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ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

Haematopoietic stem-cell transplantation in an HIV endemic area: time to consider donors exposed to or living with HIV

The Lancet HIV | 11 October 2023

Candice Laverne Hendricks, Cert Clin Haem, Juanita Mellet, Chrisna Durandt,

David Brittain, et al.

South Africa has more than 8 million people living with HIV. However, the number of patients undergoing haematopoietic stem-cell transplantation (HSCT) in South Africa is far below the target number. Donor numbers are insufficient to meet demand. Both HSCT and solid organ transplantation have proved successful in people living with HIV. Solid organ transplantation also has good outcomes when both donors and recipients have HIV. This Personal View explores the possible inclusion of people living with HIV and umbilical cord blood from HIV-negative infants exposed to HIV as donor sources for HSCT.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanhiv/article/PIIS2352-3018\(23\)00198-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanhiv/article/PIIS2352-3018(23)00198-4/fulltext)

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 [1]. Despite strong prevention programming, HIV incidence among 15- to 24-year-olds in Zambia remains high, potentially exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic [2]. Additionally, nearly two-thirds of YWHIV in Zambia have experienced sexual violence from intimate partners [3]. HIV and violence commonly co-occur in the context of harmful gender norms, early marriage, and power-inequitable relationships, hindering access to healthcare services [4].

Compliance to Viral Load Monitoring Schedules Among Women Attending Prevention of Vertical HIV Transmission Services Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Ehlanzeni District, Mpumalanga, South Africa

Aids and Behaviour | 13 October 2023

Thandiwe Elsie Mbira, Tendesayi Kufa, Gayle Gillian Sherman, Nobubelo Kwanele Ngandu et. al.

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) viral load (VL) monitoring was likely interrupted during the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. We used routine data on repeat VL testing among 667 prevention of vertical HIV transmission (PVT) clients in Ehlanzeni district, to determine compliance to VL testing recommendations and associated factors during different time periods: pre-COVID-19, transition, and COVID-19. Descriptive and multivariable Poisson regression analyses were conducted, with and without including revised PVT-guidelines rolled out in January-2020. Among 405 women with ≥ 2 VL tests, the overall median age was 30 years (interquartile range: 26–35 years).

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10461-023-04192-z>

Impact of COVID-19 Disease Control Committee (CDCC) policies on prevention of the disease using Bayes network inference in west of Iran

BMC Public Health | 16 October 2023

Ali Reza Soltanian, Roya Ahmaddoost-razdari, Hossein Mahjub, Jalal Poorolajal, et al.

The start of the COVID-19 pandemic was an emergency situation that led each country to adopt specific regional strategies to control it. Given the spread of COVID-19 disease, it is crucial to evaluate which policy is more effective in reducing disease transmission. The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of policies made by COVID-19 Disease Control Committee (CDCC) to reduce the risk of the disease in Hamadan province.

<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-023-16879-y>

Sexually Transmitted Infection Risks and Symptoms Heightened Among Female Sex Workers who Started Selling Sex Before the Age of 18 in Five Cities in Cameroon

Aids and Behaviour | 16 October 2023

Ashley Grosso, Anna L. Bowring, Iliassou Mfochive Njindam, Michele R. Decker, Carrie Lyons, et al.

Many adolescents under 18 years old who sell sex are at elevated risk for sexually transmitted infection (STI) acquisition, which may persist into adulthood. There has been limited study of the burden of the risks and vulnerabilities among women who started selling sex as adolescents across Sub-Saharan Africa. In this study, a Adult female sex workers (FSW) recruited through respondent-driven sampling in five cities in Cameroon from December 2015 to October 2016 completed a questionnaire and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and syphilis testing. Multivariable logistic regression analysis controlling for age was used to identify factors associated with reporting selling sex before age 18. Selling sex before age 18 was reported by 11.5% (256/2,220) of FSW.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10461-023-04196-9>

Effects of Maternal HIV Infection and Alcohol Use in Pregnancy on Birth Outcomes in Uganda

Aids and Behaviour | 16 October 2023

Julian Adong, Nicholas Musinguzi, Joseph Ngonzi, Jessica E. Haberer, Ingrid V. Bassett, et al.

