

HST Bulletin_17 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

Amplifying lessons learnt from the implementation of the joint programme to strengthen integrated SRHR, and HIV and SGBV services: a case study in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal provinces.

HSRC | 9 March 2023

NP Zungu, I Naidoo, T Gumede, N Manzini-Matebula, S Babtunde, et al.

In 2021, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) commissioned the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to conduct a desktop review and synthesise data from sexual reproductive health (SRH) intervention projects implemented in three districts in South Africa. These districts were Alfred Nzo and OR Tambo in the Eastern Cape (intervention conducted by the Umthombo weMpilo Institute), and uThukela District in KwaZulu-Natal (intervention conducted by Optidel Global). The scope of work was undertaken by the HSRC from November 2021 to December 2021, and from April 2022 to July 2022. In total, the HSRC reviewed and synthesised 20 project reports compiled by the two service providers.

Increasing paediatric emergency visits for suicide-related concerns during COVID-19

The Lancet | 9 March 2023

Marie-Claude Geoffroy and Nicholas Chadi

Suicidal ideation and suicide attempts are common during adolescence, with an international prevalence of 14–23% for suicidal ideation, and 5–17% for suicide attempts among people younger than 22 years. Despite this high prevalence, only a minority of adolescents seek medical help for suicide-related concerns. Yet, when they do, rapid interventions are often necessary given the acute risks for health and safety.

Non-pharmacological interventions for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder in children and adolescents

The Lancet Child and Adolescent Health | 9 March 2023

Margaret Sibley, Alisha M Bruton, Xin Zhao, Jeanette Johnstone, John Mitchell, et al

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) affects approximately 5% of children and adolescents

globally and is associated with negative life outcomes and socioeconomic costs. First-generation ADHD treatments were predominantly pharmacological; however, increased understanding of biological, psychological, and environmental factors contributing to ADHD has expanded non-pharmacological treatment possibilities. This Review provides an updated evaluation of the efficacy and safety of non-pharmacological treatments for paediatric ADHD, discussing the quality and level of evidence for nine intervention categories. Unlike medication, no non-pharmacological treatments showed a consistent strong effect on ADHD symptoms. When considering broad outcomes (eg, impairment, caregiver stress, and behavioural improvement), multicomponent (cognitive) behaviour therapy joined medication as a primary ADHD treatment. With respect to secondary treatments, polyunsaturated fatty acids showed a consistent modest effect on ADHD symptoms when taken for at least 3 months. Additionally, mindfulness and multinutrient supplementation with four or more ingredients showed modest efficacy on non-symptom outcomes. All other non-pharmacological treatments were safe; clinicians might tolerate their use but should educate families of children and adolescents with ADHD on the disadvantages, including costs, burden to the service user, absence of proven efficacy relative to other treatments, and delay of proven treatment.

A professional nurse's understanding of quality nursing care in Limpopo province, South Africa

Curationis | 10 March 2023

Maggie Nyelisani, Lufuno Makhado and Takalani Luhlima

Quality has increasingly become a critical part of life in every aspect. Patients are today continuously looking for good quality services from health professionals. Professional nurses are expected to render quality care to fulfil the patients' healthcare needs. Poor nursing care has led to several litigations and the loss of patients' lives. It is essential to explore professional nurses' viewpoints regarding quality nursing care.

Development, Implementation, and Process Evaluation of *Bukhali*: An Intervention from Preconception to Early Childhood

Global Implementation Research and Application | 11 March 2023

Catherine Draper, Nomsa Thwala, Wiedaad Slemming, Stephen Lye & Shane Norris

The Healthy Life Trajectories Initiative, an international consortium developed in partnership with the World Health Organization, is addressing childhood obesity from a life-course perspective. It hypothesises that an integrated complex intervention from preconception, through pregnancy, infancy and early childhood, will reduce childhood adiposity and non-communicable disease risk, and improve child development. As part of the Healthy Life Trajectories Initiative in South Africa, the Bukhali randomised controlled trial is being conducted with 18–28-year-old women in Soweto, where young women face numerous challenges to their physical and mental health. The aims of this paper were to describe the intervention development process (including adaptations), intervention components, and process evaluation; and to highlight key lessons learned.

Experiences and challenges of using community health worker-led mechanism in supporting HIV disclosure among adults living with HIV in heterosexual relationships in the rural Uganda

AIDS Research and Therapy | 11 March 2023

Zubair Lukyamuzi, Bashir Ssuna, Ruth Nabisere Mirembe, Denis Mawanda, Paul Kinkumu, et al.

