

# HST Bulletin



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## ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

### **Mapping Racial and Ethnic Inequities in Health and Opportunity**

*New England Journal of Medicine | 18 November 2020*

*Nadia Siddiqui, Afrida Faria, Dennis Andrulis, Derek Chapman, Gail Christopher et al*

The Health Opportunity and Equity (HOPE) Initiative – Throughout the United States, health status and outcomes, access to care, and socioeconomic status vary by race and ethnic group. This Interactive Perspective, which uses data aggregated by the Health Opportunity and Equity (HOPE) Initiative, allows readers to view and compare data on a range of indicators for each state and for six racial and ethnic groups.

### **Pregnancy Outcomes Among Women With and Without Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 Infection**

*Obstetrics and Gynecology | 19 November 2020*

*Emily Adhikari, Wilmer Moreno, Amanda Zofkie et al*

Published data suggest that there are increased hospitalizations, placental abnormalities, and rare neonatal transmission among pregnant women with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Objective: To evaluate adverse outcomes associated with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) infection in pregnancy and to describe clinical management, disease progression, hospital admission, placental abnormalities, and neonatal outcomes. This observational cohort study of maternal and neonatal outcomes among delivered women with and without SARS-CoV-2 during pregnancy was conducted from March 18 through August 22, 2020, at Parkland Health and Hospital System (Dallas, Texas), a high-volume prenatal clinic system and public maternity hospital with widespread access to SARS-CoV-2 testing in outpatient, emergency department, and inpatient settings. Women were included if they were tested for SARS-CoV-2 during pregnancy and delivered. For placental analysis, the pathologist was blinded to illness severity.

### **Domestic migrant workers in India returning to their homes: emerging socioeconomic and health challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic**

*Rural and Remote Health | 20 November 2020*

*Sweety Suman Jha and Arista Lahiri*

Domestic migrant workers were stranded far from home when India declared nationwide lockdown to combat the pandemic of novel coronavirus (COVID-19). A large number of these workers were left with no economic support, no food and in many cases nowhere to live. The pandemic posed a serious health threat to these people, and the socioeconomic insecurity pushed them towards the edge of sustainability. Many of the migrants began walking home and accepted an uncertain fate if they could not return back home. The Government of India initiated efforts to provide transport support with special train services from the beginning of May 2020. While the migrants have started to return to their villages and towns, the states are facing the challenges of preventing the spread of COVID-19. The point-of-entry screening, quarantine and isolation facilities have increased substantially in capacity, although the quality of care remains a point of concern. Back at their homes, the migrants are enduring stigma, discrimination and poor social security. In order to avert the brewing humanitarian crisis, empathetic administration combined with political will is a must. Prudent, evidence-based decision-making in the economic and health sectors is also necessary.

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## RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

### **Independent UN experts decry COVID vaccine hoarding: ‘No one is secure until all of us are’**

*Developmentaid.org | 10 November 2020*

The only way to fight the COVID-19 crisis is to make affordable vaccines available to everyone, independent UN human rights experts said underscoring that in an interconnected and interdependent world, “no one is secure until all of us are secure”.

### **Updated dashboard supports differentiated HIV testing services**

*UNAIDS | 12 November 2020*

The World Health Organization (WHO), in coordination with UNAIDS, has updated its HIV Testing Services dashboard with new data for 2020, ahead of this year’s World AIDS Day. The interactive dashboard gives users a wide range of information on HIV testing from countries worldwide on, for example, HIV prevalence, the number of people testing positive for HIV and the number of people testing for HIV for the first time or repeating a test. Data are given in charts and tables and are differentiated by age, sex and other characteristics. “It is critical to have differentiated HIV testing data at this stage in the epidemic,” said Cheryl Johnson, WHO Technical Officer. “Having such data will help programmes to implement the World Health Organization’s guidelines so that they may reach the remaining people living with HIV who do not know their status. We look forward to working with countries on how they can use their data to guide efficient and effective HIV testing services.” Countries need to have a range of testing approaches to reach people living with HIV who do not know their status and others at risk of acquiring HIV. The dashboard will help countries to develop the best mix of testing services—such as self-testing, index testing and various forms of community and facility-based testing services—suitable for their settings. Countries can also monitor the progress of the number of people who newly learn their HIV status. “We are using data to intensify our efforts to reach the remaining people living with HIV who don’t know their status and to facilitate linkage to care by prioritizing and differentiating testing so we can reach underserved geographies and populations in Uganda. The dashboard is a useful tool to help guide decision-making and our national strategy moving forward,” said Geoffrey Taasi, Programme Officer, HIV Testing Services, Ministry of Health, Uganda. The information on the dashboard is a mixture of WHO and UNAIDS data, national programme data, modelled estimates and population survey data—it also includes the implementation status of testing services and national policies. The data used were selected in consultation with representatives of ministries of health, research partners, local and international implementing partners and donors. In addition to the website, the dashboard can be accessed through the WHO HTS Info app using a smartphone or tablet. “Expansion of relevant HIV testing approaches is critical for Viet Nam to achieve the 90–90–90 targets. With support from the World Health Organization and other partners, we have successfully piloted community-based HIV testing, including lay provider testing and self-testing. We are now working to scale up these approaches nationwide,” said Nguyen Hoang Long, Director-General of the Viet Nam Authority of HIV/AIDS Control, Ministry of Health, Viet

