast-mutating virus. As detailed December 2 in the journal *Science*, the treatment produced a broad neutralizing antibody response in 35 of 36 (97 percent) of recipients who received two vaccine doses eight weeks apart. "With our many collaborators on the study team, we showed that vaccines can be designed to stimulate rare immune cells with specific properties, and this targeted stimulation can be very efficient in humans," said William Schief, PhD, a study author and immunologist at Scripps Research, in La Jolla, California, in a press release.

## **Screening saves lives: The CCPAC project enables cervical cancer screening in the hardest-to-reach places**

*Health Systems Trust | 7 December 2022*

On 22 October 2022, the Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control Programme (CCPAC) team joined Benedictine Hospital staff to support the Isibhedlela kubantu initiative point in the Ndongane area of Nongoma in Zululand. *Isibhedlela kubantu* (isiZulu for 'a hospital for the people') is an outreach campaign focused on bringing basic curative healthcare services to where people live, and is proudly supported by



HST teams who are advocates for community-based services. This outreach day enabled women in Ndongane to be screened for cervical cancer in their own neighbourhood, and to receive related health education and awareness for prevention, early diagnosis, and referral should the need arise.

## **SA SURE PRO in uThukela District mobilises around the global 16 days of activism campaign**

*Health Systems Trust | 8 December 2022*

Enduring sexual, physical and psychological abuse is a terrible reality for many South Africans, especially women, children, the LGBTQI+ community, the elderly, and people living with disabilities. This violation damages every aspect of life and society, and deprives generations of these vulnerable groups of their human rights to health, education, safety and security, and justice. The annual 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children campaign is observed across the world from 25 November to 10 December, as a call to action for all leaders and communities to speak out on gender-based violence, and stop it before it starts. In uThukela District, the SA SURE Pro project team rallied civil society leaders to join an awareness session on violence against women and children, held in Ladysmith with members of the District Department of Health (DoH) Management Team.

## **Phaahla urges South Africans to get covid vaccine booster**

*EWN | 9 December 2022*

Health Minister Joe Phaahla said that while the number of COVID-19 cases remained low, the country still continued to record deaths linked to the virus on a weekly basis.

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# **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!

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# **PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS**

## **South African Health Review 2021**

*Health Systems Trust | 2021*

When it comes to service delivery and access in both the public and private health sectors, COVID-19 has put everything to the test. It has demonstrated how central public health security is to health and livelihoods, and how pandemic health emergencies expose the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of health systems, costing lives and causing immeasurable damage to economies. Few could have imagined the impact of COVID-19 when this pandemic reached our shores in March 2020.

This edition considers the government's and broader health sector's response to COVID-19, explores the current challenges facing the health system at this unprecedented time, and reflects on lessons learnt for future for public health emergencies. The chapters offer information on, inter alia, the challenges of balancing lives with livelihoods, and the impact of COVID-19 on different cadres of healthcare workers, especially Community Health Workers who found themselves at the forefront of our COVID-19 response.

Other areas covered include the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations like children, persons with disabilities, farmworkers, migrants, and the poorest in our society.

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## CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

### **Universal Health Coverage Day 2022**

*World Health Organization | 12 December 2022*

Imagine if our societies and economies were designed to prioritize everyone's health. It means that we all get to enjoy productive and fulfilling work that do no harm to our physical and mental health. And if we ever need to access information and services to make healthier choices, prevent disease, get treatment, medicines, or recovery support, these would be readily available to us, never too far away, never too expensive. This has always been our shared vision; an ambitious goal that we call universal health coverage.

### **International conference on latest Medical research and Development (ICMRD)**

21 December 2022

It aims to bring together leading academic scientists, researchers and research scholars to exchange and share their experiences and research results on all aspects of English and American Studies. It also provides a premier interdisciplinary platform for researchers, practitioners and educators to present and discuss the most recent innovations, trends, and concerns as well as practical challenges encountered and solutions adopted in the fields of latest Medical research and Development.

### **Open call for short films: 4th edition Health for All Film Festival**

31 October 2022 – 31 January 2023

The Health for All Film Festival aims to recruit a new generation of film and video innovators to champion global health issues, launching its 4th edition, the festival is opening an invitation to independent filmmakers, production companies, NGOs, communities, students, and film schools from around the world to submit their original short films about health.

### **Antimicrobial Chemotherapy Conference 2023**

#SaveTheDate and join us for the Antimicrobial Chemotherapy Conference 2023 – Equipping African researchers tackling rising AMR

Africa CDC

Date: 1 & 2 February 2023

Time: 13h30 - (EAT)

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## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

### **Technicians (Digital Health Systems Support): HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING UNIT**

Closing Date: 2022-12-14

### **Research Registered Nurse: FEMALES RISING THROUGH EDUCATION SUPPORT AND HEALTH (FRESH)**

Closing Date: 2022-12-20

### **Area Monitoring And Evaluation Officer: HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING UNIT**

Closing Date: 2022-12-22

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