

HST Bulletin\_27 January 2023

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## CATEGORIES

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## ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

### **Pathways of TB Transmission in Children—A Systematic Review of Molecular Epidemiological Studies**

*International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* | 18 January 2023

*Roland Diel and Albert Nienhaus*

The widespread paradigm that younger children usually do not transmit *M. tuberculosis* complex (Mtb) to their contacts has not yet been proven by genotypically confirmed transmissions. Therefore, we undertook a systematic review of molecular-epidemiological studies to investigate documented source and secondary TB (tuberculosis) cases among children. We searched the literature published before August 2022 using PubMed, Cochrane, and Google Scholar databases. PRISMA statement was used for systematic review. Of 312 records retrieved, 39 studies including children aged below 15 years offered epidemiological links between cluster members. In the 39 studies from 16 countries, 225 children were reported as cluster members of whom the overwhelming majority were infected by adults. Only 3 children—of those were 2 children aged below 10—were reported to be the definite source cases of 11 other children and 1 adult with genotypically matched Mtb isolates. To date, molecular-epidemiological studies involving children with verified transmission links are scarce.

### **Epidemiologic and economic modelling of optimal COVID-19 policy: public health and social measures, masks and vaccines in Victoria, Australia**

*The Lancet Regional Health – Western Pacific* | 19 January 2023

*Joshua Szanyi, Tim Wilson, Samantha Howe, Jessie Zeng, Hassan Andrabi, et al.*

Identifying optimal COVID-19 policies is challenging. For Victoria, Australia (6.6 million people), we evaluated 104 policy packages (two levels of stringency of public health and social measures [PHSMs], by two levels each of mask-wearing and respirator provision during large outbreaks, by 13 vaccination schedules) for nine future SARS-CoV-2 variant scenarios.

### **How pregnant women living with HIV and their male partners manage men's HIV self-testing: qualitative analysis of an HIVST secondary distribution process in Kampala, Uganda**

*Journal of the International AIDS Society* | 19 January 2023

*Norma C. Ware, Monique A. Wyatt, Emily E. Pisarski, Brenda Kamusiime, Vicent Kasiita, et al*

Increased HIV testing by men in sub-Saharan Africa is key to meeting UNAIDS 2025 testing targets. Secondary distribution of HIV self-testing (HIVST) kits by pregnant women attending antenatal care to male partners has been shown to increase testing among African men. A detailed understanding of how women and male partners manage the distribution and use of HIVST and subsequent linkage to clinic-based follow-up can inform implementation and scale-up efforts.

## **Epidemiologic Situation of HIV and Monkeypox Coinfection: A Systematic Review**

*MDPI Vaccines* | 19 January 2023

*Brando Ortiz-Saavedra, Elizbet Montes-Madariaga, Cielo Cabanillas-Ramirez, Niza Alva, Alex Ricardo-Martinez, et al.*

The most recent monkeypox (Mpox) outbreak is mostly affecting men who have sex with men (MSM) who participate in high-risk sexual behaviors, which is typically the case among human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) carriers, according to clinical and epidemiological statistics. The objective of this research is to determine the epidemiological situation of HIV and smallpox co-infection. Until 1 October 2022, a thorough evaluation of the literature was conducted utilizing the databases PubMed, Embase, Scopus, and Web of Science. Studies were evaluated based on the criteria for selection. Fifty-three studies met the selection criteria. A total of 6345 confirmed cases of monkeypox were recorded, and 40.32% (n = 2558) of these cases also had HIV co-infection. In addition, 51.36% (n = 3259) of the men (91.44%; n = 5802), whose ages ranged from 18 to 71 years, exhibited MSM-specific sexual behaviors. Co-infection with these two viruses can be especially dangerous because it can exacerbate the symptoms of both diseases and make them more difficult to treat. People with HIV are more vulnerable to certain infections, including monkeypox, because their immune systems are weakened. Therefore, it is important that they take measures to prevent infection, such as avoiding contact with infected animals, risky behaviors, and maintaining good hygiene.

