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ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

Health system determinants of tuberculosis mortality in South Africa: a causal loop model

BMC Health Services Research | 26 April 2021

Muhammad Osman, Aaron Karat, Munira Khan, Sue-Ann Meehan, Arne von Delft, et al

Tuberculosis (TB) is a major public health concern in South Africa and TB-related mortality remains unacceptably high. Numerous clinical studies have examined the direct causes of TB-related mortality, but its wider, systemic drivers are less well understood. Applying systems thinking, we aimed to identify factors underlying TB mortality in South Africa and describe their relationships. At a meeting organised by the 'Optimising TB Treatment Outcomes' task team of the National TB Think Tank, we drew on the wide expertise of attendees to identify factors underlying TB mortality in South Africa. We generated a causal loop diagram to illustrate how these factors relate to each other.

The compounding effect of having HIV and a disability on child mortality among mothers in South Africa

PLOS One | 5 May 2021

Ilhom Akobirshoev, Hussaini Zandom, Allyala Nandakumar, Nora Groce, Mark Blecher, Monika Mitra

Previous research on the association between maternal HIV status and child mortality in sub-Saharan Africa was published between 2005–2011. Findings from these studies showed a higher child mortality risk among children born to HIV-positive mothers. While the population of women with disabilities is growing in developing countries, we found no research that examined the association between maternal disability in HIV-positive mothers, and child mortality in sub-Saharan Africa. This study examined the potential compounding effect of maternal disability and HIV status on child mortality in South Africa.

African based researchers' output on models for the transmission dynamics of infectious diseases and public health interventions: A scoping review

PLOS One | 6 May 2021

Olatunji Adetokunboh, Zinle Mthombothi, Emanuel Cominic, Sylvie Djomba-Njankou, Juliet Pulliam

Applied epidemiological models are used in predicting future trends of diseases, for the basic understanding of disease and health dynamics, and to improve the measurement of health indicators.

Mapping the research outputs of epidemiological modelling studies concerned with transmission dynamics of infectious diseases and public health interventions in Africa will help to identify the areas with substantial levels of research activities, areas with gaps, and research output trends.

Now and then: lessons from the rollout of ART

The Lancet Global Health Editorial | 11 May 2021

June 5 marks 40 years since the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention first reported cases of the disease that would later become known as AIDS. The early years of the epidemic were defined by fear, illness, and certain death for those infected, with the first antiretroviral treatment (ART), zidovudine (AZT), being approved by the US Food and Drug Administration in 1987. Yet the road to 26 million people receiving ART around the world in 2020 has been a long one. At the 13th International AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa, in July 2000, Ugandan HIV/AIDS researcher and physician Peter Mugenyi asked “Where are the drugs? The drugs are where the disease is not. And where is the disease? The disease is where the drugs are not.”

Factors associated with external HIV-related stigma and psychological distress among people living with HIV in South Africa

SSM – Population Health | Vol 14, June 2021

Nolusindiso Ncetakalo, Musawenkosi Mabaso, John Joska, Leickness Simbayi

HIV-related stigma and psychological distress among people living with HIV (PLHIV) pose a public health challenge in most African countries. This study aims to investigate the association between HIV-related stigmatizing attitudes and psychological distress amongst PLHIV in South Africa using the 2012 nationally representative population-based household survey.

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RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

Compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act No. 4 of 2013 (POPIA)

South African Journal of Science | 3 May 2021

Compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act No. 4 of 2013 (POPIA) will be mandatory for all sectors in South Africa from 1 July 2021. To promote understanding and compliance with POPIA within the research community in South Africa, a Code of Conduct for Research is being developed through a transparent and consultative process led by the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf). The Commentary by Adams and colleagues describes the purpose and process of the Code of Conduct for Research which, it is envisaged, will be submitted by ASSAf to the Information Regulator by early June 2021.

When will you get your COVID jab? Find out.

BHEKISISA | 7 May 2021

Struggling to figure out when your turn for a COVID vaccine will arrive? Bhekisisa and Media Hack have teamed up to create infographics that make it easier to decipher. This is a living document: when the timeline or guidelines change, we will create an updated graphic and upload it.

