

**HST Bulletin – 13 October 2023**

**CATEGORIES**

**Academic and Peer Reviewed Articles**

**Recent Public Health News**

**Training and Resources**

**Publications and Reports**

**Conferences and Events**

**Job Opportunities**

**ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES**

**Understanding health outcome drivers among adherence club patients in clinics of Gauteng, South Africa: a structural equation modelling (SEM) approach**

*AIDS Research and Therapy* | 5 October 2023

*Ndumiso Tshuma, Elakpa Daniel Ngbede, Tawanda Nyengerai, Oliver Mtapuri, Sangiwe Moyo, David D. Mphuthi & Peter Nyasulu*

There has been growing interest in understanding the drivers of health outcomes, both in developed and developing countries. The drivers of health outcomes, on the other hand, are the factors that influence the likelihood of experiencing positive or negative health outcomes. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) continues to be a significant global public health challenge, with an estimated 38 million people living with the aim of this study was therefore to develop and empirically test a conceptual research model using SEM, aimed at explaining the magnitude of various factors influencing HIV and other health outcomes among patients attending Adherence Clubs.

<https://aidsrestherapy.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12981-023-00565-5>

**Field performance and cost-effectiveness of a point-of-care triage test for HIV virological failure in Southern Africa**

*Journal of the International AIDS Society* | 6 October 2023

*Anna Saura-Lázaro, Peter Bock, Erika van den Bogaart, Jessie van Vliet, Laura Granés et al.*

Antiretroviral therapy (ART) monitoring using viral load (VL) testing is challenging in high-burden, limited-resources settings. Chemokine IP-10 (interferon gamma-induced protein 10) strongly correlates with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) VL. Its determination could serve to predict virological failure (VF) and to triage patients requiring VL testing. We assessed the field performance of a semi-quantitative IP-10 lateral flow assay (LFA) for VF screening in South Africa, and the cost-effectiveness of its implementation in Mozambique.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jia2.26176>

## **Integrated management of HIV, diabetes, and hypertension in sub-Saharan Africa (INTE-AFRICA): a pragmatic cluster-randomised, controlled trial**

*The Lancet* | 7 October 2023

*Sokoine Kivuyo, Josephine Birungi, Joseph Okebe, Duolao Wang, Kaushik Ramaiya, et al.*

In sub-Saharan Africa, health-care provision for chronic conditions is fragmented. The aim of this study was to determine whether integrated management of HIV, diabetes, and hypertension led to improved rates of retention in care for people with diabetes or hypertension without adversely affecting rates of HIV viral suppression among people with HIV when compared to standard vertical care in medium and large health facilities in Uganda and Tanzania.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(23\)01573-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(23)01573-8/fulltext)

## **Risk of Coronavirus Disease 2019 Messenger RNA Vaccination-Associated Myocarditis and Pericarditis – A Systematic Review of Population-Based Data**

*Dovepress* | 9 October 2023

Early studies showed that the risks of mRNA vaccine-associated myocarditis and pericarditis are low but with substantial variation across studies. Study characteristics, ethnicity, vaccine types, dose intervals, and SARS-CoV-2 infection prevalence may influence the rates of myocarditis and pericarditis after mRNA vaccination in population-based studies.

<https://www.dovepress.com/risk-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-messenger-rna-vaccination-associated--peer-reviewed-fulltext-article-RMHP>

## **Social/Sexual Networks of People Newly Diagnosed with HIV in Ibadan, Nigeria**

*Aids and Behaviour* | 9 October 2023

*Gregory Phillips II, Anthony E. Rodriguez-Ortiz, Olubusuyi M. Adewumi, Katelyn Banner, Adedotun Adetunji, et al.*

Young men who have sex with men (YMSM) in Nigeria are ten times more likely to be living with HIV-1 than other young men. Due to stigma and criminalization of same-sex sexual behavior, YMSM sexual networks are likely to overlap with those of the general population, leading to a generalized HIV-1 epidemic. Due to limited research on social/sexual network dynamics related to HIV-1 in Nigeria, our study focused on YMSM and sought to assess the feasibility and acceptability of collecting social and sexual network data in Network Canvas from individuals newly diagnosed with HIV-1 in Ibadan, Nigeria. The Network Canvas software was piloted at three sites in Ibadan, Nigeria to collect social/sexual network data from 151 individuals newly diagnosed with HIV-1.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10461-023-04200-2>

## **The Lancet Commission on ending stigma and discrimination in mental health**

*The Lancet* | 9 October 2023

*Graham Thornicroft, Charlene Sunkel, Akmal Alikhon Aliev, Sue Baker, Elaine Brohan, et al.*

It is time to end all forms of stigma and discrimination against people with mental health conditions, for whom there is double jeopardy: the impact of the primary condition and the severe consequences of stigma. Indeed, many people describe stigma as being worse than the condition itself. This Lancet