Nam.

## **HIV financing gap widening**

*UNAIDS | 16 November 2020*

The funding gap for HIV responses is widening. Momentum established following global agreement on the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 has been lost in the Sustainable Development Goal era. Increases in resources for HIV responses in low- and middle-income countries halted in 2017, with funding decreasing by 7% between 2017 and 2019 (to US\$ 18.6 billion in constant 2016 United States dollars). The total funding available in 2019 for HIV in these countries amounted to about 70% of the 2020 target set by the United Nations General Assembly. In the light of the theme of this year's World AIDS Day, global solidarity, shared responsibility, it's interesting to note that domestic investments in HIV responses in low- and middle-income countries have grown by 50% since 2010. Financial support for those countries provided through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria increased by 26% between 2010 and 2017, but then declined by 15% over the next two years, leaving a 7% total increase over the nine-year period. Bilateral funding provided to those countries by the United States Government increased by 50% between 2010 and 2017 before declining by 8% over the next two years, leaving a 38% total increase since 2010 (in constant 2016 United States dollars). Contributions from other international sources declined by 50% between 2010 and 2019. Resource availability is presented in constant 2016 United States dollars in order to be comparable with the target for 2020 adopted in the 2016 High-Level Meeting on Ending AIDS.

## **HIV death rate in SA men much higher than in women**

*Spotlight | 18 November 2020*

While men account for only a third of South Africa's roughly 200 000 new HIV infections in the year ending mid-2019, they account for more than half of the approximately 74 000 HIV-related deaths in the same period. This is according to new HIV estimates released by the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) during an online press conference on Tuesday. The new numbers, from the Thembisa model, provide the most up-to-date and arguably most reliable national and provincial-level estimates of HIV in South Africa. As of 2019, a total of 7.6 million people were living with HIV in South Africa – 4.8 million women, 2.5 million men and 300 000 children, according to University of Cape Town-based Dr Leigh Johnson, who presented the results on behalf of SANAC. This means just over 13% of people in South Africa are living with HIV.

## **Hope for cervical cancer sufferers as SA commits to ending this deadly disease**

*Times Live | 19 November 2020*

For many women, being diagnosed with cervical cancer is like death sentence due to its high mortality, but a new plan to expedite its elimination in SA and other parts of the world has given hope to many. SA has joined 193 other nations who have committed to eliminate cervical cancer by 2050 — a move that will see the country vaccinating 90% of young girls with a human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, screening 70% of women from age 35, and putting 90% of women with this form of cancer on treatment by 2030. This week the World Health Organisation (WHO) launched its global strategy to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer, which is set to reduce more than 40% of new cases of cervical cancer and 5m deaths by 2050. It's the first time that nations are making this commitment to end a cancer, which remains the deadliest form of cancer among women in SA. It kills between 3,000 and 3,500 women in SA every year, and about 6,000 women are diagnosed with it annually. "The huge burden of mortality related to cervical cancer is a consequence of decades of neglect by the global health community. However, the script can be rewritten," said SA-born WHO assistant director-general Dr Princess Nothemba Simelela. "The fight against cervical cancer is also a fight for women's rights. The unnecessary suffering caused by this preventable disease reflects the injustices that uniquely affect women's health around the world. Together, we can make history to ensure a cervical cancer-free future." New developments include the availability of prophylactic vaccines, low-cost approaches to screening and treating cervical cancer precursors, and novel approaches to surgical training.

