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ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

Knowledge and perceptions about Dolutegravir and Dolutegravir counselling: a qualitative study among women living with HIV

BMC Women's Health | 9 September 2023

John C. Chapola, Fan Lee, Agatha Bula, Nora E. Rosenberg, Jennifer Tseka, et al.

In 2018, the Malawi Ministry of Health adopted the recommendation to switch first-line antiretroviral therapy (ART) from an efavirenz (EFV)-based to a dolutegravir (DTG)-based regimen. Little is known about patients' experience during this transition. We conducted a qualitative study to explore DTG-related counselling challenges among providers of HIV care and factors influencing regimen switching or non-switching among women living with HIV in Lilongwe, Malawi.

<https://bmcwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12905-023-02630-7>

Dolutegravir use over 48 weeks is not associated with worsening insulin resistance and pancreatic beta cell function in a cohort of HIV-infected Ugandan adults

BMC Aid Research and Therapy | 9 September 2023

Frank Mulindwa, Barbara Castelnovo, Nele Brusselselaers, Martin Nabwana, Robert Bollinger, et al.

The Uganda Ministry of Health issued restrictive guidelines on the use of dolutegravir (DTG) in persons stratified to have a heightened risk of diabetes mellitus. This followed multiple reports of persons with HIV (PWH) presenting with accelerated hyperglycemia after a few weeks to months of exposure to DTG. Having demonstrated a low incidence of diabetes mellitus and improving blood glucose trajectories in a cohort of ART naïve Ugandan PWH on DTG, we sought to determine whether the observed improvement in blood glucose did not mask background compensated insulin resistance.

<https://aidsrestherapy.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12981-023-00564-6>

Transmission dynamics and effect of control measures on the 2022 outbreak of mpox among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men in England: a mathematical modelling study

The Lancet Infectious Diseases | 11 September 2023

Xu-Sheng Zhang, Sema Mandal, Hamish Mohammed, Charlie Turner, Isaac Florence, et al.

The monkeypox virus has two clades, the Central African clade I and West African clade II, with the clade II being less pathogenic, but responsible for most cases outside Africa. Transmission of mpox (formerly known as monkeypox) occurs through close contact. Most individuals have mild illness, including a rash that forms blisters, with recovery occurring within 3 weeks. However, serious illness can occur, with a case fatality rate of 10.6% for clade I and 3.6% for clade II infections in sub-Saharan Africa. Severe disease is more likely in individuals who are immunosuppressed.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099\(23\)00451-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(23)00451-6/fulltext)

Bacillus Calmette-Guérin vaccination for protection against recurrent herpes labialis: a nested randomised controlled trial

eClinical Medicine | 11 September 2023

Laure F. Pittet, Cecilia L. Moore, Ellie McDonald, Simone Barry, Marc Bonten et al.

Recurrent herpes labialis ('cold sore') is a common condition caused by reactivation of the herpes simplex virus (HSV) in the orofacial region. HSV-1 is endemic worldwide, infecting up to 95% of individuals, of whom between 14 and 40% have frequent recurrent cold sores. Recurrences can be debilitating and significantly reduce quality of life. Long-term suppressive therapy with an oral antiviral is somewhat effective in reducing the burden of HSV recurrences, but is costly, and involves the risk of adverse events. There is still no vaccine available against HSV.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370\(23\)00380-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370(23)00380-2/fulltext)

Gender differences in the relationships between meaning in life, mental health status and digital media use during Covid-19

BMC Public Health | 11 September 2023

Wendy Wing Yan So, Bowie Po Yi Woo, Clifford Wong and Paul Siu Fai Yip

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on individuals' social lives, mental health status, and meaning in life (MIL). Globally, the use of different types of digital media has become a proxy for pre-COVID social lives for many people. This study investigated gender differences in the relationship between use of digital media, mental health status and MIL, during COVID-19 in Hong Kong.

<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-023-16672-x>

Global health burden and cost of lead exposure in children and adults: a health impact and economic modelling analysis

The Lancet Planetary Health | 11 September 2023

Bjorn Larsen and Ernesto Sánchez-Triana

Although global lead exposure has declined substantially since the phasing out of leaded gasoline, sources of lead exposure remain plentiful, especially in low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs). Lead is one of WHO's ten chemicals of major public health concern, and lead exposure is ranked fourth among major environmental health risk factors after ambient particulate matter air pollution, household air pollution from solid fuels, and unsafe household drinking water, sanitation,

and handwashing according to the Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study (GBD) 2019. Lead is the single chemical with by far the largest quantified health effects globally, which could be influenced by research so far and data availability.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(23\)00166-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(23)00166-3/fulltext)

Exercise interventions on body composition and quality of life of overweight/obese breast cancer survivors: a meta-analysis

BCM women's health | 12 September 2023

Hongchang Yang, Li Liu & Xiaoxia Zhang

This meta-analysis aimed to assess the effects of exercise interventions on body composition and quality of life in overweight/obese breast cancer survivors. Breast cancer is the most common malignancy in women, which is the fifth leading cause of cancer-related deaths with approximately 6.9% of them being reported worldwide in 2020. With advances in early screening and breast cancer treatments, breast cancer mortality has markedly declined during the last couple of decades, which has resulted in an increasing number of breast cancer survivors. There was a 39% decrease in breast cancer mortality in the United States from 1989 to 2015, translating to approximately 322,600 patients saved from breast cancer-related deaths.