Commission report is the result of a collaboration of more than 50 people worldwide. It brings together evidence and experience of the impact of stigma and discrimination and successful interventions for stigma reduction. We include material that brings alive the voices of people with lived experience of mental health conditions (PWLE). This is right in principle because we agree with the view of nothing about us without us.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(22\)01470-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(22)01470-2/fulltext)

**Effectiveness of trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy compared to psychosocial counseling in reducing HIV risk behaviors, substance use, and mental health problems among orphans and vulnerable children in Zambia: a community-based randomized controlled trial**

*Aids and Behaviour* | 9 October 2023

*Jeremy C. Kane, Caleb Figge, Alejandra Paniagua-Avila, Susan Michaels-Strasser, Christopher Akiba, et al.*

Orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in sub-Saharan Africa are at high risk for HIV infection and transmission. HIV prevention and treatment efforts with OVC are hindered by mental health and substance use problems. This randomized controlled trial compared a mental health intervention, Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), to an enhanced version of an existing HIV Psychosocial Counseling (PC+) program among 610 adolescents who met PEPFAR criteria for OVC and had HIV risk behaviors in Lusaka, Zambia. Outcomes included HIV risk behaviors (e.g., risky sexual behaviors), mental health (internalizing symptoms, externalizing behaviors, PTSD) and substance use. At 12-month follow-up, there were significant within group reductions in both groups for all outcomes, with the only significant between group difference being for substance use, in which OVC who received TF-CBT had significantly greater reductions than OVC who received PC+. In a subgroup analysis of OVC with high levels of PTSD symptoms, TF-CBT was superior to PC+ in reducing internalizing symptoms, functional impairment, and substance use.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10461-023-04179-w>

**HIV-1 drug resistance in people on dolutegravir-based antiretroviral therapy: a collaborative cohort analysis**

*The Lancet HIV* | 10 October 2023

*Tom Loosli, Stefanie Hossmann, Suzanne M Ingle, Hajra Okhai, Katharina Kusejko, et al.*

The widespread use of the integrase strand transfer inhibitor (INSTI) dolutegravir in first-line and second-line antiretroviral therapy (ART) might facilitate emerging resistance. The DTG RESIST study combined data from HIV cohorts to examine patterns of drug resistance mutations (DRMs) and identify risk factors for dolutegravir resistance.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanhiv/article/PIIS2352-3018\(23\)00228-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanhiv/article/PIIS2352-3018(23)00228-X/fulltext)

**Menstrual cups and cash transfer to reduce sexual and reproductive harm and school dropout in adolescent schoolgirls in western Kenya: a cluster randomised controlled trial**

*eClinicalMedicine* | 10 October 2023

*Garazi Zulaika, Elizabeth Nyothach, Anna Maria van Eijk, Duolao Wang, Valarie Opollo, et al.*

High rates of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) harms and interrupted schooling are global challenges for adolescent girls, requiring effective interventions. We assessed the impact of menstrual cups (MCs) or cash transfers conditioned on school attendance (CCTs), or both, on SRH and schooling outcomes in western Kenya.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370\(23\)00438-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370(23)00438-8/fulltext)

### **Awareness, attitudes towards genetic diseases and acceptability of genetic interventions among pregnant women in Burera district, Rwanda**

*BMC Public Health* | 10 October 2023

*Jean Baptiste Niyibizi, Erigene Rutayisire, Monica Mochama, Michael Habtu, Zephania Nzeyimana, et al.*

Approximately 3% of all pregnancies are associated with conditions linked with disability, either mild or severe congenital diseases. This is a consequence of environmental and genetic exposures. Complications and poor management of these diseases arise due to limited knowledge, awareness about the disease, and limited resource settings. The current study assessed awareness, attitudes towards genetic diseases, and acceptability of genetic interventions among pregnant women. This was a cross-sectional study that was conducted among 664 pregnant women in six selected health centers in Burera district using a detailed questionnaire. The data were analysed using STATA Version 15 and entailed univariate, bivariate, and multivariable analyses. The level of significance was set at  $p < 0.05$ . The mean age of the study participants was 28, and most of them were in the age range of 21 to 30 (50%). Most of the participants were married (91.1%), Christians (98.4%), farmers (92.7%), used public health coverage (96.6%), and attained primary studies (66.1%). The findings from this study showed that among participants, adequate awareness was at 29.5%, inadequate awareness at 70.5%, positive attitudes at 87.1%, negative attitudes at 12.9%, high acceptability at 97.1%, and low acceptability at 2.9%.

