

HST Bulletin_24 February 2023

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CATEGORIES

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ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

High drug prices are not justified by industry's spending on research and development

The BMJ | 15 February 2023

Aris Angelis, Roman Polyakov, Olivier Wouters, Els Torreelle and Martin McKee

Concerns over the prices of new medicines have been growing over the past decade. In the US, estimated net prices of newly launched prescription drugs increased from a median of around \$1400 a year (£1200; €1300) in 2008 to over \$150 000 a year in 2021. Onasemnogene abeparvovec (Zolgensma), a gene therapy approved by the US Food and Drug Administration in 2019 for spinal muscular atrophy, was at the time of approval the most expensive drug ever, with a price of over \$2m for a single dose treatment. Several more recent drugs for rare diseases are priced even higher, with a gene therapy for haemophilia B approved by the FDA in November 2022 costing \$3.5m per dose. But even old and common drugs have seen inexplicable price increases: in the US, the list price of some insulin products increased more than twofold from 2007 to 2018, while a US government report identified 1216 products that had seen prices rise above inflation between July 2021 and July 2022, with an average increase of 31.6%.

Health and nutrition claims for infant formula: international cross sectional survey

The BMJ | 15 February 2023

Ka Yan Cheung, Loukia Petrou, Bartosz Helfer, Erika Porubayeva, Elena Dolgikh, et al

Human breast milk is the optimal source of infant nutrition. Consistent evidence supports multiple short term and long term health risks to both children and mothers when substitutes such as infant formula are used. Decisions about infant feeding can be influenced by a range of medical, socio-political, and psychological factors; however, the marketing of infant formula is an important factor that can undermine breastfeeding. Recent multinational research by the World Health Organization and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (Unicef) highlighted how "pervasive, personalised and powerful" the marketing of infant formula can be, with personal data on digital platforms being used to refine strategies. Industry spends billions per annum promoting breast milk substitutes, and multiple, often emotive, techniques are used to promote products.

Past SARS-CoV-2 infection protection against re-infection: a systematic review and meta-analysis

The Lancet | 16 February 2023

COVID-19 Forecasting Team

Understanding the level and characteristics of protection from past SARS-CoV-2 infection against subsequent re-infection, symptomatic COVID-19 disease, and severe disease is essential for predicting future potential disease burden, for designing policies that restrict travel or access to venues where there is a high risk of transmission, and for informing choices about when to receive vaccine doses. We aimed to systematically synthesise studies to estimate protection from past infection by variant, and where data allow, by time since infection.

High PrEP uptake and objective longitudinal adherence among HIV-exposed women with personal or partner plans for pregnancy in rural Uganda: A cohort study

Plos Medicine | 16 February 2023

Lynn Matthews, Esther Atukunda, Moran Owembabazi, Kato Kalyebara, Christina Psaros, et al.

In Uganda, fertility rates and adult HIV prevalence are high, and many women conceive with partners living with HIV. Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) reduces HIV acquisition for women and, therefore, infants. We developed the Healthy Families-PrEP intervention to support PrEP use as part of HIV prevention during periconception and pregnancy periods. We conducted a longitudinal cohort study to evaluate oral PrEP use among women participating in the intervention.

Advance the African Medicines Agency to benefit health and economic development

The BMJ | 16 February 2023

Michel Sidibé, Abdoul Dieng and Kent Buse

Many African lives were cut short by the covid-19 pandemic. We will likely never know the true magnitude of the pandemic in Africa owing to the lack of testing kits or infrastructure to monitor the pandemic. Although the virus did not cause the millions of deaths that were predicted, it exposed the continent's vulnerabilities in ensuring access to vital drugs, vaccines, and health technologies. The African continent was sidelined in the global rush for vaccines in 2021 and 2022—and currently fewer than half of the African population has been fully vaccinated.

Point-of-care ultrasound in general practice: an exploratory study in rural South Australia

Remote and Rural Health | 16 February 2023

Hamish Phillips, Nitya Sukheja, Susan Williams, Adina La Forgia, Garry Nixon, Lawrence McArthur, et al

Access to ultrasound imaging services is limited in rural areas and point-of-care ultrasound (POCUS) has the potential to address this gap. We aimed to examine how POCUS is utilised by doctors in contemporary Australian rural general practice.