## **Costs and cost-effectiveness of a collaborative data-to-care intervention for HIV treatment and care in the United States**

*Journal of the International AIDS Society* | 22 January 2023

*Ram K. Shrestha, Robyn Neblett Fanfair, Liisa M. Randall, Crystal Lucas, Lisa Nichols et al.*

Data-to-care programmes utilize surveillance data to identify persons who are out of HIV care, re-engage them in care and improve HIV care outcomes. We assess the costs and cost-effectiveness of re-engagement in an HIV care intervention in the United States.

## **New hope for cervical cancer patients**

*City of Hope* | 23 January 2023

Cervical cancer still strikes some 14,000 women each year in the U.S. Recently, two promising immunotherapies were FDA approved to treat the disease, and there have been innovations in radiation and surgery as well.

## **Picturing health: migrants' stories in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico**

*The Lancet* | 23 January 2023

*Danielle Villasana*

Although Ciudad Juárez, a city situated on the USA–Mexico border, has been affected by femicide, drug-trafficking, and other challenges, migrants from Latin America and elsewhere continue to arrive here hoping to seek asylum in the USA. As a photojournalist focusing on issues related to gender, human rights, health, and migration, I travelled to Ciudad Juárez in October, 2022 to document how lack of access to maternal health care is impacting women along their migration route. For many pregnant women and people travelling with children, this gruelling journey puts them at great risk. Despite these dangers, many migrants choose to flee as a way to escape gender-based violence, threats from gangs, or precarious economic situations at home.

## **Adult HIV-1 incidence across 15 high-burden countries in sub-Saharan Africa from 2015 to 2019: a pooled analysis of nationally representative data**

*The Lancet* | 23 January 2023

*Prof Nora E Rosenberg, Bonnie E Shook-Sa, Mincen Liu, Lynda Stranix-Chibanda, Marcel Yotebieng, et*

*al.*

Harmonised population-based surveys with recent HIV-1 infection testing algorithms permit pooled cross-sectional estimation of HIV incidence across multiple countries. We aimed to estimate adult HIV-1 incidence rates and number of new infections by sex, age, and subregion in sub-Saharan Africa.

### **Incident HIV acquisition among pregnant women in Botswana: findings from the Tsepamo birth outcomes surveillance study**

*Journal of the International AIDS Society* | 24 January 2023

Aamirah Mussa, Gloria Katuta Mayondi, Modiegi Diseko, Judith Mabuta, Mompoti Mmalane, et al.

In Botswana, where almost all pregnant women known to have HIV receive antiretroviral therapy, a large proportion of vertical HIV transmission may occur among women with incident undiagnosed HIV infection during pregnancy. Botswana guidelines recommend repeat HIV testing every 3 months in pregnancy, with at least one test in the third trimester. We evaluated the rate of repeat HIV testing, calculated HIV incidence during pregnancy and estimated missed seroconversions.

### **Human rights violations among men who have sex with men and transgender people in South Africa**

*Southern African Journal of HIV Medicine* | 23 January 2023

Raymond Chimatira, Dumo Jebese-Mfenqe, Joram Chikwanda, Edward Sibanda, Qhawekazi Thengwa, et al.

Men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender (TG) people face human rights violations (HRVs) which impact their access to critical interventions for HIV prevention, treatment, and related services. This study describes how Beyond Zero, a not-for-profit organisation in South Africa built an HRV reporting system and discusses data on the HRVs experienced by MSM and TG people who accessed HIV prevention services between 01 January 2021 and 31 December 2021.

### **Adult HIV-1 incidence across 15 high-burden countries in sub-Saharan Africa from 2015 to 2019: a pooled analysis of nationally representative data**

*The Lancet HIV*

Nora E Rosenberg, Bonnie E Shook-Sa, Mincen Liu, Lynfa Stranix-Sibanda, Marcel Yotebieng, et al.

