

**CATEGORIES**

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**ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES**

**Validation of the vaccination attitudes examination scale in a South African context in relation to the COVID-19 vaccine: quantifying dimensionality with bifactor indices**

BCM Public Health | 27 September 2023

*Anita Padmanabhanunni, Tyrone Brian Pretorius & Serena Ann Isaacs*

The COVID-19 pandemic represented a global public health emergency. Existing studies support the view that vaccination and mass immunization are among the most effective means of containing the outbreak and promoting health. However, negative attitudes toward vaccination and the related vaccine hesitancy among many groups have created a significant barrier to effectively managing the health crisis. Having a valid and reliable tool to assess attitudes toward vaccination remains imperative so that factors underlying vaccine refusal can be identified and public health interventions can be facilitated. The current study examined the psychometric properties of the Vaccination Attitudes Examination Scale (VAX) in South Africa.

<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-023-16803-4>

**Exploring the Challenges for Universal Health Coverage: A Call to Africa by AfroPHC**

*Dove Press | 27 September 2023*

*S Moosa*

The primary health care (PHC) system in Africa faces many challenges AND opportunities. To date, human resources for health in PHC are grossly insufficient in number, often inefficiently and inequitably distributed, lacking adequate training for delivering fully responsive and comprehensive frontline care and are treated inequitably within the health system. There has been a lack of solidarity among key role players in healthcare to create adequate PHC funding in Africa. Resources do not appropriately or adequately reach the frontline PHC service platform due to outdated service delivery and payment models. Patients experience PHC as numbers in a queue, with poor comprehensiveness, continuity, and coordination. Health workers are also treated like numbers in a bureaucracy that fragments and undermines training and service for integrated care around patient and population needs.

<https://dovepress.com/exploring-the-challenges-for-universal-health-coverage-a-call-to-afric-peer-reviewed-fulltext-article-RMHP>

**Clinical outcomes after extended 12-month antiretroviral therapy prescriptions in a community-based differentiated HIV service delivery programme in South Africa: a retrospective cohort study**

*Journal of the International AIDS Society* | 25 September 2023

*Lara Lewis, Yuktेशwar Sookrajh, Johan van der Molen, Thokozani Khubone, Phelelani Sosibo, et al.*

There is an urgent need for more efficient models of differentiated antiretroviral therapy (ART) delivery for people living with HIV (PLHIV), with the World Health Organization calling for evidence to guide whether annual ART prescriptions and consultations (12M scripts) should be recommended in global guidelines. We assessed the association between 12M scripts (allowed temporarily during the COVID-19 pandemic) versus standard 6-month prescriptions and consultations (6M scripts) and clinical outcomes.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jia2.26164>

**Factors that influence adolescent girls and young women's re-initiation or complete discontinuation from daily oral PrEP use: a qualitative study from Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**

*Journal of the International AIDS Society* | 29 September 2023

*Lindsey de Vos, Emily Krogstad Mudzingwa, Lauren Fynn, Millicent Atujuna, Matinatsa Mugore, et al.*

Adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) face barriers that jeopardize their prevention-effective use of daily oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). We sought to understand factors that influence AGYW's prolonged breaks in PrEP use, and their decisions to re-initiate or discontinue using PrEP in the context of a community-based adherence support intervention.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jia2.26175>

**Perception about human papillomavirus vaccination among middle adolescent school girls in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 2023: qualitative study**

*BMC Women's Health* | 30 September 2023

*Abel Wubu, Bargude Balta, Amsale Cherie & Ketema Bizuwork*

Human papillomavirus vaccine uptake among school girls in Ethiopia was still low and uptake was majorly related to perception regarding the vaccine. This study explored school girls' perceptions of Human papillomavirus vaccination in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

<https://bmcwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12905-023-02660-1>

**Burden and risk factors of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in Sub-Saharan African countries, 1990–2019: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of disease study 2019**

*eClinicalMedicine* | 2 October 2023

*Mulubirhan Assefa Alemayohu, Maria Elisabetta Zanolin, Lucia Cazzoletti, Peter Nyasulu, Vanessa Garcia-Larsen et al.*

