

HST Bulletin_22 July 2022

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CATEGORIES

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ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

Changing mortality amongst hospitalised children with Severe Acute Malnutrition in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, 2009 – 2018

BMC Nutrition | 12 July 2022

S Ndlovu, C David-Govender, P Tinarwo and K Naidoo

Globally, several interventions, including health system strengthening, improvements in maternal education and family income, and the establishment of the Sustainable Development Goals, have contributed to a reduction in under-five child mortality. While improvements were noted in decreasing under-five mortality in South Africa (SA), these were insufficient to achieve set goals. The current under-five mortality rate remains higher than the goal to reduce it to 25 per 1000 live births by 2030. This is especially true in children who have severe acute malnutrition (SAM), as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO). Health system strengthening in SA includes prioritising resources in managing the major causes of mortality in children, viz. HIV, tuberculosis, acute gastroenteritis, pneumonia, and SAM. Priority programmes focusing on these major drivers of under-five mortality are implemented at scale across districts and provinces and emphasise a primary health care approach. With more than 40% of the population living below the poverty line, these interventions include nutrition-related programmes aimed at community prevention and institutional care of children with SAM.

Kaposi sarcoma (KS) with primary effusion lymphoma in HIV infected MSM (men having sex with men) co-infected with pulmonary tuberculosis and syphilis: a case report from India

AIDS Research and Therapy | 16 July 2022

Sampada Bangar, Rohit Vashisht, Pratiksha Sonar, Kunal Ghule, Leena Rawat, et al.

We describe a case of a 30-year-old MSM recently diagnosed with HIV, immunocompromised with a purplish or brown rash all over the body for 3 to 4 months. The histopathology of the cutaneous lesions and pleural effusion aspirate confirmed the diagnosis of Kaposi's sarcoma (KS) and primary effusion lymphoma (PEL). While KS is one of the AIDS-defining illnesses seen in immunocompromised patients having low CD4 count, PEL is a rare and distinct subset of AIDS-related lymphoma. Despite the widespread availability of HIV testing, HIV diagnosis gets delayed due to stigma among MSM. This case

report emphasizes the importance of early suspicion for symptoms of HIV-associated opportunistic infections in high-risk populations like MSM. The report reiterates the need for an ambient stigma-free environment for improving HIV screening in this high-risk population.

Explaining socioeconomic inequality in cervical cancer screening uptake in Malawi

BMC Public Health | 18 July 2022

Gowokani Chirwa

There has been a recent surge of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in many low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), which has led to a huge economic burden on households. It is estimated that by 2030, NCDs will account for almost 75% of all deaths globally. Of these deaths, it is estimated that 80% will be in LMICs. Among the many NCDs, cervical cancer has been increasing in LMICs, accounting for 85% of all cases and cancer deaths. Approximately 90% of deaths from cervical cancer occurred in LMICs. Cervical cancer is caused by a human papillomavirus (HPV) infection, whereby the cervix cells uncontrollably grow and form tumours arising from abnormality. Cervical cancer has become a modern health concern such that cervical cancer screening and prevention has been set to become one of the last frontiers of universal health coverage (UHC). UHC is one of the sustainable development goals, which aims to ensure that people can access the services they need while having some form of financial protection. Worldwide, the burden of cervical cancer is the fourth most frequently occurring cancer in women.

Pregnancy and medicines: time for paradigm change

Journal of the International AIDS Society | 19 July 2022

Agnes Saint-Raymond, Lynne M Mofenson

There is a persistent scarcity of data to support clinical decision making regarding approval and use of drugs, biologics and vaccines in pregnant people, putting them at risk of inadequate, inappropriate or unsafe therapy, which can result in significant health consequences for the mother and her child. In recent years, a number of governmental and non-governmental organizations have begun to advocate for change in the existing paradigm of medicines development to ensure that women and their health providers can make informed choices about the treatment they need, based on data

Accelerating investigation of new HIV drugs in pregnancy: advancing the research agenda from theory to action