Injectable long acting antiretroviral for HIV treatment and prevention: perspectives of potential users

The BMC Infectious Diseases | 17 February 2023

Laurence Slama, Raphael Porcher, Françoise Linard, Catherine Chakvetadze, Agnes Cros, et al.

Oral preexposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and combined antiretroviral therapy (cART) are cornerstones to overcome the HIV epidemic. However, despite their high effectiveness, their better tolerability and convenience, they have limitations that may affect quality of life and adherence: tiredness of daily long-term treatment, difficulty experienced by some individuals in swallowing pills, potential drug interactions with comedications such as proton pump inhibitors. To overcome these drawbacks, developing alternative forms of cART such as long acting injectable antiretroviral (LAA) drugs is likely to be needed.

Perceptions, facilitators and barriers of physical activity among people living with HIV: a qualitative study

The BMC Public Health | 18 February 2023

Brenda Kitilya, Erica Sanga, George PrayGod, Bazil Kavishe, Kia Ditlevsen, et al.

Physical activity improves quality of life and reduces the risk of non-communicable disease (NCDs). WHO guidelines recommend 150–300 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity of physical activity per week to

reduce the risk of NCDs as well as improve health and well-being. Globally, 1 in 4 adults do not meet the global recommended levels of physical activity. In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), where there is a high burden of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) [5], physical activity may improve the quality of life of people living with HIV (PLWH). However, physical activity appears to be poor among PLWH with few studies reporting that PLWH spend ~75% of their time sedentary. Contributors to physical inactivity among PLWH include chronic inflammation, side effects of antiretroviral therapy (ART), poor nutrition, and other HIV-related co-morbidities.

Effect of Higher-Dose Ivermectin for 6 Days vs Placebo on Time to Sustained Recovery in Outpatients With COVID-19: A Randomized Clinical Trial

JAMA Network | 20 February 2023

Susanna Naggie, David Boulware, Christopher Lindsay, Thomas Stewart, Alex Slandzicki, et al.

Despite treatment advances for COVID-19, the evolution of SARS-CoV-2 variants and subvariants has shifted therapeutic options, including the recent loss of effectiveness of monoclonal antibodies. Novel oral antivirals have been authorized for high-risk individuals in high-income countries. However, efficacy of these antivirals in those vaccinated or with prior SARS-CoV-2 infection remains unclear. Interest remains for the potential of repurposed drugs to improve symptoms and clinical outcomes among patients with COVID-19.

Risk-based versus universal PrEP delivery during pregnancy: a cluster randomized trial in Western Kenya from 2018 to 2019

Journal of the International AIDS Society | 20 February 2023

John Kinuthia, Julia C. Dettinger, Joshua Stern, Nancy Ngumbau, Ben Ochieng, et al.

Integrating pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) delivery for pregnant and postpartum women within maternal and child health (MCH) clinics is feasible and acceptable. It is unknown whether a risk-guided model would facilitate appropriate PrEP use among MCH attendees better than universally offering PrEP.

Antiretroviral postnatal prophylaxis to prevent HIV vertical transmission: present and future strategies

Journal of the International AIDS Society | 20 February 2023

Martina Penazzato, Ivy Kasirye, Theodore Ruel, Irene Mukui, Adrie Bekker, et al.

Maternal antiretroviral therapy (ART) with viral suppression prior to conception, during pregnancy and throughout the breastfeeding period accompanied by infant postnatal prophylaxis (PNP) forms the foundation of current approaches to preventing vertical HIV transmission. Unfortunately, infants continue to acquire HIV infections, with half of these infections occurring during breastfeeding. A consultative meeting of stakeholders was held to review the current state of PNP globally, including the implementation of WHO PNP guidelines in different settings and identifying the key factors affecting PNP uptake and impact, with an aim to optimize future innovative strategies.