Alcohol use and HIV infection are prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa (sSA), and both are associated with low birth weight. Yet, few studies have evaluated the combined effects of maternal HIV infection and alcohol use on birth outcomes. We analyzed data from a prospective cohort study of HIV-related placental changes in Ugandan women. We defined alcohol use as self-reported alcohol use within the last year, using the AUDIT questionnaire and used linear and logistic regression to measure associations between maternal alcohol use, HIV serostatus, and birth weight. In a subsample, we measured alcohol exposure using phosphatidylethanol (PEth) in neonatal heelstick dried blood spots to confirm maternal alcohol use. Of 352 participants, 176 (50%) were women with HIV (WHIV). Three of 176 (2%) HIV-uninfected women and 17/176 (10%) of WHIV self-reported alcohol use ($P = 0.002$).

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10461-023-04181-2>

The hidden effects of COVID-19 on HIV services in Zanzibar: country report

Aids Research and Therapy | 17 October 2023

Mansour Maulid Mshenga, Farhat Jowhar Khalid, Shaaban Hassan Haji, Tatu Bilali Ali, Khadija Abbas, et al.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major effect on HIV-related healthcare services. Zanzibar has experienced several interruptions of HIV services in the areas of testing and counselling, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, key population, care and treatment services as well due to the hospital operating at a reduced capacity and the strict visit restrictions with health care allocations to COVID 19 pandemic. The community HIV initiatives, such as index testing and ARVs medicine refills, were used to mitigate the consequences of the epidemic and can be applied in future emergencies. This report tries to reveal COVID-19's unnoticed consequences on HIV services in Zanzibar.

<https://aidsrestherapy.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12981-023-00570-8>

Factors Associated with HIV Testing Among Spanish and English-Speaking Latino Adolescents Aged 13–18

AIDS and Behavior | 17 October 2023

Juan Pablo Zapata, Artur Queiroz, Carlos E. Rodriguez-Diaz and Brian Mustanski

Adolescent Latino men who have sex with men (LMSM) in the U.S. are disproportionately impacted by HIV. However, there has been limited focus on their HIV prevention and risk behaviors. In this study, we examine the rates of HIV testing and explore the significant demographic and healthcare factors that influence HIV prevention among adolescent LMSM. The analysis for this study utilized data collected during the baseline assessment of SMART, a pragmatic trial aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of an online HIV prevention intervention for adolescent LMSM ($N = 524$). Only 35.5% of participants had ever had an HIV test in their lifetime.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10461-023-04206-w>

The thriving kids and parents schools project: protocol of an incomplete stepped wedged cluster randomised trial evaluating the effectiveness of a Triple P seminar series

BMC Public Health | 17 October 2023

Christopher Boyle, Matthew R. Sanders, Tianyi Ma, Julie Hodges, Kelly-Ann Allen, et al.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the normality of daily life for many children, their families, and schools, resulting in heightened levels of anxiety, depression, social isolation, and loneliness among young people. An integrated public health model of interventions is needed to address the problem and to safeguard the mental health and wellbeing of children. The Triple P – Positive Parenting Program is one system of parenting support with a strong evidence-base and wide international reach. When implemented as a public health approach, Triple P has demonstrated population level positive effects on child wellbeing. This study will be the first large-scale, multi-site randomised controlled trial of a newly developed, low-intensity variant of Triple P, a school-based seminar series, as a response to the impacts of the pandemic.

<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-023-16962-4>

Environmental Contamination of SARS-CoV-2 Delta VOC by COVID-19 Patients Staying in the Hospital for More Than Two Weeks

Dovepress | 17 October 2023

Jingwu Ge, Chuanmeng Zhang, Zhihang Peng, Minjuan Chu, Wensen Chen, et al.

Severe acute respiratory syndrome type 2 coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) has caused a serious global pandemic and brought major public health problems. Multi-national government has taken a variety of measures to fight against COVID-19, such as converting large public utility spaces into makeshift healthcare centers, increase in-hospital COVID-19 beds and ICU capacities and so on. The virus has undergone several mutations that will promote the evolution of the virus, which may affect the transmission and pathogenicity of the virus, as well as immune escape and resistance to therapeutic drugs. Since the Delta variant strain of SARS-CoV-2 was first detected in India in October 2020, it had been identified as the variant of concern (VOC) by the World Health Organization (WHO) and affected more than 80 countries.

