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The metabolic consequences of HIV/TB co-infection

BMC Infectious Diseases | 18 August 2023

Chandré Herbert, Laneke Luies, Du Toit Loots and Aurelia A. Williams

The synergy between the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* during co-infection of a host is well known. While this synergy is known to be driven by immunological deterioration, the metabolic mechanisms that contribute to the associated disease burden experienced during HIV/tuberculosis (TB) co-infection remain poorly understood. Furthermore, while anti-HIV treatments suppress viral replication, these therapeutics give rise to host metabolic disruption and adaptations beyond that induced by only infection or disease.

<https://bmcinfectdis.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12879-023-08505-4>

Long-term symptom severity and clinical biomarkers in post-COVID-19/chronic fatigue syndrome: results from a prospective observational cohort

eClinicalMedicine | 18 August 2023

Franziska Legler, Lil Meyer-Arndt, Lukas Mödl, Claudia Kedor, Helma Freitag, et al.

Post-COVID-19 syndrome (PCS) is worldwide recognised as sequela of coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus type 2 (SARS-CoV-2). There is a worrying number of patients with various persistent symptoms following mild or moderate COVID-19 mainly presenting as fatigue, exertion intolerance, headache, myalgia, neurological and cognitive deficits as well as orthostatic disturbances, which can severely impact the patients' quality of life. Reports estimate a proportion of 2%–10% of all COVID-19 patients to be still impaired one year after infection.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370\(23\)00323-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370(23)00323-1/fulltext)

Early Omicron infection is associated with increased reinfection risk in older adults in long-term care and retirement facilities

eClinicalMedicine | 21 August 2023

Jessica A. Breznik, Ahmad Rahim, Ali Zhang, Jann Ang, Hannah D. Stacey, et al.

Infection with severe acute respiratory virus syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) has lasting and broad effects on cellular and humoral immunity. Hybrid immunity (i.e., immunity resulting from both vaccination and natural infection) generally provides transient protection against reinfection and longer-lasting protection from severe COVID-19. For older adults, their complex healthcare needs, multiple comorbidities, as well as age-associated changes to the immune system, may contribute to heterogeneous and less durable hybrid immunity.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370\(23\)00325-5/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370(23)00325-5/fulltext)

Rural-urban disparities in nutritional status among women in Ethiopia based on HIV serostatus: a cross-sectional study using demographic and health survey data

BMC Infectious Diseases | 21 August 2023

Hirut Abebe, Anette Agardh and Malachi Ochieng Arunda

Ethiopia is one of the sub-Saharan African countries most affected by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) epidemic and also by severe undernutrition, which is particularly prevalent among women. HIV infection, reproductive biology, and their role in society increase the vulnerability of women to malnutrition. Various factors including urbanization could cause differences in the nutritional status of rural and urban residents. In this study, we aimed to assess rural-urban disparities in nutritional status among women of reproductive age based on HIV serostatus in Ethiopia.

<https://bmcinfectdis.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12879-023-08490-8>

Changes in relationships, HIV risk, and feelings towards PrEP: findings from a qualitative explanatory study among participants in the CHARISMA intervention trial

BMC Women's Health | 22 August 2023

Miriam Hartmann, Noah Triplett, Sarah T. Roberts, Michele Lanham, Krishnaveni Reddy, Siyanda Tenza et al.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) and other relationship-based challenges have been demonstrated to reduce women's ability to use pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) effectively for HIV prevention. The Community Health Clinical Model for Agency in Relationships and Safer Microbicide Adherence (CHARISMA) intervention was designed to mitigate these challenges and increase South African women's agency to use PrEP. The CHARISMA randomized controlled trial did not identify statistically significant differences in PrEP adherence or relationship dynamics between the intervention and control arms. As such, the aim of this explanatory qualitative sub-study was to understand women's experiences with the CHARISMA trial and explore reasons for the null results.

<https://bmcwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12905-023-02603-w>

Prevalence and trends of advanced HIV disease among antiretroviral therapy-naïve and antiretroviral therapy-experienced patients in South Africa between 2010-2021: a systematic review and meta-analysis

BMC Infectious Diseases | 22 August 2023

Efforts to quickly expand access to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) care and treatment have led to a significant number of individuals starting antiretroviral therapy (ART). The most notable increase has occurred in South Africa, which is home to 7.5 million of the estimated 37.7 million people living with HIV (PLHIV). Access to ART in South Africa has grown from 103,300 to 2005 to 5,500,000 in 2021.

Despite significant progress in expanding access to ART, the burden of Advanced HIV Disease (AHD) in South Africa remains high. AHD is defined as a CD4 count of fewer than 200 cells/mm³ or a WHO stage 3 or 4 event in adults and adolescents, and all children with HIV younger than five years old are considered to have AHD.

<https://bmcinfectdis.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12879-023-08521-4>

Seasonal vaccination with RTS,S/AS01_E vaccine with or without seasonal malaria chemoprevention in children up to the age of 5 years in Burkina Faso and Mali: a double-blind, randomised, controlled, phase 3 trial

The Lancet Infectious Diseases | 22 August 2023

Alassane Dicko, Jean-Bosco Ouedraogo, Issaka Zongo, Issaka Sagara, Matthew Cairns, et al.