Harmonised population-based surveys with recent HIV-1 infection testing algorithms permit pooled cross-sectional estimation of HIV incidence across multiple countries. We aimed to estimate adult HIV-1 incidence rates and number of new infections by sex, age, and subregion in sub-Saharan Africa. We analysed data from 13 Population-Based HIV Impact Assessment (PHIA) surveys and two additional population-based surveys done between 2015 and 2019 in 15 sub-Saharan African countries. HIV-seropositive samples from adults aged 15–59 years were tested for recent HIV-1 infection by use of an algorithm consisting of the HIV-1 limiting antigen avidity enzyme immunoassay, HIV-1 viral load, and qualitative detection of antiretroviral agents. Data were pooled across countries; sampling weights were incorporated to represent all adults in the 15 national populations. Analyses accounted for the complex sample designs. HIV incidence rates, incidence rate differences, and number of new annual infections were estimated.

### **Same-Day ART Initiation and Associated Factors Among People Living with HIV on Lifelong Therapy at Nekemte Specialized Hospital, Western Ethiopia**

*Dove Medical Press* | 24 January 2023

L Bayisa, D Bayisa, E Turi, D Mulisa, T Tolossa, et al.

The test-and-treat approach recommends early ART initiation (same day). Early ART start has double the benefits as treatment and as prevention. However, there is limited information regarding same-day ART initiation in Ethiopia. Hence, this study aimed to assess the magnitude and factors of same-day ART initiation among people living with HIV (PLHIV) on ART at Nekemte specialized hospital, in Western Ethiopia.

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## **Acceptance and Hesitancy Toward the Covid-19 Vaccine Among Medical Students in Kabul, Afghanistan**

*Dovepress | 25 January 2023*

*Mahmoodullah Azimi, Mohammad Yusuf Yadgari and Mohammad Asif Atiq*

The availability of vaccination services” the vaccine campaign's success highly depends on vaccine confidence. Acceptance of vaccines is essential for controlling the pandemic of covid-19 but the low acceptance rate reported in many countries may contribute to the formation of challenges in efforts toward putting an end to the pandemic.<sup>2,3</sup> As the World Health Organization has stated earlier, hesitancy toward the COVID-19 vaccine is a global health threat (Organization). In a systematic review of acceptance of the COVID-19 vaccine across 33 countries (as of 25th December 2020), it was reported that Kuwait (23.6%), Jordan (28.4%), and Italy (53.7%) had the lowest acceptance rate. The hesitancy rate toward Covid-19 vaccine found to be 84.6% in Cameroonians adults.

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## **RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS**

### **Closure of HIV vaccine study shows how far we have to go**

*Aidsmap | 19 January 2023*

Janssen pharmaceuticals, the research branch of Johnson & Johnson, said yesterday that they were "disappointed" that the latest HIV candidate vaccine, and the only one left in a phase III efficacy trial, had failed to reach pre-specified standards of efficacy. For this reason, they had terminated the Mosaico Study, which gave the vaccine or a placebo to 3,900 cis and trans gay and bisexual men and trans women in the Americas and Europe. Mitchell Warren, director of prevention advocacy organisation AVAC, commented: "We always hope that efficacy trials will show positive results that lead to new prevention options... [but] the hard truth is the science of HIV vaccine development is extremely challenging".

### **How awareness helps in the fight to combat HIV, malaria and TB**

*The Standard | 19 January 2023*

Sleeping under treated mosquito nets has proved to be an essential way to prevent malaria, even as the health ministry has adopted other proactive measures to fight two other killer diseases; tuberculosis and HIV/Aids. According to the 2022 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, at least 54 per cent of households in the country own insecticide-treated nets (ITNs), an increase from 40 per cent in 2015.

### **Research Explores Links Between Stigma and HIV Prevention Services in Gender-Diverse People**

*The body pro | 19 January 2023*

Gender-based stigma experienced by transgender and gender-diverse people is associated with substance use and behaviors that increase a person's odds of acquiring HIV—as well as greater engagement in HIV prevention services, a Massachusetts/Rhode Island study found.

### **Hybrid Immunity Protects Better Against Hospitalisation and Severe COVID Infection**

*Health Policy Watch | 19 January 2023*

Hybrid immunity from a combination of being vaccinated and previously infected with COVID-19 offers better protection against hospitalisation and severe infection than immunity simply from a previous infection, according to a new study in *The Lancet*. People with hybrid immunity were 97.4% less likely to be hospitalised or suffer severe infection at 12 months, whereas those who were previously infected but unvaccinated were 74.6% less likely, according to the study, which was funded by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI).

