

HST Bulletin



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HST IN THE NEWS

South Africa's digital health travails provide useful lessons

Financial Times | 17 May 2020.

[The] country has yet to match ambition for data-fed, unified system with investment in skills and infrastructure. While technological advances and mobile phone penetration offer the potential to reduce inequalities and improve health outcomes, South Africa's approach offers useful lessons for policymakers elsewhere.

Challenges encountered during Covid-19 screening programme

Estcourt and Midlands News | 16 May 2020.

One of the challenges the teams came across was that some members of the community are unemployed and not receiving any social grant from the government

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ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

Universal access to essential health information: accelerating progress towards universal health coverage and other SDG health targets

BMJ Global Health | Published: 17 May 2020.

Geoff Royston, Neil Pakenham-Walsh, Chris Zielinski

The information that people need to protect and manage their own health and the health of those for whom they are responsible is a fundamental element of an effective people-centred healthcare system. Achieving universal health coverage (UHC) requires universal access to essential health information. While it was recently recognised by the World Medical Association, universal access to essential health information is not yet reflected in official monitoring of progress on UHC for the sustainable development goals (SDGs). In this paper, we outline key features that characterise universal access to essential health information and indicate how it is increasingly achievable.

Sexual and reproductive health of asylum seeking and refugee women in South Africa: understanding the determinants of vulnerability

Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters | Published: 19 May 2020.

Jane Freedman, Tamaryn L Crankshaw, Victoria M Mutambara

Women asylum seekers and refugees face huge challenges related to their sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and rights. In this article we explore the structural determinants of vulnerability to poor SRH for these women in South Africa, and focus particularly on the political, legal and economic structures which render them vulnerable. Based on a qualitative study carried out in Durban, South Africa, we argue that it is vital to go beyond analyses which prioritise the socio-cultural barriers to sexual and reproductive health and rights for asylum seekers and refugees, and to consider the wider national and international policies and legislation which create barriers to these women's rights to SRH.

What does the COVID-19 pandemic mean for HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria control?

Tropical Medicine and Health | Published: 13 May 2020.

Floriano Amimo, Ben Lambert, Anthony Magit

Despite its current relatively low global share of cases and deaths in Africa compared to other regions, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has the potential to trigger other larger crises in the region. This is due to the vulnerability of health and economic systems, coupled with the high burden of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), tuberculosis (TB), and malaria. Here [the authors] examine the potential implications of COVID-19 on the control of these major epidemic diseases in Africa. [The study]s use current evidence on disease burden of HIV, TB, and malaria, and epidemic dynamics of COVID-19 in Africa, retrieved from the literature. [The analysis] analysis shows that the current measures to control COVID-19 neglect important and complex context-specific epidemiological, social, and economic realities in Africa.

Reopening Society and the Need for Real-Time Assessment of COVID-19 at the Community Level

JAMA | Published: 15 May 2020.

Frederick J Angulo, Lyn Finelli, David L Swerdlow

Through May 13, 2020, approximately 1.39 million cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) have been reported in the United States (by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and more than 4.3 million cases of COVID-19 have been reported from 188 countries. There is an urgent need for COVID-19 data, including community-level incidence, spectrum of disease, diagnostic test penetration, and proportion of the community with protective immunity to severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (herd immunity). These data are vital to understanding where communities are on the continuum of COVID-19 cumulative incidence and prevalence and how nonpharmaceutical interventions can be titrated to reopen business and society. Real-time incidence and seroepidemiologic data are also essential to plan scenarios for the development of COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics. Cross-sectional community surveys combined with seroepidemiology can help inform the present and help navigate the path forward.

Epidemiology of Covid-19 in a Long-Term Care Facility in King County, Washington

The New England Journal of Medicine | Published: 21 May 2020.

Temet M McMichael, Dustin W Currie, Shauna Clark, Sargis Pogojans, Meagan Kay, Noah G Schwartz, et al

Long-term care facilities are high-risk settings for severe outcomes from outbreaks of Covid-19, owing to both the advanced age and frequent chronic underlying health conditions of the residents and the movement of health care personnel among facilities in a region. After identification on February 28, 2020, of a confirmed case of Covid-19 in a skilled nursing facility in King County, Washington, Public Health–Seattle and King County, aided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, launched a case investigation, contact tracing, quarantine of exposed persons, isolation of confirmed and suspected cases, and on-site enhancement of infection prevention and control.

Practicing Corona – Towards a research agenda of health policies

Health Policy | Published: 15 May 2020.

Roland Bal, Bert de Graaff, Hester van de Bovenkamp, Iris Wallenburg

As Corona virus is putting a huge stress on healthcare systems around the world, analysts of health policy

will have to respond with starting up research on the consequences of current policies. In this paper, we propose an agenda for research of health policy from a governance perspective, focussing on the consequences of decision-making structures and practices, the mediatisation of the pandemic, the organisation of healthcare systems and the role of expertise.