HIV status disclosure among sexual partners is vital in HIV management. Community health workers (CHW) support HIV disclosure among adults living with HIV (ALHIV) in sexual relationships with disclosure difficulties. However, experiences and challenges of using CHW-led disclosure support mechanism were not documented. This study explored experiences and challenges involved in using CHW-led disclosure support mechanism among ALHIV in heterosexual relationships in the rural Uganda.

HIV Treatment and Care of Adolescents: Perspectives of Adolescents on Community-Based Models in Northern Uganda

Dove Medical Press | 11 March 2023

Charles Miyingo, Teddy Mpayenda, Ruth Nyole, Joan Ayinembabazi, Mujib Ssepuuya, et al.

Differentiated service delivery models for people living with HIV continue to be scaled up to expand access to HIV services and treatment continuity. However, there is a gap in information on adolescents' perspectives on community-based models. We aimed to explore the perspectives of adolescents living

with HIV on community-based models in northern Uganda.

A new era for mental health care in Nigeria

The Lancet Psychiatry | 12 March 2023

Deborah Oyine Aluh, Justus Uchenna Onu, José Miguel Caldas de Almeida

Nigeria's National Mental Health Act 2021 was signed into law on Jan 5, 2023, after two decades of struggle to repeal the outdated, colonial mental health legislation. With this achievement, Nigeria joins the few African countries that have revised or enacted new mental health legislation in accordance with WHO's call for member countries to use legal reforms to end human rights violations against people with mental health conditions. This development comes at a crucial time, when the recognition and promotion of the rights of people with mental health conditions are at an all-time high.

Prevalence and risk factors of cardiovascular disease among people living with HIV in the Asia-Pacific region: a systematic review

BMC Public Health | 13 March 2023

Witchakorn Ruamtawee, Mathuros Tipayamongkhogul, Natnaree Aimyong & Weerawat Manosuthi

Cardiovascular diseases (CVD) due to atherosclerosis have become one of the major causes of death among people living with HIV (PLHIV) since effective antiretroviral therapy (ART) has been available throughout the world. However, the epidemiologic evidence of this problem from the Asia-Pacific region remains unclear. We conducted a systematic review of the situation and risk factors for CVD among PLHIV in countries with the greatest impact of CVD attributable to HIV in the Asia-Pacific region.

Adherence to Mediterranean dietary quality index and risk of breast cancer in adult women: a case-control study

BMC Women's Health | 14 March 2023

Farhang Djafari, Parivash Ghorbaninejad, Fatemeh Dehghani Firouzabadi, Fatemeh Sheikhsossein, Hossein Shahinfar, et al.

Breast cancer (BC) is the fifth most prevalent cause of cancer-related deaths in Iran. Given that the role of whole-diet on cancer risk is important, this study aimed to assess the association of MedDQI and breast cancer risk. This hospital-based case-control study was performed on 150 women with pathologically confirmed breast cancer within the period of less than 3 months. Controls were 150 apparently healthy that were matched by age. Dietary data was collected using a validated questionnaire. To examine participants' adherence to MedDQI, the MedDQI was created according to foods and nutrients highlighted or minimized in the MedDQI construction

Successful Outcome after Treatment with Cidofovir, Vaccinia, and Extended Course of Tecovirimat in a Newly-Diagnosed HIV Patient with Severe Mpox: A Case Report

MDPI Vaccines | 13 March 2023

Andres E. Martinez, Paola Frattaroli, Christine A. Vu, Lizy Paniagua, Joel Mintz, et al.

Purpose: To report a case of severe mpox in a newly diagnosed HIV patient concerning for Immune Reconstitution Inflammatory Syndrome (IRIS) and/or tecovirimat resistance and to describe the management approach in the setting of refractory disease. Case: 49-year-old man presented with 2 weeks of perianal lesions. He tested positive for mpox PCR in the emergency room and was discharged home with quarantine instructions. Three weeks later, the patient returned with disseminated firm, nodular lesions in the face, neck, scalp, mouth, chest, back, legs, arms, and rectum, with worsening pain and purulent drainage from the rectum. The patient reported being on 3 days of tecovirimat treatment, which was prescribed by the Florida department of health (DOH). During this admission, he was found to be HIV positive. A pelvic CT scan revealed a 2.5 cm perirectal abscess. Treatment with tecovirimat was continued for 14 days, along with an empiric course of antibiotics for treatment of possible superimposed bacterial infection upon discharge. He was seen in the outpatient clinic and initiated antiretroviral therapy (ART) with TAF/emtricitabine/bictegravir.