<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-023-16866-3>

### **World Mental Health Day 2023: We must leave no one behind in the response to HIV and mental health**

*Journal of the International AIDS Society* | 10 October 2023

*Milton Wainberg, George Gustaaf Wolvaardt, Lidia Gouveia and Erin Ferenchick*

Despite great achievements in the response to HIV over the past four decades, emerging data are alarming. They reveal that progress is faltering with only a 3.5% drop in global acquisitions from 2020 to 2021 - the smallest annual decline since 2016.<sup>1</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic and growing humanitarian and climate crises have challenged health systems globally, profoundly impacting the HIV response and threatening the achievement of the United Nations 95-95-95 targets. There has been considerable debate about what efforts are needed if we are to get back on track. To commemorate World Mental Health Day, we advocate that part of the solution must ensure sustained political and financial commitment to scale-up evidence-based interventions addressing the mental health needs of people living with, at risk of, or affected by HIV.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jia2.26183>

### **Risk factors for clinical stages of COVID-19 amongst employees of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) worldwide over a period of 12 months**

*BMC Infectious Diseases* | 10 October 2023

*Maria Carla Tinti, Stéphanie Cécilia Guisolan, Fabrice Althaus, Rodolfo Rossi, et al.*

Essential workers carry a higher risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection and COVID-19 mortality than individuals working in non-essential activities. Scientific studies on COVID-19 risk factors and clinical courses for humanitarian aid workers (HAW) specifically are lacking. The nature of their work brings HAW in proximity to various populations, therefore potentially exposing them to the virus. The objective of this study is to assess severity degrees of COVID-19 in relation to multiple risk factors in a cohort of HAW.

<https://bmcinfectdis.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12879-023-08674-2>

### **Practice of non-institutional delivery and its associated factors among women who gave birth in Southern Ethiopia, 2022**

*BMC Women's Health* | 10 October 2023

*Temesgen Geta, Fekire Sugebo, Fekadu Anjulo, et al.*

Non-institutional delivery is one of the major reasons that results in high mortality rates for a mother and her neonate. The World Health Organization estimates that only 43% of mothers have access to skilled delivery services. A recent Ethiopian Mini Demographic Survey indicated that more than half of Ethiopian women have given birth non-institutionally. This shows that maternal health remains a major public health challenge in Ethiopia, irrespective of the government's measures for institutional delivery. So, the aim of this study was to assess the practice of non-institutional delivery and its associated factors among women who gave birth in the study area.

<https://bmcwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12905-023-02683-8>

### **Remote training for strengthening capacity in sexual and reproductive health and rights research: a systematic review**

*BMC Public Health* | 10 October 2023

*Carla Perrotta, Vicky Downey, Darin Elabbasy, Carolyn Ingram, Chungwan Lo, et al.*

Training has been used to develop research skills among sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) researchers. Remote education may accelerate transfer of skills and reduce barriers to strengthening research capacity. This systematic review aimed to assess the effectiveness of remote training on SRHR research and describe enablers and barriers of effective remote training.

<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-023-16851-w>

### **Efficacy of mouthwash on reducing salivary SARS-CoV-2 viral load and clinical symptoms: a systematic review and meta-analysis**

*BMC Infectious Diseases* | 11 October 2023

*Mingrui Zhang, Nan Meng, Hong Duo, Yuanbo Yang, Qing Dong & Jianqi Gu.*

COVID-19 has been a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) for a lengthy period of time. The novel coronavirus is primarily spread via aerosols at a short distance, with infected individuals releasing large amounts of aerosols when speaking and coughing. However, there is an

open question regarding whether mouthwash could effectively reduce virus transmission during the COVID-19 pandemic and support the prevention of infection among medical workers.

<https://bmcinfectdis.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12879-023-08669-z>

### **Positive Childhood Experiences and Depression Among College Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Moderated Mediation Model**

*Dovepress | 11 October 2023*

Since December 2019, an epidemic of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has been spreading worldwide,<sup>1</sup> which has resulted in negative impacts on people's mental health.<sup>2–4</sup> Governments around the world have implemented various effective prevention and control measures to contain the spread of the epidemic. However, the global nature of the outbreak and the stringent preventive measures have presented significant challenges to the mental well-being of people globally.<sup>4–6</sup> In 2022, most universities in China have implemented restrictions on students going off campus to socialize with others, which has the potential to exacerbate mental health symptoms among college students.

<https://www.dovepress.com/positive-childhood-experiences-and-depression-among-college-students-d-peer-reviewed-fulltext-article-PRBM>

### **Using community conversations to integrate violence screening and referrals into HIV care for young women living with HIV in Lusaka, Zambia**

*Journal of the International AIDS Society | 11 October 2023*

*Christina A. Laurenzi, Chipso Mutambo, Chanda Mwamba, Eugene Mupakile, Chuma Busakhwe, et al*

Young women living with HIV (YWHIV) commonly experience overlapping vulnerabilities, especially in low-resource, HIV-endemic settings. They are likelier to experience violence, and have poorer antiretroviral adherence, HIV care disengagement and low viral suppression. Despite strong prevention programming, HIV incidence among 15- to 24-year-olds in Zambia remains high, potentially exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, nearly two-thirds of YWHIV in Zambia have experienced sexual violence from intimate partners. HIV and violence commonly co-occur in the context of harmful gender norms, early marriage, and power-inequitable relationships, hindering access to healthcare services.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jia2.26181>