<https://www.dovepress.com/environmental-contamination-of-sars-cov-2-delta-voc-by-covid-19-patient-peer-reviewed-fulltext-article-RMHP>

Breast cancer treatment and recovery: pets' roles as emotional buffers and stressors

BMC Women's Health | 17 October 2023

Lori R. Kogan, Jennifer Currin-McCulloch & Linda S. Cook

Research suggests pets foster affection, connection, and physical activity, yet has failed to address the challenges people diagnosed with cancer face in caring for their pets. The objective of this study was to better understand how pets serve as emotional buffers and/or stressors for people diagnosed with breast cancer, and how their ability to meet their pet's needs affects their well-being.

<https://bmcwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12905-023-02662-z>

A Comprehensive Model Based on Dynamic Contrast-Enhanced Magnetic Resonance Imaging Can Better Predict the Preoperative Histological Grade of Breast Cancer Than a Radiomics Model

Dove Press | 18 October 2023

Yitian Wu,¹ Weixing Pan,² Lingxia Wang,³ Wenting Pan,² Huangqi Zhang, et al.

According to the GLOBOCAN 2018 data produced by the International Agency for Research on Cancer from 185 countries, 2.3 million new breast cancer cases were reported, with a mortality rate of 6.9%.¹

Breast cancer has become the most common cancer globally and is responsible for the high proportion of cancer-related deaths among women; therefore, prognosis is crucial in the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer. Tumor histopathological grade,^{2–4} positive estrogen and progesterone receptors,⁵ and lymph node metastasis⁶ are important independent prognostic factors for patients with breast cancer and play essential roles in clinical treatment. Therefore, determining the histological grade of the tumor using breast cancer imaging can provide a significant breakthrough.

<https://www.dovepress.com/a-comprehensive-model-based-on-dynamic-contrast-enhanced-magnetic-reso-peer-reviewed-fulltext-article-BCTT>

A Novel and Accurate Method for Estimating Deaths and Cases During Outbreaks of Infectious Diseases Including COVID-19

Dove Press | 18 October 2023

Vis a Vis Symposiums, Bury St. Edmunds, Cambridge.

Epidemiological modelling of infectious diseases plays an important role in driving public health policy. Commonly used models are described, including those based on exponential growth (Laplace and related distributions); susceptible-infected-removed; the Gompertz distribution; and the skew-reflected-Gompertz distribution. These are all sensitive to the timing of peak infection. The development of a novel method for forecasting the number of deaths occurring during epidemics of infectious diseases is described.

<https://www.dovepress.com/a-novel-and-accurate-method-for-estimating-deaths-and-cases-during-out-peer-reviewed-fulltext-article-IJGM>

RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

Mental health disorders increase mortality from cervical cancer

Contemporary OB/GYN | 12 October 2023

The presence of a mental health disorder lowers the odds of survival in patients with cervical cancer, according to a recent study published in JAMA Network Open. Cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer worldwide. Prevention methods include papanicolaou test screening, high vaccination coverage, and cervical screening uptake. However, health inequities have been identified as one of the most significant challenges when reducing cervical cancer incidence.

<https://www.contemporaryobgyn.net/view/mental-health-disorders-increase-mortality-from-cervical-cancer>

Interview: Rural doctor of the year reflects on the rutted road to quality healthcare

Spotlight | 13 October 2023

Describing the rutted gravel road between Butterworth and Tafalofefe District Hospital in the Eastern Cape, Dr Bukiwe Spondo uses the word “terrible” at least eighteen times. Dipping through the Amatole District, the 55-kilometre journey can take several hours. With heavy rain, tractors may be required to dislodge ambulances and often even staff have difficulty getting to work because of the mud.

<https://www.spotlightnsp.co.za/2023/10/13/interview-rural-doctor-of-the-year-reflects-on-the-rutted-road-to-quality-healthcare/>

PrEP, a Key HIV Prevention Tool, Isn't Reaching Black Women

Poz | 13 October 2023

Alexis Perkins thought her OB-GYN's office in Atlanta would be just the place to get a prescription for the type of drug that reduces a person's risk of contracting HIV. But during a recent visit, the medical assistant who greeted her had not heard of the medicines known as preexposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, and she seemed uncomfortable discussing it, Perkins said. Her provider had heard of it but didn't feel confident prescribing it. "She was at least honest enough to say that she was interested in it, but she didn't really know that much about it," said Perkins, a 25-year-old nurse, who decided to get on PrEP after participating in a sexual health education class and thinking more about her own risk. She's still trying to find a provider to write her a prescription.

