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ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

Improving TB infection control in a regional hospital in the Eastern Cape, South Africa

BMJ Open Quality | Published: 1 March 2019.

Ilsa Louisa Haeusler, Felicity Knights, Vishaal George, Andy Parrish

This quality improvement (QI) work was carried out in Cecilia Makiwane Hospital (CMH), a regional public hospital in the Eastern Cape, South Africa (SA). SA has among the highest incidence of tuberculosis (TB) in the world and this is a leading cause of death in SA. Nosocomial infection is an important source of TB transmission. Adherence to TB infection prevention control (IPC) measures in the medical inpatient

department was suboptimal at CMH. The overall aim of this QI project was to make sustainable improvements in TB IPC.

Rural South African Community Perceptions of Antibiotic Access and Use: Qualitative Evidence from a Health and Demographic Surveillance System Site

The American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene | Published: 15 April 2019.

Jocelyn Anstey Watkins, Fezile Wagner, Francesc Xavier Gómez-Olivé, Heiman Wertheim, Osman Sankoh and John Kinsman

Knowledge and practices of rural South African populations with regard to antibiotic access and use (ABACUS) remain understudied. By using the case of four villages in the north east of the country, our aim was to investigate popular notions and social practices related to antibiotic use to inform patient-level social interventions for appropriate antibiotic use. To achieve this, we investigated where community members (village residents) were accessing and sourcing medication, and what they understood antibiotics and antibiotic resistance (ABR) to be. Embedded within the multicountry ABACUS project, this qualitative study uses interviews and focus group discussions.

Population attributable fractions for risk factors for dementia in low-income and middle-income countries: an analysis using cross-sectional survey data

The Lancet | Published: May 2019.

Naaheed Mukadam, Andrew Sommerlad, Jonathan Huntley, Gill Livingston

Nine potentially modifiable risk factors (less childhood education, midlife hearing loss, hypertension, and obesity, and later-life smoking, depression, physical inactivity, social isolation, and diabetes) account for 35% of worldwide dementia, but most data to calculate these risk factors come from high-income countries only. We aimed to calculate population attributable fractions (PAFs) for dementia in selected low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs) to identify potential dementia prevention targets in these countries.

'Management of a spoiled identity': systematic review of interventions to address self-stigma among people living with and affected by HIV

BMJ Global Health | 19 March 2019.

Marija Pantelic, Janina I Steinert, Jay Park, Shaun Mellors, Fungai Murau

Self-stigma, also known as internalised stigma, is a global public health threat because it keeps people from accessing HIV and other health services. By hampering HIV testing, treatment and prevention, self-stigma can compromise the sustainability of health interventions and have serious epidemiological consequences. This review synthesised existing evidence of interventions aiming to reduce self-stigma experienced by people living with HIV and key populations affected by HIV in low-income and middle-income countries.

Implementing prevention policies for mother-to-child transmission of HIV in rural Malawi, South Africa and United Republic of Tanzania, 2013–2016

Bulletin of the World Health Organization | Published: 28 January 2019.

Harriet Jones, Alison Wringe, Jim Todd, John Songo, Francesc Xavier Gómez-Olivé, Mosa Moshabela, Eveline Geubbels, Mukome Nyamhagatta, et al

[The objective of this study was] To assess adoption of World Health Organization (WHO) guidance into national policies for prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and to monitor implementation of guidelines at facility level in rural Malawi, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania. Methods We summarized national PMTCT policies and WHO guidance for 15 indicators across the cascades of maternal and infant care over 2013–2016. Two survey rounds were conducted (2013–2015 and 2015–2016) in 46 health facilities serving five health and demographic surveillance system populations. We administered structured questionnaires to facility managers to describe service delivery. We report the proportions of facilities implementing each indicator and the frequency and durations of stock-outs of supplies, by site and survey round.

High Sedentary Behavior Is Associated with Depression among Rural South Africans

International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health | Published: 19 April 2019.

Supa Pengpid, Karl Peltzer

The study aimed to investigate the association between sedentary behavior and depression among rural South Africans. Data were analyzed from the cross-sectional baseline survey of the “Health and Aging in Africa: A Longitudinal Study of an INDEPTH community in South Africa (HAALSI)”. Participants responded to various measures, including sociodemographic information, health status, anthropometric measures, and sedentary behavior. The sample included 4782 persons (40 years and above). Overall, participants engaged in <4 h (55.9%), 4–<8 h (34.1%), 8–<11 h (6.4%), or 11 or more h a day (3.5%) of sedentary behavior, and 17.0% screened positive for depression.

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RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

Collaboration and teamwork could improve South Africa’s health system

The Conversation Africa | 16 April 2019.