### **Did the COVID-19 pandemic change the weight reduction in patients with obesity after bariatric surgery?**

*BMC Public Health | 11 October 2023*

*Somayeh Mokhber, Ali Sheidaei, Shahrzad Ahmadkaraji, Seyed Amin Setarehdan, Seyed Mohsen Rahimi, et al.*

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted healthcare services worldwide, including bariatric surgery. There is a concern that the pandemic-induced stay-at-home orders and social restrictions may negatively affect weight reduction outcomes post-bariatric surgery. This study aimed to examine the impact of the COVID-19 on weight loss up to six months after three types of bariatric surgeries including One-Anastomosis Gastric Bypass (OAGB), RY Gastric Bypass (RYGB), and Sleeve Gastrectomy (SG) before and two time periods during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-023-16837-8>

## **Impact of Covid-19 on Pediatric Ophthalmology Care: Lessons Learned**

*DovePress* | 12 October 2023

*Kirandeep Kaur,1 Janani Muralikrishnan,2 Jameel Rizwana Hussaindeen,3 Nilutparna Deori,4 Bharat Gurnani5.*

The COVID-19 pandemic came with many new challenges that forced personal and professional lifestyle modifications. Medical facilities were in scarcity against this new unknown enemy and were challenged with the overloaded patient flow, scarcity of healthcare staff, and evolving treatment modalities with a better understanding of the virus each day. Ophthalmology as a “branch of medicine” suffered challenges initially because of a lack of guidelines for patient management, close working distance during routine examinations, and halt of major surgeries, including cataracts. Pediatric ophthalmology had major implications, as reduced outpatient visits would mean deeper amblyopia, and changed lifestyles, including online classes and home refinement, predisposing children to myopia, digital eye strain, and worsening of strabismus.

<https://www.dovepress.com/impact-of-covid-19-on-pediatric-ophthalmology-care-lessons-learned-peer-reviewed-fulltext-article-PHMT>

### **RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS**

#### **CDC Issues First DoxyPEP Guidelines**

*Poz* | 4 October 2023

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued its first proposed guidelines for using the antibiotic doxycycline as post-exposure prophylaxis to prevent bacterial sexually transmitted infections (STIs), an approach known as doxyPEP. The guidelines, published in the Federal Register on October 2, will be open for public comment for 45 days. “Doxy PEP is moving STI prevention efforts into the 21st century,” Jonathan Mermin, MD, MPH, director of CDC’s National Center for HIV, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, said in a statement. “We need game-changing innovations to turn the STI epidemic around, and this is a major step in the right direction.”

<https://www.poz.com/article/cdc-issues-first-doxy pep-guidelines>

#### **'Motherhood is hard': Young, HIV-positive mums in South Africa open up about regret and anger**

*News24* | 4 October 2023

In many African cultures, mothers are expected to be resilient, happy and tenacious. But what about the often “silenced” aspect of motherhood? A recent study found that young mothers were dealing with intersecting psychological, socioeconomic, health, cultural and physiological dynamics. Their HIV status created another layer of complexity due to the attached health responsibilities, stigma and shame. It's time to shift the conversation from conventional and rigid constructions of motherhood to a more open, inclusive picture across Africa.

<https://www.news24.com/life/newsletters/lovebytes/morenews/motherhood-is-hard-young-hiv-positive-mums-in-south-africa-open-up-about-regret-and-anger-20231004-4>

#### **PEPFAR Limp into Uncertain Future after Failure of US Congress to Authorise Five-Year Plan**

*Health Policy Watch* | 4 October 2023

The failure of the US Congress to reauthorize a five-year budget for the world's largest aid programme for global health, the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), by its 30 September deadline doesn't mean that it will automatically end – but without broad bipartisan support, it limps into an uncertain future.

<https://healthpolicy-watch.news/the-moral-disgrace-of-us-congress-failure-to-reauthorize-pepfar/>

### **Unmet health needs for HIV, hypertension and diabetes in rural South Africa**

*EurekaAlert* | 4 October 2023

The burden of non-communicable diseases like hypertension and diabetes is increasing globally, especially in low-income and middle-income countries where they occur alongside epidemics of communicable diseases like HIV. A large public health survey in South Africa led by Emily Wong, M.D., has assessed the multimorbidity health needs of individuals and communities in rural KwaZulu-Natal and established a framework to quantify met and unmet health needs for individuals living with infectious and non-communicable diseases. The study is published in *The Lancet Global Health*.

<https://www.eurekaalert.org/news-releases/1003771>

### **Cervical cancer could be diagnosed earlier with new DNA biosensor**

*BioPharmaReporter* | 5 September 2023

Researchers from Chung-Ang University, Korea have developed a novel DNA biosensor which could result in early diagnosis of cervical cancer.