<https://bmcwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12905-023-02627-2>

Sociodemographic and Behavioral Risk Correlates of PrEP Interest and Use Among Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness in Los Angeles

Springer Link | 12 September 2023

Erik D. Storholm, David J. Klein, Eric R. Pedersen, Elizabeth J. D'Amico, Anthony Rodriguez, et al.

Young adults experiencing homelessness (YAEH) are at elevated risk for HIV compared to their stably housed peers. Preexposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is highly effective at preventing HIV infection, yet YAEH have been largely overlooked in PrEP efforts to date despite YAEH reporting high overall interest in PrEP. We assessed individual, social, and structural variables associated with PrEP interest and use among a sample of 195 YAEH (ages 18–25) recruited from drop-in centers across Los Angeles County who met criteria for HIV risk. In the current sample, though most had heard of PrEP (81.0%), the majority were not interested in taking PrEP (68.2%) and only a minority had used/were using PrEP (11.8%).

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10461-023-04144-7>

Best practice guidelines for professional nurses to provide self-management support to adults with tuberculosis-human immunodeficiency virus coinfection: A scoping review

Plos One | 12 September 2023

Eric Tornu, Portia Jordan and Michael McCaul

Adults with tuberculosis-human immunodeficiency virus coinfection require professional nurses' support to manage their illness, treatment and its effect on their daily lives. This scoping review maps

recommendations in clinical or best practice guidelines that guide professional nurses to provide self-management support to adults with tuberculosis-human immunodeficiency virus coinfection in primary healthcare settings.

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0291529>

Accuracy of upper respiratory tract samples to diagnose Mycobacterium tuberculosis: a systematic review and meta-analysis

The Lancet Microbe | 12 September 2023

Helen R Savage, Hannah M Rickman, Rachael M Burke, Maria Lisa Odland, Martina Savio, et al.

Pulmonary tuberculosis due to Mycobacterium tuberculosis can be challenging to diagnose when sputum samples cannot be obtained, which is especially problematic in children and older people. We systematically appraised the performance characteristics and diagnostic accuracy of upper respiratory tract sampling for diagnosing active pulmonary tuberculosis.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanmic/article/PIIS2666-5247\(23\)00190-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanmic/article/PIIS2666-5247(23)00190-8/fulltext)

Barriers and facilitators to ART adherence among ART non-adherence people living with HIV in Cameroon: A qualitative phenomenological study

Plos One | 12 September 2023

Amos Buh, Raywat Deonandan, James Gomes, Alison Krentel, Olanrewaju Oladimeji, et al.

Antiretroviral therapy (ART) needs to be taken for life with near perfect levels of adherence for it to be effective. Nonetheless, ART non-adherence is still observed in sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries such as Cameroon. The objective of this study was to assess the factors influencing non-adherence and or adherence among people living with HIV (PLWH) who have experienced non-adherence to ART in Cameroon.

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0291487>

New CMMI Model Supports Health Equity in States, Shifts Care to the Community

AJMC | 13 September 2023

CMS has unveiled a new payment model aiming to support health equity in the states by shifting health care to community-based settings. The agency is already addressing health equity in other models, such as Enhancing Oncology Model and ACO REACH. The States Advancing All-Payer Health Equity Approaches and Development Model (AHEAD Model) aims to better address chronic disease, behavioral health, and other medical conditions by equipping states to promote health equity, increase access to primary care, encourage more sustainable health care spending, and lower costs for patients.

<https://www.ajmc.com/view/new-cmmi-model-supports-health-equity-in-states-shifts-care-to-the-community>

HIV/STD prevalence and test uptake among Africans in Guangzhou, China: an analysis of data from hospital-based surveillance

BMC Infectious Diseases | 13 September 2023

Mingzhou Xiong, Menglan Yang, Peizhen Zhao, Shujie Huang & Cheng Wang

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) cause substantial morbidity and mortality both in African and China. However, there is limited data available on the prevalence of HIV/STDs and the uptake of testing experience ever during in China among African migrants. A venue-based survey was conducted at a tertiary hospital in Guangzhou to investigate the prevalence of HIV/STDs through laboratory testing and identify the associated factors. A total of 200 eligible participants completed the survey and bring into the analysis from April to October 2019, and the temporary visitors were excluded. The prevalence rates of HIV, syphilis, NG, CT, and HBsAg among the participants were 1.0%, 2.5%, 1.0%, 1.5%, and 5.5%, respectively. The overall reported rate of HIV/STD testing was 37.0%, with rates of 23.0% for HIV, 16.5% for syphilis, 12.5% for NG, 6.5% for genital herpes, 5.0% for condyloma acuminata, and 2.5% for CT. HIV/STD testing was associated with living environment in Guangzhou, having medical insurance in China, and utilizing health services in China in the past year.

