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ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

Tuberculosis in prisons: an unintended sentence?

The Lancet Public Health | May 2021

Kavindhran Velen, Salome Charalambous

Tuberculosis and HIV remain serious challenges for public health programmes globally, owing to the sustained high rates of morbidity and mortality associated with these diseases. WHO has advocated for greater control efforts, including ambitious targets for both HIV and tuberculosis that aim to reach, test, and treat high-risk populations, particularly those that are incarcerated. Despite the importance of targeting high-risk populations, prisoners are not sufficiently prioritised in major policy documents, nor are prison activities integrated into national programmes. Additionally, international reporting of tuberculosis and HIV cases among prisoners remains sporadic.

Homelessness, unstable housing, and risk of HIV and hepatitis C virus acquisition among people who inject drugs: a systematic review and meta-analysis

The Lancet Public Health | May 2021

Chiedozie Arum, Hannah Fraser, Andreea Artenie, Sandra Bivegete, Adam Trickey, et al.

People who inject drugs (PWID) are at increased risk for HIV and hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection and also have high levels of homelessness and unstable housing. We assessed whether homelessness or unstable housing is associated with an increased risk of HIV or HCV acquisition among PWID compared with PWID who are not homeless or are stably housed.

High blood pressure and exposure to dust from gold mine dumps among the elderly in South Africa: A cross-sectional study

Elsevier | 14 May 2021

Vusumuzi Nkosi, Joyce Shirinde, Fonzani Rathogwa-Takalani, Kuku Voyi

The objective of this study was to investigate whether high blood pressure was associated with living close to a mine dump among the elderly in South Africa. Worldwide high blood pressure is a major public health concern and accounts for over 7.5 million deaths. The increased prevalence of high blood pressure in developing countries is a growing concern because it is a major risk factor for cardiovascular diseases

and an economic burden. Epidemiological studies have indicated a significant positive association between air pollution exposure and increased cardiovascular diseases. Numerous pollutants in the air including ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide and particulate matter may deleteriously effects the vascular system. Several studies have reported that environmental air pollutants such as gases and particulate matter are associated with increased mortality and morbidity from cardiovascular diseases.

Strengthening health systems to improve the value of tuberculosis diagnostics in South Africa: A cost and cost-effectiveness analysis

PLOS One | 18 May 2021

Nicola Foster, Lucy Cunnama, Kerrigan McCarthy, Lebogang Ramma, Mariana Siapka, et al.

In South Africa, replacing smear microscopy with Xpert-MTB/RIF (Xpert) for tuberculosis diagnosis did not reduce mortality and was cost-neutral. The unchanged mortality has been attributed to suboptimal Xpert implementation. We developed a mathematical model to explore how complementary investments may improve cost-effectiveness of the tuberculosis diagnostic algorithm.

Health systems resilience in managing the COVID-19 pandemic: lessons from 28 countries

Nature Medicine | 17 May 2021

Victoria Haldane, Chuan De Foo, Salma Abdalla, Anne-Sophie Jung, Melisa Tan, et al.

Health systems resilience is key to learning lessons from country responses to crises such as coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). In this perspective, we review COVID-19 responses in 28 countries using a new health systems resilience framework. Through a combination of literature review, national government submissions and interviews with experts, we conducted a comparative analysis of national responses. We report on domains addressing governance and financing, health workforce, medical products and technologies, public health functions, health service delivery and community engagement to prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. We then synthesize four salient elements that underlie highly effective national responses and offer recommendations toward strengthening health systems resilience globally.

Spike in Diabetic Ketoacidosis Rates in Pediatric Type 2 Diabetes During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Diabetic Care | June 2021

Lily Chao, Alaina Vidmar, Senta Georgia

The severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV2) pandemic challenges our understanding of diabetes across the life span. There appears to be a bidirectional interaction between SARS-CoV2 and diabetes. It is unclear whether SARS-CoV2 directly infects b-cells or whether a combination of immune response dysfunction, inflammation, and increased coagulation activity potentially triggers the development or worsening of diabetes. Studies examining the impact of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) on type 2 diabetes have centered on adults. The impact of COVID-19 on pediatric type 2 diabetes remains unclear. Data from multiple countries suggest that diabetes or new onset hyperglycemia are poor prognostic indicators for COVID-19 patients. Reports estimated that 10–55% of adults hospitalized with COVID-19 have diabetes.