Impact and cost-effectiveness of the national scale-up of HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis among female sex workers in South Africa: a modelling analysis

Journal of the International AIDS Society | 20 February 2023

Jack Stone, Rutendo Bothma, Gabriela B Gomez, Robyn Eakle, Christinah Mukandavire, et al.

In 2016, South Africa (SA) initiated a national programme to scale-up pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) among female sex workers (FSWs), with ~20,000 PrEP initiations among FSWs (~14% of FSW) by 2020. We evaluated the impact and cost-effectiveness of this programme, including future scale-up scenarios and the potential detrimental impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Adherence to Chronic Therapies: A Systematic Review

International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health | 21 February 2023

Elena Olmastroni, Federica Galimberti, Elena Tragni Alberico, Catapano and Manuela Casula

The spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic caused a sudden and significant disruption in healthcare services, especially for patients suffering from chronic diseases. We aimed at evaluating the impact of the pandemic on adherence to chronic therapies through a systematic review of available studies. PubMed, EMBASE, and Web of Science were searched since inception to June 2022. Inclusion criteria were: (1) observational studies or surveys; (2) studies on patients with chronic diseases;

(3) reporting the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on adherence to chronic pharmacological treatment, as a comparison of adherence during the pandemic period vs. pre-pandemic period (primary outcome) or as rate of treatment discontinuation/delay specifically due to factors linked to COVID-19 (secondary outcome). Findings from 12 (primary outcome) and 24 (secondary outcome) studies showed that many chronic treatments were interrupted or affected by a reduced adherence in the pandemic period, and that fear of infection, difficulty in reaching physicians or healthcare facilities, and unavailability of medication were often reported as reasons for discontinuation or modification of chronic therapies.

Mpox in people with advanced HIV infection: a global case series

The Lancet | 21 February 2023

Oriol Mitjà, Andrea Alemany, Michael Marks, Jezer I Lezama Mora, Juan Carlos Rodríguez-Aldama, et al
People living with HIV have accounted for 38–50% of those affected in the 2022 multicountry mpox outbreak. Most reported cases were in people who had high CD4 cell counts and similar outcomes to those without HIV. Emerging data suggest worse clinical outcomes and higher mortality in people with more advanced HIV. We describe the clinical characteristics and outcomes of mpox in a cohort of people with HIV and low CD4 cell counts (CD4 <350 cells per mm³).

Recent Alcohol Use Is Associated With Increased Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Continuation and Adherence Among Pregnant and Postpartum Women in South Africa

PubMed | 1 March 2023

Amanda Miller, Steven Shoptaw, Corrina Moucheraud, Rufaro Mvududu, Zaynab Essack

South African women experience high levels of alcohol use and HIV infection during the perinatal period. Oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is highly effective at reducing HIV risk. We examined associations between alcohol use and PrEP use during pregnancy and postpartum.

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RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

What's the deal with viral variants when it comes to HIV?

Spotlight | 16 February 2023

When a study published last year on an HIV variant that has been circulating in the Netherlands for the last 20 years made headlines around the world, it was a reminder that SARS-CoV-2 isn't the only virus out there that is constantly mutating. Behind the headlines though, the story also offered a reminder of how different HIV is to SARS-CoV-2 with its Betas, Deltas, and Omicrons. To appreciate the differences, some basic terms are worth revising. "In virology, the terms variants, strains, and subtypes all describe genetic differences between viruses in the same grouping or species. There is a progression of how big the genetic change or differences are, with variants being the smallest difference, strains slightly more, and subtypes a much bigger difference," explains Professor Eftyhia Vardas, a clinical virologist pathologist and the Head of Virology at Lancet Laboratories.

Navigating the complexities of policing weed in the workplace

Daily Maverick | 16 February 2023

While labour legislation encourages employers to adopt disciplinary rules that establish the standard of conduct expected from their employees, these rules must be reasonable, consistent with laws and public policy and not be arbitrary, capricious or unfair. That said, how do the requirements of reasonability and justifiability apply when employers want to implement a zero-tolerance policy or approach?

