

HST Bulletin\_20 January 2023

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## CATEGORIES

[Academic and Peer Reviewed Articles](#)[Recent Public Health News](#)[Training and Resources](#)[Publications and Reports](#)[Conferences and Events](#)[Job Opportunities](#)

## ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

### **Regional and country-level trends in cervical cancer screening coverage in sub-Saharan Africa: A systematic analysis of population-based surveys (2000–2020)**

*Plos Medicine* | 12 January 2023

*Lily Yang, Marie-Claude Boily, Minttu Ronn, Dorcas Obiri-Yeboah, Imran Morhason-Bello, et al.*

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has the highest cervical cancer (CC) burden globally—worsened by its HIV epidemics. In 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) introduced a CC elimination strategy with goals for vaccination, screening, and treatment. To benchmark progress, we examined temporal trends in screening coverage, percent screened at least twice by the age of 45, screening coverage among women living with HIV (WLHIV), and pre-cancer treatment coverage in SSA.

### **Predicted effects of the introduction of long-acting injectable cabotegravir pre-exposure prophylaxis in sub-Saharan Africa: a modelling study**

*The Lancet HIV* | 12 January 2023

*Jennifer Smith, Loveleen Bansal-Matharu, Valentina Cambiano, Dobromir Dimitrov, Anna Bershteyn, et al.*

Long-acting injectable cabotegravir pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is recommended by WHO as an additional option for HIV prevention in sub-Saharan Africa, but there is concern that its introduction could lead to an increase in integrase-inhibitor resistance undermining treatment programmes that rely on dolutegravir. We aimed to project the health benefits and risks of cabotegravir-PrEP introduction in settings in sub-Saharan Africa.

### **The association between low-level viraemia and subsequent viral non-suppression among people living with HIV/AIDS on antiretroviral therapy in Uganda**

*Plos One* | 13 January 2023

*Nicholus Nanyeenya, Larry Chang, Noah Kiwanuka, Esther Nasuuna, Damalie Nakanjako, et al.*

The introduction of antiretroviral therapy (ART) in the late 1980's and 1990's led to a marked improvement in HIV/AIDS care across the world, transforming the originally fatal and AIDS defining HIV epidemic into a manageable chronic condition with improved quality of life. Numerous efforts have been devoted to scale up access to ART, and an estimated 27.5 million (out of 37.7 million) PLHIV worldwide were accessing it

by the end of 2020. In Uganda, about 1.2 million (out of 1.4 million) PLHIV were accessing ART by December 2019. The increase in access to ART has simultaneously led to the scale up of HIV viral load (VL) coverage in Uganda from about 2% of PLHIV on ART in 2014 to about 95% of PLHIV on ART 2020. Uganda is currently devoting enormous efforts to achieve the global targets of ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2030, though the increasing concern of PLHIV with low-level viraemia ( $\geq 50$  to  $<1,000$  copies/ml) is posing a risk to this progress.

## **An Ecosystem Approach to Earning and Sustaining Trust in Health Care—Too Big to Care**

*JAMA Health Forum* | 13 January 2023

*Jody Platt and Paige Nong*

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the polarized political climate in the US, global climate change, and the realities of racism have thrust a spotlight on the issue of trust in society. Trust in health care is no less foundational than it is to other social institutions. And trust in health care is similarly facing challenges to sustainability in the context of systems that are too big to care and ill-equipped to foster healthy ecosystems for trust.

## **Predictors of young maternal age at first birth among women of reproductive age in Nigeria**

*Plos One* | 13 January 2023

*Obasanjo Bolarinwa, Bright Ahinkorah, Abdul-Aziz Seidu, Aliu Mohammed, Fortune Effiong, et al.*

Pregnancy and childbirth-related complications are the leading cause of death among girls aged 15–19 years worldwide, with most of these deaths occurring in low-and middle-income countries (LMICs), especially in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Thus, early childbearing (below the age of 18) remains a major public health challenge in SSA, including Nigeria, and this is because of its association with increased maternal and infant morbidity and mortality. Available evidence suggests that young maternal births have an increased risk for adverse maternal health outcomes, including haemorrhage, obstructed labour, puerperal endometritis, eclampsia and systemic infections. Besides these, early motherhood has also been associated with adverse child health outcomes such as preterm delivery, low birthweight, malnutrition and poor development.