<https://bmcinfectdis.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12879-023-08590-5>

Tenofovir diphosphate in dried blood spots and HIV-1 resistance in South Africa

AIDS Research and Therapy | 14 September 2023

Y. Singh, J. Castillo-Mancilla, R. Madimabe, L. Jennings, C. M. Ferraris, et al.

Suboptimal antiretroviral (ART) adherence can lead to virologic failure with consequent HIV-1 resistance. Tenofovir diphosphate (TFV-DP) in dried blood spots (DBS) is a powerful biomarker of cumulative adherence, predictive of future viremia. It has been associated with resistance in Persons With HIV (PWH) in South Africa and the US. We explored the relationship of TFV-DP concentrations with antiretroviral drug resistance at the time of treatment failure in SA.

<https://aidsrestherapy.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12981-023-00552-w>

Human Papillomavirus Vaccine Acceptance (HPV-VA) and Vaccine Uptake (HPV-VU): assessing the impact of theory, culture, and trusted sources of information in a Hispanic community

BMC Public Health | 14 September 2023

Gabriel Frietze, Margie Padilla, Jacquelin Cordero, Kristin Gosselink & Eva Moya

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection and is associated with many types of cancers that disproportionately impact Hispanics. An HPV vaccine is available for individuals ages 9–45 that can prevent up to 90% of HPV-associated cancers. The current study investigates factors associated with accepting the HPV vaccine in a predominately Hispanic community.

<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-023-16628-1>

Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the management of gynecologic cancer: a Spanish survey. Observational, multicenter study

BCM women's health | 14 September 2023

Myriam Gracia, Elena Rodríguez, María Dolores Diestro, Emanuela Spagnolo, Virginia García, et al.

The SARS-CoV-2 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2) pandemic changed the distribution of healthcare resources, leading in many cases to the suspension of all non-essential treatments and procedures and representing a challenge for medical professionals. The objective of this study was to evaluate whether clinical protocols in gynecologic oncology care were modified as a result of the pandemic and to assess surgeons' perceptions regarding the management of gynecologic cancers".

<https://bmcwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12905-023-02633-4>

RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

Opinion: A UN meeting on TB is at best a means to more important ends

Spotlight | 7 September 2023

In 2018 the first findings from a landmark tuberculosis (TB) vaccine trial were published in the New England Journal of Medicine. The experimental vaccine, called M72, was found to be roughly 50% effective in preventing pulmonary TB disease. It was the most promising finding for a new TB vaccine since the development of the BCG vaccine a century ago. Since the study reported in the NEJM was only a phase 2B study, the results have to be confirmed in a phase 3 study before the vaccine can be considered for wider use. For a while, it seemed that the phase 3 study would never happen – that is, until a few months ago, two philanthropies, Wellcome and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, announced that they would put up \$550 million to get it done.

<https://www.spotlightnsp.co.za/2023/09/07/opinion-a-un-meeting-on-tb-is-at-best-a-means-to-more-important-ends/>

View 2021 HIV Data Where You Live and Find Faith-Based Groups, Thanks to AIDSvu

Poz | 7 September 2023

AIDSvu, which organizes HIV data into graphs and interactive maps, has updated its content to reflect HIV data at the state and county levels for 2021, the most recent year for which such data are available. What's more, the interactive website also launched a first-of-its-kind public Faith Based Organization Locator for users. The update includes new data highlighting the impact of HIV on people experiencing homelessness or unstable housing. The local data were compiled via a partnership between AIDSvu and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Medical Monitoring Project, according to an AIDSvu news release. About 17% of people living with HIV in 2021 experienced homelessness or unstable housing.

SOUTH AFRICA'S SCHOOL-BASED ORAL HEALTH PROGRAMME NEEDS A REVAMP

Health-e News | 8 September 2023

Oral health is a vital part of overall health and well-being, but it is often ignored or neglected. Neglecting oral health can have serious consequences for physical and mental health, including tooth decay and gum disease. In South Africa schoolchildren are particularly susceptible to tooth decay because of factors such as limited access to dental care, a lack of oral hygiene knowledge, and high sugar consumption. It is therefore essential to address these challenges and improve oral health among this population group.

<https://health-e.org.za/2023/09/08/south-africas-school-based-oral-health-programme-needs-a-revamp/>

In-depth: What two major bills might mean for health sector procurement in SA

Spotlight | 8 September 2023

Recently, in a major feat for transparency and accountability, the North Gauteng High Court ordered that the public must have access to COVID-19 procurement contracts – details of which, until now, have been kept away from the public eye as the government cited confidentiality clauses. The Health Justice Initiative’s – who brought the court application – victory is a crucial one given the staggering size of public procurement contracts in the health sector. According to Zukiswa Kota, South African Programme Head at the Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM), this judgement deserves celebrating “as it deepens the case for transparency in public procurement and effectively challenges the many reasons often used to evade publication”.

