

HST Bulletin_19 August 2022

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ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

Covid-19: Study provides further evidence that mRNA vaccines are safe in pregnancy

The BMJ | 12 August 2022

Jacqui Wise

Pregnant women experienced lower rates of significant adverse events after vaccination with a covid-19 mRNA vaccine than a group of similarly aged women who were not pregnant, a Canadian study has concluded. The researchers found that 7.3% of pregnant women experienced health events requiring time off work or school or needing medical attention within a week of the second dose of an mRNA vaccine, which compared with 11.3% of vaccinated non-pregnant women. The study, published in *Lancet Infectious Diseases*, adds to the growing body of evidence that mRNA covid vaccines are safe during pregnancy. In January a US study of 46 079 pregnancies found that vaccination against SARS-CoV-2 was safe and did not increase the risk of preterm birth or of babies who were small for their gestational age.

Towards effective clinical decision support systems: A systematic review

PLOS ONE | 15 August 2022

Fancini Hak, Tiago Guimarães and Manuel Santos

Clinical Decision Support Systems (CDSS) are used to assist the decision-making process in the healthcare field. Developing an effective CDSS is an arduous task that can take advantage from prior assessment of the most promising theories, techniques and methods used at the present time. In the day-to-day routine of healthcare units, the domain professionals interact with hundreds of patients. Naturally, it is of great importance that all this interaction is transformed into records, whether clinical or administrative, which in turn are transformed into data, information, and, hopefully, knowledge. Despite technological developments, these records are still kept in physical format, which creates a delay in the work performed when compared to digital versions. Friedman boasted a theorem in which it shows that an individual or group working with the contribution of a technological resource of information, has a better performance compared to a job without such assistance. For this functional theorem to be verified, the information resources must be valid and reliable and the user must know how to handle it properly.

To disclose or not: experiences of HIV infected pregnant women in disclosing their HIV status to their male sexual partners in Blantyre, Malawi

BMC Public Health | 15 August 2022

Annie Mkandawire, Vincent Jumbe and Alinane Nyondo-Mipando

In 2014, a survey done in Malawi from 53 randomly selected immunisation sites estimated an HIV prevalence of 15.1% among postnatal women with newborns. Vertical transmission rate among them was at 8.5%. Of the pregnant women admitted to antenatal ward at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital (QECH), 30% of them were found HIV positive. This shows the high burden of HIV among pregnant women, which can result into vertical transmission of HIV if eMTCT strategies are not adhered to. In Malawi, new pediatric infections were at 3500 in 2018, a decline from 15,000 in 2010 which was attributed to the eMTCT strategy. In 2011, Malawi introduced and implemented the Option B + strategy of eMTCT outside the WHO normative guidelines. Evidence on the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of this strategy informed the WHO and led to the recommendation of the strategy in developing countries in the year 2013.

Exploring Challenges Faced by Nurses on Provision of Hormonal Contraceptives to Women on Antiretroviral Therapy in Selected Healthcare Facilities in Lilongwe District, Malawi

Dovepress | 16 August 2022

E Mkwinda, E Thombozi, J Botha, I Chilinda, E Mandala, et al.

Unintended pregnancies for women living with HIV, especially in developing countries, remain a major global health concern since this could affect their sexual and reproductive health and concomitant risk of mother-to-child transmission of HIV infection. Contraceptive use has been noted as a cost-effective intervention for preventing both maternal to child transmission of HIV and maternal morbidity and mortality from unintended pregnancies. Despite the benefit, a Malawian study reported that contraceptive use was poor among HIV-infected men and women with an unmet need of 27%.^{3,4} Another Malawian study noted that the total fertility rate is 4.4 births per woman and 41% of pregnancies are unintended, increasing the risk of vertical transmission of HIV, HIV-related maternal morbidity and mental health problems. Furthermore, it is argued that hormonal contraceptives (HC) are one of the most commonly used methods of family planning world-wide even among women on ART. However, the provision of HCs to women on ART requires the knowledge of providers in both ART and contraceptives to avoid drug interactions that would render contraceptives ineffective and, subsequently, lead to unintended pregnancies.