## **“[T]he laws need to change to reflect current society”: Insights from stakeholders involved in development, review or implementation of policies about adolescent consent for HIV testing, care and research in Kenya”**

*Journal of the International AIDS Society* | 15 January 2023

*Huangqianyu Li, Seema K Shah, Elise Healy, Kawango Agot, Jillian Neary, et al.*

Engaging adolescents in HIV care and research promotes the development of interventions tailored to their unique needs. Guidelines generally require parental permission for adolescents to receive HIV care/testing or participate in research, with exceptions. Nevertheless, parental permission requirements can restrict adolescent involvement in care and research. To better appreciate prospects for policy reform, we sought to understand the perspectives of stakeholders involved in the development, review and implementation of policies related to adolescents living with HIV.

## **Measuring the global response to antimicrobial resistance, 2020–21: a systematic governance analysis of 114 countries**

*The Lancet Infectious Diseases* | 16 January 2023

*Jay Patel, Anne Harant, Genevieve Fernandes, Ambele Mwamelo, Wolfgang Hein, et al.*

Understanding strategic commitments and policy responses to overcome antimicrobial resistance at the national, regional, and global levels is required to evaluate current progress and direct future planning. National action plans (NAPs) are the primary mechanism for guiding national strategy and action for antimicrobial resistance governance. Although several NAPs have been developed, no comprehensive content analysis of these plans exists. Using a governance framework, we aimed to assess all publicly available NAPs on antimicrobial resistance.

## **Pregnancy in the time of COVID-19: towards Fetal monitoring 4.0**

*BMC* | 16 January 2023

*Radana Kahankova, Katerina Baranov, Rene Jaros, Jan Pavlicek, Vaclav Snasel*

On the outbreak of the global COVID-19 pandemic, high-risk and vulnerable groups in the population were at particular risk of severe disease progression. Pregnant women were one of these groups. The infectious disease endangered not only the physical health of pregnant women, but also their mental well-being. Improving the mental health of pregnant women and reducing their risk of an infectious disease could be achieved by using remote home monitoring solutions. These would allow the health of the mother and fetus to be monitored from the comfort of their home, a reduction in the number of physical visits to the doctor and thereby eliminate the need for the mother to venture into high-risk public places. The most commonly used technique in clinical practice, cardiotocography, suffers from low specificity and requires skilled personnel for the examination. For that and due to the intermittent and active nature of its measurements, it is inappropriate for continuous home monitoring.

### **Patient-reported usability and satisfaction with electronic medication event reminder and monitor device for tuberculosis: a multicentre, randomised controlled trial**

*eClinical Medicine* | 16 January 2023

*Tsegahun Manyazewal, Yimtubezinash Woldeamanuel, Tewodros Getinet, Alison Hoover, Kidist Bobosha, et al.*

The success of a tuberculosis digital adherence technology relies on patients' satisfaction with and the usability of the technology. This study aimed to evaluate treatment satisfaction and usability of a digital medication event reminder and monitor (MERM) device for patients with tuberculosis to address the prespecified secondary endpoint of the SELFTB trial.

### **The role of resilience in daily experiences of posttraumatic growth, affect, and HIV/AIDS stigma among people living with HIV**