In 2021, there were an estimated 241 million cases of malaria and an estimated 619 000 malaria deaths worldwide, over 90% of which occurred in sub-Saharan Africa. In the Sahel and sub-Saharan regions of sub-Saharan Africa, where malaria remains a major cause of morbidity and mortality in young children, malaria transmission is highly seasonal. Seasonal malaria chemoprevention (SMC), which comprises monthly administration of sulphadoxine–pyrimethamine plus amodiaquine given to young children four or five times during the peak malaria transmission season, was recommended by WHO for malaria control in areas of the Sahel and sub-Saharan with highly seasonal transmission in 2012.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099\(23\)00368-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(23)00368-7/fulltext)

Healthcare Leadership Development Strategies in Collaboration: A Rapid Review

Dove Press | 23 August 2023

Bornman J and Louw B

Changes in healthcare worldwide have led to an emphasis on leadership development in healthcare professions, which include medical, dental, public health, nursing, and allied health providers (eg, audiology, nutrition, occupational therapy, physical therapy, pharmacy, respiratory therapy, radiography, speech-language therapy) to meet current healthcare needs. These changes have been brought about by factors, such as advances in information technology, automation, human interconnectivity, cross-sector mergers, advances in precision medicine, community involvement, providing services during periods of financial instability, and more recently the global COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.dovepress.com/leadership-development-strategies-in-interprofessional-healthcare-coll-peer-reviewed-fulltext-article-JHL>

Predictors of Viral Suppression Among People Living with HIV in Rural Oregon

Aids and Behavior | 23 August 2023

Timothy W. Menza, Ann Jensen & Lindsay K. Hixson

With recent outbreaks of HIV in rural areas of the United States, it has become increasingly important to understand the factors affecting health outcomes of people with HIV living in rural areas. We assessed predictors of durable HIV viral suppression among rural participants using a pooled 7-year dataset from the Medical Monitoring Project (MMP), a cross-sectional, representative sample of individuals receiving HIV medical care in Oregon. Only 77.3% of rural participants achieved durable

HIV viral suppression, while 22.7% had at least one detectable HIV viral load measurement within the past 12 months.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10461-023-04145-6>

Socioeconomic inequalities in modern contraceptive use among women in Benin: a decomposition analysis

BMC Women's Health | 11 August 2023

Eugene Budu, Louis Kobina Dadzie, Tarif Salihu, Bright Opoku Ahinkorah, Edward Kwabena Ameyaw, et al.

Contraceptive use is crucial to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3. Evidence of socioeconomic inequality in the use of modern contraceptives is essential to address the developing inequality in its utilisation given the low prevalence of contraceptive use among women in Benin. This study examined the socioeconomic inequalities in modern contraceptive use among women in Benin.

<https://bmcwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12905-023-02601-y>

Research Progress on Molecular Subtyping and Modern Treatment of Triple-Negative Breast Cancer

Dove Press | 24 August 2023

Ling Tong, Xiangling, Shan Wang, Ling Chen, Yibo.

Breast cancer has become the most common malignant tumor worldwide. Triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC) is a type of breast cancer that is negative for estrogen receptor (ER), progesterone receptor (PR), and human epidermal growth factor receptor 2 (HER2). Compared with other molecular subtypes of breast cancer, TNBC is the most aggressive and highly heterogeneous. TNBC is insensitive to endocrine and anti-HER2 therapy, and chemotherapy is currently the main systemic treatment. With the continuous development of detection techniques and deepening research on TNBC molecular subtypes, drugs targeting immune checkpoints and different targets have emerged, such as atezolizumab, pembrolizumab, poly (ADP-ribose) polymerase (PARP) inhibitors, trophoblast cell-surface antigen 2 (TROP-2), and antibody-drug conjugates.

<https://www.dovepress.com/research-progress-on-molecular-subtyping-and-modern-treatment-of-tripl-peer-reviewed-fulltext-article-BCTT>

Effects of Metformin on COVID-19 Patients with Type 2 Diabetes: A Retrospective Study

Dove Press | 24 August 2023

Ziyu, Yanxiang, Enmin, Zixiang, Yike Li,

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was brought on by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-COV-2) infection, which has never before spread on such a massive worldwide scale. Type 2 diabetes (T2D) has been proven to be one of the most significant and frequent risk factors for COVID-19 mortality in numerous observational studies around the world, which significantly raises the risk of death and adverse complications in people with COVID-19. Besides, diabetes increases the risk of acute respiratory distress syndrome and artificial ventilation in intensive care units and almost double the mortality rate. Pharmacological treatment of T2D now includes several new medications

that compete with previous oral antidiabetic drugs. Nevertheless, metformin continues to be the first-line anti-diabetic medication for the treatment of hyperglycemia in patients with T2D.