### **EDITORIAL: Health minister must intervene now to stop care catastrophe**

*Business Day | 20 January 2023*



The nursing crisis has been deepening for years, and not even the ANC's ambitions for National Health Insurance (NHI) seem enough of an incentive to awaken a sense of urgency in health minister Joe Phaala. NHI, the government's plan for universal health coverage, rests heavily on nurse-led care. Yet where these nurses will come from is a mystery.

### **Women's health: rethinking the cost as an investment for societal gain**

*World Economic Forum | 20 January 2023*

When it comes to the health and wellbeing of women, we are at a critical juncture. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a devastating backsliding on women's health – and without increased investment, we won't be able to take back the losses inflicted by the pandemic and regain progress against the SDGs. This was recognized in a main session at the World Economic Forum earlier this week. The session gathered global leaders from across sectors to discuss the significant economic benefits of investing in women and how to accelerate global prioritization and investment in health to create a healthier, more equitable world for all.

### **WHO to launch council to accelerate the development of TB vaccine**

*News Medical Life Science | 20 January 2023*

The ongoing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has significantly impacted tuberculosis (TB) related services, which has increased the urgency of TB vaccine development. Recently, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), announced the creation of the TB Vaccine Accelerator Council at a high-level panel at a World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

### **HIV reservoir cells have surface proteins that aid in evading immune attack**

*Aidsmap | 20 January 2023*

New research suggests that reservoir cells' surfaces more frequently contain proteins that help them evade the immune system's detection as well as improve their resilience against attack. Though these biomarkers are not universal, they may eventually lead to therapies that target these cells, allowing for drug-free HIV remission. Antiretroviral therapy (ART) protects cells without HIV from becoming infected with the virus, but it doesn't attack dormant cells where the virus lies waiting for an opportunity to strike. On ART, these rare cells—collectively called the latent reservoir—remain asleep. However, if ART is stopped, reservoir cells can awaken, churn out new HIV, and infect other cells in the body. Because of this, an HIV cure is unlikely to work without eliminating or permanently suppressing reservoir cells.

### **Women on ART with high HIV viral load at increased risk of non-AIDS comorbidities**

*Healio | 22 January 2023*

Women with HIV who had greater cumulative viremia had an increased risk of multimorbidity and developing five vascular-related non-AIDS comorbidities, according to a recent study. "In prior analyses evaluating the burden of non-AIDS comorbidities in women with and without HIV, we found that the overall burden of 10 comorbidities assessed was higher in women with vs. without HIV, and that comorbidity burden in women with HIV was primarily associated with traditional as opposed to HIV-related risk factors," Lauren F. Collins, MD, MSc, assistant professor of medicine in the division of infectious diseases at Emory University, told Healio.

### **Health Dept: SAMATU should refrain from protesting over false information**

*EWN | 22 January 2023*

The National Health Department said the South African Medical Association Trade Union (Samatu) should refrain from protest action based on false information, after the trade union threatened to march to the department's head offices later this month.

### **Heart symptoms persist in 10% of patients with long-COVID**

*News Medical Life Science | 22 January 2023*

In a recent study posted to the medRxiv\* preprint server, researchers described the long-term cardiac symptoms associated with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Recent studies have shown that long-term cardiac symptoms associated with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) infection can persist for months or even years. Chest discomfort, inflammatory heart disease, and arrhythmia, among other symptoms, are frequently observed. Heart muscle inflammation, or myocarditis,

which can be directly caused by a viral infection, can progress to manifest into subclinical or overt myocardial dysfunction with or without electrophysiological abnormalities having long-term consequences.