Globally, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) represent the biggest threats to health and development globally, particularly in developing countries accounting for more than 73% of the total deaths in 2017. Chronic respiratory diseases are the third major contributor of deaths accounted for 454 million people worldwide in 2019, of which 212 million (46.7%) were COPD cases. Regions with a low socio-demographic index were reported to have the greatest burden of chronic respiratory diseases. Current evidence suggests that Sub-Saharan African countries are at the dawn of the epidemiological transition<sup>6</sup> and an increase of 31.5% of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) cases over a decade that is attributable to ageing alone.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370\(23\)00392-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370(23)00392-9/fulltext)

**Rural libraries implementing walking groups or walking groups plus civic engagement for walkability in rural communities: a comparative effectiveness trial study protocol**

*BMC Public Health | 2 October 2023*

*Cynthia K Perry, Rebecca Seguin-Fowler, Jay E. Maddock, Noah Lenstra, Nathan F. Dieckmann, et al.*

Rural residents generally lack adequate physical activity to benefit health and reduce disparities in chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease and certain cancers. The Socioecological Model describes physical activity as involving a dynamic and reciprocal interaction between individual, social, and community factors. Community group-based walking programs and civic engagement interventions aimed at enhancing physical activity have been successful in rural communities but have not targeted all three socioecological levels. Public libraries can act as innovative public health partners in rural communities. However, challenges remain because rural libraries often lack the capacity to implement evidence-based health promotion programming. The goals of this study are (1) build the capacity for rural libraries to implement evidence-based health promotion programs, (2) compare changes in physical activity between a group-based walking program and a combined group-based walking and civic engagement program with rural residents, and (3) conduct an implementation evaluation.

<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-023-16788-0>

**Acceptability and feasibility of tuberculosis-diabetes mellitus screening implementation in private primary care clinics in Yogyakarta, Indonesia: a qualitative study**

*BMC Public Health | 3 October 2023*

*Denny Anggoro Prakoso, Wahyudi Istiono, Yodi Mahendradhata & Merita Arini*

The relationship between Tuberculosis (TB) and Diabetes Mellitus (DM) is intricate and intertwined, posing significant global health challenges. In addition, the increasing prevalence of DM worldwide raises concerns regarding the potential resurgence of tuberculosis. The implementation of tuberculosis prevention strategies is of the utmost importance, especially in countries like Indonesia that encounter a dual burden of TB and DM. The significance of TB screening in private primary care settings for patients with diabetes cannot be overstated. Implementing TB screening protocols in private primary care settings can assist in identifying diabetic patients with tuberculosis. Therefore, this study aims to explore the acceptability and feasibility of tuberculosis-diabetes mellitus screening implementation in private primary care clinics.

<https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-023-16840-z>

**Breast cancer awareness among Sudanese females in Omdurman city: 2021**

*BMC Public Health* | 3 October 2023

*Munir Rafat Munir Lawis & Mustafa Sabir*

Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed malignancy among women worldwide. In contrast to Europe, it presents generally very late in Africa. As with the rest of Africa, it is the most common primary malignancy of females in Sudan, and generally presents in stage III or IV disease. This study is intended to analyse the level of breast cancer awareness among women of Sudan.

<https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-023-16833-y>

**Clinical outcomes after extended 12-month antiretroviral therapy prescriptions in a community-based differentiated HIV service delivery programme in South Africa: a retrospective cohort study**

*Journal of the International AIDS Society* | 3 October 2023

*Lara Lewis, Yuktेशwar Sookrajh, Johan van der Molen, Thokozani Khubone, Phelelani Sosibo, et al.*

There is an urgent need for more efficient models of differentiated antiretroviral therapy (ART) delivery for people living with HIV (PLHIV), with the World Health Organization calling for evidence to guide whether annual ART prescriptions and consultations (12M scripts) should be recommended in global guidelines. We assessed the association between 12M scripts (allowed temporarily during the COVID-19 pandemic) versus standard 6-month prescriptions and consultations (6M scripts) and clinical outcomes.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jia2.26164>

**Prevalence of heavy menstrual bleeding and associations with physical health and wellbeing in low-income and middle-income countries: a multinational cross-sectional study**

*The Lancet Global Health* | 3 October 2023

*Sheela S Sinharoy, Lyzberthe Chery, Madeleine Patrick, Amelia Conrad, Anupama Ramaswamy, et al.*