<https://www.biopharma-reporter.com/Article/2023/10/05/cervical-cancer-could-be-diagnosed-earlier-with-new-dna-biosensor>

### **Early Diagnosis and Treatment of HIV Critical for Preventing Neurologic Infections, Long-Term Study Shows**

*TheBodyPro* | 5 October 2023

Neurologic infections are more common among people living with HIV (PLWH) who have lower CD4 cell counts and higher viral loads than among those whose HIV is well-controlled, according to a long-term observational study in Canada.

<https://www.thebodypro.com/article/early-hiv-treatment-neurologic-infections-prevention-twihr>

### **MENTAL HEALTH AND GENDER INEQUALITY: THE DUAL CRISIS AFFECTING THE WORLD'S GIRLS AND WOMEN**

*United Nations Foundation* | 6 October 2023

There's a global mental health crisis crying out for action, and it's taking the biggest toll on girls and women, whose rights are rolling back around the world. Three gender equality experts discuss girls' and women's mental and emotional well-being. "Mental health has become a silent pandemic in the lives of many of our young women," Amina J. Mohammed said at the Generation Equality Midpoint Moment during diplomacy's biggest moment, the 78th Session of the UN General Assembly. Shining a light on the severity of the crisis, the Deputy Secretary-General was adamant that gender equality will remain out of reach — as will, by extension, all 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals — until we address this issue head-on.



<https://unfoundation.org/blog/post/mental-health-and-gender-inequality-the-dual-crisis-affecting-the-worlds-girls-and-women/>

### **In-depth: Can CO2 monitors help protect healthcare workers from TB?**

*Spotlight | 6 October 2023*

One of the ways that someone can become infected with tuberculosis (TB) is through airborne transmission – breathing in TB molecules that are exhaled into the air by a person with infectious TB. A way to decrease the risk of this type of transmission is by improving the ventilation or airflow in an enclosed space and diluting the air and TB molecules in the process. Spotlight previously reported on how ventilation can be improved to help reduce the transmission of airborne diseases like COVID-19 and TB. But how do we know when exactly ventilation in a room falls to dangerously low levels? One solution is to use carbon dioxide (CO2) monitors.

<https://www.spotlightnsp.co.za/2023/10/06/in-depth-can-co2-monitors-help-protect-healthcare-workers-from-tb/>

### **JERRY COOVDIA: THE SOUTH AFRICAN DOCTOR WHO LED THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV IN CHILDREN**

*Health-e News | 9 October 2023*

South African-born Professor Hoosen “Jerry” Coovadia, renowned academic and prominent anti-apartheid activist, passed away on 4 October. As a paediatrician I was privileged to know and work with him over two decades. Prior to that I knew him when we were both health activists in apartheid South Africa.

<https://health-e.org.za/2023/10/09/jerry-coovadia-the-south-african-doctor-who-led-the-fight-against-hiv-in-children/>

### **Interview: A simple device used after birth can help save lives, says award-winning young innovator**

*Spotlight | 9 October 2023*

As a child growing up in the Ugandan capital of Kampala, Maureen Etuket used a screwdriver to dismantle electronic appliances and toy trucks. “I was around eight, nine years old,” she says. “I guess it just excited me.” Slightly over a decade later, this curiosity is driving her quest to find solutions to public healthcare challenges. Last month, Etuket’s Smart PVD device [Postpartum Haemorrhage Volumetric Drape] won the Mandela Rhodes Foundation’s award for social impact in Africa – the 2023 Äänit Prize – with a cash grant of \$38 000. At the awards ceremony in Cape Town, judges described the device as “a brilliantly practical intervention that can immediately and directly improve outcomes for patients”.

<https://www.spotlightnsp.co.za/2023/10/09/interview-a-simple-device-used-after-birth-can-help-save-lives-says-award-winning-young-innovator/>

### **Chronic heart condition survivor becomes health warrior after two open-heart surgeries**

*City Press | 9 October 2023*

Forty-nine-year-old Lillian Maseka lives to tell her tale of how she has remarkably lived a normal life after being cut open twice for two major heart operations that saved her life. Having endured a lifelong heart condition that led to two surgical procedures at the Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital in

Pretoria, the mother of two said she finally decided to share her journey, hoping to light the way for others facing similar challenges. Maseka's first heart surgery was a double-valve replacement surgery – a procedure involving the replacement of both the mitral and aortic valves of the heart.

<https://www.news24.com/citypress/news/chronic-heart-condition-survivor-becomes-health-warrior-after-two-open-heart-surgeries-20231009>

### **Advancing Vaccine Manufacturing: African nations need to collaborate to boost pharmaceutical production**

*The Independent* | 9 October 2023

Civil society organizations, government representatives, and the private sector convened at a high-level policy symposium in Kampala on September 27-28 to address the critical issue of pharmaceutical production and access in Africa. The symposium aimed to explore ways to increase local production, reduce dependence on imports, and improve access to drugs and vaccines. Rangarirai Machemdze, the coordinator of SEATINI Southern Africa, highlighted the stark reality that although Africa constitutes over 25% of the global pharmaceutical market, it produces only 2% of the drugs it consumes.