The demographic and socioeconomic correlates of behavior and HIV infection status across sub-Saharan Africa

Nature (Communications Medicine) | 18 August 2022

Chirag Patel, Kajal Claypool, Eric Chow, Ming-Kei Chung, Don Mai, et al.

Predisposition to become HIV positive (HIV +) is influenced by a wide range of correlated economic, environmental, demographic, social, and behavioral factors. While evidence among a candidate handful have strong evidence, there is lack of a consensus among the vast array of variables measured in large surveys.

Infant BCG vaccination and risk of pulmonary and extrapulmonary tuberculosis throughout the life course: a systematic review and individual participant data meta-analysis

The Lancet Global Health | September 2022

Leonardo Martinez, Olivia Cords, Qiau Liu, Carlos Acuna-Villaorduna, Maryline Bonnet, et al.

The BCG vaccine is around 100 years old and is one of the most widely used vaccines globally. The vaccine has a well established safety profile, and is considered highly cost-effective in most settings, especially in low-income countries with a high tuberculosis burden. However, there is considerable debate about the impact that BCG vaccination has on tuberculosis, particularly among older children and adults. There are several crucial unanswered questions about BCG vaccination that have important implications for global tuberculosis epidemics and the development of supplemental vaccines. Whether BCG vaccination protects against pulmonary tuberculosis is unclear. There has been wide variability in estimates of the effectiveness of the BCG vaccine against pulmonary tuberculosis, with some studies showing strong protection and others showing none. Several reasons for this heterogeneity have been proposed, such as sensitisation by environmental mycobacteria, the timing of BCG administration, and stringent tuberculosis testing. Additionally, there is a paucity of data on the impact of BCG vaccination on

mortality during childhood with several studies having been done in the pre-chemotherapeutic era, producing heterogeneous results. More recent studies suggest potential sex-specific differences in the effectiveness of BCG vaccination.

Transmission reduction, health benefits, and upper-bound costs of interventions to improve retention on antiretroviral therapy: a combined analysis of three mathematical models

The Lancet Global Health | September 2022

Anna Bershteyn, Lise Jamieson, Hae-Young Kim, Ingrida Platais, Masabho Milali, et al.

In this so-called treat-all era, antiretroviral therapy (ART) interruptions contribute to an increasing proportion of HIV infections and deaths. Many strategies to improve retention on ART cost more than standard of care. In this study, we aimed to estimate the upper-bound costs at which such interventions should be adopted.

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RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

Why SA needs NHI, in Nicholas Crisp's own words

BizNews | 11 August 2022

The proposed National Health Insurance (NHI) and the man driving what is perceived to be a potential death knell for healthcare in South Africa, Dr Nicholas Crisp, has been a sore point for many South Africans. Crisp, the director-general of health, has been pushing the 'universal healthcare NHI' agenda as an idyllic, practically feasible way to ensure equal healthcare for all South Africans, much to the dismay of those who see it for the promotional ploy it is. Earlier this month, at the annual Hospital Association of South Africa (HASA) conference, Crisp gave "an amusing and often contentious off-the-cuff "NHI 101" presentation". In his own words, Crisp believes the country needs NHI to provide "one big pool, which we can afford by spending the current 8.5% of GDP on health far more wisely". Already, the mere fact that Crisp believes these funds are capable of being spent wisely in a country with our track record greatly diminishes his credibility. This article first appeared on Medical Brief.

BCG vaccine prevents TB in young children, but not adults - new study

News24 | 12 August 2022

For 100 years, the Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine has been used in tuberculosis (TB) prevention. Although the vaccine is given to at least 100 million people annually, researchers have always questioned its effectiveness. TB affects at least 10 million people a year across the world. A new study, The Lancet Global Health, by Boston University School of Public Health researchers, found the BCG vaccination at birth provides significant protection against TB, but only among children under five years old.

HIV: Initial Symptoms In Women And Men

Emergency Live | 12 August 2022

Many patients who have experienced an episode at risk of HIV transmission (typically unprotected sexual intercourse with an unknown person or the use of needles in drug addiction) wonder what the early signs of a possible, dreaded HIV infection are.