<https://www.dovepress.com/effects-of-metformin-on-covid-19-patients-with-type-2-diabetes-a-retro-peer-reviewed-fulltext-article-DMSO>

RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

Vaccination campaign protects tens of thousands of schoolgirls from HPV

WHO Eswatini | 16 August 2023

When 13-year-old Eswatini primary school pupil Tenele Sibandze* (not her real name) overcame her fear of being vaccinated against human papillomavirus (HPV), she became one of tens of thousands of young girls protected against cervical cancer, the country's leading cancer among women aged 15 to 49. During the country's first-ever HPV vaccination campaign launched in June 2023 by Her Royal Highness Inkhosikati laMatsebula, a total of 46 674 schoolgirls were reached by 84 teams of nurses that visited schools across the country. In Eswatini, incidence of HPV is fuelled by high HIV rates, driving up cervical cancer case numbers and deaths. The HPV vaccine can prevent most cases of cervical cancer if it is administered before girls or women are exposed to the virus.

<https://www.afro.who.int/countries/eswatini/news/vaccination-campaign-protects-tens-thousands-schoolgirls-hpv>

Injectable PrEP requires new testing procedures, IAS conference hears

Aidsmap | 17 August 2023

Two weeks ago aidsmap reported that the World Health Organization was recommending a major change towards more frequent use of RNA (i.e. viral load) testing for people with HIV in lower-income settings. This change is necessary, because relying on symptoms or CD4 counts alone to detect treatment failure results in people spending too much time on failing regimens and developing drug resistance. And it is now possible, because RNA test technology is finally becoming cheap enough to use in the field. Other speakers at the conference also urged the use of RNA test technology in PrEP users and especially those on injectable PrEP.

<https://www.aidsmap.com/news/aug-2023/injectable-prep-requires-new-testing-procedures-ias-conference-hears-0>

AIDSVu Updates PrEP Use Data, Highlighting Disparities in HIV Prevention

Poz | 17 August 2023

In 2021, for every new HIV diagnosis among Black people in the South, there were four Black people taking PrEP to prevent HIV. In contrast, for every new HIV diagnosis among white people in the South, there were 27 white PrEP users. This is just one data point highlighted on AIDSVu.org that illustrates the disparities in HIV prevention. AIDSVu, which organizes HIV data into graphs and interactive maps, recently updated its data on the use of PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) according to race and ethnicity at the state level. PrEP refers to the daily pills and long-acting injectables that prevent a person from contracting HIV.

<https://www.poz.com/article/aidsvu-updates-prep-use-data-highlighting-disparities-hiv-prevention>

Breathing in a deadly dust: How a drop of blood can help

Bhekisisa | 18 August 2023

Bijali Rahaman could not see 6 feet [1.5 metres] ahead of him inside the mineral factory in West Bengal, India. A cloud of dust blurred his vision, and the thin, coarse cotton fabric tied around his mouth and nose made it difficult to breathe as he loaded large stones onto a moving belt that fed into a machine that crushes, heats, and grades the stones, which are primarily quartz, producing crystalline silicon dioxide, or silica. The makeshift mask made little difference, however. The damage to his health from inhaling the fine dust created by the intense industrial process was already done.

<https://bhekisisa.org/features/2023-08-18-breathing-in-a-deadly-dust-how-a-drop-of-blood-can-help/>

Striving for a Healthier Future: Combating HIV and Hepatitis C Coinfection

POZ | 18 August 2023

Hepatitis C is a significant public health concern affecting an estimated 71 million people worldwide. In the U.S. alone, it is estimated that approximately 2.4 million individuals are living with chronic hepatitis C. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 21% of people with HIV in the U.S. also have hepatitis C. Among injection drug users with HIV, the coinfection rate is much higher—estimated to be between 62% and 80%. HIV and hepatitis C coinfection can lead to accelerated liver disease progression, increased risk of liver-related complications, and higher mortality rates if left untreated.

<https://www.poz.com/article/striving-healthier-future-combating-hiv-hepatitis-c-coinfection>

Southern HIV/AIDS Awareness Day 2023

Poz | 18 August 2023

Sunday, August 20, marks Southern HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (#SHAAD) 2023. Founded by the Southern AIDS Coalition in 2019, SHAAD “is a powerful reminder of the need for an unwavering commitment to southern communities,” write the organizers on SouthernSolution.org, urging everyone to raise awareness and advocate for “new and necessary resources and solutions to turn the tide of HIV/AIDS in the South.” For several years, the South has been the epicenter of our nation’s HIV epidemic, particularly for people of color. In 2021, the South comprised 38% of the U.S. population in 2021 but 52% of new HIV diagnoses, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and presented in charts, graphs and maps by AIDSVu.org.

<https://www.poz.com/article/southern-hivaids-awareness-day-2023>

COURT ORDERS NATIONAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO DISCLOSE DETAILS OF COVID-19 VACCINE CONTRACTS

Health-e News | 18 August 2023

The National Department of Health has less than 10 days to hand over all the copies of the Covid-19 vaccine procurement contracts to the Health Justice Initiative (HJI). This follows a court judgement handed down by the North Gauteng High Court in Pretoria on Thursday. This is after HJI, a health equity advocacy organisation, won its legal battle against the health department. It had brought

forward an application to compel the Department of Health to disclose all the Covid-19 procurement contracts which they have with both manufactures and suppliers.