Healthcare without borders — the importance of eradicating medical Afrophobia

Daily Maverick | 16 February 2023

About two million immigrants live in South Africa, many of whom have difficulty accessing public services like healthcare. Medical Afrophobia in the context of South Africa refers to the fear or hatred of people from other African countries who seek medical treatment or services in South Africa. This phenomenon is often fuelled by prejudice and misinformation and has led to discrimination, violence, and other forms of mistreatment against foreign nationals seeking medical care. Many South Africans have expressed concerns about the burden that foreign nationals may place on the country's healthcare system, and there

have been instances of violence and harassment against African foreign nationals seeking medical care.

A single dose of an old drug could save 2 million mothers from sepsis every year

Freethink | 16 February 2023

A massive international study has found that a single course of a cheap, generic, and shelf-stable drug cut the risk of maternal sepsis after birth by more than a third. The study backers estimate that the drug could prevent 2 million cases of sepsis — a deadly infection complication — in mothers every year. A four-pill course of azithromycin, an antibiotic discovered over 40 years ago, cut the risk of maternal sepsis by 35% for mothers in low- and middle-income countries. A previous study in the US found IV azithromycin was highly effective at reducing maternal sepsis risk in C-section patients, cutting rates by about half, and it is now a recommended practice for cesarean births.

OPINION: NHI Bill must still clear many hurdles to ensure adequate medicine access

Spotlight | 17 February 2023

A frightful piece of information came to light recently. The pharmaceutical giant Pfizer announced its 2022 revenue at \$100 billion. This is more than the combined health spending of 108 countries in 2020 according to calculations of The People's Vaccine Campaign. The Pfizer COVID vaccine, of course, helped the dollars roll in. In fact, some reports suggest that Pfizer charged some countries \$130 per dose of vaccine, while it is estimated that it costs less than \$2 per dose to make. That equated to a markup of a stupefying 10 000% but we don't know the full pricing details because the contracts are marked 'secret'.

Calling Out Big Players Stalling Progress in the Fight Against HIV/AIDS in Africa

iAfrica | 17 February 2023

The head of UNAids, Winnie Byanyima, has strongly criticised pharmaceutical giants for prioritising profits over saving lives, and warned that “racist” inequalities are undermining progress towards ending Aids, especially in Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for more than half of all new infections, with women and marginalised groups facing higher new infection rates. Aids-related illnesses were the leading cause of mortality among African women, and adolescent girls and young women were three times more likely than men to get HIV.

Heart Health Prior to Pregnancy Is Important, Says Report

Healthnews | 17 February 2023

New research by the American Heart Association published in *Circulation* says women's heart health before pregnancy can largely impact the risk associated with pregnancy, and long-term cardiovascular health for both the mother and the baby. Unsurprisingly, the mother's health impacts the baby once pregnancy begins. However, improving heart health before pregnancy can be crucial to ending the generational sequence of poor cardiovascular health, which is common in the United States. For women impacted by poor social conditions and institutional racism, taking care of their health before pregnancy is especially important.

Govt intensifying efforts to implement NHI, says Ramaphosa

EWN | 17 February 2023

Government is intensifying efforts geared at implementing South Africa's national health insurance. This was announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa as he responded to the debate on his State of the Nation Address on Thursday. Ramaphosa stressed that access to quality healthcare was key to improving the quality of lives of all South Africans.

England eliminates mother-to-child transmission of hepatitis B

Contemporary OB/GYN | 17 February 2023

The United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA) announced the news yesterday that the country had eliminated transmission of hepatitis from mother to child. “We are pleased WHO has confirmed England has eliminated mother-to-child transmission of hepatitis B, thanks to universal screening and immunization benefitting more than 9 in 10 infants,” John Stewart, director for Specialized Commissioning and interim director of Commercial Medicines at NHS England, said in a statement. Pregnant women who have hepatitis B can pass the infection onto their baby around the time of birth, and this is one of the most common routes of infection. To reduce the chances of a baby developing the infection, since the late 1990s all pregnant women in England have been offered an antenatal blood test for hepatitis B (as well as

HIV and syphilis).