*Scientific Reports* | 16 January 2023

***Małgorzata Pięta & Marcin Rzeszutek***

This study investigated the intraindividual variability in daily posttraumatic growth (PTG) versus posttraumatic depreciation (PTD), positive and negative affect (PA and NA), and HIV/AIDS stigma among people living with HIV (PLWH). In particular, we examined whether this variability derives from participants' resilience operationalized on a trait level. The participants included 67 PLWH, who completed a baseline questionnaire on resilience, measured with the Brief Resilience Scale. Following this, they completed the shortened versions of the following inventories over five consecutive days: the Posttraumatic Growth and Posttraumatic Depreciation Inventory V Expanded version Inventory, the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule – Expanded Form, and the Berger HIV Stigma Scale. Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) was utilized to analyze the study results. We observed significant intraindividual variability in PTG, PTD, PA, NA, and perceived HIV/AIDS stigma. Resilience was related to PTG, PTD, PA, and NA but not to stigma. Moreover, higher resilience was associated with higher, stabler PA and lower, stabler NA. Our results highlight the need of further studies on the daily functioning of PLWH. Specifically, while health status is important, it does not appear to be the predominant source of everyday distress for PLWH. Consequently, psychological counselling for PLWH should concentrate more on the life of the person as a whole and not only on coping with HIV infection.

### **Prevalence of neurotoxicity symptoms among postpartum women on isoniazid preventive therapy and efavirenz-based treatment for HIV: an exploratory objective of the IMPAACT P1078 randomized trial**

*BCM* | 17 January 2023

This exploratory analysis investigates the prevalence and risk factors of neurocognitive toxicity in postpartum women on HIV treatment in response to a concern of an Isoniazid Preventive Therapy (IPT)/Efavirenz interaction.

### **Pregnancy outcomes and vaccine effectiveness during the period of omicron as the variant of concern, INTERCOVID-2022: a multinational, observational study**

*The Lancet* | 17 January 2023

*Prof Jose Villar, Constanza Soto Conti, Robert Gunier, Shabina Ariff, Rachel Craik, et al.*

In 2021, we showed an increased risk associated with COVID-19 in pregnancy. Since then, the SARS-CoV-2 virus has undergone genetic mutations. We aimed to examine the effects on maternal and perinatal outcomes of COVID-19 during pregnancy, and evaluate vaccine effectiveness, when omicron (B.1.1.529) was the variant of concern.

## **Digitally mediated service provision for children's social, emotional and mental health: key indicators for evaluation**

*Remote and Rural Health* | 17 January 2023

Remote delivery of assessment, consultation and therapy via digital communication technologies in mental health services is important in rural locations, and has rapidly increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **The Effectiveness of WeChat Couple-based Psychosocial Support for Gynaecological Cancer: A Randomised Controlled Trial**

*BJOG* | 17 January 2023

*Minjie Li, Carmen Chan, Dorothy Chan, Xiaomei Li, Mengyue Zhang, Hui Zhang, Li Feng, Lina Huang, Ruth Mielke, Juan Du*

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of an 8-week electronic couple-based psychosocial support platform (WeChat) for gynaecological cancer.

## **Estimating the impact of HIV PrEP regimens containing long-acting injectable cabotegravir or daily oral tenofovir disoproxil fumarate/emtricitabine among men who have sex with men in the United States: a mathematical modelling study for HPTN 083**

*The Lancet Regional Health Americas* | 17 January 2023

*Kate M Mitchell, Marie-Claude Boily, Brett Hanscom, Mia Moore, Jeffery Todd, Gabriela Paz-Bailey, et al.*

The HPTN 083 trial demonstrated superiority of HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) containing long-acting injectable cabotegravir (CAB) to daily oral tenofovir disoproxil fumarate/emtricitabine (TDF/FTC) among men who have sex with men (MSM). We compared the potential population-level impact of TDF/FTC and CAB among MSM in Atlanta, Georgia.

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## **RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS**

### **Study finds some people with HIV are at greater risk for STIs**

*Catie* | 12 January 2023

Many episodes of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) can be initially symptom free. For instance, the germs that cause syphilis can initially cause a small painless sore or lesion. If this occurs inside the anogenital tract or mouth, it can go unnoticed. The germs that cause syphilis then spread further in the body to vital organs and tissues such as the eyes, brain, heart and blood vessels, kidneys, liver and bones. Eventually, this can lead to serious complications in the affected person and in the fetus during pregnancy. In the vast majority of people, a course of treatment can cure syphilis and other STIs. However, reinfection with syphilis (and other STIs) can occur in the future, so some sexually active people require frequent testing for STIs, including syphilis.