The future of HIV testing in eastern and southern Africa: Broader scope, targeted services

Plos Medicine | 14 March 2023

Anna Grimsrud, Lynne Wilkinson, Peter Ehrenkranz, Stephanie Behel, Thato Chidarikire, et al

In the 40 years since AIDS was first reported, many countries in eastern and southern Africa (ESA), the

region most affected by HIV, have made substantial progress towards the global 2025 HIV testing target of 95% of people with HIV being diagnosed. Knowledge of HIV status increased from 5% to 86% in eastern Africa and 9% to 90% in southern Africa between 2000 and 2020. Concurrently, there was a decrease in the median time to diagnosis (11 and 7.7 years to 2.0 and 1.5 years), HIV positivity (11% and 15% to 2.5% and 5.5%), and the proportion of first-time diagnoses among all positive tests (91% and 87% to 41% and 39%). While the decrease in time to diagnosis is a remarkable achievement, the decrease in positivity and proportion of first-time diagnoses highlight the need for HTS to evolve to meet the needs of the HIV response. Continuous optimization of effective strategies, innovation, and monitoring are needed to accelerate the decline in HIV incidence.

Examining the Relationship Between HIV-Related Stigma and the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Adolescents Living with HIV: A Systematic Review

AIDS and Behavior | 14 March 2023

Abbie Robinson, Aoife Cooney, Catherine Fassbender & David P McGovern

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) affects millions of people globally. The associated stigma remains a challenge for individuals living with HIV and children and adolescents face the additional challenge of withstanding the peer, pubertal and identity challenges associated with growing up. The current systematic review aimed to define and explore the major stigma-related challenges of children and adolescents from their own perspectives. A secondary aim was to identify any challenges distinct to childhood and adolescence. Studies included individuals aged 3 to 18 years who were aware of their status. Fifteen studies met inclusion criteria. Narrative synthesis was conducted on the included studies. Five analytic themes emerged describing major stigma-related challenges: disclosure-related anxiety, medication adherence, feelings of abnormality, mental health issues and social exclusion. Disclosure-related anxiety and feelings of abnormality appeared to be largely confined to the experience of children and adolescents. Many of the themes centred around peer influence, highlighting the need to belong in youth. Results suggest that youth require tailored interventions targeting their age-specific challenges.

An Evaluation on the Role of Non-Coding RNA in HIV Transcription and Latency: A Review

Dove Medical Press | 14 March 2023

Ramirez PW, Pantoja C & Beliakova-Bethel, N.

The existence of latent cellular reservoirs is recognized as the major barrier to an HIV cure. Reactivating and eliminating “shock and kill” or permanently silencing “block and lock” the latent HIV reservoir, as well as gene editing, remain promising approaches, but so far have proven to be only partially successful. Moreover, using latency reversing agents or “block and lock” drugs pose additional considerations, including the ability to cause cellular toxicity, a potential lack of specificity for HIV, or low potency when each agent is used alone. RNA molecules, such as microRNAs (miRNAs) and long non-coding RNAs (lncRNAs) are becoming increasingly recognized as important regulators of gene expression. RNA-based approaches for combatting HIV latency represent a promising strategy since both miRNAs and lncRNAs are more cell-type and tissue specific than protein coding genes. Thus, a higher specificity of targeting the latent HIV reservoir with less overall cellular toxicity can likely be achieved. In this review, we summarize current knowledge about HIV gene expression regulation by miRNAs and lncRNAs encoded in the human genome, as well as regulatory molecules encoded in the HIV genome. We discuss both the transcriptional and post-transcriptional regulation of HIV gene expression to align with the current definition of latency, and describe RNA molecules that either promote HIV latency or have anti-latency properties. Finally, we provide perspectives on using each class of RNAs as potential targets for combatting HIV latency, and describe the complexity of the interactions between different RNA molecules, their protein targets, and HIV.

Risk Factors Associated with HIV Acquisition in Males Participating in HIV Vaccine Efficacy Trials in South Africa

AIDS and Behavior | 16 March 2023

Mookho Malahleha, Fatima Laher, Athmanundh Dilraj, Philip Smith, Glenda E Gray, et al.