### **WATCH: Should COVID-19 vaccination be mandatory?**

*WHO | 22 January 2023*

“Vaccination is about protecting yourself, but it's also an inherently altruistic act — you're vaccinating yourself in order to be part of an immune group that will then protect those who can't be vaccinated”-Dr Mike Ryan

### **HIV remains a leading killer in Africa despite medical breakthroughs – how to eliminate it**

*Health-e News | 23 January 2023*

About 38 million people around the world are living with HIV. About 70% of them live in Africa. This shows that there is no solution to the AIDS pandemic without a solution in Africa. In 2021, there were 1.5 million new cases of HIV – just over 4,000 cases per day around the world. At the same time, close to 700,000 people died. The big challenge is to address the dual realities of people still dying from HIV in large numbers, and the large numbers of new infections. The upside is that there is a clear plan with clear goals on how to address this. In 2016, countries came together at the United Nations to agree on what the world's strategy should be. The goal is to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. We spoke with leading scientist Professor Salim Abdool Karim about how to close the gaps.

### **Laboratories in Kenya and Tanzania train rats to detect tuberculosis**

*Africanews | 23 January 2023*

In laboratories in Tanzania and Nairobi, rats have been trained to sniff out tuberculosis. Already known for finding land mines, the rodents could now transform the way the disease is detected. The African giant pouched rats work with scientists at the APOPO Project, a Belgian non-profit organisation in Tanzania, because they can detect the smell of the deadly disease.

### **In-Depth: As schools open, will measles outbreaks get worse?**

*Spotlight | 23 January 2023*

In October last year, the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) alerted the public to a measles outbreak in Limpopo. Since then, four more provinces have reported outbreaks, and the number of positive cases in the country has climbed rapidly. Last week's measles report from the NICD indicated that between the first week of October 2022 and mid-week in the second week of January 2023, a total of 397 cases of measles were identified across the country. Of those, 382 cases were detected in five provinces – Limpopo 145, North West 125, Mpumalanga 79, Gauteng 18, and the Free State 15. These five provinces have all met the criteria for a measles outbreak (three or more cases in a district within a month).

### **HIV remains a leading killer in Africa despite medical breakthroughs – how to eliminate it**

*Health-e News | 23 January 2023*

*Written by Salim Abdool Karim, Centre for the AIDS Program of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA)*

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### **Proportion of women in England not screened for cervical cancer at 10-year high**

*The Guardian | 23 January 2023*

Record numbers of women are not being screened for cervical cancer, official figures show, as a leading charity urged ministers to commit to eliminating the disease. Cervical cancer is the 14th most common cancer among women in the UK. About 3,200 women are diagnosed with it each year, of whom more than

a quarter die.

## **COVID-19 Infection May Induce Fetal Brain Hemorrhages, Scientists Warn**

*Science Alert | 23 January 2023*

There are already plenty of reasons to worry about COVID-19, but there's another to add to the list: There's evidence of the virus in fetal brain tissue in instances of pregnant people passing the infection to their children. So it's not just the effects of the illness on our bodies that are of concern, but also the effects on the bodies of still-gestating babies – something that scientists have already been urgently looking into.

## **Ivermectin efficacy finally proven in 'gold-standard' RCT – Prof Colleen Aldous**

*BizNews | 23 January 2023*

Ivermectin and its use as a treatment for COVID-19 was catapulted to centre stage when the pandemic erased all rhyme and reason in 2020. However, even as the totality of evidence demonstrated Ivermectin's efficacy, mainstream media and governments across the world dismissed its use based on the absence of randomised control trials. Further to that, virtually anything related to Ivermectin that made mainstream media was negative coverage of a drug that could've saved countless lives. Now, at last, a large randomised control study on Ivermectin efficacy for preventing and treating COVID-19 has been released, as discussed in this article by Professor Colleen Aldous, one of the drug's fiercest advocates. Aldous, a geneticist and clinical researcher at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, raises some critical questions that we ignore at our peril.

## **Getting a Covid booster shot is not as easy as it should be**

*GroundUp | 23 January 2023*

As Covid-19 cases rise again around the world and the more infectious XBB.1.5 variant spreads rapidly, health minister Joe Paahla has emphasised the importance of getting vaccinated and boosted. About 19-million people in South Africa (just over 30% of the population) are fully vaccinated and four million booster shots have been administered. The country is administering just over 40,000 jabs a week. At the moment only people over 50 are eligible for a second booster. But according to Dr Nicholas Crisp, Deputy Director-General for the National Department of Health, all adults will be eligible in February. "As soon as the systems are all in place and staff orientated, the department will announce," Crisp told GroundUp.