HIV incubation period

Unfortunately, the HIV incubation period is totally asymptomatic and lasts between two and four weeks from the moment of infection, which means that up to a month can pass without having any signs or symptoms of the presence of the virus in our bodies.

Acute HIV infection

Then we enter the acute infection phase, which is of variable duration (about four weeks, after which the symptoms tend to disappear) where, however, the symptoms are very unspecific, being similar to those of a common flu. There are no major differences between these symptoms in men and women.

New 'Langya' virus found in China: What to know about symptoms, transmission

Medical News Today | 12 August 2022

Less than three years after the discovery of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, researchers found another virus that spreads from animals to humans. The findings appear in the New England

Journal of Medicine. The Langya virus was detected in nearly three dozen people in the provinces of Shandong and Henan in the eastern parts of the country.

Langya: A zoonotic virus

Zoonotic diseases occur when animals spread germs to humans. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Trusted Source (CDC), zoonotic diseases “are caused by harmful germs like viruses, bacteria, parasites, and fungi.” Some of the more well-known types of zoonotic viruses include the West Nile virus and rabies. Additionally, the virus behind the COVID-19 pandemic, SARS-CoV-2, is zoonotic. Scientists found that animal-to-human transmissions took place after SARS-CoV-2 emerged. Since late 2019, the virus has claimed more than 6 million lives. The new zoonotic virus researchers discovered in China is the Langya virus, which belongs to the henipavirus genus.

WHO To Give 'Monkeypox' Virus Variants New Name To Eradicate Stigmas Associated With The Disease

Forbes Africa | 15 August 2022

On Friday, the World Health Organization (WHO) convened with a group of global experts who have agreed on new names for monkeypox virus variants, as part of ongoing efforts to align the names of the monkeypox disease, virus and variants—or clades—with current best practices. To ensure current best practice, experts have stated that newly-identified viruses, related diseases, and virus variants should be given names with the aim of avoiding “offense to any cultural, social, national, regional, professional, or ethnic groups, and minimize any negative impact on trade, travel, tourism or animal welfare”. “The monkeypox virus was named upon first discovery in 1958, before current best practices in naming diseases and viruses were adopted. Similarly for the name of the disease it causes. Major variants were identified by the geographic regions where they were known to circulate,” WHO said in a statement.

GBV activists unimpressed with the lack of victim consultation when it comes to parole

IOL | 15 August 2022

Anti-gender-based violence activists have decried the number of instances where the victims and their families were not consulted before offenders were released on parole. The latest data provided by the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) showed that in 2021/22 the Western Cape had recorded 11 instances where victims were not consulted compared with 947 instances in KwaZulu-Natal. The statistics reflected the lowest numbers for the Free State and Northern Cape where only 7 victims had not been consulted.

Covid-19 vaccination in South Africa — boost in youth vaccine uptake urgently needed

The Daily Maverick | 15 August 2022

Since December 2021, when the Omicron-driven wave of Covid-19 swept SA, there has been a significant decline in vaccine uptake across the country. This despite the fact that about 49% of the adult population remains unvaccinated. Vaccine statistics from 9 August 2022 showed that only 722 people had been vaccinated in the previous 24 hours. Just a year before, on 9 August 2021, the number of vaccines administered in the previous 24 hours stood at 19,012. To understand the situation behind the numbers better, DM168 spoke to health experts about the current uptake of Covid-19 vaccines and boosters in SA — who's getting them, who isn't, and why we should care. Vaccine coverage is higher in older people, at 71% (3.9 million) for those 60 years and older, and 66% (3.2 million) for those aged 50 to 59. However, in the 18- to 34-year age group, about 38% (6.7 million) have been vaccinated. Vaccine uptake for those aged 12 to 17 sits at about 2.6 million.

The hunt for a universal Covid-19 vaccine

BBC | 15 August 2022

The first Covid-19 vaccines that work on all variants might be available as early as 2024.

