

HST Bulletin_13 January 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

Quasi-experimental evaluation of a financial incentive for first-dose COVID-19 vaccination among adults aged ≥ 60 years in South Africa

BMJ Global Health | 21 December 2022

Candice Chetty-Makkan, Harsha Thirumurthy, Elizabeth Bair, Simamkele Bokolo, Candy Day, et al.

COVID-19 vaccination coverage in South Africa (RSA) remains low despite increased access to vaccines. On 1 November 2021, RSA introduced the Vooma Voucher programme which provided a small guaranteed financial incentive, a Vooma Voucher redeemable at grocery stores, for COVID-19 vaccination among older adults, a population most vulnerable to serious illness, hospitalisation and death. However, the association of financial incentives with vaccination coverage remains unclear.

Prevalence and factors associated with substance use among HIV positive youth attending HIV care and treatment centers in Dodoma, Tanzania

AIDS Research and Therapy | 24 December 2022

Zahra Morawej, Azan Nyundo, Ally Kinyaga, Veneranda Kirway, Sophia Kagoye, et al.

Substance use among people living with HIV is associated with poor health, social, and psychological outcomes. This study assessed the prevalence of substance use and associated factors among youth attending HIV care and treatment centers (CTCs) in Dodoma, Tanzania. This cross-sectional study was carried out in Dodoma, Tanzania, from February to April 2020 among youth aged 15–24 attending HIV CTCs. Data was collected using sociodemographic, WHO ASSIST Version 3.0, BDI II, and SERAD questionnaires. Data analysis was done using Stata 17. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize continuous and categorical variables. Univariable and multivariable logistic regression analyses were conducted to determine factors independently associated with substance use.

Recovering from COVID lockdowns: Routine public sector PHC services in South Africa, 2019 - 2021Y

South African Medical Journal | January 2022

Y Pillay; H Museriri, P Barron & T Zondi

In a previous article on the impact of COVID-19, the authors compared access to routine health services

between 2019 and 2020. While differential by province, a number of services provided, as reflected in the District Health Information System (DHIS), were significantly affected by the pandemic. In this article we explore the extent to which the third and fourth waves affected routine services. Objectives. To assess the extent to which waves 3 and 4 of the COVID-19 pandemic affected routine health services in South Africa, and whether there was any recovery in 2021.

HIV cure: an acceptability scientific agenda

Current Opinion on HIV and AIDS | January 2023

Bonney, Evelyn Y; Lamptey, Helena; & Kyei, George B

Recent years have seen major investments into HIV cure research, seeking a permanent cure or remission. The purpose of this review is to consider how this important research agenda could be broadened to include issues of acceptability and appropriateness for different populations. We discuss how the definitions of cure such as functional cure (remission) or complete cure (viral elimination) could be interpreted differently by various populations. We also discuss the different methods of cure and the importance of including Africa in cure research to ensure that emerging remedies could be trialled and utilized on the continent that bears the brunt of the AIDS pandemic.

Exploring a community's understanding of HIV vaccine-induced seropositivity in a South African research setting

South African Medical Journal | January 2023 edition

M Malahleha, A Dilraj, J Jean, NS Morar, JJ Dietrich, et al.

The high HIV prevalence and incidence in South Africa makes it suitable for recruitment of participants for large-scale HIV preventive vaccine trials. However, fear of vaccine-induced seropositivity (VISP) may be a barrier for community acceptability of the trial, for volunteers to participate in HIV preventive vaccine trials and for uptake of an efficacious vaccine. Prior to 2015, when the first phase 1 safety HIV vaccine trial was undertaken at Setshaba Research Centre, Soshanguve, the local community stakeholders and healthcare workers were naive about HIV vaccine research and HIV preventive vaccines.

The role of multidimensional poverty in antibiotic misuse: a mixed-methods study of self-medication and non-adherence in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda

The Lancet Global Health | 1 January 2022

Dominique Green, Katherine Keenan, Kathryn Fredricks, Sarah Huque, Martha Mushi, et al.

