



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

Vitamin D deficiency and COVID-19: A case-control study at a tertiary care hospital in India

PubMed | 5 August 2021

Nirav Nimavat, Shruti Singh, Pratibha Singh, Sunil Kumar Singh, Nishi Sinha

As the pandemic COVID-19 affected developing and developed countries, there is no proven treatment options available yet. The anti-inflammatory, antiviral and immune modulator effect of Vitamin D could be beneficial to COVID-19.

Improvements in malaria testing and treatment after a national community health worker program in rural Liberia

Journal of Global Health Reports | 9 August 2021

Jeffrey Rozelle, Jerome Korvah, Olasford Wiah, John Kraemer, Lisa Hirschhorn, et al.

Progress in reducing malaria incidence and deaths has stalled, in part due to limited access to quality malaria testing and treatment amongst rural populations. This time-series analysis aims to describe changes in rural malaria diagnosis and treatment before and during the rollout of Liberia's National Community Health Assistant (CHA) program. It also explores how malaria service delivery changed during the COVID-19 epidemic.

Authorized, clear and timely communication of risk to guide public perception and action: lessons of COVID-19 from China

BMC Public Health | 12 August 2021

Ni Gong, Xiaoyuan Jin, Jing Liao, Yundong Li, Meifen Zhang, et al

This study examined the dynamic association between risk communication and the public's risk perception and action across the COVID-19 outbreak timeline in China. It collected publicly available information on COVID-19 released on official channels (e.g., government websites and official media) by the Parehub tool. Also, the study used the Zhongyun Big Data Platform to search public datasets about released COVID-19 information on Chinese social media, such as TikTok and Weibo. An online survey was conducted via WeChat to Chinese citizens using a snowball sampling method. The questionnaire assessed changes in participants' risk perception and action against COVID-19. The data analysis

examined information content and release-time trajectories against the public's risk perception and actions over time.

Internet Gaming Disorder in adolescence: investigating profiles and associated risk factors

BMC Public Health | 12 August 2021

Mirna Macur and Halley Pontes

Electronic gaming is a popular free-time activity and its deleterious effects have been considered by the American Psychiatric Association and World Health Organization. More recently 'Gaming Disorder' (GD) has been added to the 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases, while 'Internet Gaming Disorder' (IGD) remains as a tentative disorder in the 5th revision of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. This study aimed to explore the characteristics of young gamers at risk for developing IGD.

Rapid genome sequencing in hospitals to identify potential vaccine-escape SARS-CoV-2 variants

The Lancet Infectious Diseases | 13 August 2021

Luke Snell, Penelope Cliff, Themoula Charalampous, Adela Alcolea-Medina, Saidat Ebie, et al.

SARS-CoV-2 genome sequencing is embedded in academic and public health laboratories, but whether there are benefits to rapid sequencing in front-line hospital laboratories is unclear. We did rapid genome sequencing of SARS-CoV-2-positive nose and throat swabs from patients admitted to our hospital since July 7, 2021, to identify potential SARS-CoV-2 vaccine-escape variants for infection control and public health purposes. In addition, we did PCR-based genotyping of all new SARS-CoV-2 cases for three south London hospitals (Guy's and St Thomas', King's College, and Princess Royal University) using the AusDiagnostics SARS-CoV-2 Typing Panel (16-well) on the AusDiagnostics HighPlex, sequencing any non-typeable results. We identified two cases of a potential vaccine-escape variant from the B.1.621 lineage.

100 years on: The impact of the discovery of insulin on clinical outcomes

BMJ Open Diabetes Research & Care | 16 August 2021

John Buse, Melanie Davies, Brian Frier, Athena Philis-Tsimikas

Throughout history, up to the early part of the 20th century, diabetes has been a devastating disorder, particularly when diagnosed in childhood when it was usually fatal. Consequently, the successful pancreatic extraction of insulin in 1921 was a miraculous, life-changing advance. In this review, the truly transformative effect that insulin has had on the lives of people with type 1 diabetes and on those with type 2 diabetes who are also dependent on insulin is described, from the time of its first successful use to the present day. We have highlighted in turn how each of the many facets of improvements over the last century, from advancements in the properties of insulin and its formulations to the evolution of different methods of delivery, have led to continued improvement in clinical outcomes, through the use of illustrative stories from history and from our own clinical experiences. This review concludes with a brief look at the current challenges and where the next century of technological innovation in insulin therapy may take us.