Journal of the International AIDS Society | 19 July 2022

*Martina Penazzato, Shahin Lockman, Angela Colbers, **Françoise Renaud**, Alexandra Calmy, et al.*

Historical approaches to clinical development of novel therapeutics for treatment and prevention of HIV have led to unacceptable delays in the generation of data to support optimal antiretroviral drug use in pregnancy. Over the last 5 years, multiple stakeholders have voiced their concerns around the exclusion of pregnant women from drug trials, and some progress has been made to consolidate principles and forge consensus. Building on ongoing efforts, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Maternal Paediatric Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials Network (IMPAACT) convened a technical consultation designed to move the discussion from theory to practice.

Dolutegravir twice-daily dosing in children with HIV-associated tuberculosis: a pharmacokinetic and safety study within the open-label, multicentre, randomised, non-inferiority, ODYSSEY trial

The Lancet HIV | 19 July 2022

Anna Turkova, Hylke Waalewijn, Man K Chan, Pualine DJ Bollen, Mutsa F Bwakura-Dangarembizi, et al.

Children with HIV-associated tuberculosis (TB) have few antiretroviral therapy (ART) options. We aimed to evaluate the safety and pharmacokinetics of dolutegravir twice-daily dosing in children receiving rifampicin for HIV-associated TB.

Adjunct Therapy of Zinc Supplementation Increases Immunological Response in HIV-Infected Patients: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

Open AIDS Journal | 19 July 2022

Dwijo Anargha Sindhughosa, I Ketut Agus Somia, Ketut Tuti Parwati Merati and Ketut Suryana

Malnutrition greatly accelerates the impairment of immune function among HIV-infected patients. Zinc deficiency is often found in people living with HIV/AIDS, affecting their immune function. Several studies

have evaluated the effect of zinc in HIV-infected patients, including CD4⁺ T-cells. However, the results have varied. This review aimed to evaluate the effect of zinc supplementation in HIV patients, particularly its effect on CD4⁺ T-cells count.

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RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

Joburg Child Dies After Being Turned Away From Clinic Because of No Electricity

SA People News | 15 July 2022

A family in Alexandra township is mourning the death of their 4-year-old child who died after being turned away from a clinic in Johannesburg. The child was injured on Wednesday in a car accident, but was unable to get admitted to the Alexandra Health Centre at 5 pm after security guards told the family the clinic had no electricity as the generator was not working. According to the family, the child died from his injuries when they tried to take him to a hospital. Jack Bloom, DA Gauteng Shadow MEC for Health, says: "I have taken up this tragic case with Health MEC Nomathemba Mokgethi, and it has been confirmed that the generator is broken because it exploded during the frequent load-shedding. "While the investigation into this matter is continuing, it is inexcusable that a generator at a large clinic has been out of action for two weeks.

Beyond Covid-19: Strengthening Africa's health systems to address current and future health priorities

Mail & Guardian | 15 July 2022

As the Covid-19 pandemic develops, African countries' response strategies must shift from crisis response to long-term control strategies. The momentum of Covid-19 management must be integrated into broader health systems to achieve health equity and health security, while also ensuring that other health issues and deadly diseases are prioritised. The continent's leading health experts and policymakers discussed these issues in a webinar hosted by the Mail & Guardian and organised by The Conversation Africa and Global Health Strategies, with Devex as a media partner. All of the speakers agreed that significantly more financing is required for stronger African health systems. The goal is for each African country to spend 15% of its budget on healthcare; at present the average is closer to 3%.

Obstetric violence: Mother uses trauma to help others

Health-e News | 15 July 2022

Pamela Madonsela spoke to a Cape Town-based doula who experienced obstetric violence before embarking on her journey of offering a better birthing experience to other moms. "If I had known back then what obstetric violence was, I would have acted. Or better yet, I would've gotten someone like a birth doula to support me," explained Noloyiso Williams, who went through a traumatic experience while giving birth to her first child. She fell pregnant as a teenager and recalls what turned into a horrific few hours. It all started with a shooting pain in her tummy.