In the mid 1980s, Jonathan Heeney was a PhD student at the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), Maryland, when he was told to fly to Oregon – on the opposite side of the country – to investigate a mysterious new disease which was causing a surge of sudden deaths in a group of captive cheetahs. For Heeney, it proved to be his first known encounter with a coronavirus. “We eventually determined that this was a coronavirus which had jumped from domestic cats into these cheetahs,” he says. “And because cheetahs were a new host, it caused a lot of death and destruction. So that was my introduction to them.”

Four decades on and Heeney is at the helm of DIOSynVax, a biotechnology company based in Cambridge, UK, who recently received a \$42m (£34m/€41m) grant from the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), the foundation backed by Bill and Melinda Gates, the Indian and Norwegian governments, and the World Economic Forum, among others.

Fourth monkeypox case confirmed in the Western Cape

News24 | 15 August 2022

Phaahla said the patient is a 28-year-old man from the Western Cape who recently travelled to Spain. The man returned from the European country in the second week of August. "A polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test was performed in a private pathology laboratory, and the samples were submitted to the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) for sequencing analysis. Public health response measures to prevent the spread of the infection, including contact tracing, have been instituted," Phaahla said in a statement.

We still have no HIV cure. But we have a better strategy for finding one

AidsMap | 15 August 2022

There are many pre-conference meetings that lead up to each International AIDS Society conference. One of the most eagerly awaited, by researchers and treatment activists alike, is run by the Towards an HIV Cure research consortium. The 2022 meeting, held before the 24th International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2022), was titled 'Pathways to an HIV cure: Research and advocacy priorities' and this reflected a feeling in the HIV cure research community that, as we said in a report on a previous Towards an HIV Cure meeting, "targets were proliferating" in HIV cure research, and they needed a structure. There was a feeling that researchers were pursuing a number of different and even contradictory hypotheses and needed to reach a consensus on the priority of discoveries that needed to be made, and the order in which we needed to make them, to bring coherence to the field.

Zimbabwe blames measles surge on sect gatherings after 80 children die

Reuters | 15 August 2022

A measles outbreak has killed 80 children in Zimbabwe since April, the ministry of health has said, blaming church sect gatherings for the surge. In a statement seen by Reuters on Sunday, the ministry said the outbreak had now spread nationwide, with a case fatality rate of 6.9%. Health Secretary Jasper Chimedza said that as of Thursday, 1,036 suspected cases and 125 confirmed cases had been reported since the outbreak, with Manicaland in eastern Zimbabwe accounting for most infections. "The ministry of health and child care wishes to inform the public that the ongoing outbreak of measles which was first reported on 10th of April has since spread nationwide following church gatherings," Chimedza said in a statement.

The rise of 'Dr. Google': The risks of self-diagnosis and searching symptoms online

The Conversation | 15 August 2022

Virtual health care was adopted more widely during the COVID-19 pandemic, with many people accessing health-care providers remotely. However, easy and convenient access to technology means some people may choose to bypass health care and consult Dr. Google directly, with online self-diagnosis. Here is a common scenario: picture someone sitting at home, when suddenly their head starts pounding, their eyes start to itch and their heart rate rises. They reach for their phone or laptop to quickly Google what can possibly be wrong. It's possible that the search results could offer accurate answers about the cause of the person's symptoms. Or the search might erroneously suggest they're well on their way to an early death. As a researcher in the virtual care domain, I'm aware that online self-diagnosis has become very common, and that technology has shifted the way health care is delivered.

Taking Antibiotics After Sex Reduces STI Risk

POZ | 15 August 2022

Doxycycline post-exposure prophylaxis within three days after sex lowered the risk of gonorrhea, chlamydia and syphilis. Gay men and transgender women living with HIV or on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) who took the antibiotic doxycycline within 72 hours after sex had a significantly lower risk of gonorrhea, chlamydia and syphilis, according to a study presented at the 24th International AIDS Conference in Montreal. "Using doxycycline after condomless sex has potential as an effective strategy to substantially reduce sexually transmitted infections in targeted populations with ongoing high rates of STIs," study investigator Annie Luetkemeyer, MD, of the University of California at San Francisco, told

POZ.