<https://www.poz.com/article/prep-key-hiv-prevention-tool-reaching-black-women>

Breast Cancer Awareness Month: Everything you need to know about mastectomies

IOL | 15 October 2023

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and one of the most extreme measures some cancer survivors have to go through is to have a mastectomy done. We spoke to Dr Kajal Lutchminarian to find out all there is to know about the procedure. Lutchminarian is an APRSSA award-winning plastic, reconstructive and aesthetic surgeon. As a female plastic surgeon, she says that she receives many enquiries about mastectomies and says that it's very important for her to provide her patients with correct information. We asked her a few questions about the procedure and what it entails.

<https://www.iol.co.za/lifestyle/health/breast-cancer-awareness-month-everything-you-need-to-know-about-mastectomies-5773ce22-ee3f-4f7a-a2db-5f8a5b958b34>

Global and country leaders commit funding towards improving health and rights for 250 million women, children and youth

PMNC | 16 October 2023

At a Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents (GFF) event, governments and philanthropies have committed \$445 million USD in urgent funding to strengthen primary healthcare and improve the health and rights of women and children. These new investments from governments and philanthropies are a major contribution towards the GFF's 'Deliver the Future' campaign to secure access to essential health services for 250 million women, children and adolescents in the hardest to reach communities. Today's event at the World Health Summit marked the first pledging opportunity in the 'Deliver the Future' campaign, which was launched just four months ago and is being co-hosted by Germany, the Netherlands, Côte d'Ivoire and the World Bank.

<https://pnmch.who.int/news-and-events/news/item/16-10-2023-global-and-country-leaders-commit-funding-towards-improving-health-and-rights-for-250-million-women-children-and-youth>

What HIV does to your brain — and how ARVs halt that

Bhekisisa | 16 October 2023

Antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) have not just saved millions of people in South Africa from dying of HIV; they have also protected their brains and mental health against the damage the virus can cause. But taking antiretrovirals can stop this from happening — which is why getting onto treatment as soon as

possible after being diagnosed with HIV is important for people's mental health. In this Health Beat interview, Mia Malan asks HIV mental health researcher John Joska how it works.

<https://bhekisisa.org/health-news-south-africa/2023-10-16-what-hiv-does-to-your-brain-and-how-arvs-halt-that/>

First HIV TV ad in 40 years will 'tackle attitudes stuck in the 1980s'

Pink News | 16 October 2023

The advertising campaign, headed by the Terence Higgins Trust, will send the message that "stigma is more harmful than HIV" by informing the public that a diagnosis is no longer a death sentence. It is the first TV ad on HIV awareness since the UK government's 'Don't Die Of Ignorance' campaign, which featured falling tombstones four decades ago. Since the height of the pandemic in the 1980s, leaps in medical treatment have allowed those living with the virus to suppress it to undetectable levels using medicine. However, the Terence Higgins Trust says the UK public is generally unaware that medical treatment has progressed significantly since the beginning of the pandemic.

<https://www.thepinknews.com/2023/10/16/hiv-terence-higgins-trust-advert/>

ChatGPT may be better than doctors at evidence-based management of clinical depression

Medical Xpress | 16 October 2023

ChatGPT, the AI language model capable of mirroring human conversation, may be better than a doctor at following recognized treatment standards for clinical depression, and without any of the gender or social class biases sometimes seen in the primary care doctor-patient relationship, finds research published in the open access journal Family Medicine and Community Health.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-10-chatgpt-doctors-evidence-based-clinical-depression.html>

PEP-in-Pocket Is Another Option for HIV Prevention

Poz | 16 October 2023

Providing a course of antiretrovirals to use after infrequent HIV exposures could lower cost and remove barriers to access. Having antiretroviral medications on hand to take as post-exposure prophylaxis after potential exposure to HIV—an approach dubbed PEP-in-pocket, or PIP—is a feasible prevention option, especially for people who have sex infrequently, according to a presentation at IDWeek 2023.

