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ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

Dynamic needs and challenges of people with drug-resistant tuberculosis and HIV in South Africa: a qualitative study

The Lancet Global Health | April 2021

Amrita Daftary, Shinjini Mondal, Jennifer Zelnick, Gerald Friedland, Boitumelo Seepamore et al.

The diagnostic and treatment complexity, morbidity, and mortality associated with drug-resistant tuberculosis (DRTB) render it the most challenging form of the disease. Each year about half a million people develop multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDRTB) that is resistant to the first-line anti-tuberculosis medications isoniazid and rifampicin. 10% of patients are additionally resistant to a fluoroquinolone and second-line injectables, and have extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDRTB).¹ Treatment success in DRTB is very low (28–52%). The treatment duration—which until recently spanned 18–24 months—medication adverse effects, isolation, and accompanying financial, mental, and social hardships are major barriers for patients.

Miscarriage matters: the epidemiological, physical, psychological, and economic costs of early pregnancy loss

The Lancet | 26 April 2021

Siobhan Quenby, Ioannis Gallos, Rima Dhillon-Smith, Marcelina Podeseck, Mary Stephenson et al.

Miscarriage is generally defined as the loss of a pregnancy before viability. An estimated 23 million miscarriages occur every year worldwide, translating to 44 pregnancy losses each minute. The pooled risk of miscarriage is 15.3% (95% CI 12.5–18.7%) of all recognised pregnancies. The population prevalence of women who have had one miscarriage is 10.8% (10.3–11.4%), two miscarriages is 1.9% (1.8–2.1%), and three or more miscarriages is 0.7% (0.5–0.8%). Risk factors for miscarriage include very young or older female age (younger than 20 years and older than 35 years), older male age (older than 40 years), very low or very high body-mass index, Black ethnicity, previous miscarriages, smoking, alcohol, stress, working night shifts, air pollution, and exposure to pesticides. The consequences of miscarriage are both physical, such as bleeding or infection, and psychological. Psychological consequences include increases in the risk of anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicide. Miscarriage, and especially recurrent miscarriage, is also a sentinel risk marker for obstetric complications, including preterm birth, fetal growth restriction, placental abruption, and stillbirth in future pregnancies, and a predictor of longer-

term health problems, such as cardiovascular disease and venous thromboembolism. The costs of miscarriage affect individuals, health-care systems, and society. The short-term national economic cost of miscarriage is estimated to be £471 million per year in the UK.

Urine lipoarabinomannan for rapid tuberculosis diagnosis in HIV-infected adult outpatients in Khayelitsha

Southern African Journal of HIV Medicine | 26 April 2021

In 2019, there were an estimated 10.0 million cases of tuberculosis (TB) worldwide.¹ Those who had co-infection with HIV were at a disproportionately higher risk of death, despite TB being a curable disease. The World Health Organization (WHO) has highlighted that continued high rates of TB mortality relate to gaps in detection and diagnosis of this disease, as well as in poor linking of patients with care and treatment once TB is diagnosed. While sputum-based diagnostics have been the mainstay of TB diagnosis for decades, they have lower yield in people living with HIV (PLHIV) and are currently not able to provide a rapid answer at the bedside or in the clinic.

COVID-19 and the “Lost Year” for Smokers Trying to Quit

JAMA Network | 28 April 2021

Mary Jaklevic

But last spring was different. Hard-hitting Tips ads encouraging smokers to call 1 (800) QUIT-NOW, the national quit line portal, began on March 23, 2020, as the country went into pandemic lockdown. Even as the CDC separately warned that smokers could be at greater risk of becoming severely ill from COVID-19, the emotional stories didn't have their usual impact. Within weeks, it was clear to quit line operators that the pandemic had triggered a substantial drop in the number of people interested in free, evidence-based, cessation services, which include motivational counseling, information, and sometimes nicotine replacement therapies.

Overview of SARS-CoV-2 infection in adults living with HIV

The Lancet HIV | 1 May 2021

Around 2.5 million deaths and more than 110 million COVID-19 cases have been reported globally. Although it initially appeared that HIV infection was not a risk factor for COVID-19 or more severe disease, more recent large studies suggest that people living with HIV (particularly with low CD4 cell counts or untreated HIV infection) might have a more severe clinical course than those who are HIV-negative. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted HIV prevention and treatment services worldwide, creating huge challenges to the continuity of essential activities. We have reviewed the most relevant features of COVID-19 in people living with HIV and highlighted topics where further research is required.

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RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

ACT-Accelerator one year on

World Health Organization | 23 April 2021

The ACT-Accelerator marks its first anniversary today with a special report on the global alliance's progress against the COVID-19 pandemic. The “ACT Now, ACT Together: 2021 Impact Report” details the major scientific advances that have been made to confront the new disease, along with the history-making collaboration of global health organizations, governments, foundations, civil society, scientists and the private sector. The report, which was launched at an event hosted by Dr Tedros Adhanom, Director-General of WHO, with live remarks by Cyril Ramaphosa, President of South Africa, and Dag Inge Ulstein, Minister of International Development for Norway, also shows the challenges ahead, including major funding gaps that threaten to derail progress against the pandemic. “One year after the launch of the ACT Accelerator, world leaders face a choice: invest in saving lives by treating the cause of the pandemic everywhere, now, or continue to spend trillions on the consequences with no end in sight,” WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom said. “With a remaining funding gap of US\$ 19 billion for 2021 and limited supply of products, we can only end the pandemic by funding, sharing, and scaling-up access to the tools we need to fight the disease. The time to ACT is now.” The ACT-Accelerator alliance was launched on 24 April 2020 by WHO, the European Commission, France, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to

develop and deliver tests, treatments and vaccines the world needs to fight COVID-19.