Water Cuts in South Africa are Hurting Hospitals and Clinics – There's an Increased Risk of Infections

NICD | 17 February 2023

South Africa is a water-scarce country. Changing rainfall patterns and the escalating electricity crisis are making the situation worse. Treating and distributing water requires electricity. Some of the country's biggest cities have had to impose water restrictions and residents in other parts have gone months without a regular water supply. Unfortunately, health facilities have not been spared. There have been numerous media reports of hospitals and clinics around the country being hit by water shortages. The Conversation Africa's Ina Skosana spoke to epidemiologist Husna Ismail about the dangers of clinics and hospitals running out of water.

The 'epidemic' of adolescent pregnancy in SA

IOL | 17 February 2023

Adolescent pregnancy is common in South Africa with data pointing to an “epidemic” of adolescent pregnancy putting strain on our healthcare systems and societies. In 2021, Statistics South Africa reported that 142 704 births registered occurred to mothers aged 10 to 19 years. KwaZulu-Natal has the highest prevalence of adolescent pregnancy with 36 171 deliveries recorded in girls aged 10 to 19. Further, repeat births to adolescents is an untold story in South Africa warranting attention.

SA launches first virtual angioedema centre in Africa

Health-e News | 17 February 2023

Janice Strydom, a Hereditary Angioedema (HAE) patient, spent six years in and out of emergency rooms, struggling to find a diagnosis for her recurrent throat swelling and closure. Despite consulting multiple doctors, she couldn't find the information she needed to manage her condition. Angioedema is sudden swelling often triggered by an allergic reaction. Hereditary Angioedema is a genetic disorder that causes recurrent, painful episodes where the skin or mucous membranes swell.

Monkeypox in an immunocompromised patient with underlying human immunodeficiency virus and syphilis infections in Southern Florida of the United States: a case report

AIDS Research and Therapy | 18 February 2023

Wooyoung Jang, Likhita Kandimalla, Sivagami Rajan, Rafael Abreu & Jamie Enrique Campos

The orthopoxvirus causes the rare disease monkeypox, and underlying immune deficiencies might lead to worse outcomes. In this report, we described a rare case of monkeypox with an underlying immune deficiency caused by human immunodeficiency virus infection which was combined with syphilis. This report discusses differences in the initial clinical presentation and clinical course compared to typical monkeypox cases.

COVID Relief Funds May Help Pay Your Medical Debt. Here's How

Health Digest | 18 February 2023

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only had a severe impact on our health but also on our finances. Many Americans already had significant medical expenses before the pandemic began, so the financial burden of hospital and doctor visits because of the virus didn't do them any favors. Without insurance, many people have to cover their medical expenses out of their own pocket, which can be a Herculean task. In the United States, 1 in 6 individuals has received a debt collection notice because of an unpaid medical bill, according to the National Consumer Law Center. Many people find that their increasing medical debt, and their inability to pay it off, have a negative effect on their mental health.

SA's Minister of Menstruation demands that government finally prioritise menstrual health

IOL | 18 February 2023

Candice Chirwa knows the importance of holding an important title such as the “Minister of Menstruation” in the country. “Being the Minister of Menstruation has been an incredible journey, advocating for the right of so many menstruators in South Africa to have access to period dignity,” Chirwa told the Saturday Star.

COVID-19 pandemic lessons should help build robust health systems

SA News | 19 February 2023

The lessons Africa learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic must be an opportunity to build more robust health systems. This, according to President Cyril Ramaphosa, is so that the continent does not continue to be plagued by the same inequities every time it is faced with a health emergency. The President made the remarks while delivering a solidarity address during a high-level breakfast meeting of African Heads of State and Government on Africa Centres for Disease Control in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on Saturday evening.

Something stinks – Eskom's uncontrolled pollution emissions cost thousands of lives and billions of rands

Health-e News | 20 February 2023

Communities in the Mpumalanga Highveld Priority Area have long felt the health effects of Eskom's deadly air pollution that has caused premature deaths and health complications for the surrounding communities, particularly among children, writes Onke Ngcuka. A recent report shows that further air quality non-compliance by the ailing power utility could result in 79,500 air pollution-related deaths from 2025 until the power plants' end of life.