In South Africa, HIV acquisition risk has been studied less in people assigned male at birth. We studied the associations between risk behaviors, clinical features and HIV incidence amongst males in two South African HIV preventive vaccine efficacy trials. We used Cox proportional hazards models to test for associations between demographics, sexual behaviors, clinical variables and HIV acquisition among

males followed in the HVTN 503 (n = 219) and HVTN 702 (n = 1611) trials. Most males reported no male sexual partners (99.09% in HVTN 503) or identified as heterosexual (88.08% in HVTN 702). Annual HIV incidence was 1.39% in HVTN 503 (95% CI 0.76–2.32%) and 1.33% in HVTN 702 (95% CI 0.80–2.07%). Increased HIV acquisition was significantly associated with anal sex (HR 6.32, 95% CI 3.44–11.62), transactional sex (HR 3.42, 95% CI 1.80–6.50), and non-heterosexual identity (HR 16.23, 95% CI 8.13–32.41) in univariate analyses and non-heterosexual identity (HR 14.99, 95% CI 4.99–45.04; $p < 0.01$) in multivariate analysis. It is appropriate that prevention efforts in South Africa, although focused on the severe epidemic in young women, also encompass key male populations, including men who have sex with men, but also men who engage in anal or transactional sex.

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

RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

One million women screened for cervical cancer in low-and middle-income countries

Clinton Health Access Initiative | 7 March 2023

Over one million women in 14 low-and middle-income countries have been screened for cervical cancer through an integrated prevention program, delivered by country governments in collaboration with global health agency Unitaid, the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI), and Expertise France as the lead of the SUCCESS project, in partnership with Jhpiego and the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC). Over 80 percent of women who have screened positive for cervical pre-cancer have received treatment.

Depression, anxiety and childhood trauma: South African study explores links, prevalence and who's most at risk

The Conversation | 9 March 2023

Mental health problems among adults are an ever-increasing public health concern. These include depression, anxiety, and conditions associated with bad childhood experiences such as abuse. Several factors are known to influence the development of mental illness. These include anxiety, early adversity, socio-economic status, and some demographic characteristics such as where a person lives.

Nehawu strike could have resulted in four deaths, says health minister

Mail & Guardian | 9 March 2023

A preliminary report indicates that the death of at least four people could be connected to the wage strike led by the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu), health minister Joe Phaahla said on Thursday. During a media briefing held at Charlotte Maxeke Academic Hospital in Johannesburg, Phaahla said there may be deaths "attributed directly to the strike" but this would only be confirmed upon receipt of a final consolidated report.

WHO global report on sodium intake reduction

9 March 2023 | Global report

The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed this report to monitor progress and identify areas for action in the implementation of sodium reduction policies and other measures within Member States and across WHO regions and World Bank income groups. For the first time, a Sodium Country Score from 1 (the lowest level) to 4 (the highest level) is allocated to each Member State based on the level of implementation of sodium reduction policies and other measures. The Sodium Country Score is used to estimate the impact of policy progress on population dietary sodium intake and cardiovascular disease.

Online gender-based violence is systemic, sexuality education can bring systemic change

Rutgers International | 8 March 2023

Online platforms are a double-edged sword for women: they provide spaces for those seeking to express themselves while being a weapon for abusers targeting them. On this year's International Women's Day, Karin van der Velde from Rutgers International reminds us of the importance of sexuality education to prevent this issue.

Here's Why the Science Is Clear That Masks Work

The New York Times | 10 March 2023

A respected science organization says its review of studies about respiratory viruses was misinterpreted to incorrectly claim masks were useless.

Alarming high burden of STIs among people with HIV in rural Uganda

aidsmap | 10 March 2023

People living with HIV are 51% more likely to be diagnosed with at least one curable sexually transmitted infection (STI) than HIV-negative people, despite near universal HIV treatment coverage, a study in rural Uganda has found. Pregnant women living with HIV had an even higher rate of STIs. The study, published in *The Lancet Global Health*, found that the most frequently curable STI with HIV in people with HIV was trichomonas, followed by active syphilis and gonorrhoea. "Our results indicate that HIV programmes have failed to address non-HIV STI epidemics, especially among people living with HIV, and that these infections remain neglected diseases," comment the authors. "There is an urgent need to integrate STI care with HIV services in African settings."

Plan to end load shedding for health facilities

Health-e News | 10 March 2023

With loadshedding wreaking havoc on the health system, the National Department of Health (NDoH) plans to install inverters and solar panels in health facilities nationwide from June. "The declaration of loadshedding as a national state of disaster enables the department to speed up the solar energy programme", says Ayanda Dakela, Head of Facilities and Infrastructure Management at NDoH. She says the move toward solar energy has been fast tracked due to the cost of generators. Last year, Gauteng health facilities spent R42.5 million on diesel for generators by August -almost double the amount spent in the same period in 2021.

