

# HST Bulletin



## 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

### **What factors shape doctors' trustworthiness? Patients' perspectives in the context of hypertension care in rural Tanzania**

*Rural and Remote Health | 19 August 2020*

*Kahabi Isangula, Holly Seale, Rohan Jayasuriya, Tumaini Nyamhanga and Niamh Stephenson |*

There is increasing evidence that improving patient trust in doctors can improve patients' use of healthcare services, compliance and continuing engagement with care – particularly for chronic diseases. Consequently, much of the current literature on trust in therapeutic relationships focuses on factors shaping doctors' trustworthiness. However, few studies on this issue have been conducted among rural populations in low-income Africa, where health service delivery, cultural norms and patient expectations differ from those in high-income countries. This study examined patients' perspectives of factors that shape doctors' trustworthiness in rural Tanzania in the context of hypertension care.

### **Educating paediatric health-care providers about human trafficking**

*Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health | 20 August 2020*

*Catherine Coughlin, Jordan Greenbaum and Kanani Titchen*

Human trafficking is a public health issue and humanitarian crisis. Most alarming is that children are especially at risk. Although many studies demonstrate that the majority of trafficked persons surveyed engage with the health-care system during the time in which they are trafficked, health-care practitioners lack the knowledge, tools and resources to assist these patients. The present efforts in training health-care professionals have been fragmented and largely ineffective. While prior training has produced short-term changes in knowledge or attitudes of health professionals, it has not produced sustained changes in knowledge and attitudes nor meaningful changes in screening or intervention. No training has demonstrated changes in patient outcomes. Trafficked persons, particularly children and survivors of labour trafficking, are inadequately served by our present training options for health-care practitioners, and evidence-based protocols are needed to care for this underserved, disenfranchised and traumatised population. To provide optimal care for trafficked youth, health-care practitioners may benefit from: (i) evaluating training for health care providers (HCP) rigorously and meaningfully; (ii) advocating for high-quality training for all HCPs; (iii) fostering partnerships with key stakeholders to inform training and

practice; and (iv) designing HCP training that is comprehensive, spanning all forms of human trafficking and including all populations involved.

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

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## RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

### **Africa's triumph over wild polio shows the power of regional unity**

*The Guardian | 26 August 2020*

The legacy of a successful battle is now helping combat Covid, but we must stay vigilant, says WHO's Africa regional director, Matshidiso Moeti. Africa has declared victory over a virus that once paralysed 75,000 children on the continent every year. Four years have now passed since wild polio was last detected in Africa. After a year of rigorously evaluating polio data from all 47 countries in the WHO's African region, an independent body of experts announced during a virtual ceremony on Tuesday that the continent was free of wild polio. The magnitude of this achievement cannot be overstated. It should inspire confidence in Africa's ability to overcome even the most formidable public health challenges. How we got here is a remarkable story that shows what Africa can achieve when its nations unite behind a common goal.

### **Covid-19 Delays Organ Transplants but awareness drives continue**

*Health-E News | 26 August 2020*

August is National Organ Donor Awareness month. The number of patients waiting for transplants continues to increase while the shortage of potential donors remains [a] concern. Covid-19 has made this even worse. There are 4,300 adults and children waiting for organ and cochlear donations, and now the coronavirus pandemic has made this wait even longer. "The coronavirus has disturbed us a lot since lot of resources have gone into the Covid-19 pandemic. Transplants coordinators have been assigned to other areas too, which makes it difficult for some waiting transplant patients to get help," says Samantha Nicholls, executive director of the Organ Donor Foundation (ODF).

### **World Mental Health Day: an opportunity to kick-start a massive scale-up in investment in mental health**

*World Health Organization | 27 August 2020*

Mental health is one of the most neglected areas of public health. Close to 1 billion people are living with a mental disorder, 3 million people die every year from the harmful use of alcohol and one person dies every 40 seconds by suicide. And now, billions of people around the world have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which is having a further impact on people's mental health. Yet, relatively few people around the world have access to quality mental health services. In low- and middle-income countries, more than 75% of people with mental, neurological and substance use disorders receive no treatment for their condition at all. Furthermore, stigma, discrimination, punitive legislation and human rights abuses are still widespread. The limited access to quality, affordable mental health care in the world before the pandemic, and particularly in humanitarian emergencies and conflict settings, has been further diminished due to COVID-19 as the pandemic has disrupted health services around the world. Primary causes have been infection and the risk of infection in long-stay facilities such as care homes and psychiatric institutions; barriers to meeting people face-to-face; mental health staff being infected with the virus; and the closing of mental health facilities to convert them into care facilities for people with COVID-19.

### **New WHO technical package to help countries improve health data for COVID-19 response and beyond**

*World Health Organization | 27 August 2020*

Today, as part of its commitment to strengthening health information systems and improving health, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, WHO announced a new approach to improving access to life-saving data: the SCORE for Health Data Technical Package. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the urgent need for timely and reliable data to drive strategic health action. Too many countries still lack both the infrastructure to routinely gather health data and the analytical capacity to use these data for effective health actions and emergency response. "Countries must be able to measure progress to make progress," said WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. "Particularly

during COVID-19, reliable data is the best way to coordinate response efforts and improve health in all areas.” Accurate health data are necessary to understand specific country needs in order to improve health and save lives. Data also helps direct scarce resources to where they are needed most.

### **Five important things you need to know about disinfectant tunnels**

*TimesLive | 28 August 2020*

The health hazards caused by using disinfectant tunnels as a preventive measure against Covid-19 have come under the spotlight after the release of advisories by the Covid-19 ministerial advisory committee (MAC). Disinfectant tunnels, also known as fumigating tunnels, were installed in malls, schools and taxi ranks when the coronavirus first hit SA. However, **Prof Salim Abdool Karim**, chair of SA’s ministerial advisory committee on Covid-19, warned at the time that there was no scientific evidence supporting claims that disinfectant tunnels could prevent the spread of Covid-19.