<https://health-e.org.za/2023/08/18/court-orders-national-health-department-to-disclose-details-of-covid-19-vaccine-contracts/>

Why a highly mutated coronavirus variant has scientists on alert

Nature | 21 August 2023

Researchers are racing to determine whether a highly mutated coronavirus variant that has popped up in three continents will be a global concern — or much ado about nothing. Several laboratories detected the variant last week, and it has been named BA.2.86. Although the lineage seems to be exceedingly rare, it is very different from other circulating variants and carries numerous changes to its spike protein, a key focus of the body's immune attack on the SARS-CoV-2 virus. To many scientists, the emergence of BA.2.86 is reminiscent of the early days of the Omicron variant in late 2021, when scientists in southern Africa noticed a weird-looking lineage that quickly went global. "There's a little bit of déjà vu all over again," says Adam Luring, a virologist and infectious-disease physician at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, whose lab identified one person infected with BA.2.86.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-02656-9>

New Alzheimer's Drug Raises Hopes — Along With Questions

POZ | 21 August 2023

The FDA has approved Leqembi, the first disease-modifying treatment for early-stage Alzheimer's and a precursor condition, mild cognitive impairment. Medicare has said it will pay for the therapy. Medical centers across the country are scrambling to finalize policies and procedures for providing the medication to patients, possibly by summer's end or early autumn. It's a fraught moment, with hope running high for families and other promising therapies such as donanemab on the horizon. Still, medical providers are cautious. "This is an important first step in developing treatments for complex neurodegenerative diseases, but it's just a first step," said Ronald Petersen, director of the Mayo Clinic's Alzheimer's Disease Research Center in Rochester, Minnesota.

<https://www.poz.com/article/new-alzheimers-drug-raises-hopes-along-questions>

'He collapsed and died': Strokes, a silent killer in SA

News24 | 21 August 2023

"He collapsed and died": This line has become all too familiar amid concern over the number of strokes in South Africa, increasingly in younger people. The owner of the famous Eyadini Lounge in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, Jabulani "Mjay" Zama, 47, was buried this past weekend after he suffered a stroke. Other celebrities who died after strokes include Gqom artist Mandla "Mampintsha" Maphumulo, 40, singer Sibongile Khumalo, 63, Dorothy Masuku, 83, and 54-year-old Skeem Saam actor Charles Maja.

<https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/hold/he-collapsed-and-died-strokes-a-silent-killer-in-sa-20230821>

Science's carbon footprint: how health research can cut emissions

Nature | 21 August 2023

Implementing a series of sustainable practices in health research could help the field to reduce its hefty carbon footprint, according to a report commissioned by health-research funder Wellcome. The climate crisis is an ever-growing threat to human health, yet health research itself contributes to the crisis through its energy consumption and waste production. A 2011 study¹ found that a single clinical trial can produce around 180 tonnes of carbon dioxide in a year — the equivalent of what 35 UK residents produce annually. Cold storage in laboratories is one of the largest consumers of energy in the field; many life-sciences studies require materials to be kept in refrigerators and freezers for long time periods.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-02642-1>

Supporting healthy childbirth in Africa

Share America | 21 August 2023

An emergency transportation service that has reduced deaths during childbirth is expanding operations in Africa. The World Health Organization estimates that 830 women die every day in developing countries of preventable causes during pregnancy and childbirth. Many deaths are in rural areas without adequate health care. The service, called m-mama, connects pregnant women facing delivery complications with free rides to medical facilities. M-mama uses a network of local taxis that serve as ambulances and an app that can function with or without an internet connection.

<https://share.america.gov/supporting-healthy-childbirth-in-africa/>

The rubber ring revolutionising the war on HIV

The Independent | 21 August 2023

A number of African nations are boldly embracing a game-changing approach to the fight against new HIV transmissions — a vaginal ring. The innovative ring, developed by International Partnerships for Microbicides, is made from a blend of rubber and silicone. By placing the power of prevention directly in the hands of women, the rings could revolutionise the battle against new HIV infections, particularly when used together with other methods of prevention. “Most of the current HIV prevention methods are male controlled compelling women into negotiating for their use and application,” said Patricia Jeckoniah, a Kenya-based technical advisor on HIV prevention policy.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/the-rubber-ring-revolutionising-the-war-on-hiv/>

PATIENTS, STAFF COMPLAIN ABOUT WATER CRISIS IN KZN HOSPITALS

Health-e News | 21 August 2023

The quality and availability of water have been a major issue at two hospitals in Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN). At Montebello Hospital in Ndwedwe families have to bring water when visiting sick relatives because the tap water at the hospital is “muddy and discoloured”. Last week, a patient who asked not be named, told Health-e News that, when she was admitted in 2020 the hospital didn’t have running water at all. She and other patients had to use buckets to collect water from a Jojo tank on the hospital premises.

<https://health-e.org.za/2023/08/21/patients-staff-complain-about-water-crisis-in-kzn-hospitals/>

UPDATE: U.S. Task Force Gives an A Grade to Long-Acting PrEP to Prevent HIV

Poz | 22 August 2023

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) issued its final statement for PrEP to prevent HIV, giving it the highest recommendation, an A grade. Of note, the updated recommendation includes long-acting injectable PrEP, or pre-exposure prophylaxis. The USPSTF statement reads in part: Based on its review of the evidence, the Task Force recommends that health care professionals prescribe PrEP to people at increased risk for HIV to help prevent HIV. This is an A grade.... PrEP is a safe, highly effective way to help prevent HIV in people who do not have HIV but are at increased risk of getting it. There are now three FDA-approved PrEP medications in the United States—two are pills, and one is a shot....