Association between widespread pain and dementia, Alzheimer's disease and stroke: a cohort study from the Framingham Heart Study

Regional Anesthesia & Pain Medicine | 16 August 2021

Kanran Wang and Hong Liu

Chronic pain may be an early indicator of cognitive decline, but previous studies have not systematically examined the population-level associations between widespread pain and adverse cognitive outcomes and stroke. This study was designed to determine the association between widespread pain, a common subtype of chronic pain, and subsequent dementia, Alzheimer's disease dementia and stroke.

[\(Return to Top\)](#)

RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

Eradication of pit toilets at Limpopo schools still a pipe dream

Health-E News | 13 August 2021

The family of five-year-old Michael Komape, who drowned in a pit latrine more than seven years ago, as still battling with the Department of Basic Education to ensure the eradication of unsafe and unhygienic toilets at Limpopo schools. On 20 January in 2014, five-year-old Michael Komape drowned after falling into a pit toilet at Mahlodumela Lower Primary school, in Chebeng village, outside Polokwane, in Limpopo. Yet, more than seven years after the tragedy, many learners at public schools in the province are still forced to use old, dilapidated and dangerous pit toilets. This, according to Michael's older sister, Lydia Komape, is a clear indication that the Limpopo Department of Education and that national Department of Basic Education do not care about the safety of learners. Speaking to Health-e News, Komape said that since the incident that took Michael's life, not enough has been done by either department to eradicate dangerous pit toilets at public schools, something that bothers the family.

Has COVID taught us anything about pandemic preparedness?

Nature | 13 August 2021

Researchers warn that plans to prevent the next global outbreak don't consider the failures that have fuelled our current predicament. As nations struggle to control the COVID-19 pandemic, scientists warn that deadly outbreaks of other viruses are inevitable. History is clear on this: more than six distinct influenza pandemics and epidemics have struck in just over a century. Ebola viruses have spilled over from animals about 25 times in the past five decades. And at least seven coronaviruses, including SARS-CoV-2, have brought illness and death. Expecting to avoid another spillover is about as realistic as stopping lightning from sparking a forest fire. "Preventing a pandemic may not be possible, so being prepared is the key," says Youngmee Jee, chief executive at the Pasteur Institute in South Korea. Epidemiologists and researchers who specialize in biosecurity and public health have been outlining preparedness plans for at least 20 years. The core components consist broadly of surveillance to detect pathogens; data collection and modelling to see how they spread; improvements to public-health guidance and communication; and the development of therapies and vaccines.

Cote d'Ivoire declares first Ebola outbreak in more than 25 years

World Health Organization | 14 August 2021

The Ministry of Health of Cote d'Ivoire today confirmed the country's first case of Ebola since 1994. This came after the Institut Pasteur in Cote d'Ivoire confirmed the Ebola Virus Disease in samples collected from a patient, who was hospitalized in the commercial capital of Abidjan, after arriving from Guinea. Initial investigations found that the patient had travelled to Cote d'Ivoire by road and arrived in Abidjan on 12 August. The patient was admitted to a hospital after experiencing a fever and is currently receiving treatment. Guinea experienced a four-month long Ebola outbreak, which was declared over on the 19 June 2021. There is no indication that the current case in Cote d'Ivoire is linked to the earlier outbreak in Guinea. Further investigation and genomic sequencing will identify the strain and determine if there is a connection between the two outbreaks. This year Ebola outbreaks have been declared in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Guinea, but it is the first time an outbreak has occurred in a large capital city such as Abidjan since the 2014–2016 West Ebola outbreak.

Crime in SA | Fake news fuels social media hysteria

eNCA | 15 August 2021

Communities in Durban are recovering after the recent riots. At the same time, the role of social media and fake news in fuelling animosity between communities is becoming clearer. The Phoenix Massacre hashtag was among those that drove anti-Indian sentiment. It will now form part of a Human Rights Commission investigation into the unrest. As groups of looters raided shops and made their way into some neighbourhoods, communities took it upon themselves to protect lives and livelihoods. The absence of police and law and order gave rise to vigilantism and people were murdered. Police have arrested 22 suspects who have already appeared in court. One of the main drivers of public conversation about the unrest in Durban has been social media. The Digital Forensics Research Lab has studied the Phoenix Massacre hashtag, which was coined very early on during the riots. The Digital Forensics Research Lab's Jean Le Roux said, "the way that the social media scene weaponised that by taking old videos, decontextualised videos and try and inflame the situation on the ground."