<https://www.spotlightnsp.co.za/2023/09/08/in-depth-what-two-major-bills-might-mean-for-health-sector-procurement-in-sa/>

New billboards by the Health Department to raise awareness about HIV/Aids

IOL | 11 September 2023

KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Nomagugu Simelane unveiled a series of new billboards about HIV/Aids on Friday last week. The billboards are being erected across the province. The department’s spokesperson Ntokozo Maphisa said the billboards are designed to educate and raise awareness about HIV/Aids. He said they would promote responsible sexual behaviour such as condom use, knowing one’s HIV status, adherence to antiretroviral treatment (ART), prevent unplanned pregnancy, and to promote the role of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), which protects against HIV infection.

<https://www.iol.co.za/dailynews/news/new-billboards-by-the-health-department-to-raise-awareness-about-hiv-aids-99794500-ad9c-431d-a642-7b01141abb55>

The heat is on: Why climate change will leave you gasping for air

Bhekisisa | 11 September 2023

In many developing countries, poorer people feel the effects of climate change more than those with money. Khehla Mahlangu is one of them. Mahlangu lives in a Secunda township in Mpumalanga, where the air is so dirty, many people struggle to breathe. As air temperatures rise because of global warming, weather patterns change and air pollution makes people even sicker. Last week, African leaders signed a declaration at the African Climate Summit held in Nairobi, to produce more renewable energy such as solar or wind-powered electricity and also ensure factories and businesses are run in ways that are less harmful to the Earth. But is this enough to stop lung disease from getting even worse?

<https://bhekisisa.org/health-news-south-africa/2023-09-11-the-heat-is-on-why-climate-change-will-leave-you-gasping-for-air/>

Drug-resistant TB | Shortening diagnosis to get more people treated

eNCA | 11 September 2023

South Africa is among the countries with the highest prevalence of drug-resistant TB in the world. Shockingly though, only 50 percent of these patients are on treatment. Stellenbosch University is now trying to shorten the diagnosis process. It hopes this will lead to getting more people on treatment sooner. Let's find out more from Brigitta Derendinger from the university's Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-gFp3Fm5OY>

Majority of heart patients in South Africa are not taking their medication as prescribed

IOL | 11 September 2023

Cardiovascular medicine, Pharma Dynamics has urged patients to take their medication as prescribed to avoid preventable deaths and hospitalisations, as 60% of heart disease patients are not taking their medication as prescribed in South Africa. This comes after the Journal of SA Family Practice reported that only 41.9% of heart patients are adhering to antihypertensive treatment regimes, which is extremely low when juxtaposed against the 90% adherence rate among HIV-positive patients on antiretrovirals.

<https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/majority-of-heart-patients-in-south-africa-are-not-taking-their-medication-as-prescribed-a0e4b0f6-175c-4b40-9768-71bb38aec048>

Pharmacy Month: Western Cape promotes responsible use of antibiotics and antimicrobials

IOL | 11 September 2023

September is Pharmacy Month, and the theme this year includes antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) and reporting of adverse drug reactions (ADRs). AMS comprises actions to promote the responsible use of antibiotics, while the person reporting a suspected adverse drug reaction becomes a source of data on the safety of medicinal products.

<https://www.iol.co.za/lifestyle/health/pharmacy-month-western-cape-promotes-responsible-use-of-antibiotics-and-antimicrobials-02503c87-2d72-4528-959d-e871211a1bf0>

KZN HEALTH PROMISES TO TRANSPORT 'COMPLEX' TB PATIENT TO DOCTORS' VISIT AFTER HEALTH-RELATED QUERIES

Health-e News | 12 September 2023

Lungani Ngema (27) from Shakaville in KwaDukuza on the KwaZulu Natal north coast was diagnosed with tuberculosis empyema (TB empyema) in November last year. While curable, this complex form of TB disease requires specialist treatment for a period varying from six months to nine months. In some cases, it can even take longer to complete treatment. The specialist care Ngema needs is not available in his hometown. Since his diagnosis he has had to make the 76km journey to see a cardiothoracic surgeon at King Dinuzulu hospital in Durban every month.

<https://health-e.org.za/2023/09/12/kzn-health-promises-to-transport-complex-tb-patient-to-doctors-visit-after-health-e-queries/>

Alarming overuse of asthma inhalers in South Africa hinders effective treatment, study finds

IOL | 12 September 2023

Asthma affects millions of people worldwide, and inhalers are essential tools for managing its symptoms. However, there is a growing concern about the overuse of these devices, which can inadvertently put individuals at risk and compromise their long-term health. Asthma inhalers, commonly known as asthma pumps, provide quick relief during attacks and help control symptoms daily. One of the dangers of overusing asthma inhalers is that it can mask the severity of an asthma attack or exacerbation.