<https://www.poz.com/article/longacting-injectable-prep-hiv-prevention-scores-grade-uspstf-cabotegravir-apretude>

Heart Attack Patients Who Take Daily Aspirin Have Lower Risk of New Attacks, Stroke

Healthline | 22 August 2023

According to new research, heart attack patients would be wise to take a daily aspirin tablet. In a study being presented at the ESC Congress 2023, which is being held in Amsterdam on August 25-28, the researchers found that those who didn't consistently take the medication had a greater risk of having a subsequent heart attack, stroke, or death when compared with those who took it on a regular basis. Additionally, a study appearing in the August 22 issue of JAMA reports that despite what we know about the benefits of aspirin, less than half of heart attack and stroke patients worldwide are taking it.

<https://www.healthline.com/health-news/heart-attack-patients-who-take-daily-aspirin-have-lower-risk-of-new-attacks-stroke>

Lancet backs HPV vaccination for boys

Nation | 22 August 2023

This has been informed by an analysis of the global prevalence of HPV infection in males aged 15 years and older. Publishing their findings in *The Lancet Global Health*, the researchers found that one in three men worldwide is infected with at least one type of HPV. Of these, one in five men have one or more high-risk or potentially carcinogenic HPV types. "Our results show that HPV prevalence is high in men over 15 years of age and support that sexually active men, regardless of age, are an important reservoir of HPV genital infection," the Lancet study said.

<https://nation.africa/kenya/health/lancet-backs-hpv-vaccination-boys-4342412>

New control working group to propel African voices in the global HIV response

Daily Maverick | 22 August 2023

It is estimated that more than 65% of the global HIV burden is in sub-Saharan Africa. Now, in an attempt to propel African voices and perspectives in the next phase of the HIV response in Africa, a group of Africans has established an African-led HIV control working group. These experts from the continent aim to develop consensus perspectives on the long-term sustained control of HIV and prioritise the systems and capabilities to achieve it. Doctors Yogan Pillay and Izukanji Sikazwe explain the thinking behind the new working group and set out their objectives.

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-08-22-african-hiv-control-working-group-its-aims-in-global-hiv-response/>

Dangerous fungus is becoming more prevalent. Scientists believe climate change could be to blame

CBS News | 22 August 2023

In 2016, hospitals in New York state identified a rare and dangerous fungal infection never before found in the United States. Research laboratories quickly mobilized to review historical specimens and found the fungus had been present in the country since at least 2013. In the years since, New York City has emerged as ground zero for *Candida auris* infections. And until 2021, the state recorded the most confirmed cases in the country year after year, even as the illness has spread to other places, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data analyzed by The Associated Press.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/sacramento/news/clarification-climate-change-infectious-diseases-fungus-story-3/>

OPINION: A new African HIV Control Working Group to propel African voices in the global HIV response

Spotlight | 22 August 2023

The response to the HIV epidemic is more than 40 years old. The African continent has been the most affected with millions of people over the years having battled HIV-associated opportunistic infections and subsequent deaths, leaving millions of orphans and decimated communities and economies. By 1996, the scientific evidence was clear – combination highly active antiretroviral therapy (ART) prolonged and improved the quality of life of people living with HIV (PLWH).

<https://www.spotlightnsp.co.za/2023/08/22/opinion-a-new-african-hiv-control-working-group-to-propel-african-voices-on-hiv-epidemic-control-on-the-continent/>

Q&A: ChatGPT shows potential to support clinical decision-making

Healio | 22 August 2023

ChatGPT demonstrated “impressive accuracy” when used during clinical decision-making, although it was less effective when making management decisions and differential diagnoses, according to researchers. “Our paper comprehensively assesses decision support via ChatGPT from the very beginning of working with a patient through the entire care scenario, from differential diagnosis all the way through testing, diagnosis and management,” Marc D. Succi, MD, senior author and associate chair of innovation and commercialization at Mass General Brigham Radiology, said in a press release.

<https://www.healio.com/news/primary-care/20230822/qa-chatgpt-shows-potential-to-support-clinical-decisionmaking>

Novavax says updated COVID-19 vaccine induces antibody response to new variants

Healio | 22 August 2023

Novavax on Tuesday said its updated COVID-19 vaccine candidate induced neutralizing antibodies against emerging SARS-CoV-2 subvariants in small animal and non-human primate studies. It was the third company to publicize preliminary findings for the updated monovalent COVID-19 vaccines that

are expected to be available for patients this fall. None of the three companies have released data on their vaccines yet.

<https://www.healio.com/news/infectious-disease/20230822/novavax-says-updated-covid19-vaccine-induces-antibody-response-to-new-variants>

Single question on maternal HIV status most effective for identifying children with undiagnosed HIV

Aidsmap | 22 August 2023

Asking a single question about maternal HIV status proved more effective in identifying older children living with HIV than more complex screening tools asking five or ten questions, a large study carried out in primary healthcare facilities in South Africa has found. The major opportunity for diagnosing HIV acquired by vertical transmission in children comes soon after birth during the period of regular engagement with antenatal services. If HIV is not diagnosed in infancy and the child survives beyond early childhood, they may go for years without HIV testing unless they attend a healthcare facility where testing is offered.