How migration events have dramatically reshaped the genetic landscape of Africa

Maverick Citizen | 9 May 2021

The largest genetic study ever undertaken of South Africans has challenged the presumption that all southeastern Bantu-speaking groups are a single genetic entity – and this has a huge implication for the study of diseases. The southeastern Bantu language family includes isiZulu, isiXhosa, siSwati, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, Sepedi, Sesotho and Setswana. Despite linguistic differences, these groups of people are treated mostly as a single group in genetic studies. Almost 80% of South Africans speak one of the southeastern Bantu languages as their first language. Their origins can be traced to farmers of west central Africa, whose descendants over the past 2,000 years spread south of the equator and into southern Africa. Professor Michèle Ramsay, director of the Sydney Brenner Institute for Molecular Bioscience at the University of the Witwatersrand University (Wits) and the corresponding author of the study, said to investigate this, “the largest study with genome-wide genotyping in South African populations was

undertaken with 5,000 participants. This is a very detailed analysis of genetic markers across the whole genome.”

Your guide to side-effects: What you can expect after a COVID jab

BHEKISISA | 11 May 2021

In less than a week, on May 17, the health department says South Africa will start to vaccinate people aged 60 years and older, as well as 700 000 healthcare workers not covered by the country’s COVID vaccine implementation study, Sisonke. Two jabs will be used: Pfizer’s vaccine in metros and Johnson and Johnson’s (J&J) shot in rural districts. In early May we received our first batch of just over 300 000 Pfizer vaccines. Samples of those jabs are currently being examined by the National Control Lab in Bloemfontein to ensure they’re of an adequate standard. But how will the Pfizer and J&J shots affect you – can you, for instance, expect any side-effects?

COVID-19: Do I still need to wear a mask when vaccinated, and other questions

Spotlight | 11 May 2021

With South Africa’s COVID-19 mass vaccination rollout set to start on 17 May, many more people, for now, those older than 60 years, will start receiving their jabs. What, if anything, will change for those who have been vaccinated in South Africa, and what have other countries done in this regard?

Must I still wear a mask when vaccinated?

For now, it appears that the same rules, such as mask-wearing and social distancing, will remain in place for everyone. “Presently the South African guidance on public health interventions to prevent SARS-CoV-2 has not been altered to accommodate for any impact that the vaccine may have on transmission,” says Dr Kerrigan McCarthy from the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD).

Mkhize: Health workers to be vaccinated alongside elderly in Phase 2

EWN | 12 May 2021

Health Minister Dr Zweli Mkhize said that Pfizer vaccine jabs would be transported to the allocated sites across the country from Wednesday to ensure that it was ready for the rollout of the second phase of the vaccine programme on Monday. Next week, the elderly who have registered for the COVID-19 vaccine programme will be queuing at facilities to be inoculated. The Health Department was anticipating a slow start to government’s second phase of the vaccine programme but was hoping that it would increase when more vaccines become available over time. However, Mkhize, said that with the majority of healthcare workers still not vaccinated, they would be able to continue to take their job alongside the elderly.

Exposing children to smoking is like suffocating them - child health expert

Times Live | 12 May 2021

A leading child health specialist has described the exposure of children to second-hand cigarette smoke and other electronic nicotine delivery devices, such as e-cigarettes and vapers, as similar to squeezing life out of children and taking the breath out of their lungs. Prof Anthony Westwood, a retired paediatrician from Red Cross Children’s Hospital and lecturer at the University of Cape Town’s department of child and adolescent health, said exposing children to nicotine not only denied them a choice not to get addicted, but could also have devastating consequences to their developing brains.

Obesity in South Africa: Every Body needs Everybody

News24 | 12 May 2021

This year’s World Obesity Day theme was ‘Every Body Needs Everybody’, because we all have a role to play in supporting and advocating for people living with obesity. How big is the problem of overweight and obesity in South Africa? Obesity is a public health problem in South Africa. The results of national surveys show an increase in obesity, particularly among women 45-55 years old, but also among preschool children and adolescents.

Covid-19 vaccination roll-out: South Africa’s greatest political event of 2021

Daily Maverick | 12 May 2021

While the political focus of the last few months has been on the issues around Ace Magashule, the ANC and its ‘step-aside resolution, the Covid-19 pandemic and the vaccination roll-out could now take over as the key issue for the rest of the year. In particular, we may be about to enter a period of what could be called ‘vaccination frustration’. It may be important to assess government’s record on the vaccine roll-out, and how this will be measured politically. It has the scope to pit one province against others, and possibly

even the private sector against government, with the judiciary being forced to take divisive decisions. But if there is a perception that government is failing, there could well be a groundswell of frustration felt by voters and the economy.