<https://www.poz.com/article/pepinpocket-another-option-hiv-prevention>

Special probes improve ultrasound imaging in obese patients

Medical Xpress | 16 October 2023

Ultrasound is used to diagnose many diseases in the abdominal cavity. A new study conducted at the University of Leipzig Medical Center and supported by the Helmholtz Institute for Metabolism, Obesity and Vascular Research (HI-MAG) shows that obesity affects the quality of ultrasound scans of the liver and kidneys. It also shows that the use of high-performance ultrasound probes can improve the anatomical depiction in these patients. The findings have been published in the journal Scientific Reports.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-10-special-probes-ultrasound-imaging-obese.html>

LIMPOPO DAD SHARES EXPERIENCES OF RAISING A DEAF CHILD IN A RURAL AREA

Health-e News | 16 October 2023

My son was already three years old when we learned that he was Deaf,” fifty-seven-year-old Takalani Mutwanamba tells Health-e News. “We had first realised that he couldn’t utter a word when he was about six months old, but we never thought that there would be any challenges. We also did not realise that he was unable to hear any sound.” Mutwanamba’s son, Fhumulani is not alone. In South Africa it is estimated that around 6,000 children are born Deaf every year. Most are only diagnosed after they’ve reached the age of two. This is largely due to the lack of newborn hearing screening.

<https://health-e.org.za/2023/10/16/limpopo-dad-shares-experiences-of-raising-a-deaf-child-in-a-rural-area/>

UN calls on countries to include women’s reproductive health in climate plans

Global Government Forum | 17 October 2023

Most countries’ climate plans do not include a commitment to protect the sexual and reproductive health of women and girls, a UN report has found. The report from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) found that fewer than one third of the countries that have published climate plans – 38 of 119 – have taken access to contraception and maternal and newborn health into account in their adaptation plans, while only 15 reference gender-based violence. Studies have repeatedly shown that women and girls are among the hardest hit by the climate emergency.

<https://www.globalgovernmentforum.com/un-calls-on-countries-to-include-womens-reproductive-health-in-climate-plans/>

Making PEP available in the community could reduce new HIV cases in Africa by 31%

Aidsmap | 17 October 2023

Making the commonly prescribed antiretroviral regimen of tenofovir, lamivudine and dolutegravir available in the community as post-exposure prophylaxis after condomless sex, without a prescription, would reduce HIV acquisition by 31% over 20 years in African countries, according to a modelling study published in Lancet Global Health. Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is the use of antiretroviral drugs after condomless sex to prevent HIV exposure, ideally started within 24 hours and continued for one month. PEP consists of a three-drug combination. PEP is not available in community settings in eastern and southern Africa. A recent legal ruling allows South African pharmacists registered with a government scheme to provide PrEP or PEP without a prescription, but this remains unusual in the region. Wider community distribution, using the kind of methods employed to distribute condoms and HIV self-tests, has never been tried.

<https://www.aidsmap.com/news/oct-2023/making-pep-available-community-could-reduce-new-hiv-cases-africa-31>

DON’T FALL FOR FAKES: HERE’S HOW TO SPOT A BOGUS DOCTOR

Health-e News | 17 October 2023

Bogus health professionals have been a hot topic in South Africa lately. One of the more sensational is the story of ‘Tik Tok’ doctor Matthew Zingwela Lani who has been trending all over social media for the past two weeks. Lani had 280,000 followers on Tik Tok. He would share unproven ‘medical’

advice on the social network, putting the health and wellbeing of his followers at risk. The video sharing platform has since banned his account.

<https://health-e.org.za/2023/10/17/dont-fall-for-fakes-heres-how-to-spot-a-bogus-doctor/>

Study Reveals How Young Children’s Immune Systems Tame SARS-CoV-2

Poz | 17 October 2023

Infants and young children who had COVID produced protective antibodies for much longer than adults. New research helps explain why young children have lower rates of severe COVID-19 than adults. A study of infants and young children found those who acquired SARS-CoV-2 had a strong, sustained antibody response to the virus and high levels of inflammatory proteins in the nose but not in the blood. This immune response contrasts with that typically seen in adults with SARS-CoV-2 infection.