Covid Origins Debate Re-ignited by Congressional Hearings on Three-Year Anniversary of Pandemic

Health Policy Watch | 10 March 2023

This week's testimony by former CDC director Dr Robert Redfield to US Congress has reignited widespread speculation in the United States that the SARS-CoV-2 virus first emerged in a Wuhan research laboratory rather than in animals. The scientific debate about the origins of the virus took off this week just before the three-year anniversary of the World Health Organization's declaration of the pandemic on 11 March 2020. Redfield's testimony on Wednesday, in which he stated it was "not scientifically plausible" that the virus had natural origins, comes on the heels of several weeks of US media reports that revealed support for the laboratory leak theory in several US government agencies.

Push for parents to vaccinate children against measles

IOL | 12 March 2023

The Western Cape Department of Health has reminded parents, guardians and caregivers to vaccinate their children against measles. This as the outbreak in all the provinces in South Africa, except for the Eastern Cape, continues. The laboratory confirmed measles cases in the Western Cape stands at 10, which have all been reported in the Cape Town metropolitan district.

Doctors fear more loss of life as health workers strike set to intensify on Monday.

Daily Maverick | 12 March 2023

At a media briefing, held in Braamfontein, Johannesburg, on Sunday by all of its senior elected leadership, NEHAWU General Secretary, Zola Saphetha, noted that last week all Provincial health departments, except the North West, had brought successful interdicts against strike activities that threatened health services and that "we called on our members to work within the framework of the law." However, NEHAWU's five-page statement was completely silent on the issue of harm to patients and the system.

Wayne State team discovers a simple technology to detect active TB infection antibodies

News Medical Life Science | 13 March 2023

A team of faculty from Wayne State University has discovered new technology that will quickly and easily detect active *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (TB) infection antibodies. Their work, "Discovery of Novel Transketolase Epitopes and the Development of IgG-Based Tuberculosis Serodiagnostics," was published

in a recent edition of *Microbiology Spectrum*, a journal published by the American Society for Microbiology. The team is led by Lobelia Samavati, M.D., professor in the Center for Molecular Medicine and Genetics in the School of Medicine. Samavati was joined by Jaya Talreja, Ph.D, and Changya Peng, research scientists in Wayne State's Department of Internal Medicine.

Focused COVID-19 Media Monitoring, Nepal

Reliefweb | 13 March 2023

3 new coronavirus cases have been confirmed in the last 24 hours. Currently, there are 15 active cases in the country. The government has extended the Multi Drug Administration Campaign against Lymphatic filariasis for five days until 14th March. On 12th March, Nepal reported 3 new confirmed coronavirus cases. The country has not reported any COVID-19 related death in the last 24 hours. According to the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), among 325 PCR tests and 1,565 antigen tests, three samples have tested positive to COVID-19. Currently, there are 15 active cases with no discharge logged in the last 24 hours.

HRSA Recognizes National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

HIV.gov | 13 March 2023

On March 10, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) recognizes National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. This year's theme is Prevention and Testing at Every Age. Care and Treatment at Every Stage. This highlights the importance of raising awareness about the impact of HIV on women and girls in the U.S. and encouraging discussions about sexual health, HIV testing, and HIV care and treatment. In the U.S., about 23% of people with HIV and 19% of new HIV diagnoses are women, and one in nine women with HIV are unaware of their diagnosis. We encourage women to get tested for HIV so they can get connected to HIV care, if they test positive, and access prevention resources, if they are negative.

New Smartphone App Could Help Diagnose TB and Monitor Treatment

Health news | 13 March 2023

Scientists recently investigated a smartphone-based app that records cough rates and found it helpful in identifying tuberculosis (TB) and monitoring treatment success. Suffering from a cough is a primary symptom of a range of respiratory conditions, including tuberculosis (TB). Although treatable, healthcare providers often find monitoring the success of TB treatment challenging. For example, research points out that current TB treatment monitoring relies on testing sputum and culture conversion, which have low sensitivity and long turnaround times, present a biohazard risk, and are prone to contamination.

Strike by Nehawu continues, despite order interdicting essential workers

Times Live | 13 March 2023

After the judgment by the Labour Appeal Court on Monday which interdicted the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu) strike in essential service sectors, the union says its strike in other areas in the public service not covered by the court order will continue. On Sunday, the union warned the strike over a dispute about the employer's unilateral implementation of a 3% wage increase would be intensified from Monday.

