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## ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

### **Emerging Opportunities Provided by Technology to Advance Research in Child Health Globally**

*Global Paediatric Health | 17 May 2020*

*Alistair van Heerden, Jukka Leppanen, Mary Jane Rotheram - Borus*

Current approaches to longitudinal assessment of children's developmental and psychological well-being, as mandated in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, are expensive and time consuming. Substantive understanding of global progress toward these goals will require a suite of new robust, cost-effective research tools designed to assess key developmental processes in diverse settings. While first steps have been taken toward this end through efforts such as the National Institutes of Health's Toolbox, experience-near approaches including naturalistic observation have remained too costly and time consuming to scale to the population level. This perspective presents 4 emerging technologies with high potential for advancing the field of child health and development research, namely (1) affective computing, (2) ubiquitous computing, (3) eye tracking, and (4) machine learning. By drawing attention of scientists, policy makers, investors/funders, and the media to the applications and potential risks of these emerging opportunities, we hope to inspire a fresh wave of innovation and new solutions to the global challenges faced by children and their families.

### **Publics, technologies and interventions in reproduction and early life in South Africa**

*Humanities and Social Sciences Communications | 17 July 2020*

*Lenore Manderson, Fiona Ross*

Despite successful clinical interventions and maternal and child health monitoring for over a century, low and middle-income countries, including South Africa, continue to experience the quadruple burden of disease of high maternal mortality rates and poor infant and child health, non-communicable diseases, infectious diseases, and violence and injury. In this article, we focus on how different kinds of technologies in South Africa are implemented in the 'first 1000 days' from conception to early childhood. Some of these interventions, as we discuss, are lifesaving; others are conceptualised as preventing early and longer-term health problems, including cardiometabolic conditions into adulthood and in future generations. Here, we consider the use of routine and specialist technologies in reproduction and early life: scanning and monitoring in pregnancy, caesarean section, extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) for very low

birth weight infants, and the Road to Health Booklet. Through this focus, we illustrate how ‘publics’ are constituted such that foetal and infant health outcomes are privileged over women’s health, reproductive rights, and public health safety.

### **Factors explaining the shortage and poor retention of qualified health workers in rural and remote areas of the Kayes, region of Mali: a qualitative study**

*Rural and Remote Health* | 31 July 2020

*Mohamed Ahmed, Soumaïla Diakité, Koman Sissoko, Marie-Pierre Gagnon, Sylvie Charron*

Shortage of health workers is a worldwide problem but is particularly critical in sub-Saharan Africa. In Mali, the number of health workers is insufficient and their retention is low, particularly in rural and remote areas. Rural postings are unattractive to health workers. Very few studies have examined the factors contributing to the shortage and poor retention of health workers in Mali. The objective of this study is to identify and understand these factors with regards to skilled health workers in two rural health districts (Yélimané and Bafoulabé) in the region of Kayes, Mali.

### **Actionable health app evaluation: translating expert frameworks into objective metrics**

*npj Digital Medicine* | 30 July 2020

*Sarah Lagan, Patrick Aquino, Margaret Emerson, Karen Fortuna, Robert Walker et al*

As use and availability of mobile health apps have increased, so too has the need for a thorough, accessible framework for app evaluation. The American Psychiatric Association’s app evaluation model has emerged as a way to critically assess an app by considering accessibility, privacy and security, clinical foundation, engagement, and interoperability; however, there is no centralized database where users can view how various health apps perform when assessed via the APA model. In this perspective, we propose and outline our effort to translate the APA’s model for the evaluation of health apps into a set of objective metrics that can be published online, making the framework actionable and accessible to a broad audience.

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## **RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS**

### **The Experiment that Proved Airborne Disease Transmission**

*Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health* | 17 July 2020

Seven months after the first human-to-human transmission of SARS-CoV-2 was confirmed in China, the method of transmission remains unsettled. Is the virus airborne in tiny infective particles? Or do infected people expel the virus in large droplets that fall on surfaces or can be inhaled by people nearby? Current control measures—washing hands, maintaining a 6-foot distance from other people, disinfecting surfaces—are based on the latter theory. But in July, 239 scientists—including Johns Hopkins engineer **Peter DeCarlo**—published an **open letter** urging the World Health Organization and medical authorities to “recognize the potential for airborne spread of COVID-19.” The signatories claimed to have “demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt that viruses are released during exhalation, talking, and coughing in microdroplets small enough to remain aloft in air and pose a risk of exposure.”