<https://www.iol.co.za/sunday-tribune/lifestyle/alarmed-overuse-of-asthma-inhalers-in-south-africa-hinders-effective-treatment-study-finds-899d70f8-7531-4177-a60d-98035f7f8bd0>

National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS & Hepatitis Awareness Day 2023

Poz | 12 September 2023

It's official! National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS & Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day has been recognized by the federal government. Advocates began promoting the awareness day in 2014 via citywide events in Boston, and now thanks to the Department of Health and Human Services their efforts can help raise awareness of HIV and hepatitis among African immigrants and refugees nationwide each September 9. NAIRHHA Day is led by the Hepatitis B Foundation, the Africans For Improved Access program at the Multicultural AIDS Coalition and the Coalition Against Hepatitis for People of African Origin.

<https://www.poz.com/article/national-african-immigrant-refugee-hiv-hepatitis-awareness-day-2023-nairhhaday>

HPV vaccination campaign kicks off at Western Cape public and special schools

Western Cape Government | 12 September 2023

Western Cape Department of Health and Wellness officials will be visiting public and special schools in September and October 2023 to administer human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines. Parents and guardians are encouraged to sign and return the required consent form for the second vaccine doses. A total of 1 129 young girls were vaccinated against the HPV during the first week (4 – 8 September 2023) of the Western Cape Government's (WCG) school immunisation programme.

<https://www.westerncape.gov.za/news/hpv-vaccination-campaign-kicks-western-cape-public-and-special-schools>

In the bag: How buying healthy food for R115 a month can curb TB deaths in India

Bhekisisa | 12 September 2023

In a new trial in rural India, giving people with tuberculosis (TB) simple food packages and vitamin pills helped them to gain weight while on treatment — and made their chance of dying from the disease drop by 60%. Eating healthy food often helped three-quarters of patients being able to go back to work after their treatment course. Before, only three out of 100 people could do everyday activities. The Indian government gives TB patients about R115 a month to help them buy healthy food. Is it a solution to help curb TB deaths?

<https://bhekisisa.org/health-news-south-africa/2023-09-12-in-the-bag-how-buying-healthy-food-for-r115-a-month-can-curb-tb-deaths-in-india/>

HIV Prevention Choice Manifesto for Women and Girls in Africa launched

UNAIDS | 12 September 2023

UNAIDS Executive Director, Winnie Byanyima, joined women's coalitions, government officials, development partners and community groups from across East and Southern Africa to launch the HIV Prevention Choice Manifesto. Led by the African Women Prevention Community Accountability Board and supported by the International Community of Women Living with HIV (ICW) East Africa and Advocacy for Prevention of HIV and AIDS (APHA), the Choice Manifesto advocates for choice in the HIV prevention options available for women and a commitment to expanding access to long-acting HIV health technologies. Further, these options should be people centred, women-centred and women-led.

https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2023/september/20230912_choice-manifesto

Arsenic-contaminated drinking water found in two SA villages: scientists blame government mismanagement

Spotlight | 12 September 2023

A study published in April this year found that residents in two villages in Limpopo's Giyani local municipality have dangerous amounts of arsenic in their drinking water – a chemical, which at high levels, increases the risk of cancer and which may reduce cognitive function. Co-authored by scientists at the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC), the paper shows that a worrying number of the villagers had high levels of arsenic in their blood and that this was associated with arsenic contamination of garden soil and borehole water.

<https://www.spotlightnsp.co.za/2023/09/12/arsenic-contaminated-drinking-water-found-in-two-sa-villages-scientists-blame-government-mismanagement/>

Training program for health workers aims to reduce the burden of breast cancer in Malawi

News Medical Life Science | 12 September 2023

Women in rural Malawi are learning how to detect breast cancer thanks to the country's first dedicated training programme for health workers, aimed at reducing the burden of the disease. Across Sub-Saharan Africa, many countries are grappling with high mortality rates from breast cancer, with the disease often diagnosed too late and access to treatments lacking. In Malawi, breast cancer is the third most common cancer in women, with low survival rates from the time of diagnosis. Fewer than ten per cent of patients survive beyond 18 months, according to the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20230912/Training-program-for-health-workers-aims-to-reduce-the-burden-of-breast-cancer-in-Malawi.aspx>

Global Increase in Recombinant HIV-1 Strains Stifles Vaccine Development

Infectious Diseases | 12 September 2023

Researchers performed a systematic literature review and meta-analysis to characterize HIV-1 and HIV-2 subtypes across geographic regions and key populations. The review included data on HIV-1 and HIV-2 subtype prevalence that were captured between January 2010 and June 2021. A total of 454 studies were evaluated, representing a sample size of 610,000 patients and 91 countries. Among patients with HIV infection included in the analysis, 23.0% had subtype C, 16.7% had subtype A, and 9.5% had subtype CRF01_AE. Overall, CRFs and URFs comprised 29% of all circulating subtypes.