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RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

A Crisis of Undiagnosed Cancers Is Emerging in the Pandemic's Second Year

ProPublica | 4 May 2021

Teresa Ruvalcaba lay on a bed in the emergency room of Chicago's Mount Sinai Hospital, her right breast swollen to nearly twice the size of her left, the skin so thick and dimpled that the doctor examining her would note that it resembled an orange peel. *Ojalá que sólo sea una infección*, she thought, as she struggled to catch her breath, not knowing she had a partially collapsed lung. I hope it's just an infection. For more than six months, the 48-year-old factory worker had tried to ignore the pain and inflammation in her chest. She was afraid of visiting a doctor during the pandemic, afraid of missing work, afraid of losing

her job, her home, her ability to take care of her three children. She kept working until she couldn't, until the pain forced her to ask her son to drive her to the hospital on this cold, cloudy night in January.

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

News24 | 11 May 2021

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

UPDATE | How provinces are gearing up for launch of mass vaccination

News24 | 14 May 2021

Until now Covid-19 vaccinations in South Africa have only taken place in the context of clinical trials and the Sisonke implementation study. That will change on Monday (17 May) when the country's mass vaccination programme kicks off. It will also see the start of phase 2 of the vaccine rollout plan, as adults over the age of 60 become eligible for vaccination. If things go according to plan, the number of Covid-19 vaccine doses administered in the country should increase in the coming weeks to well over 100 000 per day. In the Sisonke study it has mostly been in the region of 10 000 a day, although numbers have increased substantially in the last few days as the study neared its May 15 end date.

Fake Covid vaccine and test certificate market is growing, researchers say

The Guardian | 16 May 2021

A hidden pandemic market advertising fake vaccine and test certificates for as little as £25 has grown exponentially, with more than 1,200 vendors in the UK and worldwide, researchers have found. After UK ministers announced the return of overseas holidays – with travellers required to show proof of negative tests, and vaccine passports on the horizon – the Guardian has also learned that anti-vaxxers and people arriving in Britain from poorer nations make up a significant number of those buying forged pandemic paraphernalia. Last month MPs were told that more than 100 people a day are trying to enter the UK using fake Covid test certificates as individuals attempt to get around current entry requirements, which include tests before and after travel and can cost individuals hundreds of pounds.

Bronze statue at Zuid-Afrikaans Hospital salutes nurses

IOL | 17 May 2021

Pretoria - The Zuid-Afrikaans Hospital in Muckleneuk has chosen to earmark and commemorate the hard work of nurses who have been at the forefront of the Covid-19 pandemic with the installation of a unique bronze sculpture. The iconic sculpture was crafted by renowned South African sculptor Angus Taylor, known for his powerful and monumental works using a range of materials from his immediate environment. It was officially unveiled on International Nurses' day last week.

Finding an HIV vaccine: Five lessons from the search for a COVID jab

Bhekisisa | 18 May 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic saw vaccine development shrink from decades to month. But this scientific progress also highlighted the cost of inequity when interventions are not available to poorer countries. We look at five lessons from the successes and mistakes in the search for a COVID vaccine and how these could help other pandemics.

Limpopo's elderly worried: They don't know how to register for the COVID-19 vaccine

Health-e News | 18 May 2021

As phase two of national vaccination programme starts today, some elderly citizens are concerned that they will be last in line for the COVID-19 vaccine as they do not know how to register using the online system. Speaking to Health-e News from her home in Mphego village, outside Thohoyandou, 74-year-old Meriam Makhaya said that she is worried that she is not yet registered on Electronic Vaccination Data System (EVDS) because she is unable to register herself as she does not know how to operate a smartphone nor use the internet. "I am happy that we will soon be getting a Covid-19 vaccine as it has been reported on the news, but I am worried about the registration process. No one is telling us where to go in order to register ourselves as elderly people," said Makhaya.