Poverty is a proposed driver of antimicrobial resistance, influencing inappropriate antibiotic use in low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs). However, at subnational levels, studies investigating multidimensional poverty and antibiotic misuse are sparse, and the results are inconsistent. We aimed to investigate the relationship between multidimensional poverty and antibiotic use in patient populations in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Psychiatric disorders in adolescents living with HIV in Botswana

AIDS Research and Therapy | 4 January 2023

Anthony Olashore, Saeeda Paruk, Oluyemi O Akanni & Bonginkosi Chiliza

As children living with HIV transition from adolescence into adulthood, they face a considerable burden of psychiatric disorders (PDs) which may vary between the perinatally and behaviorally infected. The knowledge of the pattern of these PDs in relation to the varying needs of the adolescents living with HIV (ALWHIV) is unclear but necessary for maximizing their linkage to care and improving their quality of life in Botswana. To determine the pattern of PDs in ALWHIV in Botswana; to compare and explore the differences in the pattern and their associated factors between congenitally infected adolescents (CIAs) and behaviorally infected adolescents (BIAs).

Oral manifestation of the monkey pox virus: a systematic review and meta-analysis

eClinicalMedicine | 5 January 2023

Aravind Gandhi P, Sourabha Kumar Patro, Mokanpally Sandeep, Prakasini Satapathy, Muhammad Aaqib Shamim, et al.

Mpox (formerly known as monkey pox) is a global public health concern, given the recent outbreaks in non-endemic countries where little scientific evidence exists on the disease epidemiology. Oral lesions among mpox cases have been poorly reported. Our aim was to estimate the overall prevalence of oral manifestations among patients with mpox globally.

Cost-effectiveness of broadly neutralizing antibody prophylaxis for HIV-exposed infants in sub-Saharan African settings

Journal of the International AIDS Society | 5 January 2023

Caitlin Dugdale, Ogochukwu Ufio, Christopher Alba, Sallie Permar, Lynda Stranix-Chibanda, et al.

Infant HIV prophylaxis with broadly neutralizing anti-HIV antibodies (bNAbs) could provide long-acting protection against vertical transmission. We sought to estimate the potential clinical impact and cost-effectiveness of hypothetical bNAbs prophylaxis programmes for children known to be HIV exposed at birth in three sub-Saharan African settings.

Should the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response Lead the National Response to a Public Health Emergency?

JAMA Network | 6 January 2023

Eli Adashi, Daniel O'Mahony & Glenn Cohen

On July 22, 2022, the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) made it known that "Secretary Xavier Becerra has elevated the existing Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response from a staff division to an operating division." The new operating division, to be phased in over the course of 2 years, will be the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR).¹ Going forward, ASPR, now a stand-alone agency, is to be deemed commensurable with other HHS agencies, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Food and Drug Administration, or the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Secretary Becerra went on to express his conviction that the reclassification of ASPR will strengthen the "long-term preparedness posture" of HHS by "better positioning the division to continue coordinating health-related emergency response in collaboration with our various HHS teams." In this Viewpoint, we consider the backdrop to the elevation of ASPR and the implications thereof to the national response to future public health emergencies.

The impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on service delivery and treatment outcomes in people living with HIV: a systematic review

AIDS Research and Therapy | 6 January 2023

SeyedAhmad SeyedAlinaghi, Pegah Mirzapour, Zahra Pashaei, Arian Afzalian, Marcarious M. Tantuoyir, et al.

The COVID-19 epidemic and various control and mitigation measures to combat the widespread outbreak of the disease may affect other parts of health care systems. There is a concern that the COVID-19 pandemic could disrupt HIV services. Therefore, this study aimed to systematically evaluate the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on service delivery and treatment outcomes in people with HIV.

Associations between punitive policies and legal barriers to consensual same-sex sexual acts and HIV among gay men and other men who have sex with men in sub-Saharan Africa: a multicountry, respondent-driven sampling survey

The Lancet HIV | 6 January 2023

Carrie E Lyons, Jean Olivier Twahirwa Rwema, Keletso Makofane, Daouda Diouf, Iliassou Mfochive Njindam, et al

Few assessments of associations between structural-level factors and HIV among gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM) have been conducted, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Our objective was to examine HIV testing history, HIV status, and stigmas among MSM living in ten countries with heterogeneous legal environments.