Menstrual changes after Covid vaccines may be far more common than previously known

NBC News | 15 July 2022

When adults gained access to Covid vaccines last year, most knew to expect headaches, fatigue and soreness as side effects. But some researchers think it's time to add another common one to the list: temporary menstrual changes. An analysis published Friday in the journal *Science Advances* found that 42% of people with regular menstrual cycles said they bled more heavily than usual after vaccination. Meanwhile, 44% reported no change and around 14% reported a lighter period. Among nonmenstruating people — those post-menopause or who use certain long-term contraceptives, for example — the study suggests many experienced breakthrough or unexpected bleeding after their Covid shots.

COVID-19 pandemic fuels largest continued backslide in vaccinations in three decades

World Health Organization | 15 July 2022

The largest sustained decline in childhood vaccinations in approximately 30 years has been recorded in

official data published today by WHO and UNICEF. The percentage of children who received three doses of the vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTP3) – a marker for immunization coverage within and across countries – fell 5 percentage points between 2019 and 2021 to 81 per cent. As a result, 25 million children missed out on one or more doses of DTP through routine immunization services in 2021 alone. This is 2 million more than those who missed out in 2020 and 6 million more than in 2019, highlighting the growing number of children at risk from devastating but preventable diseases. The decline was due to many factors including an increased number of children living in conflict and fragile settings where immunization access is often challenging, increased misinformation and COVID-19 related issues such as service and supply chain disruptions, resource diversion to response efforts, and containment measures that limited immunization service access and availability.

COVID reinfection has a silver lining—one that may help tame the pandemic

Fortune | 16 July 2022

It's the summer of reinfection, with the likelihood of getting COVID yet again higher than ever, thanks to an ultra-transmissible, immune-evading subvariant. Those variants have mutated what should have been a light, breezy summer to be enjoyed into yet another heavy season to be endured—with few opportunities for reprieve, even outdoors. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's chart shows an extended wave (or wall?) of infections, with cases slowly trending upward. But wastewater data—perhaps now our best indicator of COVID in communities—belies those numbers. Nearly half of nationwide sewage testing sites reported COVID levels at 60% to 100% of their all-time high as of this week, according to CDC data.

Phaahla says mask mandate must remain a public health measure while world virologists express concern over scary Centaurus subvariant

Daily Maverick | 16 July 2022

Three weeks after the mask mandate was lifted, Covid-19 cases have not risen sharply, but Minister of Health Joe Phaahla says a mask mandate must remain available in case of future coronavirus waves. As virologists around the world express concern about a new Covid-19 subvariant known as Centaurus, which is thought to be extremely transmissible with the potential to cause more severe disease, some of the 10 affected countries are reminding people to get vaccinated because the pandemic is not over. BA.2.75 has been detected in 10 countries, including India, the UK, the US, Australia, Germany and Canada, and it has been designated as a “variant under monitoring” by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

Monkeypox needs to be taken more seriously, Fauci says, as cases spread in majority of US states

Business Insider | 17 July 2022

As monkeypox continued to spread in the US, Dr. Anthony Fauci is sounding the alarm on the contagious disease. Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and one of America's top infectious disease experts, told CNN on Saturday that monkeypox is "something we definitely need to take seriously." "We don't know the scope and the potential of it yet, but we have to act like it will have the capability of spreading much more widely than it's spreading right now," he said. His warnings echoes the dynamic around the Covid-19 pandemic, which was dealt with dismissively under the Trump administration until it spread so rapidly that it was difficult to confront.

BA. 5: What We Know About Protection From Vaccines and Previous Infections

Healthline | 18 July 2022

COVID cases are increasing across the United States due to the immune-evasive and highly-transmissible BA.5 variant. BA.5, which accounts for 65% of infections in the U.S., has mutations on the spike protein — the part of the virus that allows for cell entry — that have helped it spread quickly and partially evade antibodies generated from previous infections or vaccinations. Recent evidence suggests that the type of variant you were previously infected with can influence your risk of reinfection. People who previously had Omicron appear to be much more protected against new infections with Omicron subvariants than those infected with past variants like Delta. But even a recent Omicron infection won't guarantee that you won't get COVID-19 again sometime soon.