Vaccinating children before poor morally wrong, Oxford scientist says

BBC News | 18 May 2021

Offering children in some richer countries a coronavirus vaccine before some high-risk people in poorer ones is "morally wrong", a group of MPs has been told. Prof Andrew Pollard, who helped develop the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, said the "inequity" of vaccine distribution must change "urgently". The US and Canada have made a jab available to children as young as 12. But in many low-income countries those most at risk are yet to be vaccinated.

SA leaders get COVID-19 vaccine to encourage senior citizens to vaccinate

Health-eNews | 20 May 2021

Leaders including Sophie Williams-De Bruyn, Trevor Manuel and Mfundu Vundla received the jab this week to show citizens the vaccines are safe and to encourage eligible citizens to register to get vaccinated.

How long will you wait for a COVID vaccination appointment? We answer 7 EVDS questions

Bhekisisa | 20 May 2021

This week, the EVDS sent out the country's first text messages for COVID vaccination appointments – but not without problems. All the healthcare workers and people of 60 years and older who received messages got the notifications on short notice, mostly the afternoon or night before the day of their appointments. This resulted in many of them being unable to make the appointments and led to questions on social media about how to reschedule a consultation. Load shedding also disabled the EVDS at times and vaccinators therefore often had to record vaccinations manually, instead of directly onto the EVDS. Moreover, on the first day of the roll-out, some people who had received appointment messages arrived at sites where they were turned away because vaccinators hadn't been informed that they were booked for appointments, due to a glitch in the system. But Nicholas Crisp, the deputy director general in charge of South Africa's National Health Insurance system, who also helps to manage the implementation of the vaccine roll-out, says most of these problems have now been addressed. We asked him to answer seven of the questions.

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TRAINING AND RESOURCES

Join the CAPRISA DSI - NRF Centre of Excellence in HIV Prevention

Students wanting to pursue Masters and PhD training in 2022 are invited to apply to be part of a dynamic and diverse research team at CAPRISA. Visit www.caprisa.org.

Click the Fellowship Programme Tab - Download the fellowship application form

Send it with a detailed CV to sma.mzobe@caprisa.org and quote Ref.CoE/2022 in the subject line

Health Systems Training Institute

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

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PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

World Report 2021: Events of 2020

Human Rights Watch | 2021

An annual review of human rights around the globe.

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

WHO | 6 May 2021

With nearly half of the world's population living in a rural or remote area, meeting the health needs of rural populations, where over 80% of the world's extremely poor live, is imperative in achieving universal health coverage. Leaving no one behind means ensuring that health workers are available in rural and remote areas. Health, social and economic inequities remain cross-cutting challenges for rural populations. Rural populations tend to be poorer, have worse health outcomes, and experience higher rates of unemployment, underemployment and informal employment. It is estimated that about 51–67% of rural populations are without adequate access to essential health services, translating to about 2 billion people being left behind. In some countries, rural populations have access to numbers of health workers that are 10 times less than the numbers available to urban populations. The deficiency in numbers and mix of trained motivated health workers to provide the needed health services is a critical health system issue. This inequitable access to health workers and health services impacts health outcomes and increases socioeconomic disadvantages. Higher under-5, maternal and preventable mortality rates, increased morbidity, decreased life expectancy, and more costs to access distant care are seen across rural areas.

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CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

Virtual 10th SA Aids Conference Part One: Ending AIDS amidst Pandemics

Date: 9 – 10 June 2021

Time: 16:00 – 20:00 (SAST)

1st International Paediatric HIV Symposium in Africa (Virtual)

Globally, 1.8 million children younger than 15 years are living with HIV; 150,000 children were newly infected by HIV in 2019 and 95,000 AIDS-related deaths occurred in that year. The African continent is the epicentre for the HIV epidemic, with the biggest burden (89%) of children living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa. Symposium participants will include healthcare workers, policy makers, programme implementers, representatives of ministries of health and researchers working on paediatric HIV.

Date: 17 – 18 November 2021

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JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The Health Systems Trust currently has no available jobs.

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