<https://www.aidsmap.com/news/aug-2023/single-question-maternal-hiv-status-most-effective-identifying-children-undiagnosed>

Thai key population-led organisations give hope for sustainable HIV financing

Aidsmap | 23 August 2023

A study presented at the 12th International AIDS Society Conference on HIV Science (IAS 2023) by Satayu Sittikarn of the Caremat Foundation in Thailand shows how eleven key population-led organisations sustained themselves despite their international funding being slashed from 84% of their budget in 2016 to 50% in 2022. They adopted dual strategies to sustain themselves and continue delivering HIV services. Firstly, they tapped more into domestic resources, and secondly, they established and successfully ran social enterprises. It is important to shine a spotlight on the scale of contribution which key population-led organisations have made in Thai HIV response. Key populations are groups of people who are disproportionately affected by HIV. In Thailand, these are men who have sex with men, people who use drugs, transgender women, and sex workers. About half of new HIV infections in Thailand are among key populations.

<https://www.aidsmap.com/news/aug-2023/thai-key-population-led-organisations-give-hope-sustainable-hiv-financing>

Why not enough people with HIV are on treatment — and how a new court ruling could help

Bhekisisa | 23 August 2023

A new ruling by the North Gauteng High Court says specially trained pharmacists can now prescribe anti-HIV drugs, including antiretrovirals (ARVs) or a daily HIV prevention pill, without patients having to see a doctor. South Africa is struggling to keep people with HIV on treatment, which means the country is lagging behind on a United Nations (UN) goal to get 95% of people diagnosed with HIV on treatment to help them have an infection level so low that they can't transmit the virus to someone

else. Better access to ARVs and HIV prevention drugs may close the gap — and help South Africa reach the UN goals set out for 2025.

<https://bhekisisa.org/health-news-south-africa/2023-08-23-why-not-enough-people-with-hiv-are-on-treatment-and-how-a-new-court-ruling-could-help/>

Human papilloma virus and cancer

WHO | 23 August 2023

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a common sexually transmitted infection. Almost all sexually active people will be infected at some point in their lives, usually without symptoms. HPV can affect the skin, genital area and throat. Condoms help prevent HPV but do not offer total protection because they do not cover all the genital skin. HPV usually goes away on its own without treatment. Some HPV infections cause genital warts. Others can cause abnormal cells to develop, which go on to become cancer.

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/human-papilloma-virus-and-cancer>

The key to depression, obesity, alcoholism – and more? Why the vagus nerve is so exciting to scientists

The Guardian | 23 August 2023

I've made a cup of coffee, written my to-do list and now I'm wiring up my ear to a device that will send an electrical message to my brainstem. If the testimonials are to be believed, incorporating this stimulating habit into my daily routine could help to reduce stress and anxiety, curb inflammation and digestive issues, and perhaps improve my sleep and concentration by tapping into the "electrical superhighway" that is the vagus nerve. From plunging your face into icy water, to piercing the small flap of cartilage in front of your ear, the internet is awash with tips for hacking this system that carries signals between the brain and chest and abdominal organs.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/aug/23/the-key-to-depression-obesity-alcoholism-and-more-why-the-vagus-nerve-is-so-exciting-to-scientists>

Top 5 stories on HIV in Africa from IAS 2023

Aidsmap | 23 August 2023

The 12th International AIDS Society Conference on HIV Science (IAS 2023) took place in Brisbane in August. Below is a round-up of news stories from the conference that are relevant to HIV treatment and prevention programmes in sub-Saharan Africa. Injectable HIV treatment is unlikely to be arriving soon in the global south, with the combination of injectable cabotegravir and rilpivirine still not approved in any lower-middle or low-income countries. There is uncertainty about whether rilpivirine will be available as a generic in the future, and without this generic option, the regimen will remain unaffordable for most. But there are also other practical barriers that come with injectable treatment in resource-limited settings, such as the need for more frequent clinic visits, resistance testing, and viral load testing. At a structural level, there is also the need for high-prevalence countries to focus on epidemic control above individualised care.

<https://www.aidsmap.com/news/aug-2023/top-5-stories-hiv-africa-ias-2023>

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.

<https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Subscription.aspx>

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!

<https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Subscription.aspx>

The Public Health Association of South Africa (PHASA) – calling all public health champions!

PHASA is a voluntary organisation of individuals passionate about population health improvements and the reduction of health inequities, and whose work focuses on the prevention of disease, the promotion of health, and the improved functioning of the country's health care system. Are you passionate about improving the health and wellbeing of communities? Do you want to expand your professional network and stay current in the field of public health? Do you want to be part of the movement to improve Public Health? Then join the Public Health Association of South Africa today to make a difference and enhance your career!

As a member, you will:

- Gain access to cutting-edge research, resources, and best practices
- Connect with public health professionals from around the country
- Participate in educational events and conferences
- Contribute to shaping the future of public health
- Have access to mentors in the field
- Be at the forefront of advocacy initiatives.

To become a member, simply visit our [website](#) and complete the membership application. Don't miss this opportunity to advance your career and improve public health.