Perinatal mental health: Who's checking in on the mums?

Health-e News | 18 July 2022

Conversations about mental well-being have shifted over the years, with people more open to discussing it, but perinatal mental health is still often overlooked. Perinatal mental health problems occur during pregnancy or in the first year following the birth of a child. It affects up to 20% of new or expectant mothers and covers various conditions like depression and anxiety. The Perinatal Mental Health Project (PMHP) is a Cape town-based organisation that addresses the problem of widespread common mental health conditions among pregnant and postnatal women in low-resource settings.

African leaders launch the Education Plus initiative – a huge step forward for girls' education and empowerment in Africa

UNAIDS | 18 July 2022

Leaders meeting at the Africa Union summit in Lusaka, Zambia, have pledged their support for the Education Plus initiative at its continental launch, committing to take action to keep adolescent girls in school, which will dramatically reduce their vulnerability to HIV. Every week, around 4200 adolescent girls and young women in sub-Saharan Africa acquire HIV. In 2020, six in seven adolescents aged between 15—19 years old acquiring HIV in the region were girls. More than 23000 young women died from AIDS-related illnesses in 2020, making it the second leading cause of death among women aged 15—29 after maternal mortality in sub-Saharan Africa. Keeping girls in secondary school and providing them with life skills, training and employment opportunities is key to ending the AIDS pandemic in Africa. Research shows that ensuring that girls complete secondary education reduces their risk of acquiring HIV by up to half, and that combining this with a package of services and rights for girls' empowerment reduces their risk further still.

UN commemorates Nelson Mandela's 'fight for a better world'

United Nation | 18 July 2022

The first democratically-elected President of South Africa, and the country's first Black leader, died in December 2013 at age 95. The annual commemoration on 18 July, his birthday, recognizes his contribution to the culture of peace and freedom. Mr. Mandela – affectionately known as “Madiba”, his Xhosa clan name - fought against the racist apartheid system in his homeland, and for equality and freedom for all people.

How many steps per day are needed for longevity? Fewer than 10 000, says large study

Health24 | 18 July 2022

The well-being and longevity benefits of a daily stroll have long been known. However, the "need" for 10 000 steps a day in order to attain these benefits has been a hot topic among experts and the general public for years. Now, a new meta-analysis, which combined the results of 15 scientific studies involving nearly 50 000 adults from four continents, offers a fresh perspective. Its findings suggest that the optimal number of steps you should aim for really depends on your age. The research team found that while taking more steps a day does have value in lowering the risk of premature death in adults 60 and older, this benefit is already seen at around 6 000 to 8 000 steps per day. In other words, any additional steps didn't appear to provide longevity benefits.

Covid infections causing 'tsunami' of health risks such as heart disease

Daily Maverick | 19 July 2022

New data from patients who contracted Covid shows that an infection, even if asymptomatic, increases their risk for heart disease (with one study indicating a 50% increase) within a year. Another large study involving 181,000 patients also showed an increased risk for diabetes.

Solutions to SA's chronic surgical delays

City Press | 19 July 2022

Over 107 000 non-emergency or elective surgeries were put on the back burner during the Covid-19 pandemic, according to figures from the national health department.

HST'S new project sets out to protect women and young girls from cervical cancer in Zululand

Health Systems Trust | 20 July 2022

A critical baseline study has commenced in 12 clinics situated in Zululand sub-districts of Abaqulusi and eDumbe in KwaZulu-Natal, as part of the initial implementation phase of an important three-year Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control (CCPAC) project that is being piloted by the Health Systems Trust (HST) in support of the Provincial Department of Health (KZN DoH). The CCPAC project is funded by the Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation and is being implemented under the auspices of a consortium comprising HST, the Zululand DoH (ZDoH), the Cancer & Infectious Diseases Epidemiology Research Unit (CIDERU) of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), and Genius Quality (GQ). The lack of adequate cervical cancer services in Zululand District has hindered the development of a sustainable and holistic approach to women's health being built into the district's health systems to improve outcomes for women.