Association of preexisting psychiatric disorders with post-COVID-19 prevalence: a cross-sectional study

Scientific Reports | 7 January 2023

Mayumi Kataoka, Megumi Hazumi, Kentaro Usuda, Emi Okazaki & Daisuke Nishi

Evidence demonstrating the association of preexisting psychiatric disorders with post-COVID-19 is limited. We aim to investigate the association using larger sample sizes and more extended postinfection periods than previous studies. A total of 6015 (response rate = 77.5%) COVID-19 survivors were surveyed using a self-administered questionnaire from July to September 2021. Poisson regression analysis with robust error variance was performed to estimate post-COVID-19 prevalence ratios (PRs) with or without preexisting psychiatric disorders. Participants with preexisting psychiatric disorders numbered 1067

(17.7%), and with post-COVID-19 were 2149 (35.7%). Post-COVID-19 PR with preexisting psychiatric disorders was 1.09 (95% CI 1.02–1.18, $p=0.013$). The interaction between preexisting psychiatric disorders and postinfection periods was significant (p for interaction <0.001). The subgroup analysis showed that those with preexisting psychiatric disorders might be at greater prolonged risk of post-COVID-19 than those without the disorders. These findings suggested that preexisting psychiatric disorders were associated with an increased post-COVID-19 risk, and post-COVID-19 with preexisting psychiatric disorders might prolong even if time passes.

A survey of COVID-19 vaccine acceptance across 23 countries in 2022

Nature Medicine | 9 January 2023

Jeffrey Lazarus, Katarzyna Wyka, Trenton White, Camila Picchio, Lawrence Gostin, et al.

Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) continued to mutate and spread in 2022 despite the introduction of safe, effective vaccines and medications. Vaccine hesitancy remains substantial, fueled in part by misinformation. Our third study of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccine hesitancy among 23,000 respondents in 23 countries (Brazil, Canada, China, Ecuador, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Poland, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States), surveyed from 29 June to 10 July 2022, found willingness to accept vaccination at 79.1%, up 5.2% from June 2021. Hesitancy increased in eight countries, however, ranging from 1.0% (United Kingdom) to 21.1% (South Africa).

Cost-effectiveness of screening and treating anal pre-cancerous lesions among gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men living with HIV

The Lancet Regional Health | 9 January 2023

Qinglu Cheng, Mary Poynten, Fengyi Jin, Andrew Grulich, Jason Ong, et al.

Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBM) living with HIV have a substantially elevated risk of anal cancer (85 cases per 100,000 person-years vs 1–2 cases per 100,000 person-years in the general population). The precursor to anal cancer is high-grade squamous intraepithelial lesion (HSIL). Findings regarding the cost-effectiveness of HSIL screening and treatment in GBM are conflicting. Using recent data on HSIL natural history and treatment effectiveness, we aimed to improve upon earlier models.

Risk of autoimmune diseases in patients with COVID-19: A retrospective cohort study

eClinicalMedicine | 9 January 2023

Renin Chang, Thomas Yen-Ting Chen, Shio-Ing Wang, Yao-Min Hung, Hui-Yuan Chen, et al.

There are a growing number of case reports of various autoimmune diseases occurring after COVID-19, yet there is no large-scale population-based evidence to support this potential association. This study provides a closer insight into the association between COVID-19 and autoimmune diseases and reveals discrepancies across sex, age, and race of participants.

Effects of scenario-based attribution on collective emotions and stigma toward persons with COVID-19: A cross-sectional survey

Health Science Reports | 9 January 2023

Hye In Boo & Yun-Kyeong Choi

The global pandemic triggered by the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has led to “collective emotions” such as fear, anxiety, sadness, anger, and disgust. Collective emotions have been defined as emotions that are shared by a large number of individuals in a certain society and/or as emotions felt by individuals as a result of their membership in a group or society. Negative collective emotions not only induce psychological distress in the infected but also lead to stigma, social criticism, and discrimination. These negative emotional responses and stigma can be influenced by attribution style, which is a method of reasoning that seeks to find the cause of one's own and other's behaviors and their consequences. Attribution to the same event may depend on the actor's or observer's point of view, which is called the actor-observer bias.

