

HST Bulletin_10 March 2023

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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

One-Year Adverse Outcomes Among US Adults With Post-COVID-19 Condition vs Those Without COVID-19 in a Large Commercial Insurance Database

*JAMA Health Forum | 3 March 2023**Andrea DeVries, Sonali Shambhu and Sue Sloop*

Among the many puzzling aspects of COVID-19 has been the variable recovery time and range of complications experienced by many individuals. Median recovery time for mild cases is approximately 2 weeks and for severe cases is 6 weeks. Numerous studies have identified a subset of patients for whom recovery time exceeds 6 weeks and who experience an increased risk of adverse outcomes. The condition among the subset of patients experiencing post-COVID-19 symptoms has been described in the lay press as “long COVID” and in the medical literature as experiencing postacute sequelae of SARS-CoV-2, or post-COVID-19 condition (PCC).

Knowledge of breastfeeding and human milk banks amongst mothers at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital: A descriptive study

*Sabinet | 7 March 2023**N Patel, P Sumaraj, T Gabler, A Grieve, P Naidoo, et al.*

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, followed by breastfeeding and complementary foods up to two years of age. Breastfeeding is associated with numerous positive benefits as compared to mixed and formula feeding. These benefits include improved neurodevelopmental outcomes, decreased rates of infant mortality and sudden infant death syndrome, and decreased frequency and severity of neonatal and infant infections, particularly necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC). Breastfeeding is a significant challenge in the developing world, and particularly in South Africa. Although initiation rates for breastfeeding in South Africa have improved considerably since 2011 when the State ceased provision of a free six month supply of formula to all Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) positive mothers, rates of exclusive breastfeeding at six months postpartum remain low (6.8–8.3%) in comparison to other countries in Southern Africa, such as Zimbabwe (31%) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (38%). As such, mixed feeding is the predominant norm in the South African population, resulting in significantly increased risk for NEC and other diseases of

infancy.

Identifying access barriers faced by rural and dispersed communities to better address their needs: implications and lessons learned for rural proofing for health in the Americas and beyond

Remote and Rural Health | 7 March 2023

Natalia Houghton, Ernesto Bascolo, Rachael R Cohen, Norma Lleny Cruz Vilcarromero, Hernán Rodríguez Gonzalez, et al.

Universal access to health services and universal health coverage are needed to achieve good health for all, yet rural communities face a variety of access barriers. As part of an effort to 'rural proof' health systems, it is therefore imperative to identify and act on the factors limiting access to health services by rural and indigenous communities. This article provides a comprehensive overview of the wide range of access barriers faced by rural and remote communities in two countries where barrier assessments were conducted. It also discusses the potential for barrier assessments to contribute evidence for rural proofing of national health policies, strategies, plans and programs.

Early childhood lower respiratory tract infection and premature adult death from respiratory disease in Great Britain: a national birth cohort study

The Lancet | 7 March 2023

James Peter Allinson, Prof Nishi Chaturvedi, Andrew Wong, Imran Shah, Prof Gavin Christopher Donaldson, et al

Lower respiratory tract infections (LRTIs) in early childhood are known to influence lung development and lifelong lung health, but their link to premature adult death from respiratory disease is unclear. We aimed to estimate the association between early childhood LRTI and the risk and burden of premature adult mortality from respiratory disease.

A cross-sectional study of knowledge, attitudes, barriers and practices of cervical cancer screening among nurses in selected hospitals in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

BMC Women's Health | 9 March 2023

Wezile Chitha, Siyabonga Sibulawa, Itumeleng Funani, Buyiswa Swartbooi, Kedibone Maake, et al.

Cervical cancer is a preventable but highly prevalent cancer in many low -and middle-income countries including South Africa. Cervical cancer outcomes can be improved with improved vaccination, a well-coordinated and efficient screening programme, increased community awareness and uptake, and increased knowledge and advocacy of health professionals. This study therefore aimed to ascertain the knowledge, attitudes, practices and barriers of cervical cancer screening among nurses of selected rural hospitals in South Africa.

Prevalence of potentially traumatic events and symptoms of depression, anxiety, hazardous alcohol use, and post-traumatic stress disorder among people with HIV initiating HIV care in Cameroon

BMC Psychiatry | 9 March 2023

Angela M Parcesepe, Lindsey M Filiatreau, Peter Vanes Ebasone, Anastase Dzudie, Brian W Pence, et al.

This study explored the relationship between specific types of potentially traumatic events (PTEs) and symptoms of mental health disorders among people with HIV (PWH) in Cameroon.