<https://www.poz.com/article/tudy-reveals-young-childrens-immune-systems-tame-sarscov2>

Health Equity and Survival

Poz | 17 October 2023

Hate and rage make our work difficult, if not impossible. How do you prioritize life when the world is out of control? Where does ending the HIV epidemic fit in this insanity? The Middle East is breaking my soul. Another war with too many children caught in the crossfire. I’m having trouble processing all the violence and hate. Anger has become the world’s go-to emotion, and nowhere feels safe. Every week there is another challenge in a too-long series of pain, loss, and sadness. That is why NMAC is bringing together 45 national organizations this week to discuss our mutual commitment to health equity and survival during these difficult political times.

<https://www.poz.com/blog/health-equity-survival>

Why it’s important to know the difference between medical aid and medical insurance

IOL | 17 October 2023

There is a lot of confusion and misunderstanding when it comes to medical aid versus medical insurance, and where hospital plans fit in, and this can make it difficult to decide what the best solution is to meet your needs.

<https://www.iol.co.za/lifestyle/health/why-its-important-to-know-the-difference-between-medical-aid-and-medical-insurance-71d5e868-5ce1-449d-8fc8-1445f7ae767b>

‘I’m not going to be cured’. How breast cancer awareness and support sidelines people with metastatic disease

The Conversation | 17 October 2023

There have been incredible advances in breast cancer diagnosis and treatment in recent years. And stories about celebrities who have “beaten” breast cancer continue to be a source of inspiration for many people. However, this emphasis on fighting, beating and surviving cancer shuts out the voices

of those who will not survive. That is, the many people diagnosed with incurable, life-limiting metastatic breast cancer, which kills nine Australians every day or nearly 3,300 people a year. Yet an estimated 10,000 Australians are living with the diagnosis.

<https://theconversation.com/im-not-going-to-be-cured-how-breast-cancer-awareness-and-support-sidelines-people-with-metastatic-disease-215458>

HIV in the brain – does it correlate with neurocognitive symptoms?

Aidsmap | 17 October 2023

In some cases, HIV can bypass the barrier that encases the brain and cerebrospinal fluid which can contribute to brain inflammation and neurocognitive symptoms. However, diagnosing this viral 'escape' into cerebrospinal fluid is challenging due to its anatomical inaccessibility. Swiss researchers found that the presence of the virus did not clearly correlate with symptoms. In their paper published in the Journal of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndromes, they also conclude that the only way to know whether the virus is present in the cerebrospinal fluid is taking a small amount of fluid directly from the spine.

<https://www.aidsmap.com/news/oct-2023/hiv-brain-does-it-correlate-neurocognitive-symptoms>

The fine line between wrong and almost right — and how that plays out during pandemics

Bhekisisa | 18 October 2023

In January 2021, French President Emmanuel Macron announced to journalists in his country that one of the COVID-19 jabs that France used wasn't working as it should. Simultaneously, across the Atlantic, in the United States, former president Donald Trump made downright false statements about unfounded COVID treatments. How should journalists cover such comments — should they treat Macron and Trump's statements differently? We take a deep dive into strategies to fight misinformation during times of crises.

<https://bhekisisa.org/opinion/2023-10-18-the-fine-line-between-wrong-and-almost-right-and-how-that-plays-out-during-pandemics/>

More girls seek treatment for mental health reasons than boys

Chief Healthcare | 18 October 2023

Pediatric mental health encounters have generally dropped from the peak levels seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, but the rate of visits among females remains above pre-pandemic levels. An analysis by Epic Research shows girls are more likely to visit emergency departments, outpatient facilities and hospitals for mental health concerns than pediatric males. Epic's researchers found that in May 2023, 5.4% of emergency department visits for pediatric females occurred for mental health reasons, compared to 2.9% for pediatric males.

<https://www.chiefhealthcareexecutive.com/view/more-girls-seek-treatment-for-mental-health-reasons-than-boys>

Companies fingered in corruption at Tembisa Hospital still getting tenders

IOL | 18 October 2023

At least four companies implicated in the Tembisa Hospital corruption that the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) is investigating, have received contracts worth R1.2 million in the last three months. This is despite a promise that the suspicious companies would be blacklisted. This was revealed by Gauteng Health and Wellness MEC Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko, in a written reply to DA Gauteng Shadow Health MEC Jack Bloom's questions in the provincial legislature.