### **Pregnant learners in South Africa need creches and compassion to keep them in school**

*The Conversation* | 12 January 2023

After Boitumelo gave birth she decided not to go back to school. She assumed that, because she was now a mother, she would be barred from returning. Then she had a surprising interaction: They [school] were like, why did you not come back [to school], do you attend [school] elsewhere? I was like, no, I have a child. Then they were like, on January we need you here, this school is empty without you, and that gave me the confidence of saying, oh I must go back to school. In fact, Boitumelo had the right, under South African law, to continue her schooling through and after her pregnancy – without fear of stigma or discrimination.

### **AIDS Denialism Is Still Deadly in 2023**

*The body today* | 18 January 13 2023

As we approach the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic, and with shifts in social media moderation,

many of us continue to confront science denialism and misinformation daily. While the dangers of misinformation may be new to some, it's nothing new to HIV/AIDS advocates, who see it as a long-existing barrier to ending the epidemic.

### **For People With HIV, Early Anal Cancer Screening Tied to Better Outcomes**

*MedPage Today | 13 January 2023*

Screening HIV-positive individuals for early signs of anal cancer may lead to an earlier diagnosis and better survival, according to an observational Dutch cohort study. Among men who have sex with men (MSM) living with HIV, anal cancer-related mortality was 3.7% in those who had been screened in the Netherlands compared with 24.0% in those who had not been screened (P=0.023), reported Jan Prins, PhD, of the University of Amsterdam, and colleagues.

### **With End of Uganda Outbreak, There is No Clear Path to Test the Ebola Sudan Candidate Vaccines**

*Health Policy Watch | 13 January 2023*

There is no clear path to test the three candidate vaccines developed to combat the Ebola Sudan strain now that Uganda's outbreak is over. The three candidate vaccines – produced by IAVI (called SUDV), Sabin (ChAD3) and Oxford (ChAdOx1) – were delivered to Uganda with much fanfare in mid-December. But scientists attending a meeting convened by the World Health Organization (WHO) on Thursday could not agree on how to test them now, and discussed options including regulatory approval based on animal-only studies and “immunobridging”.

### **WHO updates COVID-19 guidelines on masks, treatments and patient care**

*World Health Organization | 13 January 2023*

WHO has updated its guidelines on mask wearing in community settings, COVID-19 treatments, and clinical management. This is part of a continuous process of reviewing such materials, working with guideline development groups composed of independent, international experts who consider the latest available evidence and the changing epidemiology.

### **Close to one billion people globally are served by health-care facilities with no electricity access or with unreliable electricity**

*WHO | 14 January 2023*

Close to 1 billion people in low- and lower-middle income countries are served by health-care facilities with unreliable electricity supply or with no electricity access at all, according to a new report from the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), and Sustainable Energy for All (SEforAll). Access to electricity is critical for quality health-care provision, from delivering babies to managing emergencies like heart attacks, or offering lifesaving immunization. Without reliable electricity in all health-care facilities, Universal Health Coverage cannot be reached, the report notes.

### **False claims circulate about Magic Johnson's HIV diagnosis**

*AP News | 14 January 2023*

CLAIM: Magic Johnson contracted HIV from a contaminated Hepatitis B vaccine as part of a study run by Dr. Anthony Fauci decades ago. AP'S ASSESSMENT: False. The Lakers legend has said he believes he contracted the virus from unprotected sex. Johnson didn't comment on the latest claims, but in the past has credited Fauci, who had been a leading researcher when AIDS first emerged, with helping him cope with his diagnosis, which prompted him to retire from the NBA. THE FACTS: Social media users are sharing a video claiming that contaminated vaccines were the reason the Hall of Fame basketball player contracted HIV, the virus that causes the immune system-damaging disease AIDS.

### **Long COVID: Most symptoms resolve within a year after mild infection, study finds**

*Global News | 15 January 2023*

Most health issues arising from long COVID would remain for several months and be resolved within a year of diagnosis if the infection was mild, a recent study has found. The study, published Tuesday in the British Medical Journal (BMJ), analyzed electronic health records from the comprehensive database of Maccabi Healthcare Services, the second-largest health maintenance organization in Israel. The study involved the complete data of 299,855 eligible individuals, who tested positive for COVID-19 between

March 1, 2020, and Oct. 1, 2021, and had not been hospitalized within a month of their diagnosis.