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

RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

In Malawi, community-run Oral Rehydration Points help address cholera deaths

WHO Africa | 3 March 2023

In Area 36, a densely populated neighbourhood of the capital of Malawi, Lilongwe, community volunteers and health workers keep a lifesaving Oral Rehydration Point (ORP) open every day, all day long. Every morning, the small group sweeps the ground and takes out supplies provided by World Health Organization (WHO): an oral rehydration solution and chlorine solutions to mix with water to disinfect cups and surfaces and for hand hygiene.

Tackling taboo topics such as sex, HIV, and reproductive health is crucial

IOL | 3 March 2023

It is reported that women tend to be hesitant to seek healthcare associated with taboo subjects such as sex, HIV, and reproductive health. This lack of awareness becomes a challenge to be tackled for preventative women's healthcare. Experts say promoting women's reproductive and overall health should be a top priority for community development. According to Sister Thandi Mgcina, healthcare manager at NPO, Rhiza Babuyile, there are still many adolescent girls and women who need to be encouraged to seek healthcare at their closest available facility.

WHO launches policy on preventing and addressing sexual misconduct

World Health Organization | 3 March 2023

The World Health Organization today launched its Policy on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Misconduct[*] which places the victims and survivors at its core, sets strict standards of zero tolerance and stresses that there can be “no excuse” for sexual misconduct.

We can overcome vaccine hesitancy. Just look at the HPV shot. Focus on women's healthcare needs

Vox | 4 March 2023

Vaccines save lives like no other single health intervention, preventing millions of deaths every year. And that makes it all the more confounding that vaccine hesitancy, with all of its negative public health repercussions, has moved to the forefront of American society over the last three years. About a quarter of American adults say they won't get the Covid-19 vaccine, according to one recent study, and experts fear that Covid vaccine skepticism could spread to other shots. The good news is that Americans have quashed vaccine apprehension before — and we did it not by dismissing vaccine deniers, but by taking their fears seriously.

Prevention Access Campaign and Partners on the Frontline of PEPFAR COP/ROP Planning

poz.com | 4 March 2023

It is that time of the year when civil society organizations (CSOs), governments, the United States government's President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and other partners convene in Johannesburg, South Africa, to plan for funding for the year 2023 and beyond. PEPFAR is the largest donor to over 50 countries in the global HIV response. This was the first in-person meeting since the pronouncement of COVID-19 as a global pandemic.

Focus on women's healthcare needs can help avoid illness

IOL | 5 March 2023

The majority of us are aware of the fundamental components of good health, such as maintaining a balanced diet, getting regular exercise, drinking plenty of water, and managing stress. Millions of women in vulnerable communities across South Africa are struggling to obtain basic and tertiary health-care services as a result of rising demand over the past three years. More so than in the past, medical care has focused on treating diseases, which might lower death rates and lengthen life expectancy, but what if some health conditions could be easily avoided prior to medical intervention? These circumstances, according to Rhiza Babuyile, a community development NGO that works in townships throughout South Africa, have increased demand for access to charity-sponsored health care for those who have trouble accessing the overburdened public system. South Africa's health-care system is exceedingly unequal and is split into two tiers: public and private. The public sector, which is backed by the government, provides services to 71% of the population.

Should SA's public hospitals go solar?

Spotlight | 6 March 2023

For businesses and households that can afford it, solar panels and batteries offer a way to keep the lights on during South Africa's ongoing bouts of loadshedding. Such technologies may also offer a solution for healthcare facilities, where a reliable energy supply can be a matter of life and death.

#BhekisisaDiaries: What vasectomy research says about sex, myths and manhood

Bhekisisa | 6 March 2023

Stories about reproductive health often focus on women and their options to prevent or end an unwanted pregnancy. But it takes two to tango and since men are often left out of the family planning picture — they may start to believe that birth control is only a feminine problem. Get a sense of what it's like to report on the few contraceptive options for men from our Mohale Moloi.

Study: Some parents lied about COVID-19 status of children

UPI | 6 2023

About a quarter of U.S. parents lied about their children's health status throughout the COVID-19 pandemic in order to avoid public health restrictions that were intended to fight the virus by keeping sick kids home from school, according to a study released Monday. About 25.9% of the parents that participated in the study reported misrepresentation or nonadherence in at least one of seven categories related to reporting their children's health related to COVID-19, the survey titled "Public Health Parental Nonadherence to Health Policy Recommendations for Prevention of COVID-19 Transmission Among Children" found.