Willingness to receive the COVID-19 vaccine among HIV positive men who have sex with men in China: a cross-sectional study

BMC Public Health | 10 January 2023

People living with HIV (PLWH) are deemed more vulnerable to the SARS-CoV-2 infection than the uninfected population. Vaccination is an effective measure for COVID-19 control, yet, little knowledge exists about the willingness of men who have sex with men (MSM) living with HIV in China to be vaccinated. This cross-sectional study evaluated the willingness of MSM living with HIV to receive COVID-19 vaccination in six cities of Guangdong, China, from July to September 2020. Factors associated with willingness to receive COVID-19 vaccination using multivariable logistic regression.

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

RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

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

SABC News | 5 January 2023

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

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

News Medical Life Science | 5 January 2023

Women who experience recent intimate partner violence (IPV) are three times more likely to contract HIV, according to a new study led by McGill University researchers. In regions like Sub-Saharan Africa, women face an intersecting epidemic of intimate partner violence and HIV. "Sub-Saharan Africa is among one of the regions in the world with the highest prevalence of both IPV and HIV. We wanted to examine the effects of intimate partner violence on recent HIV infections and women's access to HIV care in this region," he says.

Study finds few mpox infections after one vaccine dose

CIDRAP | 7 January 2023

A large study of patients seen at sexual health clinics in London found low numbers of mpox cases after vaccination with one dose of modified vaccinia Ankara (MVA-BN) vaccine. A team from the United Kingdom's National Health Service (NHS) reported their findings this week in *BMJ Sexually Transmitted Diseases*. In other research developments, a team led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) today reported that though cisgender women only made up less than 3% of US mpox cases, Black and Hispanic patients were disproportionately affected, similar to the pattern seen in men.

Monkeypox and HIV

POZ | 9 January 2023

Mpox cases have declined dramatically, but people living with HIV remain at higher risk. Monkeypox—recently renamed mpox—was one of the biggest health stories of 2022. Historically a rare disease mostly seen in Central and West Africa, a new outbreak emerged in London in May. Most cases were among men who have sex with men, suggesting sexual transmission. Before long, mpox skyrocketed in cities across Europe and the United States. New cases have since declined dramatically, but major disparities remain, including a high proportion of cases among people living with HIV.

#BizTrends2023: Climate change will affect healthcare and provision of services

BizCommunity | 9 January 2023

In her article in *The New Yorker*, "Climate Change From A to Z: The stories we tell ourselves about the future", Elizabeth Kolbert writes of the Swedish scientist Svante Arrhenius, who, on the eve of the 20th century, constructed the world's first climate model. According to his scarily accurate calculation, if the amount of carbon dioxide in the air were to double, global temperatures would rise between three and four degrees Celsius – pretty close to the 2.5 to four-degree increase predicted by the vastly more advanced climate models of today.

NCCC to meet on Tuesday to discuss new Covid-19 variant, Ramaphosa says

BusinessDay | 9 January 2023

President Cyril Ramaphosa has confirmed the National Coronavirus Command Council (NCCC) will meet to discuss the new Covid-19 variant detected in SA this week. Speaking to journalists in Johannesburg on Monday, he said government received a Covid-19 report on Sunday which would be discussed by the NCCC on Tuesday.

Measles outbreaks confirmed in five provinces, with test positivity rate skyrocketing

Daily Maverick | 9 January 2023

The National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) has urged parents to get their children vaccinated after a measles outbreak that has spread to five provinces in fewer than two months, with data revealing dismal vaccination rates. The first outbreak was confirmed in Limpopo in October 2022.

A model for HIV management

Bangkok Post | 9 January 2023

The key to ending Aids is to end inequality, and countries most affected by the disease must lead the effort against the disease by closing the economic gap. Inequality, compounded by stigmatisation if not, criminalisation, is making it impossible for many people at risk of contracting HIV, as well as those living with the disease, to receive the quality care they need.