<https://www.independent.co.ug/advancing-vaccine-manufacturing-african-nations-need-to-collaborate-to-boost-pharmaceutical-production/>

### **[WATCH] Yvette Raphael's incredible journey of two decades with HIV**

*Bhekisisa* | 9 October 2023

Yvette Raphael has taken antiretroviral (ARVs) pills each day of her life for the past 22 years. She was diagnosed with HIV in 2000. ARVs have transformed her condition from a death sentence to a chronic disease. She can live a long, healthy life, as long as she takes her treatment correctly. But, even though her family helps her to remember to take her pills, it hasn't been easy. There's been times she wanted to stop. And people with HIV are up to eight times more likely to have depression and experience anxiety, which makes it harder to stick to treatment.

<https://bhekisisa.org/multimedia/videos/2023-10-09-watch-yvette-raphaels-incredible-journey-of-two-decades-with-hiv/>

### **World Mental Health Day: Mental health is a universal human right, declares WHO**

*IOL* | 10 October 2023

WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia, Poonam Khetrpal said, "The focus of human rights has historically been on needs such as food, shelter, and healthcare. "However, mental health stands as a critical pillar for human wellbeing. Recognising that mental health is a universal human right is acknowledging the relationship between mental health and the overall quality of life."

<https://www.iol.co.za/lifestyle/health/mind/world-mental-health-day-mental-health-is-a-universal-human-right-declares-who-dc779adb-ed46-593b-ab7f-8bda5d996d2f>

### **WHO introduces new pilot scheme for Expert Review Panel for Diagnostic Products for neglected tropical diseases**

*Reliefweb* | 10 October 2023

The World Health Organization (WHO) is taking a significant step to address challenges in diagnostics for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) by introducing a pilot scheme for a WHO Expert Review Panel for Diagnostic Products (ERPDP) for NTDs. This pilot initiative aims to enhance the quality assurance and accessibility of NTD diagnostic tools for health-care providers. The landscape of in-vitro diagnostics (IVDs) is rapidly evolving, posing significant challenges to procurers, health-care programmes, and authorities for public health and patient care. Notably, in the field of NTD diagnostics, challenges are multiple. Low profit margins and limited returns on investment make the NTD diagnostics market unattractive to manufacturers and suppliers, resulting in uncertainty about the quality of many NTD diagnostic products.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/who-introduces-new-pilot-scheme-expert-review-panel-diagnostic-products-neglected-tropical-diseases>

## **PREVENTION IS NEEDED ON ALL FRONTS TO STEM THE TIDE OF NEW HIV INFECTIONS**

*Health-e News | 10 October 2023*

New HIV infections are still a major driver of the epidemic. According to UNAIDS adolescent girls and young women are disproportionately affected. Around the world, this population group accounts for about 4000 new infections every week. In South Africa, where the highest number of people with HIV live, new infections among women and girls aged 15-24 is estimated at 43,300 a year. But the country is adding new tools to its HIV-prevention arsenal.

<https://health-e.org.za/2023/10/10/prevention-is-needed-on-all-fronts-to-stem-the-tide-of-new-hiv-infections/>

## **Will the Earth's changing climate make TB spread faster?**

*Bhekisisa | 10 October 2023*

The world wants to end tuberculosis (TB) by 2030. But with our planet's climate changing, this might be an unrealistic goal. Changing weather patterns will cause TB to spread — not so much because places are getting hotter or drier, but because disruptive storms, heatwaves and droughts will become more common in the future. When people have to flee their homes because of climate disasters and seek refuge in crowded shelters, TB can spread easily. Disrupted health services for things like TB and HIV treatment and not having enough healthy food will make things worse. In the third piece in our series on the links between climate change and health, we take a deep dive into what it means for the fight against TB.

<https://bhekisisa.org/health-news-south-africa/2023-10-10-will-the-earths-changing-climate-make-tb-spread-faster/>

## **Raising the bar for stem cell research: Q&A with Jack Mosher**

*Spectrum | 10 October 2023*

Stem cells have proven to be powerful — and popular — tools for understanding human biology and conditions such as autism. But there is an urgent need for standardization and quality control, says a task force of scientists organized by the International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR). For example, although researchers typically submit only their cleanest and best-characterized cell lines to

stem cell banks, the WiCell Research Institute, in Madison, Wisconsin, has shared that more than one-third of submitted cell lines fail quality testing.

<https://www.spectrumnews.org/opinion/q-and-a/raising-the-bar-for-stem-cell-research-qa-with-jack-mosher/>

### **Malaria Vaccine Recommended by WHO Could Help Fix Supply Issues**

*Drug Topics | 10 October 2023*

A new vaccine indicated for the prevention of malaria in children has been recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). The vaccine, R21/Matrix-M, is the second recommended by the organization, potentially alleviating some of the supply issues that have negatively impacted campaigns to control transmission of the virus. This recommendation follows that of the RTS,S/AS01 vaccine, which was recommended in 2021. Both vaccines have been deemed safe and effective in preventing malaria in children, who are disproportionately affected, especially in regions such as Africa, where nearly 500,000 children die each year from the disease.