<https://www.infectiousdiseaseadvisor.com/home/topics/hiv-aids/recombinant-hiv-strains-most-prevalent-of-all-circulating-subtypes/>

Everything you need to know about new Covid-19 strain Pirola

IOL | 12 September 2023

There is a new Covid-19 variant scientifically named BA.2.86, dubbed by the worldwide community as Pirola and is a descendant of the Omicron variant. What makes this variant stand out is its high number of mutations. The variant has approximately 30 mutations, about the same number that differentiated the highly transmissible and virulent Omicron variant from its predecessors.

<https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/everything-you-need-to-know-about-new-covid-19-strain-pirola-14abcf44-d0e3-4ceb-b43d-ba57f61ad493>

Study weighs in on fears that COVID drug could spawn super virus

Medical Xpress | 13 September 2023

COVID-19 patients are often prescribed antiviral drugs that work by reducing the number of viral particles circulating in the body. One such drug, molnupiravir, tricks the virus into generating mutations, some of which are lethal to the virus itself. The mutations eventually overwhelm and destroy the body's SARS-CoV-2 population. Since molnupiravir causes the virus to die by inducing mutations, some have raised concerns about the possibility of inadvertently creating new, treatment-resistant versions of the virus. Coronaviruses like SARS-CoV-2 are good at mutating into newer strains like delta, omicron, and EG.5. The idea of a drug that helps the virus mutate, even for the purpose of killing it, has some people worried.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-09-covid-drug-spawn-super-virus.html>

[WATCH] This nurse wants to stop cervical cancer in Hammanskraal

Bhekisisa | 13 September 2023

Between March and September 2019 Tshwane health workers tried to vaccinate 22 000 grade four girls with two shots of an anti cervical cancer vaccine. But they missed their target and only got to 15 000. Now things have worsened. Research shows that parents are increasingly reluctant to sign consent forms for their daughters to be vaccinated after the COVID pandemic. But sister Tebogo Seleka wants to win them over. She talks to every mom about a human papillomavirus (HPV) shot that will stop their girls from getting cervical cancer when they're older. Certain types of the human papillomavirus cause cancer of the cervix. Our TV team takes you to Hammanskraal to meet Seleka.

<https://bhekisisa.org/multimedia/videos/2023-09-13-watch-this-nurse-wants-to-stop-cervical-cancer-in-hammanskraal/>

Competing priorities impact HIV treatment adherence for South Africans with low incomes

AIDS Map | 13 September 2023

Difficulty in balancing work commitments and clinic appointments, diverting resources towards substance use, and covering other basic household needs over ART-related costs negatively affected the ability of people living with HIV to access or adhere to ART, South African researchers report in the journal *AIDS Research and Therapy*.

<https://www.aidsmap.com/news/sep-2023/competing-priorities-impact-hiv-treatment-adherence-south-africans-low-incomes>

Certain proteins in breast milk found to be essential for a baby's healthy gut

Medical Xpress | 13 September 2023

More than 320 million years of mammalian evolution has adapted breast milk to meet all the physiological needs of babies: It contains not only nutrients, but also hormones, antimicrobials, digestive enzymes, and growth factors. Furthermore, many of the proteins in breast milk, for example casein and milk fat globule membrane proteins, aren't just sources of energy and molecular building blocks, but also directly stimulate immunity, at least under preclinical conditions.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-09-proteins-breast-essential-baby-healthy.html>

SOUTH AFRICAN CHILDREN LACK PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT. 'EVERY SCHOOL NEEDS A SOCIAL WORKER'

Health-e News | 13 September 2023

Social workers, researchers and teachers are desperate for more psychosocial support for children and adolescents in South Africa. They say it's a "no-brainer" that every school needs a social worker. The issue of mental illness among learners has made recent headlines. The Gauteng Department of Education has recorded more than 40 cases of suicides in the provinces' schools since the beginning of the 2023 academic year. About 20% of children younger than 18 who visited a mental health facility in 2019 and 2020 had a mental illness, according to a 2022 report by Statistics South Africa.

<https://health-e.org.za/2023/09/13/south-african-children-lack-psychosocial-support-every-school-needs-a-social-worker/>

In-depth: Why an Eastern Cape TB hospital closed and what comes next

Spotlight | 13 September 2023

In 2021, Orsmond TB Hospital in Nelson Mandela Bay closed its doors as a result of its dwindling patient numbers. The Eastern Cape Department of Health decided to repurpose it as a psychiatric facility, but it appears little progress has been made with this transition. Government has since the closure of the facility spent over R67 million paying 45 former Orsmond staff members after they refused to be transferred to other facilities in the same district. This recently emerged in the Eastern

Cape Legislature after DA MPL and spokesperson for health in the province, Jane Cowley, posed a question on the matter to Health MEC Nomakhosazana Meth.