## **In latest guidelines, WHO recommends 'the use of masks by the public in specific situations'**

*Daily Maverick | 16 January 2023*

The World Health Organization (WHO) has reiterated in its latest set of guidelines on the Covid-19 pandemic that it still “recommend[s] the use of masks by the public in specific situations, and this update recommends their use irrespective of the local epidemiological situation, given the current spread of the Covid-19 globally”. “Masks are recommended following recent exposure to Covid-19, when someone has or suspects they have Covid-19, when someone is at high risk of severe Covid-19, and for anyone in a crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated space. Previously, WHO recommendations were based on the epidemiological situation,” the new guidelines read.

## **A booster shot is your best protection against new Covid variants**

*Health-e News | 16 January 2023*

In an interview with Health-e News, South African infectious disease expert Professor Salim Abdool Karim said current vaccines continue to offer protection against the COVID-19 Omicron sub-variant XBB.1.5, known as Kraken. Karim said what was important was to increase vaccine coverage, especially among people with co-morbidities and older people. “The questions are how do we improve our vaccine coverage, especially among older people, people with diabetes, hypertension, and heavier people? How do we get them vaccinated? That is what we should be concentrating on,” said Karim.

## **Poisoned production: The lead industry is booming – it's just moved to poorer countries**

*Bhekisisa | 16 January 2023*

Given the negative publicity about the lead paint in our homes poisoning children and lead pipes contaminating our water, most people might assume that the lead industry is suffering a slow death. But even as our understanding of low-level lead exposure hazards has grown, global lead production actually increased by 75% between 2001 and 2017. In the United States (US), according to the most recent federal data, lead usage grew 26% over this same period, largely due to a rise in ammunition production and lead battery manufacturing.

## **Three ways to protect the health of the world's most vulnerable women, children and adolescents**

*World Economic Forum | 16 January 2023*

Protecting and supporting the most vulnerable women, children, and adolescents is a challenge the world has failed to meet for far too long. Too often, just as progress is being made, we are knocked backward by war, economic crisis or the pandemic. It will not be possible to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 by sticking to business as usual.

## **NICD worried about an increase in measles cases in SA**

*Bhekisisa | 16 January 2023*

The National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) is concerned about the rising number of measles cases in the country. This comes after a measles outbreak was declared in Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Gauteng, the Free State and the North West. The NICD's Dr Michelle Groome said since last week, there have been 371 confirmed cases – with 140 of these in Limpopo.

## **'Mom, you know your child' — A guide to spotting early signs of childhood cancer**

*702 | 16 January 2023*

About 800 to 1,000 children in South Africa are diagnosed with cancer every year. Hulisani Ravele interviewed, programme development manager, Adri Ludick, from the Childhood Cancer Foundation South Africa. The survival rate for children with cancer in South Africa is around 55%, with half of the total number of patients dying due to misdiagnosis. Ludick says that parents and primary caregivers should trust their instincts to spot the early signs of cancer in children.

## **Anglia Ruskin University ARU: The science behind the new mRNA cancer vaccines**

*MarketScreener | 16 January 2023*

The UK government recently announced that it is partnering with German firm BioNTech to test vaccines for cancer and other diseases. The project aims to build on the mRNA vaccine technology that BioNTech became famous for developing, and which has been so successful at preventing serious illness and death from COVID. The goal of this new project is to deliver 10,000 personalised therapies to UK patients by 2030. With trials potentially starting as soon as this autumn.