## **FDA scientists propose an annual Covid shot matched to current strains**

*Statnews | 23 January 2023*

Scientists at the Food and Drug Administration propose making Covid vaccination a regular, once-a-year shot that is updated to match current strains of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, according to documents posted by the FDA on Monday. For people who are older or immunocompromised, the FDA would recommend two annual doses of the revised shot. The new proposals were outlined ahead of a Thursday meeting of the FDA's advisory panel on vaccines and related biological products, which will be asked to give the agency feedback on its plan.

## **Fifteen more cases of Covid-19 'Kraken' subvariant detected in South Africa**

*Daily Maverick | 23 January 2023*

Seventeen confirmed cases of the Omicron subvariant XBB.1.5 have been detected in South Africa since December 2022. One was found in Gauteng, 13 in the Western Cape, one in the Free State and two in KwaZulu-Natal, according to the latest genomic surveillance report released by the National Institute for Communicable Diseases. The latest report on Covid cases in the country shows 1,499 cases reported for the second week of the year.

## **Five billion people unprotected from trans fat leading to heart disease**

*WHO | 23 January 2023*

Five billion people globally remain unprotected from harmful trans fat, a new status report from WHO has found, increasing their risk of heart disease and death. Since WHO first called for the global elimination of industrially produced trans fat in 2018 – with an elimination target set for 2023 – population coverage of best-practice policies has increased almost six-fold. Forty-three countries have now implemented best-practice policies for tackling trans fat in food, with 2.8 billion people protected globally. Despite substantial progress, however, this still leaves 5 billion worldwide at risk from trans fat's devastating health impacts

with the global goal for its total elimination in 2023 remaining unattainable at this time.

## **WHO launches funding appeal to help a record number of people in complex, intersecting health emergencies**

*WHO | 23 January 2023*

WHO is launching its 2023 health emergency appeal today for US\$ 2.54 billion to provide assistance to millions of people around the world facing health emergencies. The number of people in need of humanitarian relief has increased by almost a quarter compared to 2022, to a record 339 million.

## **The end of the Mosaico vaccine trial must be a spur to deliver HIV treatment and prevention options to all who need them says UNAIDS**

*UNAIDS | 23 January 2023*

The end of the Mosaico HIV vaccine trial must lead to a continued drive to innovate as well as an urgency to ensure that proven HIV prevention and treatment options reach all who need them, says UNAIDS. Rapid progress against the HIV pandemic is possible if existing prevention and treatment options are made available through the sharing of technologies, expanding provision, and tackling barriers to access. The development, and sharing, of long-acting prevention and treatment options are also important to expand coverage. “The disappointment of the vaccine trial further underlines the importance of rolling out available HIV treatment and prevention innovations, including oral PrEP, long acting injectables and the vaginal ring,” said UNAIDS Executive Director, Winnie Byanyima. “The search for a vaccine must continue, but it's important to remember that despite this setback the world can still end AIDS by 2030 by delivering all the proven prevention and treatment options to all the people who need them.”

## **WHO investigating links between 'contaminated' cough syrups and 300 child deaths**

*Times Live | 24 January 2023*

The World Health Organisation (WHO) is investigating whether there is any connection between manufacturers whose contaminated cough syrups it has linked to the deaths of more than 300 children in three countries, a person familiar with the matter said. Citing “unacceptable levels” of toxins in the products, the WHO is seeking more information about the specific raw materials used by six manufacturers in India and Indonesia to produce medicines linked to the recent deaths, as well as whether the companies obtained them from some of the same suppliers, the person said. The WHO has not named any suppliers.

## **A new report examines the safety of bivalent COVID boosters among 1.7 million over-50s**

*News Medical Life Science | 24 January 2023*

In a recent study posted to medRxiv\*, researchers in Denmark examined the risk of adverse events after severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) Omicron-based bivalent booster vaccination. Bivalent messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) boosters targeting the ancestral SARS-CoV-2 and the Omicron BA.1 or BA.4/5 spikes were approved for use in 2022. These bivalent boosters were recommended following primary vaccination (two-dose regimen) regardless of boosting (third dose or first booster) with monovalent vaccines.