African leaders pledge new commitments to end AIDS

UNAIDS | 20 February 2023

African leaders and partners have joined together at a high-level event on the side-lines of the 36th Session of the African Union to commit to a set of actions to boost progress towards ending AIDS. The event, Health Financing and Sustaining Action to End AIDS and Related Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases, was co-hosted by the African Union, NEPAD, UNAIDS and PEPFAR. During the event, heads of state and government adopted a declaration which includes commitments to take personal responsibility and provide active leadership in the AIDS response, champion science and mobilize domestic political and financial support.

Zimbabwe Moves to Strengthen Collaboration in Fight Against Tuberculosis (TB)

allAfrica | 20 February 2023

Tuberculosis (TB) is the ninth leading cause of death worldwide, ranking above HIV/AIDS. Globally, 10.6 million people developed TB while an estimated 1.6 million people died of TB in 2021 alone. Despite progress made in the last two decades, the incidence of TB is not declining fast enough to end the disease. In Zimbabwe an estimated 29,945 people developed active TB in 2021 and only 16,541 were diagnosed and put on treatment. A significant number of people are still being missed and not getting the treatment they need and deserve. In addition, the proportion of children who were diagnosed with TB has been consistently low, and has been 6% for the past 4 years. Stigma and discrimination, limited resources, limited capacity to diagnose TB in children and catastrophic costs suffered by TB patients as they seek services remain a challenge.

Malaria-Carrying Mosquitos Are Expanding Their Territory Almost 3 Miles a Year

Science Alert | 20 February 2023

Scientists have long warned that climate change would push species into new territories, with the march of disease-carrying mosquitos among their gravest concerns. But this is not some theoretical future threat. Mosquitos that transmit malaria have been moving into warming areas for over a century in Africa, according to a new study.

Response to New STI Prevention Tools & Approaches Research at CROI 2023

CDC | 20 February 2023

More tools are desperately needed in the nation's fight against STIs. Ongoing increases in reported STIs show no signs of slowing without long-term investment and game-changing innovations in STI prevention, rapid diagnostics, vaccine-development, and treatment. The recent momentum in research exploring STI prevention is encouraging, particularly in a field that has lacked innovation for so long. As these promising findings are shared, it is exciting to see important pieces of a much larger puzzle falling into place, but there are still many gaps left to fill. Continued research and investment are needed to develop the right mix of testing, prevention, and treatment solutions for all groups impacted by STIs. And everyone – from the federal government, to state and local health departments, to healthcare providers – must commit to

equitable access to all proven innovations from the start.

The Düsseldorf Patient HIV Cure Case Published in Nature Medicine

TAG | 21 February 2023

The news today is awash with stories about the Düsseldorf Patient, one of five people considered likely cured of HIV after receipt of a stem cell transplant to treat a life-threatening cancer diagnosis. As with all five reported cases to date, the stem cell donor was homozygous for the CCR5Δ32 mutation, which renders immune cells resistant to most HIV variants. The media coverage has been prompted by the publication of a detailed report in the journal Nature Medicine by Björn-Erik Ole Jensen and colleagues. The individual, who identified himself as Marc in an interview with a Dutch news outlet in 2021, has now been off antiretroviral therapy (ART) for four years with no sign of HIV viral load rebound. His current health is reported to be good, although the paper makes clear his journey has been difficult having experienced two relapses of acute myeloid leukemia and reactivation of multiple chronic viral infections (cytomegalovirus, herpes simplex virus 2, human herpesvirus 8 and Epstein–Barr virus). Mild chronic graft-versus-host disease of the eyes with bilateral keratoconjunctivitis sicca (dry eye syndrome) developed after the stem cell transplant and is still present.

Vaginal ring to prevent HIV safe to use in late pregnancy and while breastfeeding

Spotlight | 21 February 2023

Women can safely use a monthly, antiretroviral-containing vaginal ring to prevent HIV infection during late pregnancy and while breastfeeding with no risk to their babies, new research released this week shows. The ring is expected to become available at selected clinics and private pharmacies this year alongside the HIV prevention injection and the HIV prevention pill.