Heavy menstrual bleeding is an understudied global health challenge with potentially far reaching consequences. The clinical definition of heavy menstrual bleeding is “excessive menstrual blood loss which interferes with a woman's physical, emotional, social, or material quality of life”. Heavy menstrual bleeding can cause iron-deficiency anaemia, which is among the leading causes of years lived with disability in low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs). Heavy menstrual bleeding is also associated with a range of adverse functional outcomes, including lower productivity and income earning, reduced ability to perform daily activities, and limitations on social life and relationships.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(23\)00416-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(23)00416-3/fulltext)

**Fear of COVID-19: the mediation role between the COVID-19 diagnosis and KAP in Spanish university students**

*BMC Public Health* | 3 October 2023

*Ana Cancela, Mar González-Noriega & Ana Visiers*

Although health public services recommend prevention strategies for COVID-19 some of these recommendations have not been taken seriously by young people. Understanding why some people comply with these recommendations and others do not seem to be crucial in helping public health services to predict behavior and compliance with rules, especially for young people. Previous studies suggest that knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) are useful to assess compliance with the preventive measures and public health policies. Being afraid has also been found to correlate with more engagement with preventive measures. This study aims to assess the KAP and fear of COVID-19 of Spanish university students and to understand the relation between diagnosis, KAP and the level of fear.

<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-023-16777-3>

### **Barriers and enablers of breast cancer screening among women in East Africa: a systematic review**

*BMC Public Health* | 4 October 2023

*Faraja Mussa Magwesela, Doreen Ombeni Msemakweli & David Fearon*

Breast cancer is among the most common cancers globally with a projected increase in incidence and mortality in low- and middle-income countries. The majority of the patients in East Africa present with advanced disease contributing to poor disease outcomes. Breast cancer screening enables earlier detection of the disease and therefore reduces the poor outcomes associated with the disease. This study aims to identify and synthesize the reported barriers and enablers of breast cancer screening among East African women.

<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-023-16831-0>

### **Place Visitation Data Reveals the Geographic and Racial Disparities of COVID-19 Impact on HIV Service Utilization in the Deep South**

*Aids and Behaviour* | 4 October 2023

*Zhenlong Li, Shan Qiao, Huan Ning, Xiaowen Sun, Jiajia Zhang, et al.*

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed unprecedented pressure to health care systems, and interrupted health care delivery and access including HIV care in the United States' Deep South, which endures a double epidemic of HIV and COVID-19. Ryan White programs cover HIV care services for over half of PLWH in the Deep South. Given the important role of Ryan White programs, examining the visitation changes to Ryan White facilities during the pandemic offers insights into the impact of the pandemic on HIV healthcare utilization.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10461-023-04163-4>

### **Modeling homophily in dynamic networks with application to HIV molecular surveillance**

*BMC Infectious Diseases* | 4 October 2023

*Victor DeGruttola, Masato Nakazawa, Tuo Lin, Jinyuan Liu, Ravi Goyal, Susan Little, Xin Tu, et al*

Efforts to control the HIV epidemic can benefit from knowledge of the relationships between the characteristics of people who have transmitted HIV and those who became infected by them. Investigation of this relationship is facilitated by the use of HIV genetic linkage analyses, which allows inference about possible transmission events among people with HIV infection. Two persons with HIV (PWH) are considered linked if the genetic distance between their HIV sequences is less than a given

threshold, which implies proximity in a transmission network. The tendency of pairs of nodes (in our case PWH) that share (or differ in) certain attributes to be linked is denoted homophily. Below, we describe a novel approach to modeling homophily with application to analyses of HIV viral genetic sequences from clinical series of participants followed in San Diego.

<https://bmcinfectdis.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12879-023-08598-x>

## **RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS**

### **A 'malaria emergency' is in the making. Here's why**

*Bhekisisa* | 27 September 2023

Africa has the most cases of malaria in the world, and 96% of the deaths from the disease occur on the continent. Progress on getting rid of the disease has gone backwards in 13 countries and stalled in other nations in Africa. Last week, political leaders at the United Nations General Assembly called for action to get us back on track to wipe out the disease by 2030.