## **A Study Aims to Determine Whether Longer-Term Paxlovid Can Mitigate Long COVID**

*The body | 24 January 2023*

For several years now, Gabriel San Emeterio has been living with HIV as well as myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) —a condition marked by chronic and debilitating pain and both mental and physical fatigue. I've watched up close how San Emeterio has had to carefully pace out their work to avoid overexerting themselves. But even when they've thoughtfully planned their day, they often experience “post-exertional malaise,” or PEM. After being diagnosed with COVID last June, San Emeterio determined that they were experiencing long COVID, which has no real test, after realizing that their symptoms—chronic cognitive impairment called “brain fog,” exhaustion, pain, and irregular heartbeat or palpitations—overlapped with ME/CFS.

## **'They fail us, year in and year out': Why community health workers are ditching unions**



*Bhekisisa | 24 January 2023*

Community health workers (CHWs) say they've "lost all faith" in trade unions as their fight for contracts that include pension and medical aid benefits nears a decade. Gauteng is the only province where these health workers get the same protection as other permanently employed government staff, such as nurses. In 2020, CHWs in Gauteng were classified as level two public servants, so they're eligible for pension and medical aid benefits and they earn between R9 000 and R11 000.

### **Tennessee says it's cutting federal HIV funding. Will other states follow?**

*NBC News | 24 January 2023*

The Tennessee Department of Health abruptly rejected the use of available federal funds for HIV prevention services. This decision is short-sighted and undermines the state's public health and response to HIV while limiting community access to critical services. Among the programs that will be affected by the Tennessee Department of Health's rejection of U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funding are HIV prevention and surveillance activities, as well as the federal Ending the HIV/AIDS Epidemic (EHE) initiative. The EHE is a program launched by President Donald Trump that targets funds to designated HIV/AIDS "hotspots" within the U.S. with the goal of ending the HIV epidemic by 2030. Should other states follow suit, the likelihood of achieving this goal will be greatly reduced.

### **Load-shedding: powering malnutrition and obesity**

*Health-e News | 24 January 2023*

South Africa is likely to experience even more malnutrition and obesity as the power crisis affects the quality of food children eat. Dr Edzani Mphaphuli, Executive Director at Grow Great, said the impacts would be more apparent in about two years. The country faces a double-edged sword of stunting on one edge and obesity on another. Mphaphuli said the poorest children were the most severely affected. Some areas in the country experience load shedding for longer periods than others. Last year the University of Johannesburg released a study showing the inequality and racism in load shedding based on areas and townships in Gauteng.

### **Fatigue in COVID-19 survivors**

*Medical health life science | 24 January 2023*

Physical and mental fatigue, commonly referred to as asthenia, is characterized by a loss of energy, weakness, irritability, and anxiety. To combat prolonged asthenia, individuals may choose to incorporate minerals, vitamins, and nutrients to strengthen their bodies and provide the necessary energy for daily life.

### **Major Blow as Experimental HIV Vaccine Fails in Late Clinical Trial**

*Science News | 25 January 2023*

The decades-long quest to develop a HIV vaccine has been dealt another major blow, with the 'last true candidate in development' failing to prevent infections any better than a placebo in late-stage clinical trials. The multinational Mosaico study, which began in 2019 and involved more than 3,900 volunteers, was investigating a four-shot HIV vaccine for cisgender men and transgender people who have sex with cisgender men and/or transgender people.

### **Why inventing a vaccine for AIDS is tougher than for COVID**

*NPR | 26 January 2023*

The four-decades long effort to create an HIV vaccine suffered a blow last week with news that Janssen Pharmaceuticals, a division of Johnson & Johnson, was discontinuing the only current late-stage clinical trial of a vaccine. Results showed it to be ineffective. "I was disappointed in the outcome," says Mitchell Warren, executive director of AVAC, an organization that advocates for HIV prevention to end AIDS. "It was a setback in the search for a vaccine." So it's back to the drawing board with several early, small-scale clinical trials underway and more that might eventually enter the research pipeline ... But the holy grail has always been to find a vaccine that would prevent people from being infected with HIV. "The only way we've ever actually eradicated a disease [in humans], and that was smallpox, is with a vaccine," says Dr. Susan Buchbinder, director of HIV prevention research at the San Francisco Department of Public Health and a professor at the University of California, San Francisco.