#WhatItsLike: Helping cancer patients navigate the public healthcare system in Gauteng

Spotlight | 20 July 2022

Some phone calls turn to dread for Ouma Mamatela. It is when she calls cancer patients to tell them they've made it to the top of the treatment waiting list – but then no one picks up. “You keep trying and you phone back the next day and you try all the numbers again. You get this feeling that something is not right. Then you suddenly realise that the person you're trying to call has probably died,” says Mamatela, herself a breast cancer survivor and now a cancer patient navigator.

South Africa's power cuts take a toll on mental health

MedicalExpress | 20 July 2022

You can't do your work because there's no power. You eat late and bolt your food before the lights fail. And then to be at home, in the utter dark, gives you the creeps. As blackouts unfurl across South Africa, triggered by problems that have overwhelmed its energy provider, stress is taking a mounting toll on mental health, experts say.

Health care services: Villagers' rights under threat

Health-E News | 21 July 2022

Access to health care services is a basic human right as stipulated in South Africa's Constitution. Yet, the community members of Mmakaunyana Village in Moretele are being stripped of these rights, which places their well-being under severe threat. The Mmakaunyana Clinic in the North West is at the root of the problem. The multi-million Rand facility is standing at a standstill, forcing residents to make alternative arrangements.

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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 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.

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CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

World Health Organization | Infodemic Management community event: The science of storytelling

Date: 26 July 2022

Time: 16:00 – 17:00 CET

For anyone who wishes to learn more about the craft of science storytelling, there is perhaps no more powerful tool than narrative to engage audiences on an emotional and personal level. On 26 July 2022 at 16:00 CEST-Geneva, join Tina Purnat of WHO and Maryam Zaringhalam for an introductory webinar on the fundamentals of science storytelling and how it relates to infodemic management.

Invitation for participation in the World Health Organization World Drowning Prevention Day Webinar 2022

Date: 27 July 2022

Time: 12:00 – 13:00 CET

The World Health Organization warmly invites your participation in a global, virtual event to celebrate World Drowning Prevention Day. This webinar will connect UN agencies, governments, organizations and other global drowning prevention partners to reflect on key achievements and progress made since endorsement of the first-ever UN Resolution on Global Drowning Prevention.

Webinar: WHO Global Talk Show on World Hepatitis Day 2022

World Health Organization (WHO)

Time: 28 July 2022

Date: 13:00 – 14:45 CET Online webinar

WHO's World Hepatitis Day 2022 virtual webinar will feature updates from the recently launched WHO HCV guidelines on service delivery which recommends a radical simplification of the care pathway to overcome barriers in access to testing and treatment and shows how hepatitis services can be delivered at lower levels of health care, including primary care. WHO is sharing a new Elimination report from seven countries from the six WHO regions that have piloted the WHO criteria to validate progress towards hepatitis B and C elimination. The results are encouraging, and reinforce our goals -- that elimination efforts are feasible, acceptable and can be measured within different country contexts and disease burdens. The panel discussion will feature high profile speakers and community experiences to share solutions to bridge major gaps in the hepatitis response.

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

Health System Strengthening (HSS) Unit: CERVICAL CANCER PREVENTION, ACCESS AND CONTROL (CCPAC) PROJECT PATIENT NAVIGATORS (x2)

Closing date: 25 July 2022

Health System Strengthening (HSS) Unit: CERVICAL CANCER PREVENTION, ACCESS AND CONTROL (CCPAC) PROJECT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NURSES (x2)

Closing date: 25 July 2022

Health System Strengthening (HSS) Unit: CLINICAL LABORATORY ADVISOR – ETHEKWINI DISTRICT

Closing date: 25 July 2022

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hst@hst.org.za

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