Variants, the fourth wave, vaccines and the unlikelihood of herd immunity: What

might happen in South Africa?

Daily Maverick | 16 August 2021

The rise of the scary-sounding variants, a South African third Covid-19 wave that was much worse than the first or second for most of the country, and the introduction of multiple vaccines has confused many of us. Uncertainty about the future is always frightening. This is especially so when scientists don't explain things clearly, or where there is disagreement around ideas like 'herd immunity', whether the new variant makes you sicker than the previous ones, and speculation about how the virus will evolve further. In this article, we try to explain the current scientific understanding, and, more importantly, some scenarios that may evolve as we stare down a fourth wave, and how you should plan your life.

CANSA seal of recognition aims to promote health living

Health-E News | 16 August 2021

CANSA's Smart Choice Endorsement Program will award a seal of recognition to products that have health benefits and reduce the risk of cancer, in a bid to promote healthy living among South African consumers. The Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA) hopes to promote a healthy lifestyle among South Africans and lower their risk of developing cancer, through its revitalised seal of recognition initiative that endorses products which may assist in reducing the cancer risk and are free of all known carcinogens and toxins. According to CANSA nutritional expert Megan Pentz-Kluyts, it is important for South Africans to have information about products that offer health benefits when they go shopping.

A controversial 'NHI-focused' change could hit South Africa – as doctors look at leaving

BusinessTech | 16 August 2021

Trade union Solidarity has slammed proposed regulations that will introduce a 'Certificate of Need' for healthcare practitioners in South Africa. In terms of the new regulations, all healthcare practitioners must apply for a certificate that will enable them to practice. They will then be prescribed where and how they may practice, the union said. Solidarity said it vehemently opposes these regulations which, as a result of the implementation of the certificate, will threaten ownership rights of private practices. "The state only has one goal in mind and that is to centralise health care in its entirety," said Henru Krüger, sector head of the professional guild at Solidarity.

Women in Health: It's in the genes for Professor Michèle Ramsay

Spotlight News | 16 August 2021

As a child, Professor Michèle Ramsay never thought of a future in academia or receiving an 'Oscar in Science'. She was interested in climbing trees and pretending trees were spaceships. By the time she started her first year at the University of Stellenbosch, Ramsay had lived in four countries – South Africa (Vereeniging), Mexico, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Her father was an engineer and the family followed him to where his job took him. It is these experiences that gave Ramsay valuable insight into the diversity of people and which shaped her worldview.

South Africa: Durban Parents Demand Schools Close After Learner Dies of Covid

AllAfrica | 17 August 2021

Protest follows death of 12-year-old Kaitlyn Pillay. Education expert warns of "dire" cost to children of closing schools. On Sunday and Monday parents held placard demonstrations in Phoenix, Durban, demanding schools close because of Covid-19. The protest comes after a 12-year-old, grade 7 learner at Wembley Primary School, Kaitlyn Pillay, died on Saturday. The protesters say measures to combat Covid are inadequate at schools. The KwaZulu-Natal Parent Association says it is inundated with calls from worried parents.

Telehealth services on the up as COVID-19 maintains grip

Health-E News | 17 August 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has ushered in new ways of doing things to curb the spread of the virus, with one significant trend being the adoption of telehealth services. Telehealth – where patients consult their doctors virtually – has become a prominent trend in the wake of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. It essentially involves consulting with your medical practitioner virtually and receiving a prescription if needed after the consultation. According to a study, the COVID-19 pandemic has made telehealth the primary means through which patients interact with their health providers. However, there is a concern

that the pandemic will exacerbate the existing disparities in overall healthcare utilisation and telehealth utilisation.

Opinion: COVID-19 booster jab – are we ready for a third shot?

