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ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

Trapped Between Two Pandemics: Domestic Violence Cases Under COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown: A Scoping Review

International Quarterly of Community Health Education | 8 June 2021

Endurance Uzobo, Aboluwaji Ayinmore

Understanding crises through a social relations lens gives a clearer picture of the social structure of societies, organisations, households, and other intimate relationships within which catastrophic events emanates. Hence, paying attention to gender relations during disaster gives us a better understanding of how to critically comprehend power dynamics in pandemic situations. This is because as evidence has shown from various studies and observations in times of disastrous events, women may experience a re-emphasis of (i) traditional and lower household status (ii) worsening condition.

Diabetes in a TB and HIV-endemic South African population: Analysis of a virtual cohort using routine health data

PLOS One | 10 June 2021

Tsaone Tamuhla, Joel Dave, Peter Raubenheimer, Nicki Tiffin

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is currently undergoing an epidemiologic shift and the health systems in the region are dealing with the dual burden of infectious diseases and an increasing prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). NCDs are overtaking infectious disease as the leading cause of disability and mortality in the region. This epidemiologic transition is already evident in South Africa where, although Tuberculosis (TB) was still the overall leading cause of natural deaths from 2015–2017, in the same time period, Diabetes Mellitus (DM) was the second leading cause of death. The burden of DM is putting a strain on already struggling public health systems, and with an estimated 19 million people with diabetes in the region currently, projected to increase to 29 million by 2030, SSA is facing an impending diabetes epidemic.

Parental education and inequalities in child mortality: a global systematic review and meta-analysis

The Lancet | 10 June 2021

Mirza Balaj, Hunter York, Kam Sripada, Elodie Besnier, Hanne Vonen, et al.

Education and child survival have both been at the heart of the international development agendas for decades, yet large inequalities in education attainment persist within and between countries, as do large inequalities in child mortality rates. Despite decades of reports documenting education-related disparities in child survival, to our knowledge, no study to date has attempted to systematically quantify the effect of parental education on under-5 mortality on a global scale. Understanding how increased parental education might reduce child mortality rates and close within-country and between-country inequalities in child mortality is, therefore, of crucial importance to tackling social inequalities in health and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

TB prevention cascade at a district hospital in rural Eastern Cape, South Africa

International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease | 21 June 2021

B van de Water, T Meyer, M Wilson, C Young, B Gaunt, et al.

To identify steps in the TB preventive care cascade from routinely collected data among TB patients at a district hospital prior to the implementation of a novel TB program. This was a retrospective study. They adapted the TB prevention cascade to measure indicators routinely collected at district hospitals for TB using a cascade framework to evaluate outcomes in the cohort of close contacts. A total of 1,722 charts of TB patients were reviewed. The majority of patients (87%) were newly diagnosed with no previous episodes of TB. A total of 1,548 (90%) patients identified at least one close contact. A total of 7,548 contacts were identified with a median of 4.9 (range 1–16) contacts per patient. Among all contacts identified, 2,913 (39%) were screened for TB. Only 15 (0.5%) started TB preventive therapy and 122 (4.4%) started TB treatment. Nearly 25% of all medical history and clinical information was left unanswered among the 1,722 TB charts reviewed.

Asymptomatic COVID-19 in South Africa – implications for the control of transmission

International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease | 21 June 2021

M Paleker, Y Tembo, M-A Davies, H Mahomed, D Pienaar, et al.

Asymptomatic COVID-19 may contribute significantly to the pandemic trajectory based on global biological, epidemiological and modelling evidence. A retrospective analysis was done to determine the proportion of asymptomatic COVID-19 in the workplace during the lockdown period from 27 March to 31 May 2020. We found that nearly 45% of cases were asymptomatic at the time of the first test. This high proportion of asymptomatic COVID-19 cases has implications for interventions, such as enforcing quarantine of all close contacts of COVID-19 cases regardless of symptoms.

The words we choose matter: recognising the importance of language in decolonising global health

The Lancet Global Health | 1 July 2021

Franziska Hommes, Helena Monzo, Rashida Ferrand, Meggan Harris, Lioba Hirsch, et al.