New deputy president to launch national strategic plan for HIV, TB and STIs

Bizcommunity | 7 March 2023

Following this final stage of approval, the plan will be launched to the public by the new deputy president, Paul Mashatile in his capacity as the chairperson of the South African National Aids Council (Sanac), during the official commemoration of World TB Day on 24 March in Rustenburg, North West. The NSP provides a strategic framework for a multi-sectoral approach that is people-centred to eliminate HIV, TB and STIs as public health threats by 2030.

First-in-woman study of a non-hormonal vaginal film showed safety, potential contraceptive efficacy, and supports future development

News Medical Life Science | 7 March 2023

Hormones-based contraceptives are safe and highly effective. However, some women might have medical contraindications or side effects due to them. Likewise, non-hormonal methods, e.g., copper intrauterine devices, cause heavy menstrual bleeding and dysmenorrhea. Likewise, nonoxynol-9 (N9)-based spermicides, female condoms, and diaphragms have many potential drawbacks; as such, their uptake is low worldwide. Consequently, there is an urgent need for safer and more acceptable contraceptives to meet their growing demand as the unplanned pregnancy rate exceeds 50% across several countries.

Third patient declared HIV-free following bone marrow transplant

Clinical Trials Arena | 7 March 2023

The introduction of antiretroviral therapy (ART) to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) patients in the 1980s was a turning point in the treatment of the disease. Once considered a terminal diagnosis, HIV could now be recognised as a manageable chronic health condition. Today, the World Health Organization (WHO) classifies HIV as a global epidemic and reports that ART was used to treat 75% of HIV patients in 2021. ART is a daily treatment method that works by reducing the replication of HIV in the blood, resulting in undetectable and non-transmissible viral levels. Lifelong treatment is recommended to ensure the virus does not continue to replicate and spread.

Reluctance to prescribe medication risks the health of pregnant women, finds study

Medical Express | 7 March 2023

An unwillingness among health care professionals to prescribe and dispense otherwise recommended medications is putting the health and lives of pregnant women at risk, finds a new study involving a UCL researcher. The research, published in *BMJ Open* and involving researchers at UCL, the Center for Reproductive Research & Communication at BPAS, Cardiff University, and Pregnancy Sickness Support, highlights the experiences of women whose pharmacists had refused to dispense prescriptions made by their GP. The study analyzed survey responses from 7,090 women and interviews with 34 women who were pregnant or had been pregnant in the last five years, and found that women were made to feel "guilty" or like "the worst mother" for seeking medication to treat serious conditions. Several participants even resorted to self-prescribing and discontinued their advised treatments without medical consultation—due to fears about fetal harm. This resulted in either hospitalization or exacerbation of symptoms. Now

researchers are calling for health care professionals to "work harder to ensure pregnant women are able to access the right medicines for themselves and their baby."

'Radical change of direction' needed in women, peace and security agenda

United Nations | 7 March 2023

Ms. Bahous noted that although several historic firsts for gender equality occurred during the first two decades of the resolution, "we have neither significantly changed the composition of peace tables, nor the impunity enjoyed by those who commit atrocities against women and girls." She said the 20th anniversary "was not a celebration, but a wake-up call," pointing to situations from across the globe that have emerged since then. They include the regression of women's and girls' rights in Afghanistan in the wake of the Taliban takeover, sexual violence committed in the war in the Tigray region in Ethiopia, and online abuse targeting women opposing military rule in Myanmar. Women and children also comprise a staggering 90 per cent of the nearly eight million people forced to flee the conflict in Ukraine, and nearly 70 per cent of those displaced within the country.

Blood vending machine aims to reduce supply issues

Health-e News | 7 March 2023

The South African National Blood Services (SANBS) has launched a smart blood fridge, aimed at reducing turnaround times for patients to receive blood. The fridge, called Bophelo, is currently being piloted at Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital in Johannesburg. It operates as a vending machine and healthcare workers use a unique code sent to them by SANBS to access cross-matched blood.

Cancer will cost the world \$25 trillion over next 30 years

Nature | 7 March 2023

The total cost of cancer to the global economy will reach 25.2 trillion international dollars between 2020 and 2050, according to an analysis of 29 cancers across 204 countries. Of that, five types of cancer will account for roughly half of that cost. The study, published in JAMA Oncology last month, finds that tracheal, bronchial and lung cancer will be the most expensive, followed by colon and rectal cancer, breast cancer, liver cancer and leukaemia¹ (see 'Which cancers cost the most'). Together, those cancers will cost roughly Int\$12 trillion over the next 30 years. International dollars are an artificial currency often used in economic analyses and comparisons across countries.