Mathematical model is new tool in fight against malaria

E & T | 15 August 2022

Researchers have created a mathematical model to predict genetic resistance to antimalarial drugs in Africa to help manage one of the biggest threats to global malarial control. Malaria is a life-threatening disease caused by parasites and spread to humans through infected mosquitoes. It is preventable and curable, yet resistance to current antimalarial drugs is causing an avoidable loss of life. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there were an estimated 241 million cases of malaria worldwide in 2020, with over 600,000 deaths. To tackle this issue, an international research team used data from the WorldWide Antimalarial Resistance Network (WWARN), a global, scientifically independent collaboration, to map the prevalence of genetic markers that show resistance to Plasmodium falciparum – the parasite that causes malaria. Lead author associate professor Jennifer Flegg from the University of Melbourne said malaria has devastating impacts on lower-income countries and effective treatment is key to elimination.

Addressing maternal mental healthcare in Africa

BizCommunity | 16 August 2022

Affecting around 20% of pregnant women in low and middle income countries, mental-health issues like depression and anxiety are common during pregnancy and the first year after birth, with consequences for both mothers and their infants. Africa's health systems, and particularly mental-health infrastructure, may not be adequately serving women on the continent, who often experience intense suffering if left untreated. "A period of heightened emotions, and often great joy, pregnancy also brings anxiety and uncertainty into women's lives. It's a tumultuous time during which roles and relationships shift.

Does TB influence viral suppression in HIV patients on DTG-based therapy?

MIMS Respiriology | 16 August 2022

Incident tuberculosis (TB) appears to be a risk factor for virologic non-suppression (ie, viral load of >1,000 copies/mL) in HIV patients who have transitioned to dolutegravir (DTG)-based therapy with recycled NRTIs*, according to a retrospective subanalysis of the VISEND study. "It is so important to look for the occurrence of TB in patients on DTG-based therapy, especially when transitioning them to second-line therapy with recycled NRTIs," said presenting author Dr Nyuma Mbewe from the University Teaching Hospital, Lusaka, Zambia, at AIDS 2022. "Because if not, this is a possibility for emergent DTG resistance and ... [TB IRIS**] whilst they do have TB." "Whilst there have been some studies ... that did not show any TB-associated IRIS, we felt that the situation would be different in our patient population, especially as Zambia is one of the top 30 countries in the world with TB and HIV co-infections," she continued.

Millions more children to benefit from world's first malaria vaccine: UNICEF

United Nations | 16 August 2022

The pharmaceutical company GSK has been awarded a contract to produce the world's first malaria vaccine so that millions more children will be protected against the killer disease, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) announced on Tuesday. The landmark award, valued at up to \$170 million, will lead to 18 million doses of the RTS,S vaccine being available over the next three years, potentially saving thousands of young lives annually. Malaria remains one of the biggest killers of children under five. In 2020, nearly half a million boys and girls died from the disease in Africa alone, a rate of one death every minute.

COVID-19: Benefits of vaccines still far outweigh risks, experts say

Spotlight | 16 August 2022

The benefits of vaccines still far outweigh the risks, experts say following the recently reported death linked to a COVID-19 vaccine. The South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) announced two weeks ago that the individual developed Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) after receiving the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine. It is the first death in the country that has been causally linked to a COVID-19 vaccine. Since the announcement, some groups opposing vaccines have taken to Twitter and other social media platforms using this very, very rare adverse event following immunisation as confirmation of their stance that vaccines are not safe. Local health experts have raised concerns that these groups may negatively affect vaccine uptake.

The challenges integrating U=U into HIV care around the world

Aidsmap | 17 August 2022

Advocates from around the world came together at the U=U Global Summit at the 24th International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2022) in Montreal last month to share successes and challenges that continue to hamper full-scale integration of the 'Undetectable = Untransmittable' (U=U) message in diverse global contexts. A central theme was that structural barriers – especially poverty, limited access to treatment and viral load testing, stigma, and widespread inequalities – continue to shape health outcomes. HIV criminalisation is also a formidable barrier in many contexts, and advocates discussed the possible role of U=U in challenging HIV criminal laws.