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RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

WHO to agree deal over future coronavirus inquiry

The Guardian | 19 May 2020.

The World Health Organization will establish an independent and impartial inquiry into the source and handling of the coronavirus outbreak, once the pandemic is brought under control, a virtual meeting of its annual governing body was set to agree on Tuesday.

Historic health assembly ends with global commitment to COVID-19 response

World Health Organisation | 19 May 2020.

“Let our shared humanity be the antidote to our shared threat.” - Dr Tedros

Why do some COVID-19 patients infect many others, whereas most don't spread the virus at all?

Science | 19 May 2020.

When 61 people met for a choir practice in a church in Mount Vernon, Washington, on 10 March, everything seemed normal. For 2.5 hours the chorists sang, snacked on cookies and oranges, and sang some more. But one of them had been suffering for 3 days from what felt like a cold—and turned out to be COVID-19. In the following weeks, 53 choir members got sick, three were hospitalized, and two died, according to a 12 May report by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that meticulously reconstructed the tragedy.

COVID-19 Report 4: Massive UK analysis of deaths from virus

Spotlight | 20 May 2020.

This is the fourth issue of COVID-19 Report. [The authors] point you to the latest quality science on the pandemic. If you come across unfamiliar terms, there is a glossary at the bottom of the article.

Leading SA health experts warn that Covid-19 response is hurting other health priorities

GroundUp | 17 May 2020.

Children are suffering increasingly from preventable infectious diseases, including TB and measles, due to missed vaccinations.

Covid-19 has exposed the limits of the pharmaceutical market model

STAT | 19 May 2020.

That so much hope is being pinned on remdesivir, the drug Gilead is testing for Covid-19, reflects the failure of our system for new drug development rather than the unqualified success some commentators are making it out to be.

More than six million new TB cases worldwide by 2025 warns report

Health-e News | 8 May 2020.

Whilst global and national attention is focussed on one respiratory illness – Covid-19 – tuberculosis (TB) treatment and testing is falling to the wayside. Some health professionals say that TB testing needs to be linked to Covid-19 testing to remedy this.

Here's what South African nurses want

Health-e News | 18 May 2020.

Although the 'mouth, eyes and ears of the vulnerable and the defenceless' nurses struggle with dangerous understaffing, equipment and medicine shortages and meagre salaries.

New HIV prevention injection shown to be very effective

GroudUp | 18 May 2020.

A new form of HIV prevention medicine which is injected every two months is effective, according to the interim analysis of the HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) 083 study.

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TRAINING AND RESOURCES

Launch of the WHO Academy and the WHO Info mobile applications

World Health Organisation | 13 May 2020.

WHO announces the launch of the WHO Academy app designed to support health workers during COVID-19, and the WHO Info app designed to inform the general public.

[On 13 May], the WHO Academy, World Health Organization's lifelong learning centre, launched a mobile app designed to enable health workers to expand their life-saving skills to battle the COVID-19 pandemic.

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PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

Clinical management of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 disease Version 4

National Department of Health | 18th May 2020.

Version 4: What's New?

- Updated case definition for a suspected COVID-19 case (section 3.1)
- New guidance on SARS-CoV-2 sampling and on repeat testing (section 3.2)
- Recommendation against the use of rapid antibody-based tests for the routine diagnosis of acute COVID-19 (section 3.2)
- Removal of the requirement that mild disease in high-risk individuals requires hospitalization (section 4.1)
- Guidance on patients requiring nebulized medications or inhaled or systemic steroid use for management of their comorbidities (section 4.2)
- Updates to critical care section (section 4.5)
- Specific guidance on children, HIV patients, and pregnant/breastfeeding women (section 5)
- Updated guidance on the forms required when testing and managing COVID-19 patients (section 7)

Guidelines for Quarantine and Isolation in Relation to COVID-19 Exposure and Infection

National Department of Health | 7 May 2020.

The objective of this document is to provide:

- Guidance on how quarantine and isolation should be conducted.
- A checklist for the identification of suitable facilities.
- Guidance on the set-up of such facilities.
- Guidance on the management of the quarantine and isolation facilities.
- A framework for standard operating procedures for the daily work and interaction of Department of Health and other staff with occupants/patients.
- Guidelines for people who self-isolate.
- Guidelines to ports of entry on the management of South African travellers from high risk countries

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CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

Due to the disruption COVID-19 has caused the conferencing industry many events have been cancelled

or postponed. As a result of this uncertainty we have decided not to list any conferences and events in the Bulletin for the time being.

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JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Please click on the job title for more information.

URC: District TB Coordinators

Closing Date: 27 May 2020

URC: TB Nurse Mentors

Closing Date: 27 May 2020

Palladium International: Programme Manager - Data Use and Analytics

Closing Date: 30 June 2020

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