<https://phasa.org.za/index.php/get-involved/membership>

THE OLIVER TAMBO FELLOWSHIP (OTFP) PROGRAMME: A POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN HEALTH LEADERSHIP

An Opportunity to Grow

- To HR components - This value-for-money health leadership programme directly relates to the manager's workplace within the health system. Acquired skills and competencies have been well-researched. Nominating people from the same team offers the possibility of greater impact, including across successive cohorts.

- To Line managers - Students develop capabilities to lead and to bring improvements in their workplaces. Nominate teams.
- To Health Care Workers and Health System Influencers - Invest in yourself to show up as a leader who lead with confidence.

Why the OTFP?

- Affiliated to the internationally renowned University of Cape Town.
- Proudly bears the name of an exceptional African Leader.
- Nearly 30 years' experience of growing health leaders.
- Offers a unique perspective on leadership, rooted in systems thinking & policy analysis, tailored to the complex challenges of our health system.

What Does the Programme Entail?

- Four sequenced and interrelated 6-day learning blocks, covering:
 - The complex nature of health systems and their challenges.
 - Leading everyday health system strengthening.
 - Engaging health system hard- and software resources for implementing improvement.
 - Sustaining workplace-based interventions for system improvement.
 - Mentorship during and after the course.
 - Direct engagement with senior health leaders, other experts with national and international insights, as well as peer leaders.

What Will You Learn?

- Personal, relational, and technical competencies to lead across the system complexities.
- How to show up as a leader for your team and the wider system.

Who Should Attend?

- Mid- and senior level leaders (managers and clinicians) in the public health sector.
- Mid- and senior level leaders in NGOs and the private sector with public value goals.
- Teams of leaders from the same setting.

Fees and Registration

- The fees for 2024/25 intake is approximately R65 505, thus an average cost of R32 500 per year.
- Students arrange own travel and accommodation.
- Registration open until 9 December 2023.
- The course commences in February 2024.
- How to register? Apply online by clicking on [Application Link](#)

Contact

- Contact Fahiema.titus@uct.ac.za or the Program Convener at Maylene.shungking@uct.ac.za or visit us at <https://health.uct.ac.za/school-public-health>

The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) is committed to meeting the objectives of Employment Equity to improve representativity within the Institution. Preference will be given to applicants from the designated groups in accordance with Employment Equity.

Operation Smile South Africa

Get behind Dr Shetil,

She's just one of hundreds of volunteer doctors, nurses, speech therapists, psychologists and dentists who give generously of their time, skill, and loving care to help Operation Smile.

Calm and soft-spoken, Dr Shetil is the embodiment of grace under fire. As a paediatrician, she's driven to help children ... all children. And those born with a cleft lip and/or cleft palate have a special place in her heart.

"It can be incredibly challenging and difficult for both the child and the parents," says Shetil. "There can be feeding and speech difficulties. And it can be visually distressing. As part of the Operation Smile team, we do our best to help these children as much as we can."

Shetil vividly remembers the first time she joined the Operation Smile Team earlier this year, performing life-changing surgery to correct children's cleft conditions.

"I was awed by the consideration, dedication and care that each child and family received," she says. "It was a humbling experience, and I hope to be part of many more experiences like that."

But surgical programmes are expensive. There are many costs – medical, transport, logistics. And while our volunteer medical professionals give freely of their time and skills, donations from others who care ... people like you ... are also vitally important.

Please be there in spirit, with Dr Shetil and the rest of the Operation Smile Team, during our next surgical programme. Join in by donating now, and be an integral part of our life-changing team.

Like Shetil, you have the power to help give a child a beautiful new smile. But it's only possible when we all join together – and everyone plays their part.

[Watch a recent interview with Dr Shetil](#) to find out more about her experiences as an Operation Smile volunteer.

Donate now: <https://operationsmile.org.za/donate/>

PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

The 2022 South African Health Review is available!

We are pleased to release the 25th edition of the South African Health Review (SAHR). Entitled 'health systems strengthening after COVID-19', the journal provides valuable insights and recommendations on how to improve the response to the pandemic and build more resilient health systems.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the world, and the health sector has been at the forefront of the response. Curated as a supplement to the 2021 edition, which addressed the response of government and the broader health sector to COVID-19, the 2022 South African Health

Review provides a platform for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to share their experiences and insights on how they navigated this crisis and build more robust health systems for the future. The journal encompasses a diverse array of subjects, including reflections on the work of the Ministerial Advisory Committee during COVID-19 and the knowledge gained and lessons learned from these processes. Additionally, it explores the ramifications of COVID-19 on maternal, women, and child health and highlights the gendered implications of the pandemic, revealing that women experienced more pronounced effects of stress, fear, and depression during the lockdown period compared to men.

Commenting on its release, CEO and co-editor of the Review Dr Themba Moeti said that “This edition of the South African Health Review offers promising examples of COVID-19 response, mitigation and recovery strategies for us to use the emerging lessons to enhance our health system resilience and better prepare for future pandemics.”