<https://www.drugtopics.com/view/malaria-vaccine-recommended-by-who-could-help-fix-supply-issues>

### **J&J LIFTS PATENT ON MDR-TB DRUG BUT IT MAY BE YEARS BEFORE SOUTH AFRICA BENEFITS**

*Health-e News | 11 October 2023*

Pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson (J&J) recently announced that it would lift patents on the life drug bedaquiline. Bedaquiline is a key component in the cocktail of drugs used to treat multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) which develops when the TB bacteria build resistance to two of the strongest anti-TB drugs. J&J is currently the sole manufacturer of bedaquiline. The announcement paves the way for the manufacturing of cheaper, generic versions of the drug to be sold in 134 low- and middle income countries.

<https://health-e.org.za/2023/10/11/jj-lifts-patent-on-mdr-tb-drug-but-it-may-be-years-before-south-africa-benefits/>

### **Latent HIV Triggers inflammation Despite Treatment**

*Poz | 11 October 2023*

Even among people on antiretroviral treatment, cells in the viral reservoir continue to produce HIV genetic material and proteins that set off an ongoing immune response, potentially contributing to a host of health problems, according to three recent studies. “No one actively questioned the presence of an active reservoir, but here [the researchers] find evidence that it might in fact matter,” long-time HIV cure researchers Steven Deeks, MD, of the University of California San Francisco, who was not involved in the research, told Science News.

<https://www.poz.com/article/latent-hiv-triggers-immune-activation-despite-treatment>

### **Unvaccinated COVID-19 survivors face higher risk of heart complications, Singapore study finds**

*Medical Xpress | 11 October 2023*

Unvaccinated people who have recovered from COVID-19 are at heightened risk of heart complications almost a year later, a national study led by Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) and affiliated faculty has found. The study, based on testing and medical claims records of 106,012 people resident in Singapore and diagnosed with COVID-19 between 1 September and 31 November 2021, was carried out during the period of the delta variant predominance. The study found that many (912 patients) who have recovered from COVID-19 have reported lingering after-effects, consistent with the long COVID syndrome.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-10-unvaccinated-covid-survivors-higher-heart.html>

### **Rejected Claims for PrEP Linked to New HIV Diagnoses**

*Contagion Live | 11 October 2023*

It has long been established that PrEP plays a significant role in preventing new HIV infections. However, there can be barriers to care that decrease uptake of these medications due to a variety of reasons. A new study presented as a poster at IDWeek 2023 titled "The Real-World Impact of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Prescription Uptake and Dispensing Status on HIV Infection Risk in the US" explored patients' ability to secure PrEP, time to dispense it, and the potential relationship with HIV.

<https://www.contagionlive.com/view/rejected-claims-for-prep-linked-to-new-hiv-diagnoses>

### **Immune and Hormonal Features of Long COVID**

*Poz | 11 October 2023*

Some people may experience chronic symptoms for months or years after an acute viral infection. Long COVID, a syndrome that develops in some people after an acute SARS-CoV-2 infection, is a prominent recent example. More than 200 long COVID symptoms have been documented. Typical ones include extreme fatigue, cognitive impairment, post-exertional malaise, and respiratory problems. Research suggests that about one in eight people who survive an acute SARS-CoV-2 infection go on to have persistent symptoms. The processes that give rise to long COVID remain unclear.

<https://www.poz.com/article/immune-hormonal-features-long-covid>

## **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>

### **Masters in Adult Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal**

Adult education is a very broad discipline, and our programmes will be of benefit to anyone who is interacting with adults in some kind of educative relationship (including developing or running training/courses/workshops for adults, or producing learning/promotional material), as is the case for your organisation. The discipline of adult education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal has a long history of working closely with a range of organisations and individuals involved in community development, education or training in a variety of sectors, including land, environment, health, gender, ECD, water, unemployment, savings, and so on.

We offer a two-year part-time coursework Masters (i.e. modules offered on the PMB campus in the first year, followed by a thesis) and a full-time or part-time research Masters (i.e. thesis only). Our coursework Masters includes specific modules to help people understand theories about how adults learn (differently from children), and how to develop curricula and materials that will be of most benefit to adults in communities or other settings. Lectures are held on Saturdays. Our research Masters allows people to closely study an area of particular interest to them, in relation to adult education.

The entry requirement for both coursework and research Masters is a Bachelor of Education (Honours) or equivalent degree with a 60% average (although this does not guarantee entry into this programme). In addition to the average, Masters by Full dissertation applicants are required to submit a brief description/concept note of the research they intend to pursue.

There is more information (admission requirements, how to apply, etc.) on the postgraduate programmes in Education (including Adult Education) at: <https://soe.ukzn.ac.za/postgraduate-information/>

Applications close end-October 2023.