<https://bhekisisa.org/health-news-south-africa/2023-09-27-a-malaria-emergency-is-in-the-making-heres-why/>

### **Women in Africa Prefer Long-Acting PrEP Over Pills**

*Poz* | 27 September 2023

A majority of women in the HPTN 084 trial, which compared injectable cabotegravir versus daily oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), chose the long-acting option, according to study findings presented at the International AIDS Society Conference on HIV Science (IAS 2023). "These results suggest that long-acting PrEP could have a huge prevention impact in Africa, where uptake of daily oral PrEP has been disappointingly low," IAS president Sharon Lewin, MD, of the University of Melbourne, said in a news release. "I hope these findings will accelerate momentum to make long-acting PrEP accessible to all those who need it."

<https://www.poz.com/article/women-africa-prefer-longacting-prep-pills>

### **Analysis: How does SA measure up against new TB recommendations?**

*Spotlight* | 28 September 2023

A new report from the Lancet Commission on Tuberculosis (TB) titled 'Scientific advances and the end of tuberculosis' makes several recommendations for how governments should go about fighting the deadly, but curable, disease. The report was published last week ahead of the second United Nations High-Level Meeting on TB. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that over 10 million people fell ill with TB in 2021 and 1.6 million died of the disease. In South Africa, they estimate 304 000 fell ill in 2021 and 56 000 died. The WHO is expected to publish estimates for 2022 within the next month or so.

<https://www.spotlightnsp.co.za/2023/09/28/analysis-how-does-sa-measure-up-against-new-tb-recommendations/>

### **It's Way Too Hard for Black Women With HIV/AIDS to Get the Pain Relief They Need**

*Vice Us* | 28 September 2023

Esther Ross was diagnosed with AIDS in 1993, At the time, she was living in New York and had a multitude of physical symptoms and poorly-managed mental illness symptoms that contributed to her overall ill health. he credits a determined social worker with helping her address her physical and mental health and for gaining the education she needed in order to help herself and others. She now lives in North Carolina and advocates for others who are HIV positive. Thanks to newer medications, Ross is now undetectable for the AIDS virus and the symptoms she experienced when she was diagnosed have vanished, but she has constant pain.

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/z3mwv8/black-women-hiv-aids-pain>

## **WHAT IS ENDOMETRIOSIS? WHY IS IT SO HARD TO DIAGNOSE AND TREAT?**

*Health-e News | 28 September 2023*

Arnetia Brown got her first period when she was 13 and pain has been a regular part of her life since. “With my very first cycle my father found me passed out on the floor. I actually fainted because I was in so much pain,” she recalls. It would be another two years before the 28-year-old would consult a gynaecologist and start the long journey of trying to figure out what was going on. It was only six years later, at the age of 21, that Brown got the final diagnosis.

<https://health-e.org.za/2023/09/28/what-is-endometriosis-why-is-it-so-hard-to-diagnose-and-treat/>

## **New organic sanitary pads can lower the risk of cervical cancer**

*IOL | 28 September 2023*

After breast cancer, cervical cancer is the second most frequent malignancy in women in South Africa. Cervical cancer is a lifelong risk for 1 in every 42 women, according to the Cancer Association of South Africa (Cansa). The uterus, a hollow, pear-shaped structure where a foetus can develop, has a lower, narrow end called the cervix. From the uterus, the cervix extends downward to the vagina (birth canal).

<https://www.iol.co.za/sunday-tribune/lifestyle/new-organic-sanitary-pads-can-lower-the-risk-of-cervical-cancer-31078b5c-9d4e-492d-8aae-9293ba8021b6>

## **“World AIDS Day 35: Remember and Commit”**

*Poz | 29 September 2023*

Every year on December 1st, the world unites to commemorate World AIDS Day. This annual event serves as a reminder of the global struggle to end HIV-related stigma, an opportunity to honor those we have lost, and a rallying cry to continue working toward a day when HIV is no longer a public health threat. In 2023, we mark the 35th commemoration of this important day with the theme “World AIDS Day 35: Remember and Commit.” The first World AIDS Day took place in 1988, providing a platform to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and honor the lives affected by the epidemic.