<https://www.spotlightnsp.co.za/2023/09/13/in-depth-why-an-eastern-cape-tb-hospital-closed-and-what-comes-next/>

HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis study finds TAF has higher risk of hypertension than TDF

Medical Xpress | 13 September 2023

Researchers at Kaiser Permanente Southern California, Pasadena, have found that in patients taking pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), tenofovir alafenamide fumarate (TAF) use associated with higher incidents of hypertension and statin initiation compared with the alternative formulation tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF), especially in those 40 years or older. In a paper, "Use of Tenofovir Alafenamide Fumarate for HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis and Incidence of Hypertension and Initiation of Statins," published in JAMA Network Open, the researchers detail a retrospective cohort analysis conducted using electronic health records from Kaiser Permanente Southern California database.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-09-hiv-pre-exposure-prophylaxis-taf-higher.html>

Women With HIV May Have Higher Comorbidity Burden Than Men

Poz | 13 September 2023

Women living with HIV are more likely to have other age-related conditions that can affect their overall health and quality of life, according to study results published in JAMA Network Open. What's more, another study found that the protective effect of female sex against heart disease was diminished for HIV-positive women. More than half of people living with HIV in the United States are now ages 50 or older. Numerous studies have shown that HIV-positive people are more likely to develop various comorbidities—and to do so at younger ages—compared with their HIV-negative peers. But clinical guidance for comorbidity screening and prevention is lacking, according to the study authors.

<https://www.poz.com/article/women-hiv-may-higher-comorbidity-burden>

Long COVID risk found to be significantly lower following Omicron infection

News Medical Life science | 13 September 2023

The risk of developing long COVID is significantly lower following an infection with the Omicron variant than after an infection with earlier coronavirus variants. This was the finding of a study by University Medicine Halle, which was published in the "International Journal of Infectious Diseases". The analysis looked at information gathered from 11,000 people about their infection history, vaccination status, and post-infection symptoms. The data provide strong evidence that the risk for long-term effects after a re-infection with the coronavirus is lower if the patient did not develop long COVID after the initial infection.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20230913/Long-COVID-risk-found-to-be-significantly-lower-following-Omicron-infection.aspx>

Free State bottom of the list when it comes to multi-month dispensing of ARVs, survey finds

Spotlight / 13 September 2023

The percentage of people living with HIV receiving a three to six-month supply of ARVs at a time in the Free State has dropped from 13% last year to 3% this year, making the province the worst performer in multi-month dispensing of ARVs in the country. This while in Mpumalanga, 64% of people living with HIV receive a three to six-month refill as per national guidelines. This is according to the latest figures from community-led clinic monitoring group, Ritshidze. In its third Free State report, released on 30 August, the group notes several challenges faced by people living with HIV, key populations that include men who have sex with men and sex workers, among others, and other public healthcare users in the province. Among these are a lack of multi-month dispensing of ARVs and long waiting times at clinics, two factors that can make it harder to take treatment as prescribed.

<https://www.spotlightnsp.co.za/2023/09/14/free-state-bottom-of-the-list-when-it-comes-to-multi-month-dispensing-of-arvs-survey-finds/>

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.

<https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Subscription.aspx>

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!

<https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Subscription.aspx>

The NDoH and CSIR Call for Book Chapters

The Emerging South African National Digital Health System: Strategies, Approaches and Experiences

About

The book, a collaboration between NDoH and CSIR, aims to showcase strategies and experiences in developing a National Health Information System that facilitates efficient, personalized healthcare information transfer across various boundaries. Undergoing a double-blind peer review and editing, it serves as a detailed guide to the evolving South African National Digital Health System, reflecting on the substantial research and strategies that have influenced its formation, with a focus on the scholarly depth and validity of the results.

Each chapter, contributing to an enriched discussion, will dissect a specific facet of the system, assisting readers in understanding its integral components and the ensuing challenges and opportunities within the South African Health Ecosystem. Contributions from several authors are encouraged, bringing in diverse perspectives and firsthand experiences to foster a comprehensive narrative on the system's ongoing improvements in the context of South African Digital Health.

Opinion pieces in line with the NHI, Digital Health Strategy, and efforts to strengthen the Health System are welcome. Further details can be found in the Submission Guidelines.

IMPORTANT DATES

- SEPTEMBER, 2023: Presentations
- 22 OCTOBER, 2023: Abstract submissions
- 20 NOVEMBER, 2023: Abstract feedback
- 8 FEBRUARY, 2024: Submission of full paper for review
- 15 MARCH, 2024: Final corrected paper submission

SUBMISSION LINK - <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=sadhs24>

Any queries and abstract submissions to: digitalhealth@health.gov.za

Subject: SA National Digital Health System Book

ABSTRACT FORMAT

- Title of the Chapter
- Purpose
- Study design/methodology/approach
- Findings
- Originality/value
- Keywords Author/s

The Public Health Association of South Africa (PHASA) – calling all public health champions!

PHASA is a voluntary organisation of individuals passionate about population health improvements and the reduction of health inequities, and whose work focuses on the prevention of disease, the promotion of health, and the improved functioning of the country's health care system. Are you passionate about improving the health and wellbeing of communities? Do you want to expand your professional network and stay current in the field of public health? Do you want to be part of the movement to improve Public Health? Then join the Public Health Association of South Africa today to make a difference and enhance your career!