### **UNAIDS is hopeful that a new long-acting HIV prevention option will soon become available for women in sub-Saharan Africa**

*UNAIDS* | 28 July 2020

UNAIDS congratulates the **International Partnership for Microbicides** (IPM) on obtaining a positive opinion from the European Medicines Agency (EMA) on the dapivirine vaginal ring. The monthly ring adapts a medical technology commonly used as a contraceptive device to deliver the antiretroviral medicine dapivirine to prevent HIV. “UNAIDS welcomes the advances made to make the dapivirine ring available to women in sub-Saharan Africa where around 4500 adolescent girls and young women become infected with HIV every week,” said Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director of UNAIDS. “Continued investment in research is needed to fill the HIV prevention gap for women and give them the options they need to protect themselves from HIV.”

### **Should I be sanitising my groceries to protect myself against Covid-19? We asked a**

### **trio of medical experts**

*TimesLive | 29 July 2020*

When it comes to navigating life in the new normal, we take so many precautions to safeguard ourselves and our loved ones against Covid-19 that it's sometimes hard to tell if we're being pragmatic or paranoid. Case in point: should we be sanitising or wiping down our groceries before packing them away — or is this overkill? To find out, we asked three medical experts whether they'd recommend doing so. This is what they had to say:

### **Dual pandemics at the centre of Women's Month**

*Health-E News | 31 July 2020*

The Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane has officially launched this year's Women's Month key focuses. Under the theme "Generation equality, realising women's rights for an equal future", the official celebration, set for 9 August, is due to be observed virtually. "The concept of generation equality is a global campaign and it links South Africa to global efforts to achieve gender equality by 2030. We want to join hands across spheres of government and with all sectors of our society as part of a decade of action towards gender equality," the Minister says.

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## **TRAINING AND RESOURCES**

### **New Tools for Effective Public Health Communication**

*The Aspen Institute | 30 July 2020*

Communicating about public health has never been more important, and too many people don't understand what public health is or what public health professionals do. That's why the de Beaumont Foundation and the Aspen Institute have launched the **Public Health Reaching Across Sectors (PHRASES) website and tools**. These tools include research-based framing and communication strategies that can help build support, trust, and credibility.

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## **PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS**

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

*Health Systems Trust | 31 July 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. [Click here for details](#).

### **Start Free Stay Free AIDS Free - 2020 report**

*UNAIDS | 7 July 2020*

This progress report reviews recent gains, new developments and remaining challenges as countries approach the 2020 targets of the Start Free Stay Free AIDS Free framework.

### **Water, sanitation, hygiene, and waste management for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19: Interim guidance**

*WHO | 29 July 2020*

This interim guidance supplements the infection prevention and control (IPC) documents by summarizing WHO guidance on water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH) and waste management relevant to viruses, including coronaviruses. This document is an update to the interim guidance document entitled 'Water, sanitation, hygiene, and waste management for the COVID-19 virus', published on 23 March 2020. It is intended for water and sanitation practitioners and providers, and health-care providers who want to know more about WASH and waste risks and practices in relation to COVID19.

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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.

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## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

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

The District Health Barometer team wishes to secure the following service providers to assist with the 2019/20 DHB: A journalist/writer who will be able to standardise all of the chapters so that the entire book is seamless, a copy editor/proof-reader and a layout artist. For further information please email [communications@hst.org.za](mailto:communications@hst.org.za). Closing date for applications 28 August 2020

### HST Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) Directorate – NICD Registered Nurses

Closing date 6 August 2020

### HST Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) Directorate – NICD Data Capturers

Closing date 6 August 2020

### HST Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) Directorate – Data capturers (3)

Closing date 11 August 2020

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