### **Increased demand for digital health tools helps bridge healthcare provision gap during COVID-19 pandemic**

*Harvard Global Health Institute | August 2020*

When the first COVID-19 cases began to spring up in Kenya, the government quickly responded with an array of infection prevention measures. While travel restrictions and curfews would help reduce the spread of the disease, there was a several-week gap that left pregnant women and new mothers confused on how to navigate care, while the Kenyan government created guidelines on how to safely provide care to those with ongoing needs. At the same time, providers looked for ways to circumvent the healthcare service disruptions that were making it difficult to communicate with patients and deliver essential services. Fearing that maternal care would become jeopardized, it was clear a solution was needed quickly. For **Jacaranda Health**, a non-profit organization that uses digital tools to improve maternal and child health outcomes, it was clear they were well positioned to overcome some of these challenges. Prior to COVID-19, the organization was already using a contactless approach to connect new and expectant mothers to care at public hospitals at the right time and place.

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

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## **TRAINING AND RESOURCES**

### **Webinar Series**

#### **Maintaining essential child and adolescent TB services during the COVID-19 pandemic: practical solutions and lessons learnt**

*The Union | Thursday, 3 September 2020: 13h00 – 14h30 CEST*

Although the primary risk of coronavirus infection in young people aged 0-19 with co-morbidities such as tuberculosis (TB), HIV, or severe malnutrition is still uncertain, the negative impact of the pandemic on this already vulnerable population is becoming clear. For example, delays in TB diagnosis and treatment, increased household transmission, interruption of TB preventive treatment, as well as indirect impact through reduced income. Leveraging services for COVID-19 while maintaining essential TB services is critical. This webinar, co-hosted by the Child and Adolescent TB Working Group, the Secretariat of which is housed at the WHO Global TB Programme, will provide practical experiences and perspectives from healthcare workers and programme managers on how they work with relevant stakeholders to maintain the most important child and adolescent TB prevention, case finding and treatment services in different settings around the world. This webinar will be followed by a Union member only questions session. Details will follow once you have registered. **Register today**

#### **Novel rapid diagnostics for assessing zoonotic tuberculosis**

*The Union | Tuesday, 8 September 2020: 14h00 – 15h00 CEST*

Rapidly diagnosing TB infection in humans or animals with high sensitivity and specificity is difficult, and determining the source of a zoonotic infection through the identification of infecting Mycobacterium species is generally limited to whole-genome sequencing. In this webinar, leaders in the development of new rapid TB diagnostic tests will discuss the overall challenges and progress, including the ultimate challenge of rapidly identifying cases of zoonotic TB. **Register today**

## SURVEYS

### National HIV & TB HCW Hotline survey

Are you a healthcare worker in the field of HIV in SA?

You are invited to take part in a research study being run by the National HIV & TB HCW Hotline at the University of Cape Town (UCT) to understand knowledge of parts of the new ART guidelines.

It would be appreciated if you could take the time to help with this anonymous short survey for healthcare workers. They are collecting this data to know whether you have received enough support and training about the new ART guidelines.

The survey data will be collected anonymously. There is an optional prize draw after completion (details stored separately from survey answers, to protect anonymity).

They hope to use the results to design interventions to assist healthcare workers and improve the transfer of important ART-related information to the patient.

The survey can be accessed at <https://tinyurl.com/y3csemo9> and will be open for four weeks.

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

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## PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

### District Health Barometer (DHB) Call for Expressions of Interest

*Health Systems Trust | Closing date: 28 August 2020*

Please click on the link below for more detailed information on the terms of reference.

### The South African Health Review (SAHR) 2021 Call for Abstracts is now open!

*Health Systems Trust | Closing date: 31 October 2020*

Prospective authors are invited to submit abstracts that examine health-sector responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly from the perspectives of strengthening health systems; leadership and governance; resource allocation and financing; service delivery, human resources, and medical equipment and supplies. Please click on the link below for further details.

### Lessons learned from the HIV response – UNAIDS warns of dangers of failing to respect human rights in the response of COVID-19

*UNAIDS | 27 August 2020*

*Report reveals interruptions of HIV services, violence, harassment, abuse, arrests, deaths and a failure to respect human rights in their early responses to the pandemic—UNAIDS urges governments to protect the most vulnerable, particularly key populations at higher risk of HIV.* During the early response to COVID-19 UNAIDS received numerous reports of interruptions to HIV services and disturbing human violations against vulnerable and marginalized populations. The experience of the response to HIV has proved that violations of human rights during a pandemic undermine trust, harm individuals, and set back public health responses. The United Nations Secretary General has requested all United Nations entities to support the efforts of the World Health Organization in their own respective areas of expertise. So, to better inform the response going forwards, UNAIDS commissioned a report on how COVID-19 public health orders and restrictions on movement have impacted the response to HIV and human rights. The findings are reflective of trends across the world and uncovered significant breaches of human rights, life-threatening disruptions to health and social services, violence, abuse and discriminatory targeting of marginalized, poor and key populations.

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

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## CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

Due to the disruption COVID-19 has caused the conferencing industry many events have been cancelled or postponed. As a result of this uncertainty we have decided not to list any conferences and events in the Bulletin for the time being.

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

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## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Our job vacancies are currently closed. Please do consult the Health Systems Trust website [www.hst.org.za](http://www.hst.org.za) (careers section) on a regular basis for updates.

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

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