<https://www.iol.co.za/the-star/news/companies-fingered-in-corruption-at-tembisa-hospital-still-getting-tenders-3596a1b7-8f70-42b8-aeab-73bc71047457>

South Africa likely to see more cases of rubella this year: NICD

Times Live | 18 October 2023

An increase in rubella cases has been noted in the Western Cape since the second week of September (week 36), the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) said on Tuesday. It said while sporadic cases have been noted across the country, a week-on-week increase in laboratory-confirmed cases has been noted in Khayelitsha since week 36. "To date, 19 cases have been identified through serological testing, and all are in the five to nine year age group. Anecdotal reports of increased numbers of clinically suspected cases without laboratory confirmation in the Khayelitsha subdistrict of the City of Cape Town have been received by the NICD."

<https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2023-10-18-south-africa-likely-to-see-more-cases-of-rubella-this-year-nicd/>

Breast cancer awareness is key to early cancer detection

News24 | 18 October 2023

"KNOW your body, and take care of it." This is the advice given to South African women by Dr Zukiswa Jafta, a Clinical Radiation Oncologist based in East London. Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women of all races, with a lifetime risk of one in 27 in South Africa, according to the 2019 National Cancer Registry (NCR). While cancer-related organisations and initiatives strive to educate the public about the importance of regular breast self-examinations, mammograms, and clinical check-ups, breast cancer awareness remains a challenge.

<https://www.news24.com/news24/community-newspaper/pe-express/breast-cancer-awareness-is-key-to-early-cancer-detection-20231016>

The Ever-Evolving Landscape Of HIV Medicine: What You Need To Know

Legal Study Material | 18 October 2023

The battle against HIV, or Human Immunodeficiency Virus, has seen remarkable progress in the past few decades, especially in the realm of medicine for HIV. This virus has been a global health challenge, impacting millions of lives. However, with scientific advancements and relentless efforts, the landscape of HIV medicine has continually evolved, offering hope and improved outcomes for individuals living with the virus. In this comprehensive exploration, we will delve into the ever-evolving world of HIV medicine, shedding light on key developments and what you need to know.

<https://legalstudymaterial.com/the-ever-evolving-landscape-of-hiv-medicine/>

Diagnostic Gaps: Hepatitis C Screening Shortfalls Among Pregnant Women and Their Infants

Contagion Live | 18 October 2023

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), incidence rates of hepatitis C (HCV) are increasing in adults who are of reproductive age. In fact, “rates of new HCV infections increased by more than 60% from 2015 to 2019. And in 2019, more than 63% of new HCV infections occurred among adults 20-39 years of age,” writes the federal agency on its site. Additionally, CDC says it also expects perinatal HCV to increase as well. “Rates of HCV infection nearly doubled during 2009–2014 among people with live births. From 2011-2014, an estimated 29,000 HCV-infected patients gave birth each year.

<https://www.contagionlive.com/view/hepatitis-c-screening-among-pregnant-women-and-their-infants>

Despite progress, challenges persist in advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights in the WHO European Region

WHO | 18 October 2023

While significant strides have been taken to enhance sexual and reproductive health and rights in the WHO European Region, challenges persist. In the run-up to the 73rd session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe, WHO/Europe hosted a side event on this topic to discuss these key challenges with partners from across the Region. Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are crucial for overall health and well-being, gender equality, and societal development, as recognized by the Sustainable Development Goals. Over the past two decades, the Region has made significant progress in improving SRHR. However, considerable inequalities persist in SRHR outcomes among Member States.

<https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/18-10-2023-despite-progress--challenges-persist-in-advancing-sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights-in-the-who-european-region>

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

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>

Annual SA Heart Congress 2023

When: 26 - 29 Oct 2023

Where: Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa

Register: <https://saheartcongress.org/registration/>

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

PSYCHOSOCIAL ADVISORS

Closing date: 24 October 2023

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

CLINICAL ADVISORS (2)

Closing date: 24 October 2023

[https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Health-Systems-Strengthening-\(HSS\)-Unit--Clinical-Advisors-\(2\).aspx](https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Health-Systems-Strengthening-(HSS)-Unit--Clinical-Advisors-(2).aspx)