Recognition of the relevance of colonial history to the contemporary practice of global health is not new, but the recent increase in visibility and prominence given to it by global health institutions and flagship journals is welcome when accompanied by meaningful reflection and action. The goal of decolonising global health is to critically reflect on its history, identify hierarchies and culturally Eurocentric conceptions, and overcome the global inequities that such structures perpetuate. We must reflect on the terminology we use when we discuss global health challenges, phrase research questions, write papers, teach students, or interact with patients, research participants, and the public.

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RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

Statement for healthcare professionals: How COVID-19 vaccines are regulated for safety and effectiveness

World Health Organization | 11 June 2021

Healthcare professionals and public health authorities have a central role in discussing vaccination against COVID-19 with their patients. Vaccines play a critical role in preventing deaths, hospitalisation caused by infectious diseases. Emerging data on effectiveness indicates that licenced COVID-19 vaccines

are contributing to controlling the spread of the disease. Until widespread vaccination has been achieved, both vaccinated and unvaccinated people need to be aware of the additional protective behaviours required to control the pandemic locally.

New HIV/AIDS political declaration seeks to end inequalities and get on track to end AIDS by 2030

World Health Organization | 11 June 2021

Member States at the High-Level Meeting on HIV and AIDS adopted a Political Declaration in order to get the world on track to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. Re-committing to urgent action over the next five years, Member States agreed to a number of key focus areas which are highlighted in the article.

Vaccines and children

World Health Organization | 11 June 2021

Why does WHO recommend at this time, in June 2021, that vaccinating children is not a priority? When would their vaccination be prioritized? How is safety of these vaccines ensured? WHO's Chief Scientist Dr Soumya Swaminathan explains in Science in 5.

Week five: Aspen confirms 300,000 Johnson and Johnson jabs for SA teachers

Maverick Citizen | 14 June 2021

Aspen Pharmacare was "extremely disappointed" to hear that some batches of the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine mixed and finished at its Gqeberha site would not be released and used in South Africa's national Covid-19 vaccination programme. It said these doses will have to be "destroyed". However, together with Johnson & Johnson, it has committed to substituting this loss. Johnson and Johnson will "within days" provide the country with 300,000 vaccine doses "for South African teachers", Aspen said in a statement. Johnson & Johnson will also deliver "substantial quantities" of finished vaccines to South Africa "to replace the lost stock thereby ensuring the momentum in the South African vaccine initiative is maintained". Aspen will "within a week" release Johnson & Johnson doses manufactured from ingredients not impacted by the contamination at the plant in the US. In addition, it has doses of the vaccine in production which will become available in July. Aspen said it would elaborate on these quantities at a later stage.

Infants produce a strong immune response to COVID-19

Science Focus | 14 June 2021

Infants have relative protection from coronavirus because their bodies produce a strong immune response to it, according to a new study. The University of Bristol and Bristol Royal Hospital for Children conducted research which found that infants produce relatively high levels of antibodies and immune cells which protect against the virus, compared to adults. Researchers say the findings could help explain why younger children appear to be protected from the severe effects of COVID-19 at a time of their development when they could be more vulnerable.

Ending Covid means ending Aids, and ending both means ending inequality

Maverick Citizen | 14 June 2021

When it comes to communicable diseases, the lesson we should take from Covid-19 is that one person is all it takes to start a devastating pandemic. Is that fact enough of a wake-up for governments to seriously tackle the social and economic determinants of health and disease? Last week, at the opening of the tenth South African Aids Conference, Professor Salim Abdool Karim made a plenary presentation titled "HIV and Covid-19 in South Africa". It revealed how interdependent the HIV/Aids and Covid-19 pandemics are becoming.

COVID-19: Scientists discover source of life-threatening blood clots

Science Focus | 15 June 2021

Scientists in Ireland have identified how some COVID-19 patients can develop life-threatening clots. The researchers said the findings could lead to therapies that prevent it from happening. The work, led by researchers from RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences, is published in the Journal of Thrombosis and Haemostasis. Previous research has established that blood clotting is a significant cause of death in patients with COVID-19.

Soaring e-waste affects the health of millions of children, WHO warns

World Health Organization | 15 June 2021

Effective and binding action is urgently required to protect the millions of children, adolescents and expectant mothers worldwide whose health is jeopardized by the informal processing of discarded electrical or electronic devices according to a new ground-breaking report from the World Health Organization: *Children and Digital Dumpsites*. "With mounting volumes of production and disposal, the world faces what one recent international forum described as a mounting "tsunami of e-waste", putting lives and health at risk," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. "In the same way the world has rallied to protect the seas and their ecosystems from plastic and microplastic pollution, we need to rally to protect our most valuable resource –the health of our children – from the growing threat of e-waste." As many as 12.9 million women are working in the informal waste sector, which potentially exposes them to toxic e-waste and puts them and their unborn children at risk.