Triple Infection With HIV, HBV and HCV Raises Risk for Liver Failure

Poz | 13 March 2023

People who are living with HIV as well as hepatitis B virus (HBV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV) are more likely to develop end-stage liver disease compared with those who have HIV and HCV coinfection, according to study results published in *AIDS*. What's more, people HIV and HBV coinfection had a lower risk of liver failure than those with HIV and HCV. Over years or decades, chronic hepatitis B or hepatitis C can lead to serious complications, including cirrhosis, liver cancer and end-stage liver disease (ESLD), or liver failure. Prior research has shown that HIV coinfection can lead to more aggressive liver disease progression.

African Leaders Pledge To Drive Routine Immunization And Polio Eradication

Africa.com | 13 March 2023

In a bid to foster a healthy population, African leaders have come together to reiterate the need to actively direct resources and efforts to curb the spread of polio on the continent after their previous success was

hampered by the Covid 19 outbreak. The African continent has made significant progress in its decades-long fight against polio, a life-threatening and vaccine-preventable disease caused by the poliovirus. Over the past decade, the African health community has worked towards increasing the number of children receiving vaccines, resulting in increased immunization rates across the continent. In 2019, basic immunization coverage (DTP3) in Africa reached 76%, an impressive increase from 9% in 1980 and 56% in 2020.

Three Years of the COVID-19 Pandemic: 'A Failure of Multilateralism and Solidarity'

Health Policy Watch | 13 March 2023

Three years after the World Health Organization's (WHO) declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic, the era of hourly headlines updating death and case counts has come to a merciful end. But the virus is still killing around 1,000 people worldwide every day, and it isn't going anywhere. As of 7 March, WHO has confirmed over 750 million cases of COVID-19 and 6.8 million deaths – widely viewed as a considerable underestimate by experts. The world's choice to move on from the pandemic is reflected in the increasingly sparse data on case, test and death counts that once underpinned the breathless news cycle at the height of COVID-19's assault.

Dapivirine vaginal ring: increasing SA's HIV arsenal

Health-e News | 13 March 2023

The dapivirine vaginal ring will soon be available to women and young girls at limited pilot sites from June. The South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) approved its use by women ages 18 and older to reduce their HIV risk in March last year. Health ministry spokesperson Foster Mohale says these pilot sites will be determined following consultations with the research partners and the Global Fund supported partners.

Community care model improves uptake of TB preventive therapy, KZN study finds

Spotlight | 13 March 2023

The uptake and continuation of tuberculosis (TB) preventive therapy were much higher when it was provided through a community-based model compared to the standard clinic-based model, a study conducted in KwaZulu-Natal found. The findings were presented at the recent Conference for Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Seattle, USA.

Pandemic Has Long-lasting Effects on Adolescent Mental Health and Substance Use

Columbia University Public Health | 14 March 2023

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a long-lasting impact on adolescent mental health and substance use according to a new population-based study based on survey responses from a nationwide sample of over 64,000 13–18-year-old North American and Icelandic adolescents assessed prior to and up to two years into the pandemic. The study was conducted by faculty at Columbia University Teachers College and Mailman School of Public Health and a team of Icelandic and other North American clinical, behavioral and social scientists. The findings are published in *Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*.

Common cold may give children immunity against COVID-19, reveals study

Medical Express | 14 March 2023

During the pandemic, medical doctors and researchers noticed that children and adolescents infected with COVID-19 became less ill than adults. A possible explanation for this is that children already had a prior level of immunity to COVID-19 provided by memory T cells generated by common colds. After studying unique blood samples from children taken before the pandemic, researchers from Karolinska Institutet in Sweden have now identified memory T cells that react to cells infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Tanzania Tuberculosis Fact Sheet [EN/SW]

Reliefweb | 14 March 2023

Tuberculosis (TB) is the 13th leading cause of death and the second leading infectious disease killer after COVID-19 worldwide in 2021. Tanzania is among the 30 high-burden countries for TB and TB/HIV coinfection. USAID's TB focus in Tanzania aligns with the National Tuberculosis and Leprosy Program (NTLP) strategy VI 2021 - 2025 and Global Strategy towards Ending TB by 2030. The focus is to reach

people and communities with TB services through different service delivery models for early identification and diagnosis of TB patients.

Why SA's cancer activists are stuck in an endless loop

Bhekisisa | 14 March 2023

Six life-saving cancer medicines, of which only unaffordable branded versions are available in South Africa, will remain caught up in the years-long campaign that activists had to fight for access to the generic blood cancer drug lenalidomide, which became available in government hospitals in December. Why? Paperwork and patent loopholes. Lenalidomide helps to fight cancer cells for one of the most common forms of blood cancer, called multiple myeloma, and significantly reduces the chance of a person's cancer getting worse if a patient starts using it as soon as they're diagnosed. This also depends on at which stage the cancer was diagnosed.

