



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

Uncovering ART adherence inconsistencies: An assessment of sustained adherence among adolescents in South Africa

Journal of the International AIDS Society | 28 October 2021

Siyanaï Zhou, Lucie Cluver, Yulia Shenderovich, Elona Toska

In 2019, an estimated 1.7 million adolescents aged 10–19 years were living with HIV (ALHIV) globally, with the majority (80%) living in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). South Africa has the highest number of ALHIV, with an estimated 360 000 ALHIV in 2019. As more children born with HIV survive into adulthood and infections among 15–24 year-olds continue to rise, adolescents make up a growing portion of the global HIV burden. HIV-related deaths among adolescents have tripled over the last two decades. Adolescents continue to experience disproportionately high rates of poor antiretroviral (ART) treatment outcomes, presenting a significant challenge to global attempts to meet the UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets.

Differentiated service delivery for people using second-line antiretroviral therapy: clinical outcomes from a retrospective cohort study in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Wiley Online Library | 28 October 2021

Lara Lewis, Yuktेशwar Sookrajh, Kelly Gate, Thokozani Khubone, Munthra Maraj, et al

Evidence is needed to guide the inclusion of broader groups of people living with HIV (PLHIV) in differentiated service delivery (DSD) programmes. We assessed treatment outcomes among PLHIV on second-line regimens in a community antiretroviral therapy (ART) delivery programme, compared to those who remained at clinics.

Group counselling for adherence support among young people failing first-line antiretroviral therapy in Zimbabwe

South African Journal of HIV Medicine | 29 October 2021

Bahati Kasimonje, Tinei Shamu, Tinashe Mudzviti, Ruedi Luethy

Sub-optimal adherence to antiretroviral therapy (ART) amongst people living with HIV (PLHIV) is the leading cause of virological failure (VF). This is reported to be more pronounced in young people and to some extent 'characteristic' during this growth phase. Young people are a diverse group of the population and are defined in this study to be in the age range of 13–25 years. One of the major challenges that

healthcare professionals face is helping young people adhere to ART despite its well-known benefits in improving the overall health and quality of life. Globally, HIV is a leading cause of death amongst young people, which is associated with inadequate adherence support and poor retention in care. Given the high risk of VF, disease progression, drug resistance, limited treatment options and the ultimate threat to survival, understanding and examining adherence strategies that delve beyond a traditional clinical approach is imperative. This is more so in countries in sub-Saharan Africa, where more than 80% of the world's 2.1 million adolescents infected with HIV live.

The Association of Recurrent and Multiple Types of Abuse with Adverse Mental Health, Substance Use, and Sexual Health Outcomes among Out-of-School Adolescent Girls and Young Women in Cape Town, South Africa

Environmental Research and Public Health | 29 October 2021

Bronwyn Myers, Felicia Browne, Tara Carney, Tracy Kline, Courtney Bonner, et al.

Like many low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), mental health concerns are highly prevalent among South African adolescents and young adults between the ages of 15 and 24, with an estimated 30% to 40% of this age cohort being at elevated risk of depression, anxiety, or problematic substance use. Compared with their male age counterparts, adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) appear particularly vulnerable for mental health concerns. This heightened vulnerability is a product of AGYW's exposure to multiple social determinants of mental ill-health, including adverse living conditions characterized by material deprivation, low education outcomes, lack of economic opportunities, gendered experiences (such as leaving school before completion because of family caregiving responsibilities and unintended pregnancy), and exposure to violence arising from widespread economic and gender inequality in South Africa. Problematic substance use often co-occurs with, and heightens risk for, these mental health concerns. In a context where AGYW face limited access to age- and gender-appropriate mental health and substance use treatment services, AGYW may use substances to manage these environmental stressors and cope with symptoms of depression, anxiety, and trauma.

Regulating Alcohol: Strategies Used by Actors to Influence COVID-19 Related Alcohol Bans in South Africa

Environmental Research and Public Health | 31 October 2021

Yandisa Ngqangashe, Maddie Heenan, Melanie Pescud

South Africa has used intermittent alcohol prohibitions and restrictions as a strategy to relieve hospitals of alcohol-related trauma cases and spare services for COVID-19 caseloads. Alcohol regulation is highly contested and involves a diverse range of actors who influence policies to align with their interests. This study sought to examine the strategies used by these actors to shape the COVID-19 related alcohol regulation in South Africa as presented by online news media. We found that the voice of pro-regulation actors is smaller and fragmented compared to opponents of the regulation as each actor seeks to advance their own interests. Despite the regulations initially being framed as a COVID-19 public health measure, pro-regulation government ministries, such as police and transport, perceive the regulations as a way of reducing existing (pre-pandemic) alcohol-related harm, such as crime, road-traffic injuries, and gender-based violence.