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## TRAINING AND RESOURCES

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### 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!

### One-stop resource toolkit launched on refugee and migrant health

*World Health Organization | 25 January 2023*

WHO developed a [Refugee and migrant health toolkit](#), a web-based one-stop comprehensive platform of tools and resources, to support the global, regional, and country efforts in implementing health and migration-related activities. Migration and displacement often impact people's physical and mental health and well-being, especially for those who were forced to flee their homes. It can leave particular impact on people displaced across borders or within their own country and those in an irregular situation or with vulnerabilities and specific health and protection needs. Refugee and migrants could face many factors such as their migratory status; national migration policies; and linguistic, cultural, economic, and social barriers that often hinder their access to health services. It is essential that countries have strong and inclusive health systems equipped with the necessary knowledge and tools to help decision-makers and health personnel meet the health needs and rights of these populations and advance the health and migration agenda.

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## PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

### South African Health Review 2021

*Health Systems Trust | 2021*

When it comes to service delivery and access in both the public and private health sectors, COVID-19 has put everything to the test. It has demonstrated how central public health security is to health and livelihoods, and how pandemic health emergencies expose the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of health systems, costing lives and causing immeasurable damage to economies. Few could have imagined the impact of COVID-19 when this pandemic reached our shores in March 2020.

This edition considers the government's and broader health sector's response to COVID-19, explores the current challenges facing the health system at this unprecedented time, and reflects on lessons learnt for future for public health emergencies. The chapters offer information on, inter alia, the challenges of balancing lives with livelihoods, and the impact of COVID-19 on different cadres of healthcare workers, especially Community Health Workers who found themselves at the forefront of our COVID-19 response. Other areas covered include the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations like children, persons with disabilities, farmworkers, migrants, and the poorest in our society.

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## CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

### World Leprosy Day 2023

In 2023, World Leprosy Day is Sunday 29 January. This international day is an opportunity to celebrate

people who have experienced leprosy, raise awareness of the disease, and call for an end to leprosy-related stigma and discrimination. The theme of World Leprosy Day 2023 is "Act Now. End Leprosy." This year's theme calls attention to three key messages:

1. Elimination is possible: We have the power and tools to stop transmission and defeat this disease.
2. Act now: We need the resources and commitment to end leprosy. Prioritize leprosy elimination.
3. Reach the unreached: Leprosy is preventable and treatable. Suffering from leprosy is needless.

### **World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day 2023**

Date: 30 January 2023

Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) are widespread in the world's poorest regions, where water safety, sanitation and access to health care are less than optimal. NTDs affect over 1 billion people globally and are caused by a variety of pathogens including viruses, bacteria, parasites, fungi, and toxins. These diseases are "neglected" because they are almost absent from the global health agenda, receive little funding and are associated with stigma and social exclusion. They are diseases of neglected populations and perpetuate a cycle of poor educational outcomes and limited professional opportunities.

### **Open call for short films: 4th edition Health for All Film Festival**

31 October 2022 – 31 January 2023

The Health for All Film Festival aims to recruit a new generation of film and video innovators to champion global health issues, launching its 4th edition, the festival is opening an invitation to independent filmmakers, production companies, NGOs, communities, students, and film schools from around the world to submit their original short films about health.

### **Antimicrobial Chemotherapy Conference 2023**

#SaveTheDate and join us for the Antimicrobial Chemotherapy Conference 2023 – Equipping African researchers tackling rising AMR

Africa CDC

Date: 1 & 2 February 2023

Time: 13h30 - (EAT)

### **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**

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.

Date: March 5th - 8th 2023

Venue: Kigali Convention Centre, Rwanda

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## **JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

There are currently no vacancies at the moment.

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