## **Getting Quality Medicines to Patients Faster in Africa: How to Solve Access Issues**

*IQVIA | 16 January 2023*

Africa houses 1.2 billion people, about 11% of the global population. Along with this population burden, the continent also bears a disproportionate burden of disease, with 60% of Africans living with HIV/AIDS, and more than 90% of the annual global malaria cases being in Africa. The continent is also afflicted by significant infectious diseases and increasing non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Africa has faced significant public health challenges due to insufficient access to quality, safe, efficacious, and affordable medical products over the years. In 2022, some children reportedly lost their lives from acute kidney injury in Gambia after ingesting imported adulterated cough syrups. Events such as these are not just shocking, but also distressing knowing they could have been easily avoided.

## **Complacency continues making HIV an unfinished agenda – Experts**

*Africa Science News | 16 January 2023*

HIV is now 40-plus years since emerging as a global health problem, but complacency and reduced funding continue to make it an 'unfinished agenda' Winnie Sseruma, an activist, and Linda Bakker, a researcher said recently. Years since first recognized as a global health threat, those first diagnosed with the problem have now aged with it and now live with a number of co-morbidities. "The experience and lessons we have learned over the years is that time to an integrated approach in HIV care was now. There is a need to position HIV within the broader global health agenda given," said Linda.

## **Mask up, WHO Urges as it Cuts COVID-19 Isolation Recommendation**

*Health policy watch | 16 January 2023*

The World Health Organization (WHO) has called for stricter masking policies and reduced isolation time recommendations for people with COVID-19 isolation, the organization announced on Friday. Patients who test positive for COVID-19 but do not have signs or symptoms are now recommended to isolate for five days in the absence of testing, WHO suggested – compared to the 10 days it previously recommended. "Patients without symptoms are much less likely to transmit the virus than those with symptoms," WHO said. The organization advises that COVID-19 patients who test negative on an antigen-based rapid test may leave isolation early. People who have symptoms but do not test should isolate for 10 days from the date of symptom onset. This is an update from WHO's previous recommendation that these individuals isolate for at least three additional days after their symptoms have been resolved.

## **Covid during pregnancy increases risk of maternal death, study finds**

*The Washington Post | 16 January 2023*

Pregnant people infected with the coronavirus have a seven times higher risk of dying compared with pregnant individuals who are not infected, a finding that arrives amid renewed calls for vaccination of those who are expecting a baby. Researchers, whose findings were published Monday in the journal *BMJ Global Health*, pooled patient data from more than 13,000 pregnant individuals included in 12 studies from 12 countries, including the United States. Along with a higher death rate, infected pregnant people had a greater risk of being admitted to an intensive care unit, needing a ventilator or developing pneumonia if they have a coronavirus infection.

## **Rapid cognitive decline uncommon in aging people with HIV on stable treatment, says study**

*Medical X press | 16 January 2023*

With successful treatment, HIV has become a chronic health condition which can be managed with life-long care. Treatment reduces the amounts of HIV in the blood to an undetectable level and most people with the infection who take their medication live as long as people without HIV. While there have been successful developments in treating the virus, it's important to understand how it may impact the long-term cognitive function of those aging with HIV.

## Most Long COVID Symptoms 'Resolve' within 12 Months

*Health Policy Watch | 16 January 2023*

Most long COVID symptoms are resolved within a year of diagnosis, according to the results of a retrospective Israeli study published last week in the peer-reviewed BMJ medical journal. “Our study suggests that mild COVID-19 patients are at risk for a small number of health outcomes and most of them are resolved within a year from diagnosis,” according to researchers. The clinical definition of long COVID is still evolving. So far, it has been defined as persistent symptoms or appearance of new symptoms beyond four weeks from the diagnosis of COVID-19, which cannot be attributed to another condition.

## A booster shot is your best protection against new Covid variants

*Health-e News | 16 January 2023*

Karim said what was important was to increase vaccine coverage, especially among people with co-morbidities and older people. “The questions are how do we improve our vaccine coverage, especially among older people, people with diabetes, hypertension, and heavier people? How do we get them vaccinated? That is what we should be concentrating on,” said Karim. He added that everyone must get vaccinated as young people place their older counterparts at risk. The expert said South Africa would likely see an increase in new Covid-19 infections due to XBB.1.5. But he believes the slight increase would not cause an alarming spike in severe cases or hospitalisations.