Diabetes and obesity are rising globally — but some nations are hit harder

Nature | 7 March 2023

Rates of type 2 diabetes and other conditions caused by disorders of the body's energy-processing system are driven in part by changing food habits.

Indoor air is full of flu and COVID viruses. Will countries clean it up?

Nature | 7 March 2023

The current pandemic has focused attention to the importance of healthy indoor air and could spur lasting improvements to the air we breathe.

'I would lie and listen to my pain': The multitasking mavericks fighting for a good death

Bhekisisa | 8 March 2023

- Morphine was first introduced to Uganda 30 years ago, but as the burden of cancer increases, thousands of people still lack access to even basic treatment or pain relief.
- The Ugandan government cannot fulfil its responsibility to provide end-of-life care for its people. Now, a hospice organisation that has been picking up the slack is running out of money too.
- Meet the health workers doing what they can to provide a good death for cancer patients at the end of their lives.

Can Women Living With HIV Safely Breastfeed Their Babies? [VIDEO]

POZ | 8 March 2023

Mothers living with HIV have a low likelihood of transmitting the virus to their infants through breastfeeding, and revised U.S. guidelines state that HIV-positive people should receive patient-centered counseling to support shared decision-making about infant feeding. The same considerations apply to

transgender men and nonbinary people who wish to chestfeed.

International Women's Day

WHO | 8 March 2023

The theme for International Women's Day 2023 is DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality. Multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against women and girls, rooted in gender inequality, harm their health and well-being. Women and girls in many parts of the world face the risks of unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections including HIV and cervical cancer, malnutrition, depression, and respiratory infections, amongst other risks.

The pursuit of dialysis equity

Nature | 8 March 2023

When a transplant is out of reach, kidney failure leaves those without access to high-quality health care with few options.

What we didn't expect was the violence – Health Minister Joe Phaahla as the health worker wage strike intensifies

Daily Maverick | 9 March 2023

Four days into the wage strike by health workers has resulted in four lives being lost according to Phaahla. A number of protesting workers have been shot with rubber bullets and the devastation has no end in sight as the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union has vowed to intensify industrial action.

[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!

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

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.

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

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

Global Convening on COVID-19 Vaccination Monitoring and Related System Strengthening

Date: 13 – 15 March 2023

The COVID-19 vaccine rollout has required unprecedented levels of in depth and near real-time implementation data to support programmatic decision-making. Governments, international agencies, and other partners involved in the rollout at all levels have had to rapidly develop both a) monitoring frameworks and b) data systems and infrastructure for COVID-19 vaccination, whether by building on existing resources or by developing new ones. Due to the epidemiology of COVID-19 infection, this has meant monitoring vaccine uptake in new population groups and reporting key data at increased frequencies, as compared with typical practices under routine immunization.

First in line: The complex challenges of primary health care service delivery, whilst enabling and retaining the workforce

Date: 13 March 2023

Time: 12:00 – 14:00 UTC Time

The second series of the joint WHO Health Workforce-Health Education England planning and leadership programme, 'Working for Health 2030: Building Health Workforce Leadership', begins on 13 March. The first interactive seminar of the WHO-Health Education England Working for Health 2030 programme will showcase the expertise of primary care specialists. This seminar will cover case studies from around the world, and touch on key priorities for health systems delivering primary care in the wake of COVID-19.

South African Nursing Council Indaba

Date: 18-19 May 2023

The South African Nursing Council (SANC) is pleased to welcome you to this key event where we will focus on The Future of Nursing. The SANC is a statutory body entrusted to set and maintain standards of Nursing Education and Practice in the Republic of South Africa, to protect the public. It is an autonomous, financially independent, statutory body operating under the Nursing Act, 2005 (Act No. 33 of 2005). The Council of the SANC is constituted in terms of the Nursing Act, 2005 (Act No. 33 of 2005). The tenure of the current and 16th Council of the SANC is from 2018 – 2023 and will end in August 2023. The Indaba program thus contains a focus on the milestones achieved by the 16th Council, and in addition, provides a wide variety of topics that affect Nursing as a whole.

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

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING (HSS) UNIT: AREA CO-ORDINATOR

Closing date: 10 March 2023

FEMALES RISING THROUGH EDUCATION, SUPPORT AND HEALTH (FRESH): ENROLLED NURSES

Closing date: 16 March 2023

COMMUNICATIONS UNIT, CORPORATE SERVICES: COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Closing date: 24 March 2023

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



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