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

Medical Xpress | 9 January 2023

About 38 million people around the world are living with HIV. About 70% of them live in Africa. This shows that there is no solution to the AIDS pandemic without a solution in Africa. In 2021, there were 1.5 million new cases of HIV—just over 4,000 cases per day around the world. At the same time, close to 700,000 people died. The big challenge is to address the dual realities of people still dying from HIV in large numbers, and the large numbers of new infections. The upside is that there is a clear plan with clear goals on how to address this.

A Vaccine Against COVID-19 Found to Protect Against Infection and Brain Damage Caused by the Virus

Neuroscience News | 9 January 2023

Although the pathology of the respiratory system is the main impact of COVID-19, many patients also manifest important neurological symptoms, such as loss of smell (anosmia), headaches, malaise, cognitive loss, epilepsy, ataxia and encephalopathy, among others. However, this effect on the nervous system by the coronavirus has not been characterized in detail and it is unknown if the vaccines developed against COVID-19 prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2 to the central nervous system and confer protection against brain injury.

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

EurekAlert! | 9 January 2023

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

Profound immune escape by SARS-CoV-2 XBB.1 even after 4 vaccine doses

News Medical Life Science | 9 January 2023

In a recent correspondence published in *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* journal, researchers in Germany assessed the neutralization sensitivity of the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) XBB.1 lineage. Co-infection with different SARS-CoV-2 lineages can lead to the recombination of the distinct viral genomes and the creation of new and recombinant SARS-CoV-2 lineages. First detected in India in January 2022, the recombinant XBB lineage is spreading rapidly throughout Europe and Asia. The XBB lineage was formed due to the recombination of two SARS-CoV-2 Omicron variant sublineages, namely BM.1.1.1 and BJ.1.

COVID-19 vaccines: From nasal drops to a redesign, what 2023 could have in store

CBS News | 9 January 2023

Several vaccine companies say they are expecting breakthroughs as early as this year as they pursue new ways to protect people against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. The Food and Drug Administration is set to convene a panel of its outside vaccine advisers later this month to weigh key issues over the future of COVID-19 vaccines, including when and how to greenlight new boosters and changes to which strain the vaccines target. Here's a peek at some of what's expected this year for the next generation of COVID-19 vaccines.

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

Medical Xpress | 9 January 2023

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

Study Finds There Are 4 Subtypes of Long COVID

Prevention | 9 January 2023

Research has found that long COVID impacts one in five adults under the age of 65, but scientists are still trying to learn more about the condition. Now, a new study has found there are actually four main subtypes of long COVID. The study, which was published in the journal *Nature Medicine*, used machine learning to analyze clusters of symptoms in about 35,000 patients with long COVID. (Each patient had at least one lingering symptom after having COVID-19 that lasted between 30 and 180 days after they had the virus.) The researchers used an algorithm that looked at 137 different symptoms, and then classified the patients into four main groups that appeared.

Call to address women's reproductive needs holistically

Science Daily | 9 January 2023

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

WHO Proposes High-Level Global Council to Guide Future Health Emergencies

Health Policy Watch | 9 January 2023

A high-level council to govern global health emergencies, made up of heads of state and other international leaders, is one of the proposals to be discussed by the World Health Organization (WHO) this year. It is the first of 10 proposals to strengthen the WHO's response to health emergencies put forward by WHO Director General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, in a document published late last week. The proposals, distilled from the numerous proposals from member states and global health in light of COVID-19, will be considered by the body's executive board meeting from 30 January to 7 February.

Scientists map cellular changes linked to endometriosis

The Guardian | 9 January 2023

Scientists have mapped the cellular changes linked to endometriosis to help improve therapeutic options for the millions of women affected by the disease. Roughly 1 in 10 women are affected by the condition, which is characterised by cells similar to those lining the uterus growing elsewhere in the body -- most

commonly on the ovaries, fallopian tubes and in the abdominal cavity. Patients with the disorder can experience chronic pain, infertility, headaches and fatigue, as well as bowel and bladder dysfunction. Despite it being so common, it takes an average of seven to eight years to be diagnosed with endometriosis because it is so poorly understood.