<https://www.poz.com/blog/world-aids-day-35-remember-commit>

## **Opinion: This court case will literally determine whether some people get to breathe**

*Spotlight | 29 September 2023*

In a pivotal case for access to affordable medicines in South Africa, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) and Doctors Without Borders (MSF) Southern Africa – represented by SECTION27 – earlier this year came together to help champion access to lifesaving new cystic fibrosis treatments. Cheri Nel, a

South African woman living with cystic fibrosis, and the Cystic Fibrosis Association started legal action against Vertex Pharmaceuticals earlier this year, challenging Vertex's monopoly on the treatments. The TAC and MSF approached the court to be joined as amici curiae.

<https://www.spotlightnsp.co.za/2023/09/29/opinion-this-court-case-will-literally-determine-whether-some-people-get-to-breathe/>

### **PREGNANT WOMEN IN MORETELE GO MONTHS WITHOUT ULTRASOUND SCANS**

*Health-e News | 29 September 2023*

It's been three months since expectant mothers in Seutelong in Moretele, North West province have been able to get an ultrasound scan at Sediane clinic. Patients say they have repeatedly been told that the doctor is not available. The clinic relies on a portable ultrasound machine which the doctor brings along when making rounds at the clinic. Ultrasound scan is used during pregnancy to check the baby's development. Without this machine the mothers are faced with a dilemma of having to go pay for the services at private institutions.

<https://health-e.org.za/2023/09/29/pregnant-women-in-moretele-go-months-without-ultrasound-scans/>

### **South Africa to introduce vaginal rings to fight HIV scourge**

*Punch | 29 September 2023*

Three key organisations involved in preventing and responding to HIV in South Africa – AIDS Foundation of South Africa, Beyond Zero, and Networking HIV & AIDS Community of Southern Africa – have placed an initial order of 16,000 Dapivirine Vaginal Rings for HIV prevention with the support of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The Global Fund disclosed this on Friday, in a press statement issued. The pre-exposure prophylaxis ring is a silicone ring that is inserted in the vagina every month and delivers long-acting, topical, and localized HIV prevention.

<https://punchng.com/south-africa-to-introduce-vaginal-rings-to-fight-hiv-scourge/>

### **Exogenous hormone use not associated with increased breast cancer risk**

*Contemporary OB/GYN | 29 September 2023*

Exogenous hormone use is not significantly associated with increased breast cancer risk, according to a presentation at The Menopause Society 2023 Annual Meeting. There is a prevalent concern that exogenous hormone exposure increases breast cancer risk in women, as estrogen promotes mammary cancer development in animal studies. Serum estradiol levels have also been significantly associated with estrogen receptor-positive breast cancer. Breast cancer may also be impacted by the timing of exposure. A protective differentiation of breast tissue occurs during the first full-term pregnancy.

<https://www.contemporaryobgyn.net/view/exogenous-hormone-use-not-associated-with-increased-breast-cancer-risk>

### **Efficacy, safety, tolerability, and pharmacokinetics of long-acting injectable cabotegravir for HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis in transgender women: a secondary analysis of the HPTN 083 trial**

*The Lancet HIV | 29 September 2023*

*Prof Mark A Marzinke, Brett Hanscom, Zhe Wang, Prof Steven A Safren, Christina Psaros, et al.*

The HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) 083 trial showed that long-acting injectable cabotegravir was more effective than tenofovir disoproxil fumarate plus emtricitabine in preventing HIV in cisgender men and transgender women who have sex with men. We aimed to characterise the cohort of transgender women included in HPTN 083.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanhiv/article/PIIS2352-3018\(23\)00200-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanhiv/article/PIIS2352-3018(23)00200-X/fulltext)

### **South African men much more likely to die from TB than women – here's why**

*IOL | 2 October 2023*

Around the world, men are more likely to get TB and to die from it than women. We recently conducted research to establish the various factors that explain higher rates of TB among men in South Africa. South Africa is ranked among the top six countries contributing to 60% of the global burden of TB. Our main finding was that men are 70% more likely to develop TB and die from the disease, compared to women.