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

RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

Booster basics – Health workers will get boosters from 8 November

Bhekisisa | 28 October 2021

Half a million healthcare workers in South Africa were vaccinated with one shot of Johnson & Johnson (J&J) in the country's Sisonke implementation trial, can get a second shot of the same vaccine from 8 November as part of a new leg of the study. The Sisonke study ran from February to May and immunised 496 900 healthcare workers with J&J's COVID jab. The programme used leftover stock from J&J's international vaccine trials and ran at a time when South Africa had no other jabs available. The local study's goal was to provide protection to South Africa's frontline workers.

Skin patch coated in covid-19 vaccine may work better than injections

NewScientist | 28 November 2021

A skin patch for administering covid-19 vaccines gives greater immune protection than traditional injections, according to a study in mice. The patch can be stored at room temperature and be self-administered, making it suitable for use in places that lack cold storage facilities and medical staff. Although covid-19 vaccines are now widely available in many countries, they have to be transported and stored at cold temperatures. “We wanted to come up with an alternative that would be stable long enough to go that last mile, especially in resource-limited settings,” says David Muller at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia.

In the age of smart phones, social media and increased dis- and misinformation, how information literate are YOU?

Digital platforms are saturated with ongoing debates around COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and unprecedented rumours and misinformation, despite the reported number of lives lost globally. In an age where scientific data and information are at our fingertips, the biggest question around vaccine hesitancy today is why not forge ahead and protect yourself and those around you by simply taking the jab? The month of October ends with the very necessary commemoration of Global Media and Information Literacy Week – an initiative of the United Nation's Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**) – which celebrates its 10th anniversary and is hosted this year by South Africa under the theme: *Media and Information Literacy for the Public Good*.

World AIDS Day 2021: Ending the HIV Epidemic: Equitable Access, Everyone's Voice

HIV.gov | 1 November 2021

Annually on December 1st, we commemorate World AIDS Day and reflect upon our worldwide response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. This year has been especially poignant as we mark 40 years since the first five cases of what later became known as AIDS were officially reported and honor the more than 36 million people, including 700,000 in the United States, who have died from AIDS-related illness globally since the start of the epidemic. The U.S. Government's theme for World AIDS Day 2021—Ending the HIV Epidemic: Equitable Access, Everyone's Voice—highlights the Biden-Harris Administration's strong commitment to ending the HIV epidemic globally by addressing health inequities and ensuring the voices of people with HIV are central in all our work.

Study shows impact of air pollution on sperm count

IOL | 1 November 2021

During recent study researchers have shown how air pollution reduces sperm count by causing inflammation in the brain. The findings of the study by University of Maryland School of Medicine (UMSOM) researchers were published in the journal 'Environmental Health Perspectives'. Scientists already know that the brain has a direct line to the reproductive organs affecting fertility and sperm count under stressful conditions. For example, emotional stress can lead to skipped menstrual periods in women. However, this latest study connects the dots on how breathing polluted air can lower fertility.

COVID: Medical experts step up after dismissing menstrual changes

Aljazeera | 2 November 2021

After her first Pfizer vaccine five months ago, Dahye Yim, 30, noticed something different with her menstrual cycle. Unusually heavier and with more physical symptoms such as a migraine, she went online to see if other women had experienced post-vaccine cyclical changes. She uncovered similar stories but failed to find scientifically-backed information on possible short-term vaccine side effects. The South Korean national, a PhD student based between London and Berlin, told Al Jazeera: “After I received my second dose in September, I noticed a lump under my armpit and I was able to find out very easily that this was a side effect that was nothing to worry about. This helped me calm down. “It would have been helpful if this had been the case when I looked up information about menstrual cycle irregularities too. There's a lot of money out there for COVID research and I know there are priorities, but I do think women's health is a big priority.”