### **The NDoH and CSIR Call for Book Chapters**

#### **The Emerging South African National Digital Health System: Strategies, Approaches and Experiences**

##### **About**

The book, a collaboration between NDoH and CSIR, aims to showcase strategies and experiences in developing a National Health Information System that facilitates efficient, personalized healthcare information transfer across various boundaries. Undergoing a double-blind peer review and editing, it serves as a detailed guide to the evolving South African National Digital Health System, reflecting on the substantial research and strategies that have influenced its formation, with a focus on the scholarly depth and validity of the results.

Each chapter, contributing to an enriched discussion, will dissect a specific facet of the system, assisting readers in understanding its integral components and the ensuing challenges and opportunities within the South African Health Ecosystem. Contributions from several authors are encouraged, bringing in diverse perspectives and firsthand experiences to foster a comprehensive narrative on the system's ongoing improvements in the context of South African Digital Health.

Opinion pieces in line with the NHI, Digital Health Strategy, and efforts to strengthen the Health System are welcome. Further details can be found in the Submission Guidelines.

#### **IMPORTANT DATES**

- SEPTEMBER, 2023: Presentations
- 22 OCTOBER, 2023: Abstract submissions
- 20 NOVEMBER, 2023: Abstract feedback
- 8 FEBRUARY, 2024: Submission of full paper for review
- 15 MARCH, 2024: Final corrected paper submission

**SUBMISSION LINK** - <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=sadhs24>

**Any queries and abstract submissions to:** [digitalhealth@health.gov.za](mailto:digitalhealth@health.gov.za)

**Subject: SA National Digital Health System Book**

#### **ABSTRACT FORMAT**

- Title of the Chapter
- Purpose
- Study design/methodology/approach
- Findings
- Originality/value
- Keywords Author/s

#### **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>

#### **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, please go to <https://www.hst.org.za/publications/Pages/SAHR2022.aspx>

## **CONFERENCES AND EVENTS**

### **Towards Universal Health Coverage, Strengthening Primary Health Care: A whole of Government, whole of Society approach conference**

The South African National Department of Health, the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, the World Health Organization and Health Systems Trust cordially invites you to participate



in a Primary Health Care (PHC) themed, **Towards Universal Health Coverage, Strengthening Primary Health Care: A whole of Government, whole of Society approach**, conference.

When: 14-17 November 2023

Where: to be held at the East London International Conference Centre

The goals of the conference are to reinvigorate South Africa's commitment to the PHC approach as a strategic component of comprehensive health services in a unified health system, within a National Health Insurance (NHI) dispensation and to re-commit the country (i.e. government, citizens and social partners) to the PHC principles as being central to health promotion, disease prevention, and building a people-centred and resilient health system that is able to adapt and respond to emerging health challenges in a rapidly changing world.

For more information do go to the [conference web page](#).

<https://www.hst.org.za/media/Pages/PHC-Conference.aspx>

### **Connecting the African healthcare community for a sustainable and innovative future**

The largest healthcare gathering in the African region will return from 17-19 October 2023. Join the most influential healthcare exhibition as we bring you the future of healthcare!

When: 17-19 October 2023

Where: Gallagher Convention Centre, Johannesburg

Register: <https://www.africahealthexhibition.com/en/home.html>

### **13th World Congress of the World Society for Pediatric Infectious Diseases (WSPID)**

When: 12-17 November 2023

Where: Durban ICC, Durban

For more information, go to: <https://www.emedevents.com/medical-hybrid-events-2023/13th-world-congress-of-the-world-society-for-pediatric-infectious-diseases-wspid>

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

### **JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

#### **ADVANCED CLINICAL CARE (ACC) CLINICIAN**

Closing date: 17 October 2023

[https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Health-Systems-Strengthening-\(HSS\)-Unit-ADVANCED-CLINICAL-CARE-\(ACC\)-CLINICIAN.aspx](https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Health-Systems-Strengthening-(HSS)-Unit-ADVANCED-CLINICAL-CARE-(ACC)-CLINICIAN.aspx)

#### **CLINICAL ADVISOR**

Closing date: 17 October 2023

[https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Health-Systems-Strengthening-\(HSS\)-Unit--Unfinished-Business-Project-Clinical-Advisor.aspx](https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Health-Systems-Strengthening-(HSS)-Unit--Unfinished-Business-Project-Clinical-Advisor.aspx)

**CROSS-SITE FACILITATOR: PAEDIATRIC AND ADOLESCENT CO-ORDINATORS**

Closing date: 17 October 2023

[https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Health-Systems-Strengthening-\(HSS\)-Unit-----Cross-Site-Facilitator-----Paediatric.aspx](https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Health-Systems-Strengthening-(HSS)-Unit-----Cross-Site-Facilitator-----Paediatric.aspx)

**DATA CAPTURER**

Closing date: 17 October 2023

[https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Health-Systems-Strengthening-\(HSS\)-Unit--Data-Capturer.aspx](https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Health-Systems-Strengthening-(HSS)-Unit--Data-Capturer.aspx)