Health-E News | 17 August 2021

As South Africa continues to battle the third wave of the pandemic and is likely to face a fourth towards the end of the year, a debate has started around whether South Africans would be willing to get a COVID-19 booster jab. The looming fourth COVID-19 wave is predicted to affect South Africa from October through to December. This is according to experts such as vaccinologist Prof Shabir Madhi, from Wits University, and Dr Nicolas Crisp, deputy director-general at the Department of Health. These predictions come at a time when the devastation of the third wave continues to be felt by many South Africans and the easily transmissible Delta variant has taken the lives of many since the beginning of the year. The urgency of the question: to boost or not to boost? is influenced by the uncertainty and fear of the unknown in terms of the loss and continued lifestyle shift that will take place if we aren't as protected as we can be from the fourth wave. But how willing are most South Africans to get another COVID-19 jab?

Medicines stockouts once again reported in North West

Spotlight | 19 August 2021

A recent report by Ritshidze, a community monitoring project started by organisations representing people living with HIV, paints a grim picture of public healthcare services in North West province. The report, titled **North West: State of Health**, asserts that the province's public healthcare system has been in a state of crisis for many years.

Correlation ≠ causation: How to link a death to COVID vaccines for sure

Bhekisisa | 19 August 2021

Nobody has died as a result of COVID vaccines in South Africa, according to the country's medicines regulator, the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (Sahpra), which monitors side-effects. Fifty-three deaths of people who had been vaccinated against COVID had been reported to Sahpra between May 17 and July 31 — 0.0007% of the 7 059 283 doses administered in that period. (This data excludes side-effects or deaths reported for **the Sisonke study**, for which the last doses were administered on May 16).

[\(Return to Top\)](#)

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.

Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) #YearLater national survey to evaluate how COVID-19 has affected South Africans a year later

How have you coped during the pandemic?

Please participate by clicking on the #datafree link <https://research.datafree.co/r/HSRCOYL>

NDoH HealthWorker Connect

This HealthWorker Connect WhatsApp service has a vast amount of COVID-19 and vaccine related content, and also allows health workers to screen symptoms to get advice on what protocol to follow depending on their COVID-19 risk. It has a set of learning modules focused on helping health workers build resilience, not only during these challenging times, but given the fact that their roles are so demanding in general.

Development of the Next PEPFAR Strategy: Vision 2025

Under the PEPFAR Strategy for Accelerating HIV/AIDS Epidemic Control (2017-2020), the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) made significant strides toward reducing HIV

infections, saving lives, and supporting many countries to achieve or approach HIV/AIDS epidemic control. With that strategy reaching its conclusion at the end of 2020, PEPFAR is pleased to continue partnering across sectors in development of the next PEPFAR Strategy, with a vision for 2025. Building on the critical inputs received from a diversity of stakeholders through a broad-based survey administered in the fall of 2020 and the release of Guiding Principles for the Next Phase of PEPFAR on World AIDS Day 2020 – PEPFAR is holding a series of Virtual Listening Sessions from August 9-16, 2021, to further inform development of the next PEPFAR Strategy: Vision 2025. The below Listening Sessions are organized by individual sector/constituencies, and grounded in the latest data. Video recordings of each session are now available.

[\(Return to Top\)](#)

PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

Using multidimensional poverty and vulnerability indices to inform equitable policies and interventions in health emergencies

The WHO | 17 August 2021

To prevent or mitigate the health equity impacts of health emergencies, or the health dimensions of humanitarian emergencies, analysts and decision-makers require an evidence-base to inform equitable planning, policy making, and interventions. In addition to several existing emergencies rapid assessment tools, multidimensional poverty and vulnerability indices (MPIs or MVIs) have been used for measurement, analyses, and policy guidance in several countries around the world. This research brief provides an overview of the use of MPIs and MVIs in health emergencies, with the goal of sharing insights and lessons learned. This brief shares experiences from Afghanistan, Colombia, Honduras, Iraq, and select countries in southern Asia. This research brief will also inform national health authorities when looking for ways to reinforce health equity into their measurement approaches in their policies before, during and after a health emergency.

[\(Return to Top\)](#)

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING (HSS) UNIT: Community Mobilisation Co-ordinator

Closing Date: 23 August 2021

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING (HSS) UNIT: Community Educator-Engagers – DO ART Project

Closing Date: 31 August 2021

[\(Return to Top\)](#)



Copyright © 2019 HEALTH SYSTEMS TRUST, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

hst@hst.org.za

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>
[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)
Health Systems Trust · 34 Essex Terrace · Westville · Durban, KZN 3630 · South Africa