COVID-19: SOUTH AFRICA HAS NOT ENTERED A NEW WAVE

NICD | 13 May 2021

The recent rapid increase in the percentage testing positive for COVID-19 and the 7-day moving average of confirmed cases nationally, and across all provinces, is cause for concern. Data from the last reporting week (3 to 9 May 2021) showed an overall 46% new case increase in comparison to the previous reporting week (26 April to 2 May 2021) with the Northern Cape (68%), Gauteng (63%) and Limpopo (47%) provinces topping the list. Although there has not been an increase in hospital admissions, COVID-19 related deaths increased by 18% in comparison to the preceding week with the following provinces accounting for 81% of all reported fatalities: Eastern Cape and Western Cape (21% respectively), Gauteng (20%) and KwaZulu-Natal (19%). Nationally however, South Africa has not met the threshold for a new wave. According to a Ministerial Advisory Committee Technical Working Group, a resurgence occurs when the 7-day moving average incidence exceeds 30% of the previous wave's peak. Nationally the 7-day moving average peaked at ~18,800 cases on 11 January 2021, equating to a new wave threshold 7-day moving average incidence of ~5,600 cases per day. As of 12 May 2021 the national 7-day moving average incidence is ~1,950 cases.

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TRAINING AND RESOURCES

The SARETI Research Ethics Leadership programme

The South African Research Ethics Training Initiative (SARETI) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal has been awarded competitive funding from the Fogarty International Center (FIC) of the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), to offer doctoral training in research ethics through the SARETI Leadership Programme, beginning 2021. The main goal is to train high-level African research ethicists who will produce local and internationally relevant scholarship and leadership in research ethics in Africa. Applications are now open for scholarships and for admission into the SARETI Doctoral programme. Please consult advert for full details of the programme and the application process.

FPD Nursing Education Unit: Short Course in Integrated Case Management and ICD10 Coding

Date: 14 – 15 June 2021

Venue: Pretoria, Gauteng

Health Systems Training Institute

The Health Systems Training Institute (HSTi) offers innovative, tailored and application-driven clinical and non-clinical training solutions aimed at strengthening health systems at all levels and improving the quality of primary health care. Courses on offer include accredited short programmes, non-accredited short programmes and full NQF programmes.

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PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

International Policy Statement for Universal Use of Kangaroo Mother Care for Preterm and Low Birthweight Infants

Complications of prematurity and low birthweight are now the leading cause of neonatal deaths worldwide. In November 2015, The World Health Organization (WHO) issued recommendations for the care of preterm infants, including kangaroo mother care (KMC), defined as care of preterm infants carried skin-to-skin with the mother and exclusive breastfeeding or feeding with breastmilk. Although the WHO preterm

guidelines apply to all settings, much of the evidence base for the recommendations comes from studies in health care facilities in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC). It should be noted, however, that some evidence also exists for the benefits of KMC in preterm and low birthweight infants in high-income countries (HIC). Upon review of the evidence, we agree that KMC provides benefits to preterm and low birthweight infants in high, middle, and low income settings.

National Health Research Strategy: Research Priorities for South Africa: 2021-2024

The development of health research priorities is part of the mandate of the National Health Research Committee (NHRC). Research priorities will ensure that health research agendas and research resources focus on priority health problems. The NHRC in identifying health research priorities, took into consideration the followings:

- the burden of disease.
- the cost-effectiveness of interventions aimed at reducing the burden of disease.
- the availability of human and institutional resources for the implementation of an intervention at the level closest to the affected communities.
- the health needs of vulnerable groups such as woman, older persons, children, and people with disabilities; and
- the health needs of communities.

WHO guideline on health workforce development, attraction, recruitment and retention in rural and remote areas

Securing equitable access to health services for rural and remote populations continues to be a challenge for governments and policymakers around the world. At the core of this complex challenge is a global shortage of well trained, skilled, motivated health workers. In 2016, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated a shortfall of 18 million health workers to achieve universal health coverage by 2030, primarily in low- and middle-income settings. Shortages are often felt most acutely in rural, remote and hard-to-reach areas, where health workforce densities are generally lower than national averages. Even in settings where national shortages are not observed, issues of maldistribution can occur, leaving some populations behind. Rural populations, which tend to be poorer and less healthy, fall disproportionately into this category.