How antivaxxers laid the groundwork to blame COVID-19 vaccines for Damar Hamlin's cardiac arrest

Science Based Medicine | 9 January 2023

Right after Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin collapsed from a cardiac arrest after a tackle and was resuscitated on the field, antivaxxers immediately pounced, blaming COVID-19 vaccines even as CPR was still continuing. That's because antivaxxers had "primed the pump" over more than a year with stories of young athletes who had supposedly "died suddenly." (Warning: This one's long, even by Gorski.

Improve healthcare access to end 'preventable tragedy' of child mortality

United Nations | 9 January 2022

In 2021, an estimated five million boys and girls died before their fifth birthday together with some 2.1 million counterparts aged between five and 24 years, according to the latest estimates by the United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME). A second report found that 1.9 million babies were stillborn during the same period. Many of these deaths could have been prevented with equitable access and through the provision of higher quality maternal, newborn, adolescent and child healthcare.

Diabetics to get 'artificial pancreas' on NHS which injects insulin via body-worn tracker

Sky News | 10 January 2023

Auto-injecting blood sugar trackers will be handed to more than 100,000 diabetics in England under an NHS scheme. The new body-worn monitors, likened to an artificial pancreas, pump insulin into the body whenever it is required. The hybrid closed-loop monitors will help patients manage blood sugar levels without having to monitor their levels manually. It means type 1 diabetics won't need continuous glucose monitors or finger-prick tests to check their levels - nor daily insulin injections to treat the disease.

Health dept says it needs more info to confirm case of highly-transmissible Covid-19 subvariant

News24 | 10 January 2022

Claims that South Africa has recorded its first case of a highly-transmissible subvariant of the Covid-19 virus are under investigation by the Department of Health. However, until it has more information, the department cannot confirm if a case has been recorded. Health department spokesperson Foster Mohale said the announcement had originated within the scientific community and not from the department. He added that the department has yet to receive any information on the patient profile, including age, gender and the province in which they were tested.

China won't use foreign vaccines to fight Covid due to 'national pride,' says South Korean vaccine maker

Business Insider South Africa | 10 January 2023

It's no secret that China's been dealing with a flood of new Covid-19 infections ever since it rolled back its strict zero-Covid stance. But that doesn't necessarily mean the country is likely to go sourcing much-needed Covid vaccines from external parties — the CEO of the leading vaccine producer in South Korea feels that "national pride" will keep China from sourcing foreign vaccines.

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

Bhekisisa | 10 January 2023

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

Advancing Gender Equality: UN Women at Davos 2023

UN Women | 10 January 2023

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

A child or youth died once every 4.4 seconds in 2021 – UN report

World Health Organization | 10 January 2023

An estimated 5 million children died before their fifth birthday and another 2.1 million children and youth aged between 5–24 years lost their lives in 2021, according to the latest estimates released by the United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME).

Health Beat #4 | Can the NHI fix SA's rural doctor dilemma?

Bhekisisa | 11 January 2023

There aren't enough doctors working in South Africa's rural areas. To fix this, the Umthombo Youth Development Foundation has trained hundreds of health workers, the majority of whom end up working in the country's far-flung areas. Now, the project's success is being undermined by hiring freezes as provincial health departments battle to balance a shrinking public purse and increasing salaries. In the fourth episode of Health Beat, our Mia Malan asks the head of the National Health Insurance, Nicholas Crisp, whether the scheme could solve the problem.

In your mind, in your head: SA youth's challenges with mental wellbeing

Health Systems Trust | 11 January 2023

When Gigi D'Agostino, the world-famous DJ, remastered Ivan Gough's song, In my mind, it swept through nightclubs and beaches, igniting youth. The hypnotic refrain, "In my mind, in my head, this is where we all came from, the dreams we have, the love we share, this is what we're waiting for", spoke of a generation seeking insight and freedom from the many challenges they face. In 2021, UNICEF South Africa released the findings of a U-Report poll in which 5 500 youth up to the age of 24 were surveyed. The results were shocking. Some 65% of youth indicated that they had some form of mental health issue, but had not sought help for it. The U-Report findings were released at the start of mental health awareness month in South Africa alongside the launch of the #OnMyMind campaign and UNICEF's global flagship report, The State of the World's Children 2021; On My Mind: promoting, protecting and caring for children's mental health.