New rules say Covid-19 vaccines can be made mandatory in South Africa – this is the guide you should see

Business Tech | 15 June 2021

The Department of Employment and Labour has issued an updated occupational health and safety directive which, among other things, expressly permits an employer to implement a mandatory workplace vaccination policy subject to specific guidelines. Whether employers can or can't force employees to have the Covid-19 vaccination has, up until now, been widely debated, says law firm Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr. "While this latest directive clarifies the matter, it cautions employers that when implementing a mandatory workplace vaccination policy, the rights of employees to bodily integrity and religious freedoms and beliefs must be taken into account," it said.

KZN embarks on drive to encourage people in rural areas to vaccinate

SABC News | 17 June 2021

KZN Health department says over 337 000 people have been vaccinated with the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine in the province since the start of the phase 2 roll out. The KwaZulu-Natal Health Department is embarking on an intensive drive to encourage people over the age of 60, in the province's rural and outlying areas to get vaccinated. Provincial Health MEC Nomagugu Simelane-Zulu is expected to start at the Charles Johnson Memorial Hospital in Nquthu in northern KwaZulu-Natal. The department says over 337 000 people have been vaccinated with the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine in the province since the start of the phase 2 roll out. If healthcare workers who received the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine are added it brings the total to 466 000.

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TRAINING AND RESOURCES

HSTi offers accredited and non-accredited short courses and full programmes

The Health Systems Training Institute (HSTi) is the training arm of the Health Systems Trust (HST), a leading force in the South African public health sector. HST was established in 1992, on the brink of democracy in South Africa, and has since played a significant role in strengthening the national primary health system through health research, informatics, clinical support, capacity-building and training.

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PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

Support for rehabilitation self-management after COVID-19-related illness

World Health Organization

This leaflet provides basic exercises and advice for adults who have been severely unwell and admitted to the hospital with COVID-19. It provides information on the following areas:

- Managing breathlessness

- Exercising after leaving hospital
- Managing problems with your voice
- Managing eating, drinking, and swallowing
- Managing problems with attention, memory, and thinking clearly
- Managing activities of daily living
- Managing stress and problems with mood
- When to contact a healthcare professional

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CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

Covid-19 Health and Safety Implementation Webinar 2021

When: 8 July 2021 (Online, Johannesburg)

“Ensure that you and your returning employees stay compliant and meet the requirements essential to operating during this Covid period.”

It is vital that you and your employees responsible for managing safety in your workplace, understand how to implement HSE systems in your organisation in alignment with Covid-19 workplace safety guidelines.

Removing Legal and Structural Barriers to Ending AIDS by 2030: Lessons from the Global Commission on HIV and the Law

When: 21 June 2021

UNDP, on behalf of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), convened the Global Commission on HIV and the Law (the Global Commission) to interrogate the relationship between legal responses, human rights and HIV. In 2020, the Program on Global Health and Human Rights, Institute on Inequalities in Global Health at the University of Southern California undertook an evaluation of the impact, success factors, challenges and good practices of the Global Commission on HIV and the Law.

Vaccine-associated allergies in the time of Covid-19

When: 23 June 2021

Prof Jonathan Peter is Head of The Allergy and Immunology Unit, as well as being Head of the Division of Allergology and Clinical Immunology in the Department of Medicine at the University of Cape Town.

Allergic reactions to vaccines are well known, with severe anaphylaxis to vaccines reported to occur in 1 in 1 million people. The rapid roll-out of new COVID19 vaccines of different types has seen an increased burden and awareness of vaccine-associated allergy and anaphylaxis. This webinar provides a background context to vaccine-induced allergy, known offending agents, clinical presentations, and how to manage COVID19 vaccination in patients with prior allergies, including previous vaccines.

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JOB OPPORTUNITIES

FEMALES RISING THROUGH EDUCATION, SUPPORT AND HEALTH (FRESH):

Enrolled Nurse (x2)

Closing Date: 28 June 2020

FEMALES RISING THROUGH EDUCATION, SUPPORT AND HEALTH (FRESH): Facilitator

Closing Date: 2 July 2020

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