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## **TRAINING AND RESOURCES**

## Global Health Training Centre eLearning Courses

Global Health Training Centre eLearning courses are designed to cover every step, process, and issue that needs to be understood in order to conduct high-quality research. Every course is written to be globally applicable, for all diseases and all regions. Each course is carefully researched to provide high-quality material that is peer reviewed and regularly updated. A certificate is issued once a minimum of 80% is achieved in the course quizzes.

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## PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

**Health Systems Trust Announcement – the 2020 District Health Barometer (DHB) and the South African Health Review (SAHR) will both be released electronically next month! Please watch this space or go to our website [www.hst.org.za](http://www.hst.org.za) for updates. For queries please email [communications@hst.org.za](mailto:communications@hst.org.za)**

### Independent Accountability for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' health is at risk

*Independent Accountability Panel | 19 November 2020*

While independent accountability has been central to a landmark decade of progress in women's, children's and adolescents' health, under mobilization of the Every Woman Every Child (EWEC) movement, it is currently under threat. The UN Secretary-General's office is considering closing both the Independent Accountability Panel (IAP) and EWEC by the end of the year, without a clear transition plan to a new mechanism.

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## CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

### Research in Global Health Emergencies Workshop

*24 November 2020 | 10:00 - 15:00 EAT*

There is an increase in the occurrence of epidemics and outbreaks globally, many of which are emerging such as COVID 19. These may have no known treatment or vaccines and thus present a great threat and challenge to the global public health. Research is key to finding interventions such as treatments and vaccines for such emerging global health emergencies. However, conducting research during such epidemics is very challenging due to the very nature of the outbreak.

This workshop aims to equip participants with knowledge and skills to conduct research during outbreaks and epidemics. The workshop will cover areas such as navigating the ethical landscape for research in epidemics, rapidly developing proposals that can be adapted and implemented during epidemics, as well as areas of safety during data collections.

Join the discussion group to connect with other delegates and learn more about the programme.

#### Learning Objectives

At the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Generate research topics/areas that can be conducted during epidemics and outbreaks
- Understand and work through the processes of obtaining ethical approval for research during epidemics
- Appreciate and navigate the ethical challenges associated with research conducted in epidemics
- Ensure safety of the participants and research team before, during and after research in epidemics
- Disseminate and publish research findings during epidemics

### Certificates

Certificates of Attendance will be available. To be eligible for one you must register in Zoom (even if you are joining from a classroom); You must attend for at least 80% of the workshop; You must complete the workshop evaluation.

Your Certificate of Attendance will automatically be emailed to you once we have confirmed that you have met the above requirements. Please refer to **The Global Health Network's certificates policy** for more information. **REGISTER HERE**

### The EDCTP Knowledge Hub: Providing tools and guidance for conducting clinical research

30 November | 15:00 - 16:30 (GMT)

Online Event Location: **Register via Zoom**

EDCTP and The Global Health Network have partnered to develop the **EDCTP Knowledge Hub**, a one-stop open online portal to provide researchers with tools and guidance to enable them to undertake high-quality health research. The aim of the EDCTP Knowledge Hub is to become a core resource for researchers that can guide and support the protocol development, data management and data sharing processes.

### Invitation to conference: Delivering Good Mental Health for People Living with HIV

1 December | 10:00 - 12:30

High-level conference with the participation of the:

- Health and Food Safety Commissioner, Stella Kyriakides
- WHO Europe Director, Dr. Hans Kluge
- Special Adviser to Executive Director UNAIDS, Vinay Saldanha

and hosted by Members of the European Parliament from across the political spectrum.

Register here: <https://t.co/KuwkNldETL?amp=1>

### UKZN College of Health Sciences: 2020 WORLD AIDS DAY WEBINAR

1 December | 17:00 - 19:00

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Health Sciences, Professor Busisiwe Ncama cordially invites you to the 2020 WORLD AIDS DAY WEBINAR. The theme is "Global solidarity, shared responsibility" in recognition of the impact of COVID-19.

Click here to RSVP: [https://ukzn.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_T9W21PZdTBWFDfa6Cd-Vww](https://ukzn.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_T9W21PZdTBWFDfa6Cd-Vww)

### International AIDS Society's (IAS) COVID-19 Conference: Prevention!

**SAVE THE DATE:** Recognizing the urgent need to advance the COVID-19 pandemic response, the IAS COVID-19 Conference: Prevention will feature the latest in prevention related science, policy and practice. The conference will take place virtually on Tuesday, 2 February 2021 – and will include invited-speaker sessions and abstract presentations.

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## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

### HST Health Systems Strengthening Unit (HSS) – Pharmacists

Closing date: 26 November 2020

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