Monkeypox: Vaccine on the cards as SA records fourth case

Health-e News | 17 August 2022

Health Minister Dr Joe Phaala is expected to reveal details of the country's response to Monkeypox on Friday. Phaala announced that a fourth Monkeypox virus case was identified in SA. The patient is a 28-year-old man from the Western Cape who has a travel history to Spain and returned to South Africa in the second week of August 2022. A polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test was performed in a private pathology laboratory, and the samples were submitted to the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) for sequencing analysis. Public health response measures to prevent the spread of the infection, including contact tracing, have been instituted. The fourth case follows three unlinked laboratory-confirmed Monkeypox cases reported from Gauteng, Western Cape and Limpopo provinces.

Women in Health: Francesca Conradie – from HIV to groundbreaking TB research

Spotlight | 17 August 2022

Francesca Conradie knew she wanted to be a doctor when she was eight years old. Well, that, or a truck driver. It was one of her family's weekly trips to the local library that helped make the decision clear. While flipping through the pages of Dr Christiaan Barnard's autobiography 'One Life' and reading about the man who performed the world's first heart transplant, Conradie knew that she wanted to pursue a career in medicine. Back then there were not many female doctors, something Conradie was determined to change.

UNAIDS launches podcast series 'Against the Odds'

UNAIDS | 18 August 2022

This week we're talking to adventurer, traveller, former ballet dancer and above all – walker – Jonatan Montoya... His 'Against the Odds' moments in his life include his mother's well-meaning but misguided childhood health tips, surviving a near-miss car crash while selling bootleg records on the street, avoiding becoming a professional ballet dancer, and his own mental health struggles as he grew up. Jon's motivation for his mega walk is to raise awareness and understanding of HIV. He reflects on his own fear of being infected with the disease as a teenager, a fear that grew to the point that he became celibate.

WHO releases new guidance on national strategic planning for tuberculosis

WHO | 18 August 2022

The **World Health Organization** (WHO) is releasing new guidance to support national strategic planning for **tuberculosis** (TB) response. The guidance encourages the use of a people-centric focus in the development of national TB strategic plan (NSP). It highlights the importance of government stewardship and ownership, promotes alignment with national health strategy and other health programmes, emphasizes multi stakeholder and multi-sectoral engagement as one of the key steps for multisectoral accountability for TB.

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TRAINING AND RESOURCES

Subscribe to the Health Systems Trust Bulletin

The Health Systems Trust (HST) produces a weekly bulletin on Fridays focusing on key public health news, peer-reviewed journal articles and other important primary healthcare resources.

Subscribe to the Health Systems Trust 60percent

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

HSTi offers accredited and non-accredited short courses and full programmes

The Health Systems Training Institute (HSTi) is the training arm of the Health Systems Trust (HST), a leading force in the South African public health sector. HST was established in 1992, on the brink of democracy in South Africa, and has since played a significant role in strengthening the national primary health system through health research, informatics, clinical support, capacity-building and training.

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PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

South African Health Review 2022 | Call for Abstracts

South Africa's health systems strengthening efforts in pursuit of universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals have been greatly hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic. As first responders to the country's epidemic, healthcare workers found themselves facing a wide-range of challenges that had a negative impact on both their ability to provide care and their mental health and well-being. Access to health care for chronic conditions, services for sexual and reproductive health, as well as testing, starting treatment, and continuity of care for HIV and TB, have all been compromised. As South Africa rebuilds its health system and transitions from the pandemic response to recovery, it is necessary to consider how to leverage our response to COVID-19 towards strengthening the health system for future pandemic preparedness.

The editorial team of the South African Health Review (SAHR) 2022 invites the submission of abstracts describing promising examples of response, mitigation, recovery and health systems strengthening strategies to rebuild the health system in wake of the country's COVID-19 response.

Closing Date: Monday, 26 August 2022

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.