55 countries face a health worker crunch linked to COVID-19: WHO

United Nation | 14 March 2023

According to the UN agency, African nations have been worst-hit by the phenomenon, with 37 countries on the continent facing health worker shortages that threaten their chances of achieving universal health care by 2030 – a key Sustainable Development Goals pledge. The actions of wealthy countries that belong to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) come under scrutiny in the WHO alert, among other regions. “Within Africa it's a very vibrant economy that is creating new opportunities”, said Dr. Jim Campbell, the Director responsible for health worker policy at WHO. “The Gulf States have traditionally been reliant on international personnel and then some of the OECD high-income countries have really accelerated their recruitment and employment to respond to the pandemic and respond to the loss of lives, the infections, the absences of workers during the pandemic”. To help countries protect their vulnerable healthcare systems, WHO has issued an updated health workforce support and safeguards list, which highlights nations with low numbers of qualified health care staff.

The great serotonin debate: do depression treatments work by boosting the happy hormone?

The Guardian | 14 March 2023

Daniela da Silva is feeling good. Lying cocooned under fleece blankets inside a medical scanner, her eyes are closed and her mind is focused and remarkably unperturbed by negative thoughts. Three hours earlier, the 39-year-old yoga teacher and neuroscience student was given a dose of the stimulant drug dextroamphetamine, which is often used to treat ADHD. “I'm having a serotonin increase. Oh definitely,” she predicts before entering the PET scanner. Da Silva is a healthy volunteer in a trial using a pioneering brain imaging technique designed to measure serotonin changes in the brains of living people. Last year, scientists used the scan to obtain what they claimed to be the first direct evidence that serotonin release is blunted in the brains of people with depression.

Huge study finds tomosynthesis better at breast cancer detection

Medical Express | 7 March 2023

In a study of over a million women, digital breast tomosynthesis (DBT) showed improved breast cancer screening outcomes over screening with standard digital mammography alone. The results of the study were published in *Radiology*. Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in the United States. While breast cancer mortality has been on the decline since the late 1980s due to improvements in early detection and treatment, it still remains the leading cause of cancer death among women. The five-year relative survival rate of breast cancer when it is detected early in its localized stage is 99%, according to the American Cancer Society. Regular screening is the most reliable method for the early detection of breast cancer.

UCT study finds obesity in pregnant women could increase risk of poor health for mother and baby

IOL | 14 March 2023

A research study by University of Cape Town professors Naomi Levitt and Mushi Matjila has found maternal obesity changes the structure of the placenta, a vital organ that nourishes the baby during pregnancy, more than gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM). The new insight, published in *The Journal of Physiology*, adds to the understanding about the mechanisms underlying poor pregnancy outcomes, and

the subsequent greater risk of poor neonatal and offspring health.

In-depth: The state of SA's HPV vaccination programme in 2023

Spotlight | 15 March 2023

"I was overwhelmed and in complete shock. I never expected what was pretty much a cancer scare in my twenties," says Johannesburg-based Rachel, who was 28 years old when she received the results of her first pap smear in 2018. Rachel asked Spotlight not to mention her real name fearing stigma.

Five cities recognized for public health achievements at Partnership for Healthy Cities Summit

WHO | 15 March 2023

Today, during the inaugural Partnership for Healthy Cities Summit in London, five global cities were recognized for their achievements in preventing noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and injuries. The Summit brought together mayors and officials from more than 50 major cities in the partnership to discuss urgent public health concerns and best practices that save lives and create healthier cities.

In-depth: State of SA's HPV vaccination programme in 2023

New 24 | 16 March 2023

- South Africa's HPV vaccination programme has by all accounts been a resounding success over the last decade, likely helping to prevent many cases of cervical cancer.
- But the programme has suffered major setbacks due to Covid-19-related disruptions and in addition to getting it back on track, some argue vaccine eligibility should be expanded to include boys as well as older girls and women newly infected with HIV.
- Amy Green takes stock of the country's HPV vaccination efforts.

[Return to Top](#)

TRAINING AND RESOURCES

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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.

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

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

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

As a member, you will:

- Gain access to cutting-edge research, resources, and best practices
- Connect with public health professionals from around the country
- Participate in educational events and conferences

- Contribute to shaping the future of public health
- Have access to mentors in the field
- Be at the forefront of advocacy initiatives.