America poised for final approval of Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine for children aged 5-11

IOL | 2 November 2021

An expert panel unanimously recommended Pfizer-BioNTech's Covid-19 vaccine for five- to 11-year-olds

on Tuesday, the penultimate step in the process that will allow injections in young children to begin this week in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the top US public health agency, was expected to endorse that recommendation later Tuesday. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the vaccine for the age group last week, but since it is distributed through public services, the CDC is also required to recommend it.

Is one better than none? Why SA's teens are only getting half a COVID jab

Bhekisisa | 3 November 2021

South Africa has enough unused doses of Pfizer vaccines to immunise half of the country's 6.5-million children aged 12 to 17. This means matriculants will be protected as they sit their final school exams. But they'll only be getting one dose of the two-shot vaccine.

Living with long Covid: 'One day I will heal and return to my old self'

Health24 | 3 November 2021

Thousands of people worldwide are suffering from the lingering effects of Covid-19 – from severe fatigue and struggling to breathe to coping with memory or hair loss. Health24 spoke to a number of long haulers. This is Azra's story. Contracted Covid-19 in January and June 2021. I hadn't even properly recovered from the lasting effects of my first Covid-19 infection when I was reinfected in June. My first infection caused blood clots in my lungs and I was put on oxygen. I only came off it recently. In March 2021, I was hospitalised because of the clots. I was given injections in my stomach for the blood clots to dissolve and was put on blood thinners.

African scientists race to test COVID drugs — but face major hurdles

Nature | 3 November 2021

In a bid to stave off looming disaster, scientists are trying to repurpose drugs used for malaria and other diseases, but infrastructure and recruitment challenges stymie progress. For more than a year, Adeola Fowotade struggled to recruit people to a clinical trial for COVID-19 treatments. A clinical virologist at University College Hospital in Ibadan, Nigeria, she joined the effort in August 2020, which aims to test the efficacy of a combination of readily available drugs. Her goal was to find 50 volunteers — people diagnosed with COVID-19 who had moderate to severe symptoms and might benefit from the drug cocktail. But the recruitment effort crawled along, even as cases of the virus surged in Nigeria in January and February. After 8 months, she had managed to enlist only 44 people.

Keep your mental health in check during exam time

IOL | 4 November 2021

You might experience stress because you are worried about how well you will do in the exam. Research shows high levels of exam stress can interfere with attention and reduce working memory, leading to lower performance. Early experiences of anxiety and stress can also set a precedent for mental health problems in adulthood. Exam stress can be overwhelming and exhausting. It's important to manage this stress and find coping strategies that work for you, to eliminate the risk of burn-out.

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

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.

Subscribe to the Health Systems Trust's 60 percent

The Health Systems Trust (HST) produces a weekly bouquet of HIV-related content on Fridays focusing on maternal, adolescent, child and youth health topics.

HSTi offers accredited and non-accredited short courses and full programmes

The Health Systems Training Institute (HSTi) is the training arm of the Health Systems Trust (HST), a leading force in the South African public health sector. HST was established in 1992, on the brink of

democracy in South Africa, and has since played a significant role in strengthening the national primary health system through health research, informatics, clinical support, capacity-building and training.

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

PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

National Department of Health Annual Performance Plan 2021 – 2022

The 2nd Injury Mortality Survey: A national study of injury mortality levels and causes in South Africa in 2017

SAMRC | 11 October 2021

BoDRU, in collaboration with the Gender and Health and Biostatistics unit, conducted a survey of more than 25,000 non-natural deaths that presented to mortuaries in 2017 in order to:

- describe the incidence of fatal injury rates in South Africa by age, sex and cause
- compare the provincial injury mortality rates for fatal injuries

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

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

2021 Global Conference on Health and Climate Change

World Health Organization | 6 November 2021

The 2021 Global Conference on Health & Climate Change, with a special focus on Climate Justice and the Healthy and Green Recovery from COVID-19, will convene on the margins of the COP26 UN climate change conference. The aim of the conference is to call on governments, businesses, institutions and financial actors to drive a green, healthy and resilient recovery from COVID-19. The Conference will support and highlight countries' ambitious and just Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement that promote and protect health. It will also mobilize the rapidly growing movement of health professionals around the world who are now driving ambitious climate action.

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

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING UNIT: Facility Team Leaders (x3)

Closing date: 17 November 2021

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



Copyright © 2019 HEALTH SYSTEMS TRUST, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

hst@hst.org.za

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>
[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)
Health Systems Trust · 34 Essex Terrace · Westville · Durban, KZN 3630 · South Africa