<https://www.iol.co.za/lifestyle/health/south-african-men-much-more-likely-to-die-from-tb-than-women-heres-why-494555d5-403a-4ed4-b09b-4f2726042b89>

### **Greater weight gain in first year of HIV treatment raises risks of diabetes, metabolic syndrome and precursors of heart disease**

*Aidsmap | 2 October 2023*

Greater weight gain and changes in body composition in the first year after starting antiretroviral treatment were associated with an increased risk of developing diabetes and metabolic syndrome over nine years of follow-up among participants in several large clinical trials, study investigators report in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. The study also found that greater weight gain was associated with a higher risk of developing potential precursors of heart disease in the form of high blood pressure (hypertension) and coronary artery disease (atherosclerosis).

<https://www.aidsmap.com/news/oct-2023/greater-weight-gain-first-year-hiv-treatment-raises-risks-diabetes-metabolic-syndrome>

### **Breast Cancer Awareness Month: 1 in 27 SA women are affected by breast cancer**

*IOL | 2 October 2023*

In South Africa, the battle against breast cancer has reached alarming levels, affecting 1 in 27 women and accounting for 23% of all diagnosed cancers in 2019, as revealed by the National Health Institute report. The need for awareness and early detection has never been more vital. With Breast Cancer Awareness Month upon us, the Breast Imaging Society of South Africa (BISSA) steps forward as a guiding light, urging women to prioritise self-examinations and annual mammograms starting at the age of 40 or even earlier.

<https://www.iol.co.za/sunday-tribune/lifestyle/breast-cancer-awareness-month-1-in-27-sa-women-are-affected-by-breast-cancer-2e730041-5c6f-4ba3-a131-b1592a8fc70c>

### **How breast milk promotes newborn brain development**

*El Pais Science | 2 October 2023*

Breast milk contains nutritional substances that promote the development and general health of the newborn. But it's less known whether these substances can affect their brain development and future intelligence. For this reason, a recent study by researchers at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University in Saudi Arabia attempted to assess whether breastfeeding had affected the general and social intelligence of girls aged between seven and nine. They compared the results of girls who were exclusively breastfed, exclusively bottle-fed, or mixed-fed during their first six months of life.

<https://english.elpais.com/science-tech/2023-10-02/how-breast-milk-promotes-newborn-brain-development.html>

### **HIV self-test kits are meant to empower those at risk – but they don't necessarily lead to starting HIV treatment or prevention**

*The Conversation* | 2 October 2023

HIV self-test kits were developed to make it easier for people to access HIV testing. However, our research team has found that many people who use self-test kits do not go on to receive needed HIV treatment or start preexposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, to prevent future infection. In 2016, the World Health Organization recommended HIV self-test kits as a way for people to confidentially test for HIV in their homes or other private places.

<https://theconversation.com/hiv-self-test-kits-are-meant-to-empower-those-at-risk-but-they-dont-necessarily-lead-to-starting-hiv-treatment-or-prevention-213726>

### **WHO recommends a second malaria vaccine for children, plugging supply gap**

*News24* | 2 October 2023

The World Health Organisation has added a second malaria vaccine to its recommendation for children. The current vaccine, RTS,S, is in short supply. With R21/Matrix-M on the recommended list, more children may have a chance to fend off malaria. Existing efforts have already seen a drop in child mortality. 28 African countries are now expected to start routinely vaccinating against malaria.

<https://www.news24.com/news24/world/news/who-recommends-a-second-malaria-vaccine-for-children-plugging-supply-gap-20231002>

### **Voluntary medical male circumcision shown to be highly cost-effective, highlighting the need to intensify scale up and sustainability**

*WHO* | 2 October 2023

UNAIDS' Global AIDS Update - The Path that Ends AIDS underscores 2 main challenges faced by voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) programmes: diminished funding and low coverage among men in their twenties and older. Since VMMC was recommended by WHO and UNAIDS in 2007 as key to HIV prevention in high-prevalence settings, about 35 million men have accessed services across the 15 VMMC priority countries.