Disproportionate number of children in SA have severe asthma, experts say

Spotlight | 21 February 2023

Despite being one of the most common non-communicable diseases globally and there being highly effective treatments for it, asthma is often not well controlled in many low-resource settings, according to a cross-sectional study recently published in the Lancet medical journal.

'Absolute chaos' after flooding in the Vaal

Mail & Guardian | 21 February 2023

There are people who had a house on Friday and on Sunday morning they only had a foundation. Their entire house was washed away.” This is according to Storm Zurcher, the community policing forum chairperson of the Loch Vaal neighbourhood watch area, who was referring to the widespread destruction of homes, roads and bridges in Loch Vaal, Vanderbijlpark and other parts of the Vaal after devastating flooding at the weekend. On Saturday, the department of water and sanitation announced that a further two floodgates had been opened at the Vaal Dam to ease pressure after heavy rains, which unleashed flooding in the region. The total number of floodgates that have been opened stands at 12.

South Africans can finally test for Covid-19 at home with a self-test kit

Daily Maverick | 21 February 2023

Late last year the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (Sahpra) approved antigen tests that can be used at home. Sahpra has approved seven Covid-19 antigen self-test kits for self-test or at-home tests. The approved tests are from Humor Diagnostica (Pty) Ltd, IDT Diagnostics t/a ICT International, Mnandi Pharma Solutions (Pty) Ltd, Rapid Testing Solutions SA (Pty) Ltd, TipTop Trade (Pty) Ltd, Rapid Testing Solutions SA (Pty) Ltd and Pro Med Diagnostics (Pty) Ltd. “This Sahpra authorisation allows organisations that received approval to market and sell the self-test kits to the public. These test kits can be [bought] at any pharmacy,” Sahpra explained in its statement.

Meet Eddy Moyambo, the man overseeing HST's clinic–laboratory interface in support of KZN communities testing for HIV

Health Systems Trust | 23 February 2023

Consider the fact that, according to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Province has the highest prevalence of HIV infections globally. The UNAIDS 95-95-95 mandate to accelerate action to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030 requires that people know their HIV status, start antiretroviral therapy (ART) if they test HIV-positive, and stay on treatment to achieve and

maintain viral suppression. Now consider how much co-ordination, meticulous attention to detail, and quality assurance is required to ensure that the province's HIV Testing Services (HTS) work seamlessly with laboratory services. This entails verifying the number of blood samples collected at local clinics and in community-based settings and test results, so that those found to be HIV-positive can be initiated on the ART regimen best suited for their viral load. Humble and warm-hearted Eddy Moyambo (pictured above) is Health Systems Trust's (HST's) Co-ordinator responsible for optimising the clinic-laboratory interface (CLI) and ensuring that quality assurance support for HTS is provided to the KZN Provincial Department of Health at facility and community level.

Measles outbreak spreads to Western Cape

Times Live | 23 February 2023

The National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) says four laboratory-confirmed measles cases were reported in Cape Town between January 24 and February 17. "Even though all the lab-confirmed measles cases were investigated, no epidemiological link could be established," the NICD said. A week ago the institute said a total of 560 cases had been detected in Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, Gauteng and Free State since the outbreak started.

A woman dies every two minutes due to pregnancy or childbirth: UN agencies

World Health Organization | 23 February 2023

Every two minutes, a woman dies during pregnancy or childbirth, according to the latest estimates released in a report by United Nations agencies today. This report, Trends in maternal mortality, reveals alarming setbacks for women's health over recent years, as maternal deaths either increased or stagnated in nearly all regions of the world. "While pregnancy should be a time of immense hope and a positive experience for all women, it is tragically still a shockingly dangerous experience for millions around the world who lack access to high quality, respectful health care," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO). "These new statistics reveal the urgent need to ensure every woman and girl has access to critical health services before, during and after childbirth, and that they can fully exercise their reproductive rights."

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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!