South Africa’s public health system has many shortcomings. There aren’t enough health professionals to serve the 84% of patients who rely on the public sector. This is why it’s more important than ever that health and care professionals like doctors, nurses and social workers learn to work together as a team.

Hundreds march in Cape Town for National Health Insurance

GroundUp | 24 April 2019.

Protesters visit ten private health facilities to highlight unequal access to health care

Employers turn to private primary healthcare plans in lieu of elusive NHI

Business Day | 23 April 2019.

While national bodies to and fro on benefits, many companies have opted to pursue their own plans

What do a pair of goggles, a cellphone and a set of headphones have in common?

Bhekisisa | 23 April 2019.

South Africa's public health nurses are infamous for having bad attitudes. Google goggles could help them change their ways.

Tuberculosis innovation approaches in South Africa and strategies to secure public returns

Fix the Patent Laws | 24 April 2019.

[On 24 April] Fix the Patent Laws [launched] a report of findings from an analysis of tuberculosis research and development (R&D) underway in South Africa. The analysis was conducted to gain greater insight into the TB innovation landscape in South Africa, the role of public financing in driving and supporting innovation, as well as expectations of public returns (i.e. affordable, user friendly health technologies) from R&D efforts and expenditure, and strategies employed to promote public returns.

Smoke, spies, and lies: Big Tobacco gatecrashes public health lobby meeting

Bhekisisa | 23 April 2019.

South Africa's top public health experts sat down to discuss the safety of e-cigarettes. The verdict? Stay away.

Good news for democracy

The Lancet | 13 March 2019.

Do we really need democracy? Clashes between populist political movements and liberal institutions have raised urgent questions about how human beings should be governed. According to an Article by Thomas J Bollyky and colleagues in The Lancet, democracy is good for public health.

Breaking the cycle of HIV for my daughter

Health Systems Trust | 24 April 2019.

"My mother died of AIDS, and recently, at the age of 22 I was also infected. But I am going to make sure that I break this cycle for my daughter," says Pearl Ngcobo*. At first glance, Pearl looks like any other young student at the UNISA campus in Pietermaritzburg, but it soon becomes apparent she has not had an easy life.

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TRAINING AND RESOURCES

WHO guideline recommendations on digital interventions for health system

strengthening

World Health Organisation | 17 April 2019.

The key aim of this guideline is to present recommendations based on a critical evaluation of the evidence on emerging digital health interventions that are contributing to health system improvements, based on an assessment of the benefits, harms, acceptability, feasibility, resource use and equity considerations. This guideline urges readers to recognize that digital health interventions are not a substitute for functioning health systems, and that there are significant limitations to what digital health is able to address.

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PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

Presidential Health Summit Report (2018)

The Presidency | April 2019.

The report contains the output of the deliberations of the first Presidential Health Summit held in Boksburg on the 19th and 20th of October 2018. The Summit was convened with the aim to find solutions to the concern that the South African health system is in a crisis. A wide range of stakeholders comprising government, health professionals, civil society, labour, business, academia, scientists and health users attended the two-day Summit. Nine Commissions were arranged to enable participants to deliberate on the massive challenges the health system is facing and suggested interventions to improve its quality. The Post-Presidential Health Summit Working Group that includes vital stakeholders is currently preparing a health compact to be jointly signed by the President of South Africa and representatives of stakeholder groups.

Tuberculosis innovation approaches in South Africa and strategies to secure public returns

Catherine Tomlinson, Marcus Low | March 2019.

TB is the leading reported cause of death in South Africa, and the leading cause of death by a single infectious agent globally. While South Africa has experienced significant declines in TB incidence over the past decade largely due to the broad roll-out of antiretroviral therapy, new TB cases and TB mortality remain extremely high. While inadequate investment has significantly impeded the development of new diagnostics and treatments for TB, South Africa has spearheaded the use of the few new important health technologies that have entered the market in recent years. Recognising the urgent need for new health technologies to address TB in South Africa and the strong political will to address TB needs in this country, we undertook this analysis to gain greater understanding of the TB innovation landscape in South Africa.

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CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

South African Medical Association Conference

8-10 August 2019

Southern Sun Elangeni & Maharani Hotel, Durban, South Africa

Rural Health Conference

5-7 September 2019

Kapenta Bay Hotel & Conference Resort, Port Shepstone, South Africa

3rd National Pharmacy Conference

3-6 October 2019

Sun City, South Africa

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JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Please click on the job title for more information.

Health Systems Trust: SAHR Writing Coach

Closing Date: 26 April 2019

Kungwini Welfare: Registered Nurse

Closing Date: 30 April 2019

Pulse Health: Various Posts

Closing Date: 10 May 2019

CHAI: South Africa Associate – Cancer

Closing Date: 31 May 2019

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