Strong messages emerging from this edition emphasise that in order to effectively promote national vaccination programmes, it is imperative to equip healthcare workers (HCWs) with comprehensive, relevant, and current information. This will enable them to enhance patient communication and increase vaccine acceptance. Subsequent chapters delineate an inventive collaboration between the public and private sectors aimed at mitigating the accumulated volume of elective surgical procedures at Groote Schuur Hospital and reflect on the importance of consulting, involving and deploying community based organisations such as clinic committees in public health emergencies from the outset.

The crucial importance of inter-country collaboration is emphasised in mitigating disease transmission and impact, with authors advocating for a more coordinated approach to managing cross-border health measures.

Additionally, the Review highlights the intersection between climate change and health systems and reinforces the imperative to prioritise health within the framework of a 'just transition' and to enhance the capabilities of healthcare systems to be low-carbon and climate-resilient as crucial focal points for improving pandemic preparedness.

For more information on the journal and to access the latest edition, visit <https://www.hst.org.za/publications/Pages/SAHR2022.aspx>

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

The Public Health Association of South Africa (PHASA) hosts an annual conference, with the aim of engaging public health practitioners from around the country, region and world to share their experiences and research, discuss topical public health issues, and mentor public health students and young researchers.

This year it will be from 10 – 13 September in Qheberha, Eastern Cape. The theme is, **Transforming Research Translation, Reimagining Public Health Evidence, Policies and Practice.**

The 2023 Public Health Association of South Africa’s conference will provide an opportune setting for engaging with the most recent public health research and evidence, for rethinking current models of research translation, for identifying barriers and opportunities for change, and for exploring new strategies for knowledge exchange and dissemination.

Join fellow public health experts, academics, researchers, students, non-governmental organisations, and civil society members at this year's annual PHASA Conference; as we transform the ways we think about and approach priority areas of public health research, policy, and practice, to ultimately improve health outcomes for all.

<https://phasa.samrc.ac.za/about.html>

World Congress of Epidemiology – WCE 2024 – 24 to 27 September 2024

WCE is well-known for bringing epidemiologists and public health experts working in different sectors together in an atmosphere designed to promote dialogue, the interchange of ideas, and state-of-the-art scientific research. The theme of WCE2024 is **“Epidemiology and complexity: challenges and responses”** which will engage the full depth and breadth of methods and practice in contemporary epidemiology. The meeting will feature top-calibre invited speakers presenting plenary lectures, workshops and interactive sessions. The abstract-driven programme will include oral and poster presentations including theory and application from every sub-discipline of epidemiology. With more than 1000 delegates expected, WCE2024 promises to be a unique opportunity to share experiences and expertise – the opportunities to learn, grow and network within the field will be phenomenal. This is the first time the congress will be hosted on the African continent and the Cape Town International Convention Centre provides a world-class venue for this meeting.

<https://www.wce2024.org/>

SA Congress of Oncology 2023 Conference

When: 1 – 3 September 2024

Where: Cape Town CTICC

We would like to invite you to the second South African Congress of Oncology (SACO) to be held from 1 – 3 September 2023 in Cape Town. There will also be a pre-congress workshop on 31 August 2023 with a focus on radiotherapy contouring for the oncologists and RTTs as well as a workshop for allied health. SACO is a collaboration of multiple Societies including the Clinical and Radiation Oncologists, Paediatric Oncologists, Gynaecologic Oncologists, Medical Physicists, Radiotherapists, Pharmacists, Oncology Nurses and Oncology Social Workers. Furthermore, for the first time in 2023, the Radiological Society of South Africa (RSSA) will also participate in SACO, and we look forward to welcoming them to our congress and collaborating in combined sessions to the benefit of all our societies. Together, our Societies are striving to build on our knowledge, experience and expertise to ultimately improve the quality of cancer care for our patients.

Register: <https://saco2023.co.za/register/>

Society for Endocrinology, Metabolism and Diabetes of South Africa (SEMDSA) 56th Congress

When: 7 – 10 September 2023

Where: Johannesburg

On behalf of the organising committee for SEMDSA (Society for Endocrinology Metabolism and Diabetes of South Africa) and LASSA (Lipid and Atherosclerosis Society of South Africa), we would like to invite you to attend the 56th SEMDSA Congress taking place from 7 to 10 September 2023.

Register: <https://congress.semdsa.org.za/registration.html>

South African Paediatric Association (SAPA)

When: 8 – 10 September 2023

Where: The Capital on the Park, Sandton

For more information, go to: <https://paediatrics.org.za/>

Hospital Association of South Africa (HASA)

When: 18 – 19 September 2023

Where: Century City Conference Centre, Cape Town

Every year HASA hosts a world-class conference featuring a number of international and South African experts in healthcare. An exhibition runs simultaneously to showcase advances in healthcare. The 2023 conference takes place at the Century City Conference Centre, designed as the hub and pivotal point of the Century City precinct.

Register: <https://www.registrationsonline.co.za/hasa/register>

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Differentiated Model Of Care (DMOC) Co-Ordinator UThukela District

Closing date: 28 August 2023, @ 16:30

[https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/-Differentiated-Model-Of-Care-\(DMOC\)-Co-Ordinator--%E2%88%92-Uthukela-District.aspx](https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/-Differentiated-Model-Of-Care-(DMOC)-Co-Ordinator--%E2%88%92-Uthukela-District.aspx)