## These doctors want to work in SA's rural hospitals. But there's no money to hire them

*News24 | 17 January 2023*

South Africa has eight doctors for every 10 000 people in the country, 2019 World Health Organisation data shows. Although this figure is higher than in most other African countries, it's much lower than in other middle-income regions. In Latin America and the Caribbean, for instance, there are about 30 doctors per 10 000 people (when high-income countries in the region are excluded).

## Older diabetes drugs may lower dementia risk

*TimesLive | 17 January 2023*

An older class of diabetes drugs appeared to lower the risk of developing dementia in a study, suggesting the inexpensive medicines could be researched to help combat the growing societal burden of cognitive decline. People who took an older class of diabetes drugs known as glitazones, or TZDs, had a 22% lower risk of developing dementia in an observational study published in the journal BMJ Open Diabetes Research & Care.

## HPV Is The Main Cause Of Cervical Cancer: How The Virus Spreads, Who Needs HPV Vaccine, And More

*The HealthSite.com | 17 January 2023*

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most prevalent sexually transmitted infection, and it is also the leading cause of cervical cancer incidence globally. Often, the infection is invisible, and most HPV-infected individuals don't exhibit any symptoms. The majority of HPV infections go away on their own without causing any problems. However, the illness might occasionally last longer. Since it does not usually present symptoms, those who are sexually active are likely to get this virus at some point in their lives. It affects both male and female genitalia.

## HIV-specific immune response unconnected to inflammation in people taking ART

*Aidsmap | 17 January 2023*

Recent research results offer a new clue into the mystery of why some people living with HIV experience persistent inflammation. While the findings don't uncover a cause, they upend one theory to explain this phenomenon: that inflammation or immune activation is linked to adaptive, HIV-specific immunity in people on antiretroviral therapy (ART). The new findings suggest the opposite and actually support a contrary hypothesis that sustained inflammation is borne from legacy effects that arise during untreated, chronic HIV infection.

## 9 year old boy with type 1 diabetes receives artificial pancreas

*Diabetes.co.uk | 17 January 2023*



A young boy with type 1 diabetes has been fitted with an artificial pancreas that automatically regulates his blood sugar levels. Sam, who is 9 and from Worcester, has been wearing the artificial pancreas device, which determines when blood sugar levels are low, for two years now. Despite worries about restricted availability, a similar device is likely to be put out on the NHS.

### **WHO announces plans to establish a TB Vaccine Accelerator council**

*World Health Organization | 17 January 2023*

The adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tuberculosis (TB) services has brought the urgency of vaccine development efforts into sharp focus. Speaking earlier today at a high-level panel on TB at the World Economic Forum, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization, announced plans to establish a new TB Vaccine Accelerator Council.

### **Health-related Bills: We break them down for you**

*Health-e News | 18 January 2023*

Three significant health-related bills are currently before Parliament, and if passed, could save lives and ensure sustainable futures. We break them down for you.

### **People with HIV Experience Higher Rates of Inflammation and Immune Activity During Pregnancy**

*News Wise | 18 January 2023*

People with HIV have a higher chance of having chronic systemic inflammation during pregnancy, according to a Rutgers study. Published in the *Journal of Infectious Diseases*, the **study** examined the impact of inflammation and the biomarkers that activate the immune system in pregnant people with HIV on the growth of their babies. “We wanted to see if inflammation and immune activation in pregnant people with HIV is different than pregnant people without HIV, and how inflammation and immune activation during pregnancy impacts children who are exposed to HIV during pregnancy but are not infected,” said **Stephanie Shiau**, lead author of the study and an assistant professor at the **Rutgers School of Public Health**. The study found that certain maternal inflammatory biomarkers were associated with poor growth in children in the first year of life.

### **Another HIV Vaccine Fails in Large Trial**

*POZ | 18 January 2023*

Researchers halt the Mosaico study after an experimental vaccine was found to be safe but not effective against HIV.