As a member, you will:

- Gain access to cutting-edge research, resources, and best practices
- Connect with public health professionals from around the country
- Participate in educational events and conferences
- Contribute to shaping the future of public health
- Have access to mentors in the field
- Be at the forefront of advocacy initiatives.

To become a member, simply visit our [website](#) and complete the membership application. Don't miss this opportunity to advance your career and improve public health.

<https://phasa.org.za/index.php/get-involved/membership>

THE OLIVER TAMBO FELLOWSHIP (OTFP) PROGRAMME: A POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN HEALTH LEADERSHIP

An Opportunity to Grow

- To HR components - This value-for-money health leadership programme directly relates to the manager's workplace within the health system. Acquired skills and competencies have been well-researched. Nominating people from the same team offers the possibility of greater impact, including across successive cohorts.
- To Line managers - Students develop capabilities to lead and to bring improvements in their workplaces. Nominate teams.
- To Health Care Workers and Health System Influencers - Invest in yourself to show up as a leader who lead with confidence.

Why the OTFP?

- Affiliated to the internationally renowned University of Cape Town.
- Proudly bears the name of an exceptional African Leader.
- Nearly 30 years' experience of growing health leaders.
- Offers a unique perspective on leadership, rooted in systems thinking & policy analysis, tailored to the complex challenges of our health system.

What Does the Programme Entail?

- Four sequenced and interrelated 6-day learning blocks, covering:
 - The complex nature of health systems and their challenges.
 - Leading everyday health system strengthening.
 - Engaging health system hard- and software resources for implementing improvement.
 - Sustaining workplace-based interventions for system improvement.
 - Mentorship during and after the course.
 - Direct engagement with senior health leaders, other experts with national and international insights, as well as peer leaders.

What Will You Learn?

- Personal, relational, and technical competencies to lead across the system complexities.
- How to show up as a leader for your team and the wider system.

Who Should Attend?

- Mid- and senior level leaders (managers and clinicians) in the public health sector.
- Mid- and senior level leaders in NGOs and the private sector with public value goals.
- Teams of leaders from the same setting.

Fees and Registration

- The fees for 2024/25 intake is approximately R65 505, thus an average cost of R32 500 per year.
- Students arrange own travel and accommodation.
- Registration open until 9 December 2023.

- The course commences in February 2024.
- How to register? Apply online by clicking on [Application Link](#)

Contact

- Contact Fahiema.titus@uct.ac.za or the Program Convener at Maylene.shungking@uct.ac.za or visit us at <https://health.uct.ac.za/school-public-health>

PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

The 2022 South African Health Review is available!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

Hospital Association of South Africa (HASA)

When: 18 – 19 September 2023

Where: Century City Conference Centre, Cape Town

Every year HASA hosts a world-class conference featuring a number of international and South African experts in healthcare. An exhibition runs simultaneously to showcase advances in healthcare. The 2023 conference takes place at the Century City Conference Centre, designed as the hub and pivotal point of the Century City precinct.

Register: <https://www.registrationsonline.co.za/hasa/register>

World Congress of Epidemiology – WCE 2024 – 24 to 27 September 2024

WCE is well-known for bringing epidemiologists and public health experts working in different sectors together in an atmosphere designed to promote dialogue, the interchange of ideas, and state-of-the-art scientific research. The theme of WCE2024 is “**Epidemiology and complexity: challenges and responses**” which will engage the full depth and breadth of methods and practice in contemporary epidemiology. The meeting will feature top-calibre invited speakers presenting plenary lectures, workshops and interactive sessions. The abstract-driven programme will include oral and poster presentations including theory and application from every sub-discipline of epidemiology. With more than 1000 delegates expected, WCE2024 promises to be a unique opportunity to share experiences and expertise – the opportunities to learn, grow and network within the field will be phenomenal. This is the first time the congress will be hosted on the African continent and the Cape Town International Convention Centre provides a world-class venue for this meeting.

<https://www.wce2024.org/>

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Cervical Cancer Prevention, Access and Control (CCPAC) Project Data Capturer

Closing Date: 20 September 2023 @ 16:30:00

[https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Cervical-Cancer-Prevention,-Access-and-Control-\(CCPAC\)-Project-Data-Capturer-.aspx](https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Cervical-Cancer-Prevention,-Access-and-Control-(CCPAC)-Project-Data-Capturer-.aspx)

Cervical Cancer Prevention, Access and Control (CCPAC) Project Driver Mobiliser

[https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Cervical-Cancer-Prevention,-Access-and-Control-\(CCPAC\)-Project-Driver-Mobiliser-.aspx](https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Cervical-Cancer-Prevention,-Access-and-Control-(CCPAC)-Project-Driver-Mobiliser-.aspx)

Closing Date: 20 September 2023 @ 16:30:00