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CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

UKZN College of Health Science: Long COVID and Determinants of Clinical Outcomes

With more than 138 million documented infections and 2.97 million deaths worldwide, the COVID-19 pandemic continues unabated. The clinical spectrum of SARS-CoV2 infection ranges from asymptomatic infection to life-threatening and fatal disease. Current estimates are that approximately 78.8 million people globally have “recovered”; however, clinicians are observing and reading reports of patients with persistent severe symptoms and even substantial end-organ dysfunction after SARS-CoV-2 infection. Since COVID-19 is a new disease, much about the clinical course remains uncertain—in particular, the possible long-term health consequences, if any. This webinar will shed some light on the possible long term effects.

Date: 13 May 2021

Time: 15:00 – 16:00

Register: https://ukzn.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ea2ViA0nSQ2v2f9-RSIBnw

Live stream the event: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBxYStNRUP_vC38qO0E3ukg

International Kangaroo Care Awareness Day

International Kangaroo Care Awareness Day on May 15th is a global event celebrated since 2011 by communities that appreciate Kangaroo Care parents, organizations, and professionals. Kangaroo mother care (KMC) refers to the practice of providing continuous skin-to-skin contact between mother and baby, exclusive breastmilk feeding, and early discharge from hospital. KMC is an especially important intervention for babies that are born premature. To highlight the benefits of KMC, we encourage you to take a few moments to read a new article, watch a video, engage in a conversation, and share your

stories with us.

Date: 15 May 2021

Live Webcast: Balancing the Power to Meet the Needs of ALL Women and Children

Inequities relating to gender, age, or socioeconomic status inhibit coverage of client-centered maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH) and family planning services in countries around the world. If countries are to meet their Sustainable Development Goals and national targets, then they must work to better reach and include the voices of groups with less power and access to MNCH and family planning services. Please join the Wilson Center's Maternal Health Initiative, in collaboration with the U.S. Agency for International Development's MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership, for a panel discussion highlighting country-led strategies to improve equity and meet the needs of ALL women and children.

Date: 19 May 2021

Time: 9:00 – 10:30 (ET)

A Promising Sexual Violence Intervention for Post School Education and Training (PSET) Female Students in South Africa

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has developed the Policy Framework to Address Gender-Based Violence in the Post-School Education and Training System (2020) which prioritizes research, prevention, response and support for survivors within the sector. Comprehensive literature reviews conducted to inform the development of the GBV Policy Framework highlighted that there is a lack of evidence-informed, campus-based, sexual gender-based violence (SGBV) interventions in the country. Therefore, research was needed to understand the prevalence and context in which female students experience SGBV in PSET institutions and to inform the development of evidence-informed, campus-based SGBV interventions which address its underlying drivers. To fill this critical gap in knowledge and practice, the SAMRC Gender and Health Research Unit (SAMRC GHRU) conducted formative research, developed and piloted the Ntombi Vimbela! sexual violence intervention in selected TVET and University campuses. In collaboration with DHET, the SAMRC GHRU will disseminate the findings of the study in a webinar on 19 May 2021 from 10.00am-12.00pm. The webinar is targeting wider stakeholders including practitioners, programmers, and management in post-school education and training (PSET) institutions, policymakers, researchers and other interested parties working in the GBV field. The advert, which has a link for registration to attend the webinar, is attached.

Date: 19 May 2021

Time: 10:00 – 12:00

Register: <https://www.samrc.ac.za/calendar/promising-sexual-violence-intervention-post-school-education-and-training-pset-female>

Respectful Maternal Care: Are we trending in the right direction? A conversation about RMC Approaches and Routine Monitoring & Evaluation

High quality maternal health care requires ensuring respect and dignity and the prevention of mistreatment. A focus on the experience of care is increasingly appreciated and recognized and approaches to advancing this area continue to emerge. However, less is known around how to routinely measure and evaluate respectful care efforts to foster accountability and to track progress. Join us for a discussion in which we will explore evidence, experiences and perspectives on routine monitoring and evaluation for respectful maternal care in Africa. During this webinar we will discuss a research paper written by webinar organizers and speakers, entitled, "A Rapid Review of Available Evidence to Inform Indicators for Routine Monitoring and Evaluation of Respectful Maternity Care." Please read this paper in advance in order to fully engage in the respectful maternal care measurement discussion. This webinar is co-hosted by the East, Central, and Southern Africa Health Community and the University of California San Francisco.

Date: 25 May 2021

Time: 16:00 – 17:30 EAT (Nairobi); 9:00 – 10:30 EDT

Register: https://ucsf.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qGnkVELQOy-D2CXdlHSQ

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JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The Health Systems Trust currently has no available jobs.

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