Pregnant and breastfeeding women will soon be included in the Sisonke J&J trial

Bhekisisa | 26 April 2021

The Sisonke trial, that was paused earlier this month because of the US government's regulator the Food and Drug Administration's investigation into rare blood clotting disorders associated with the Johnson & Johnson jab, will resume on Wednesday, April 28th. Find out more from our summary and Twitter thread and access the full press release.

Immunization services begin slow recovery from COVID-19 disruptions, though millions of children remain at risk from deadly diseases – WHO, UNICEF, Gavi

World Health Organization | 26 April 2021

While immunization services have started to recover from disruptions caused by COVID-19, millions of children remain vulnerable to deadly diseases, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance warned today during World Immunization Week, highlighting the urgent need for a renewed global commitment to improve vaccination access and uptake. "Vaccines will help us end the COVID-19 pandemic but only if we ensure fair access for all countries, and build strong systems to deliver them," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO's Director-General. "And if we're to avoid multiple outbreaks of life-threatening diseases like measles, yellow fever and diphtheria, we must ensure routine vaccination services are protected in every country in the world." A WHO survey has found that, despite progress when compared to the situation in 2020, more than one third of respondent countries (37%) still report experiencing disruptions to their routine immunization services.

Midlife Sleep and Dementia; Brain Changes and Coffee; Diabetes Drugs and Parkinson's

Medpagetoday | 27 April 2021

People who reported sleeping an average of 6 hours or less when they were 50 or older were 30% more likely to be diagnosed with dementia late in life compared with those who regularly slept 7 hours, a study of nearly 8,000 people showed. (Nature Communications) Autopsy reports of 41 COVID-19 patients suggested that damage to the brain did not result from direct viral infection of parenchyma but more likely was from systemic inflammation, perhaps in conjunction with hypoxia or ischemia. (Brain) What's the connection between functional neurological disorder and COVID-19 vaccines? An expert explains. (JAMA Neurology) Dementia was an age-independent risk factor for disease severity and death in hospitalized COVID-19 patients. (Alzheimer's & Dementia) Men under age 50 with asymptomatic COVID-19 showed a persistent increased risk of acute ischemic stroke months after serological diagnosis in a small study. (JAMA Network Open) Compared with non-coffee drinkers, habitual coffee drinkers showed distinct patterns of brain connectivity on resting-state functional MRI. (Molecular Psychiatry) Both sleepwalking and REM sleep behavior disorder were significantly associated with higher odds of Parkinson's disease. (JAMA Network Open)

Abdool Karim joins the World Health Organisation's Science Council

The Mercury | 27 April 2021

DURBAN: Infectious diseases epidemiologist Professor Salim Abdool Karim has been appointed as a member of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Science Council. Abdool Karim, who is director of the Centre for the AIDS Program of Research in South Africa (Caprisa), stepped down as the co-chair of South Africa's Covid-19 ministerial advisory committee, to focus on his academic commitments in March. His WHO appointment was announced by Caprisa in a statement on Monday.

A cost-effective clinic that puts care at the centre of daily treatment

Health-E News | 28 April 2021

The CareKahle Clinic in Orange Farm gives patients healthcare services at reduced rates helping unburden the state primary health care system. Mondays are often busy at the CareKahle Clinic in Orange Farm where patients can seek medical care at a rate that aims to care for their pockets as well. CareKahle is positioned as a midway point between public clinics that offer free service but poor efficiency, and private hospitals where turnaround times are quick but the fees are unaffordable for most citizens.

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TRAINING AND RESOURCES

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.

Health Informatics MasterTrack® Certificate

Take the next step in your biomedical, clinical, and public health career by exploring innovative approaches to data and knowledge management in a live, simulated environment taught by Health Informatics faculty at the Yale School of Public Health. Earn a powerful university-issued career credential in as little as seven months.

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PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

Media Statement: Fake HPCSA letters

HPCSA | 22 April 2021

Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research 2020 Annual Report

WHO | 19 April 2021

2020 was a year like no other. During the last year, the Alliance not only re-programmed some of its work to support the response to COVID-19, it also continued its long-term initiatives to build the field of HPSR. Last year, the Alliance supported 18 ongoing projects, representing 145 grants across 38 countries. Find out more about these projects and how they are supporting the development of the field of health policy and systems research in this year's annual report. The report is organized around our core objectives: working together, empowering leaders, advancing knowledge and informing policy. We also look at our immediate response to the COVID pandemic, and explore how our investments have supported greater capacity for health policy and systems research in Ethiopia.

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CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

Lives in the Balance: Equity in COVID-19 Recovery - Register Today!

On 17-18 May, PMNCH, the Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents (GFF), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and CORE Group will co-host the third Lives in the Balance Summit: Equity in COVID-19 Recovery. The Summit builds on the previous Lives in the Balance summits, which revealed the urgent needs of women, children, and adolescents during COVID-19, and enabled coordinated action by partners and governments to help meet those needs.

The Annual Meeting for the Global Research Council

24 – 27 May 2021

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JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The Health Systems Trust currently has no available jobs, but please do have a look at the:

**South African Medical Research Council, Environment and Health Research Unit:
Project Coordinator (Study Coordinator)**

Closing Date: 30 April 2021

**South African Medical Research Council, Alcohol, Tobacco and other drug Research
Unit: Field Supervisor (Chief Research Technologist)**

Closing Date: 5 May 2021

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