### **Over the past few years, the topic of HIV and AIDS was not a priority but infections are rising once again.**

*Cape Talk | 19 January 2023*

Clarence Ford speaks to Mark Heywood, health activist and board member of the HIV/AIDS organisation Treatment Action Campaign. **UN AIDS has warned of rising HIV infections and deaths. Young people in particular are at risk for infection.**

### **People living with HIV default on ARV treatments due to hunger, increasing transport costs to collect medicine**

*Daily Maverick | 19 January 2023*

Activists, health practitioners, and organisations that support people living with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) say there is a rise in people defaulting on their antiretroviral treatment due to hunger. The high cost of living and the **high unemployment rate** affects the quality of life for many South Africans. Not only are people struggling to afford healthy food, but millions also struggle to have regular meals. This particularly affects people who are on chronic medication as they can't take their medicine on an empty stomach, creating a vicious cycle of ill health. Thulina Moukangwe, 29, lives openly with HIV and is an activist in the **Treatment Action Campaign (TAC)**. She says multiple factors lead to patients defaulting on their medicines including poor mental health, lack of food and ill-treatment of patients in healthcare facilities. She says it is particularly hard for the unemployed. “There are no jobs and people are hungry. This will result in more people defaulting.

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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!

### COVID-19 updated testing guidelines

National Institute for Communicable Diseases | 17 January 2023

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## 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.

### SA Medicines Formulary 2022 (Latest Updated Ed)

Published by the South African Medical Association, the South African Medicines Formulary is researched and written by members of the Division of Clinical Pharmacology of the University of Cape Town, in collaboration with health care professionals. The formulary is aimed at doctors, pharmacists, nurses, dentists and others concerned with the safe and cost-effective prescribing of medicines.

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## CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

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

Date: 23 – 24 January 2023

World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day (WNTDD) will be celebrated on Monday 30 January 2023. To

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

### **UCT Annual Bongani Mayosi Lecture**

Date: Saturday, 28 January 2023

Venue: Pigalle Restaurant, Green Point, Cape Town

Time: 17h30 for 18h00 for the in-person lecture and dinner dance

### **World Leprosy Day 2023**

**In 2023, World Leprosy Day is Sunday 29 January.** This international day is an opportunity to celebrate people who have experienced leprosy, raise awareness of the disease, and call for an end to leprosy-related stigma and discrimination.

The theme of World Leprosy Day 2023 is “Act Now. End Leprosy.” This year’s theme calls attention to three key messages:

1. Elimination is possible: We have the power and tools to stop transmission and defeat this disease.
2. Act now: We need the resources and commitment to end leprosy. Prioritize leprosy elimination.
3. Reach the unreached: Leprosy is preventable and treatable. Suffering from leprosy is needless.

### **World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day 2023**

Date: 30 January 2023

Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) are widespread in the world’s poorest regions, where water safety, sanitation and access to health care are less than optimal. NTDs affect over 1 billion people globally and are caused by a variety of pathogens including viruses, bacteria, parasites, fungi, and toxins. These diseases are “neglected” because they are almost absent from the global health agenda, receive little funding and are associated with stigma and social exclusion. They are diseases of neglected populations and perpetuate a cycle of poor educational outcomes and limited professional opportunities.

### **Open call for short films: 4th edition Health for All Film Festival**

31 October 2022 – 31 January 2023

The Health for All Film Festival aims to recruit a new generation of film and video innovators to champion global health issues, launching its 4th edition, the festival is opening an invitation to independent filmmakers, production companies, NGOs, communities, students, and film schools from around the world to submit their original short films about health.

### **Antimicrobial Chemotherapy Conference 2023**

#SaveTheDate and join us for the Antimicrobial Chemotherapy Conference 2023 – Equipping African researchers tackling rising AMR

Africa CDC

Date: 1 & 2 February 2023

Time: 13h30 - (EAT)

### **The Lancet Summit - Childhood obesity: consequences across the life course**

March 2-3, 2023 | Virtual | Free to attend

In partnership with the World Health Organization, UNICEF and the World Obesity Federation. Join us online for the Lancet Summit - Childhood obesity: consequences across the life course.

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## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

There are currently no vacancies at the moment.

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