<https://www.who.int/news/item/02-10-2023-voluntary-medical-male-circumcision-shown-to-be-highly-cost-effective--highlighting-the-need-to-intensify-scale-up-and-sustainability>

## **In a first, CDC to recommend antibiotic pill after sex for some to prevent sexually transmitted infections**

*CBS News | 2 October 2023*

Doctors should weigh prescribing some of their patients a pill of a powerful antibiotic, doxycycline, to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections, according to new draft recommendations released Monday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Officials say the approach, dubbed doxycycline post-exposure prophylaxis, or Doxy-PEP for short, could mark a turning point in the nation's fight against the ongoing epidemic of sexually transmitted infections, or STIs.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/cdc-antibiotic-pill-after-sex-prevent-stds/>

## **Greater weight gain in first year of HIV treatment raises risks of diabetes, metabolic syndrome and precursors of heart disease**

*AIDS Map | 2 October 2023*

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<https://www.aidsmap.com/news/oct-2023/greater-weight-gain-first-year-hiv-treatment-raises-risks-diabetes-metabolic-syndrome>

## **Dr Kristine Slam Discusses Preoperative Practices to Increase Treatment Value for Patients With Breast Cancer**

*AJMC | 3 October 2023*

Kristine Slam, MD, FACP, Central Ohio Surgical Associates, spoke at our recent Institute for Value-Based Medicine® event, held in partnership with the Zangmeister Cancer Center of Columbus, Ohio, on September 14. Here she discusses the positive impact that Choosing Wisely and enhanced recovery after surgery (EROS) protocols have had on patients receiving treatment for breast cancer.

<https://www.ajmc.com/view/dr-kristine-slam-discusses-preoperative-practices-to-increase-treatment-value-for-patients-with-breast-cancer>

## **Interview: “There’s so much respiratory disease and there’s so much to be done,” says leading paediatrics Prof**

*Spotlight | 3 October 2023*

New vaccines to protect infants and unborn babies from contracting highly contagious seasonal Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) were just approved in the United States. Speaking from South Africa, leading paediatric pulmonologist Professor Heather Zar is calling on global health authorities to bring these vaccines to resource-poor countries, where RSV-related illness and deaths are most severe. “It’s

a key issue to get these products to low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)," says Zar. "This is where children are dying from RSV."

<https://www.spotlightnsp.co.za/2023/10/03/interview-theres-so-much-respiratory-disease-and-theres-so-much-to-be-done-says-leading-paediatrics-prof/>

### **Mpox vaccination reduces the likelihood of hospitalisation**

*Aids Map | 3 October 2023*

Receiving at least one dose of the MVA-BN vaccine significantly reduced the likelihood of being hospitalised with mpox (formerly known as monkeypox) for both HIV-positive and HIV-negative people, according to a study by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the California Department of Public Health, published in *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

<https://www.aidsmap.com/news/oct-2023/mpox-vaccination-reduces-likelihood-hospitalisation>

### **Study finds how medication affects men and women differently**

*IOL | 3 October 2023*

Researchers have created a powerful new tool to better understand how medications affect men and women differently, which will help lead to safer, more effective drugs in the future. Women are known to experience a disproportionate amount of liver disorders as a result of medication. They are, however, generally underrepresented in drug testing. To address this, UVA researchers created sophisticated computer simulations of male and female livers and utilised them to identify sex-specific distinctions in how medications affect the tissues.

<https://www.iol.co.za/lifestyle/health/study-finds-how-medication-affects-men-and-women-differently-a0da380d-d7ac-5ffc-af21-3881d67b857e>

### **FDA Authorizes New Novavax COVID Vaccine**

*Poz | 3 October 2023*

On October 3, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized an updated version of the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine, following its mid-September approval of updated messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines from Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech. The three new vaccines are designed to provide better protection against recent SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus variants. "The COVID-19 vaccines have saved countless lives and have prevented serious outcomes of COVID-19 caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus," Peter Marks, MD, PhD, director of the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, said in a news release.

<https://www.poz.com/article/fda-authorizes-new-novavax-covid-vaccine>

### **Research may explain why men are more likely to experience severe cases of COVID-19**

*Medical Xpress | 3 October 2023*

A new study by a team of researchers at the University of Toronto's Emerging and Pandemic Infections Consortium (EPIC) has uncovered biological reasons underlying sex differences in COVID-19 outcomes,

offering a promising new strategy to prevent illness. The pre-clinical research, published in the journal *iScience*, has yet to be replicated in humans, but points to the ACE2 protein as a key contributor to differences in COVID-19 outcomes between males and females.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-10-men-severe-cases-covid-.html>

### **Preexposure prophylaxis nurses increase HIV prevention discussion**

*Contemporary OB/GYN | 3 October 2023*

According to a recent study published in the *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology*, a preexposure prophylaxis nurse increases HIV prevention discussion rates, but does not increase rates of preexposure prophylaxis prescription. About 1 in 5 new HIV diagnoses in the United States are reported in cisgender women, with 85% attributed to heterosexual contact. While preexposure prophylaxis is effective at preventing HIV, rates of preexposure prophylaxis prescription among US women are low.