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

USAID High Potential Grants for NGO-led Development Projects in 2023

Deadline: 11 May 2023

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has launched new grant opportunities to support organizations, individuals, and communities worldwide. Check out the list below and start applying!

Screening and Testing Recommendations for Chronic Hepatitis B Virus Infection (HBV)

CDC recently published updated recommendations for hepatitis B screening and testing. In this publication, "screening" refers to testing people not known to be at increased risk for exposure to HBV. "Testing" refers to conducting serologic tests of people with symptoms or who are identified to be at increased risk for exposure to HBV. These updates expand on the recommendations published in 2008.

Sub-Saharan Africa - Call for Application 2023

To submit applications/nominations for this program, you must be logged in to your account. If you are unable to access the form once you are logged in, please refer to the "How do I apply for a program?" section of the FAQ.

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

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.

National Guidelines on the Treatment of Tuberculosis Infection

Department of Health | February 2023

Tuberculosis (TB), HIV and AIDS are the major causes of morbidity and mortality in the country. Modelling work conducted showed that a combination of interventions implemented at scale is required to reach the 2025 End TB Strategy targets of reducing the TB incidence by 50 per cent and the TB mortality by 75 per cent. It is for this reason that the following interventions were implemented:

1. prevention of new infections and TB disease
2. early identification of people with TB through intensified and active TB detection strategies
3. reduction in loss to follow-up
4. improvement of treatment outcomes

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

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

WHO World TB Day 2023 - Online Talk Show

Date: 22 March 2023

Time: 14:00 – 16:30 CET Geneva, Switzerland

The World Health Organization (WHO) is organizing a special virtual Talk Show to commemorate World TB Day. This year, the spotlight will be on the theme 'Yes! We can end TB!' with the aim of inspiring hope and encouraging high-level leadership, increased investments, faster uptake of new WHO recommendations, adoption of innovations, accelerated action, and multisectoral collaboration to combat the TB epidemic. 2023 is critical, with several opportunities to raise visibility and political commitment. Countries will be urged to ramp up progress in the lead-up to the 2023 UN High-Level Meeting on TB. WHO's Director General will launch an initiative spanning 2023-2027, bringing together countries and stakeholders to redouble efforts to ensure universal access to prevention, care and the latest tools and technologies to combat TB on the road to Universal Health Coverage. WHO will also issue a call to action with partners urging Member States to accelerate the rollout of new WHO-recommended shorter all-oral treatment regimens for drug-resistant TB.

Epidemiology and diagnostic testing for Leptospirosis, an emerging public health problem

Date: 22 March 2023

Time: 11:00 – 12:30 CET

In this webinar we will have an introduction to leptospirosis, looking into the epidemiology and diagnostic testing, and discuss how laboratory methods can be applied to human and animal surveillance of leptospirosis, with data from a study conducted in Puerto Rico.

Global meeting on skin-related neglected tropical diseases (skin NTDs)

Date: 27 – 31 March 2023

The World Health Organization (WHO) is holding its first global meeting on skin-related neglected tropical diseases (skin NTDs) on 27–31 March 2023. This hybrid meeting (in person and remote attendees) is expected to bring together more than 600 global experts, partners and stakeholders. Discussions will focus mainly on progress and challenges in implementing integrated skin NTD activities at country level, as underscored in the WHO NTD road map 2021–2030.

The 5th Paediatric and Adolescent HIV Learning Collaborative for Africa (PAHLCA) Meeting in Maputo Mozambique

Dates: 7 - 8 May 2023

Time: 9:00pm - 5:00pm

The Paediatric and Adolescent HIV Learning Collaborative for Africa (PAHLCA) is hosting its first face-to-face event in Maputo from 7-8 May 2023. With the theme "Prevention of Vertical Transmission of HIV: A Key Pivot in Ending Paediatric HIV and AIDS," PAHLCA aims to:

1. Fostering learning, innovation, and collaboration among MOH programming teams and partners in African countries.
2. Providing a platform for sharing guidelines, implementation frameworks, curricula, toolkits, job aids, and client/caregiver information/education/communication materials that can be used to improve paediatric and adolescent HIV programs.
3. Maintaining an updated directory of Ministry of Health paediatric and adolescent HIV focal persons to facilitate communication, coordination, and sharing across countries.
4. Facilitating networking among country teams to form research collaborations for multi-country studies to improve paediatric and adolescent HIV services.

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

COMMUNICATIONS UNIT, CORPORATE SERVICES: COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Closing date: 24 March 2023

Data Capturer (FRESH) CLINICAL RESEARCH SITE

Closing Date: 2023-03-28

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



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