University of the Western Cape: DSI/NRF SARChI Chair in Health Systems, Complexity and Social Change (1 POST)

The postdoctoral fellow will be attached to the Learning Partnership Project for a Gender Transformative Approach (LP4GT) project, which is multidisciplinary project (led by Prof Asha George and Ms Nikki Schaay, in collaboration with colleagues from NACOSA and Hope Africa). The project aims to create a collaborative community-based learning platform to support dialogue, exchange, capacity strengthening, and other forms of learning on gender transformative approaches in adolescent and young people's sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) in South Africa.

University of the Western Cape: DSI/NRF SARChI Chair in Health Systems Governance (1 POST)

The postdoctoral fellow will advance a programme of a work in one or more of the following areas:

1. Tracking and evaluating primary health care and district health system reforms, in the context of National Health Insurance reforms
2. Learning partnerships in support of district and sub-district health system development
3. Integrating and scaling up quality improvement initiatives
4. Intersectoral governance and whole of society approaches to health and wellbeing

University of the Western Cape: School Health Project (1 POST)

The postdoctoral fellow will work on a project : *“Assessment of Integrated School Health Programmes in eThekweni (Marian Hill), uMzinyathi (Dundee) and Ugu (Port Shepstone) Health Districts in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa”* which aims at assessing the implementation of two models of the new integrated school health programme in KwaZulu-Natal.

Call for abstracts: 53rd Union World Conference on Lung Health

Every year for 53 years, The Union World Conference on Lung Health has come together to present the latest scientific research in all aspects of lung health. But our work does not stop there. Generating new evidence from research projects and presenting the results or publishing it in a journal is not enough. We need implementation. We need research converted into practice. We need to strive for evidence-based health policies and decisions. Submissions of abstracts, symposia, post-graduate courses and workshops will open on 16 February and close by 6 April 2023 at 23:59 Central European Time (CET).

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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.

CDC is proud to share the new Mantoux Tuberculin Skin Test training video!

CDC | 23 February 2023

Check out the new video to learn more about how to administer a TB skin test: <https://bit.ly/3ZcnUuk>

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CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

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.

Resilient Health Systems for Africa: Re-envisioning the Future Now

March 5th - 8th 2023 | Kigali Convention Centre, Rwanda

For seven years Amref Health Africa, together with like-minded partners have been hosting the Africa Health Agenda International Conference (AHAIC), a biennial high impact convening that brings together diverse stakeholders from around the world to discuss challenges and opportunities for improving health in Africa.

World Hearing Day 2023

World Health Organization

World Hearing Day will highlight the importance of integrating ear and hearing care within primary care, as an essential component of universal health coverage

Key messages

- Ear and hearing problems are among the most common problems encountered in the community.
- Over 60% of these can be identified and addressed at the primary level of care.
- Integration of ear and hearing care into primary care services is possible through training and capacity building at this level.
- Such integration will benefit people and help countries move towards the goal of universal health coverage.

On this day, WHO will launch a new training manual - **Primary ear and hearing care training manual**. The manual will be accompanied with trainer's handbook and other community resources.

Webinar: Pharmacy Law AND E-learning: Ethics in Pharmacy Law

7 March 2023 | LexisNexis South Africa

A webinar hosted by LexisNexis and presented by Andy Gray and Dr Mariet Eksteen (PSSA). Our 2 panellists will address the topics of ethics and disciplinary processes, the linkages between pharmacy law and medical law, as well as the Schedule 5 & 6 Risks, based on a selected case study. This set is inclusive of a copy of the *Pharmacy Law in SA* book authored by Andy Gray and 2 others and a single user licence to our eLearning course: Legal Ethics for Pharmacists.

WHO Postpartum Haemorrhage Summit

World Health Organization

7 – 10 March 2023 Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Severe bleeding after childbirth - postpartum haemorrhage (PPH) - is the leading cause of maternal mortality world-wide. Each year, about 14 million women experience PPH resulting in about 70,000 maternal deaths globally. Even when women survive, they often need urgent surgical interventions to control the bleeding and may be left with lifelong reproductive disability.

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JOB OPPORTUNITIES

There are currently no vacancies available at the moment.

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hst@hst.org.za

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