Actions being taken by health department after 'Kraken' variant detected in SA welcomed

IOL | 11 January 2023

Covid-19 testing and surveillance of wastewater for detection of cases, including on international flights, is set to increase as the Health Department seeks to respond to the first case of the XBB.1.5 variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Minister of Health Dr Joseph Phaahla yesterday announced that after consulting with the World Health Organization (WHO) and scientists, it was decided that there would be no restrictions or travel ban imposed in the country.

COVID-19 UPDATE: XBB.1.5 VARIANT

NICD | 11 January 2023

The Omicron variant of concern has given rise to many new sublineages, including the BA.1 and BA.2 that were predominant in South Africa from November 2021 through March 2022. BA.4 and BA.5 became predominant in April 2022 and remained the predominant circulating sublineages throughout 2022. As of 9 January 2023, more than 650 sublineages of Omicron have been identified, of which more than 200 have been detected in South Africa. In September 2022, a new sublineage XBB was identified in the United States of America (USA) and Singapore. XBB is a recombinant of two BA.2 sublineages which means it contains the genetic material of both parent sublineages.

Lung cancer mortality in South Africa is increasing due to lack of knowledge and accessibility

IOL | 12 January 2023

The National Cancer Strategic Framework states that cancer in South Africa is a growing national health and socio-economic concern. It has been acknowledged that it is avoidable through immunisation, dietary changes, early discovery, and prompt treatment, alleviating needless suffering.

[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 Common Purpose Leadership Training

The Africa Venture is an annual leadership development programme that seeks to bring together exceptional emerging leaders from across all African nations onto a common platform, where they work together to address pressing issues relevant to the region.

Upcoming dates:

Phase 1 : Online begins 8 May – 14 July 2023

Interactive asynchronous content

Phase 2 : 17 – 20 July 2023

Four days of intensive, dynamic, synchronous sessions

Phase 3 : Online begins 21 July – 1 September 2023

Interactive asynchronous content

Phase 4 : 5 – 7 September 2023

3 days in-person, in a leading African city

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

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.

Public Comment: PEPFAR COP/ROP 2023 Guidance and FY24 Technical

Considerations

The draft PEPFAR Country/Regional Operational Plan 2023 (COP/ROP23) Guidance and the FY24 Technical Considerations documents are now available for public comment through 12:00 am EST on January 23, 2023. Submissions will not be accepted after the deadline.

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

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

International Symposium on Hansen's Disease “Leave No One Behind” and Global Appeal 2023 to End Stigma and Discrimination against Persons Affected by Leprosy

Date: 23 – 24 January 2023

World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day (WNTDD) will be celebrated on Monday 30 January 2023. To mark the first global health day of the year, WHO is organizing or participating in a series of events. In 2016, an International Symposium was held at the Vatican titled “Towards Holistic Care for People with Hansen's Disease, Respectful of their Dignity.” Since that symposium, new case numbers remained more or less constant until the coronavirus pandemic, which impacted leprosy services, disrupted case finding and saw a large drop in new cases from 2020. The pandemic made it harder for persons affected by leprosy to receive treatment and disability care, and impacted their day to day lives and the lives of many other socially vulnerable individuals. Against this backdrop, the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and Sasakawa Leprosy (Hansen's Disease) Initiative as well as French Raoul Follereau Fondation and Italian Association Amici di Raoul Follereau, have agreed to co-host a second international symposium on Hansen's Disease.

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)

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

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Candidates for PhD and Master Studies

Closing Date: 2023-01-17

Quality Improvement Co-ordinator: HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING (HSS) UNIT

Closing Date: 2023-01-19

Ultrasound Radiographer: HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING (HSS) UNIT

Closing Date: 2023-01-19

Genetic Counsellor: HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING (HSS) UNIT

Closing Date: 2023-01-19

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



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