Guidance for national strategic planning for tuberculosis

Reliefweb | 15 August 2021

A national strategic plan (NSP) for TB is a key document that guides national authorities and stakeholders on how to comprehensively address the TB epidemic through interventions within the health and across other sectors. The NSP translates global, regional and national commitments into national and subnational targets and activities to be implemented to achieve these targets, and provides the basis for mobilizing domestic and external resources for the TB response. It outlines the overall goal(s), strategies and priority interventions, and provides guidance on how these are coordinated across sectors. This

guidance is intended for use in developing standalone TB strategic plans, or TB interventions as part of multidisease or health sector plans. It describes key considerations and steps for strategic planning for TB in line with the World Health Organization's End TB strategy, and the proposed structure of the NSP. The target audience of this publication are all stakeholders involved in national strategic planning for TB (e.g., ministry of health, other government ministries, private sector, civil society, affected communities, academic and research institutions, and technical and funding partners). The current document is an update to the 2015 Toolkit to develop a national strategic plan for TB prevention, care and control. It was developed to better align with global commitments and latest developments in TB and in public health, and builds on lessons learned from using the 2015 toolkit.

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CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

World Health Organization | Consultation on the global oral health action plan

Date: 12 August – 16 September 2022

Web-based consultation

The resolution on oral health WHA74.5 requested WHO to translate the Global Strategy on Oral Health A75/10 Add.1 into an action plan for public oral health by 2023 and in consultation with Member States, including a framework for tracking progress with clear measurable targets of oral health to be achieved by 2030. In addition to the Global Strategy on Oral Health, the action plan will be aligned with the Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013–2030 and pillars 1 and 3 of WHO's Thirteenth General Programme of Work.

World Health Organization | Storytelling for Infodemic Management Workshop Application

16 August – 12 September 2022

Through building storytelling skills, infodemic managers can become more effective communicators and explain to others the power of narratives that can mislead and cause harm online, talk about their infodemic management work and how stories can be used as a force for promoting public health. This is a free training for successful applicants who have been working in and responding to health misinformation, worked in the COVID-19 pandemic, and understand how information informs people's personal health decisions. Successful applicants will be invited to the workshop and encouraged to share and record their stories of how health misinformation and information overload have affected their lives either professionally or personally during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their stories will be featured in a community storytelling project of the WHO infodemic manager community.

International Pre-Conference on Primary Health Care

Date: 7 & 8 September 2022

The International Institute for Primary Health Care (IPHC-E) in collaboration with the Ethiopian Ministry of Health (MoH-E) and supported by the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health is organizing the very first International Conference on Primary Health Care in the wake of the Astana Global Conference on Primary Health Care held by the World Health Organization and partners on October 2018. Preceding the main conference in 2023, IPHC-E plans on organizing a virtual pre-conference event on September 7-8, 2022. The pre-conference is an integral part of the bigger conference as it will offer a glimpse of the main conference's offerings, jumpstart discussions, and launch a longer-term networking platform.

World Health Organization | World Patient Safety Day

Date: 17 September 2022

Medications are the most widely utilized interventions in health care, and medication-related harm constitutes the greatest proportion of the total preventable harm due to unsafe care, let alone the economic and psychological burden imposed by such harm. Acknowledging this substantial burden and recognizing the complexity of medication-related harm prevention and reduction, the theme of World Patient Safety Day 2022 is "Medication Safety". The campaign is envisaged to provide the needed impetus to consolidate the efforts of the existing WHO Global Patient Safety Challenge: Medication

Without Harm, emphasizing the need to adopt a systems approach and promote safe medication practices to prevent medication errors and reduce medication-related harm. Special consideration will be given to areas where most harm occurs. The key action areas are high-risk situations, transitions of care, and polypharmacy.

PHASA (Public Health Association of South Africa) 17th annual public health conference

Date: 11 – 14 September

Location: Durban

Late Registration: 16 July – 26 Aug 2022

The Public Health Association of South (PHASA) invites you to attend their annual conference in Durban (eThekweni), on the east coast of South Africa. PHASA hosts an annual conferences, with the aim of engaging public health practitioners and interested people from around the country and world to share their experiences and research, discuss topical public health issues, and mentor public health students and young researchers. Hosting the national PHASA conference in Durban aims to add stimulus to the local economy, and contribute to enhanced awareness and widespread advocacy, for health, the social determinants of health, and healthcare in the region.

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JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Clinical Research Assistant

Closing Date: 2022-08-30

Research/Professional Nurse

Closing Date: 2022-08-30

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