<https://www.contemporaryobgyn.net/view/preexposure-prophylaxis-nurses-increase-hiv-prevention-discussion>

### **Health Beat #12 | How to cope with taking HIV meds for life**

*Bhekisisa | 3 October 2023*

HIV infects CD4 white blood cells. Our brains have such cells too. When HIV gets to someone's brain it causes inflammation and may lead to confusion. But antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) can change that. The pills stop HIV from making copies of itself, so it reduces the amount of virus in someone's body — mostly to such low levels that it becomes scientifically impossible to infect others. ARVs, however, have to be taken for the rest of an infected person's life, and that often leads to anxiety and depression.

<https://bhekisisa.org/bhekisisa-tv/2023-10-03-health-beat-12-how-to-cope-with-taking-hiv-meds-for-life/>

### **Vulnerability found in immunotherapy-resistant triple-negative breast cancer**

*Medical Xpress | 4 October 2023*

Researchers at Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center have discovered a drug target on natural killer cells that could potentially trigger a therapeutic response in patients with immunotherapy-resistant, triple-negative breast cancer. Currently, only about 15% of early-stage, triple-negative breast cancer patients benefit from combining immunotherapy, drugs that target immune cells to attack the tumor, with chemotherapy.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-10-vulnerability-immunotherapy-resistant-triple-negative-breast-cancer.html>

### **Embracing the Light Within**

*Poz | 4 October 2023*

Living with HIV is not an easy path, but it has transformed me into a resilient warrior, determined to love myself unconditionally and share my inspiring journey with the world. This is my story of how I have risen above the challenges, embraced my inner strength and embarked on a profound journey of self-love and acceptance. The day I received my HIV diagnosis was a turning point in my life. Initially overwhelmed by fear, stigma and uncertainty, I soon realized that HIV did not define me. I resolved to confront the disease head-on, seeking knowledge and support to empower myself in this new chapter.

<https://www.poz.com/article/embracing-light-within>

## **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.

<https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Subscription.aspx>

### **Subscribe to the Health Systems Trust 60percent**

HST produces a weekly online publication, 60percent, which keeps subscribers abreast with the latest news and developments pertaining to HIV-related maternal, adolescent, child and youth health. The name 60percent signifies that southern Africa is responding to a feminised HIV/AIDS epidemic, with at least 60% of those living with HIV being women. Subscribe to 60percent by simply visiting HST's website (<https://www.hst.org.za>), scroll to the bottom of the page, hit the SUBSCRIBE button, and follow the prompts. Let's keep you posted!

<https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Subscription.aspx>

### **Masters in Adult Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal**

Adult education is a very broad discipline, and our programmes will be of benefit to anyone who is interacting with adults in some kind of educative relationship (including developing or running training/courses/workshops for adults, or producing learning/promotional material), as is the case for your organisation. The discipline of adult education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal has a long history of working closely with a range of organisations and individuals involved in community development, education or training in a variety of sectors, including land, environment, health, gender, ECD, water, unemployment, savings, and so on.

We offer a two-year part-time coursework Masters (i.e. modules offered on the PMB campus in the first year, followed by a thesis) and a full-time or part-time research Masters (i.e. thesis only). Our coursework Masters includes specific modules to help people understand theories about how adults learn (differently from children), and how to develop curricula and materials that will be of most benefit to adults in communities or other settings. Lectures are held on Saturdays. Our research Masters allows people to closely study an area of particular interest to them, in relation to adult education.

The entry requirement for both coursework and research Masters is a Bachelor of Education (Honours) or equivalent degree with a 60% average (although this does not guarantee entry into this programme). In addition to the average, Masters by Full dissertation applicants are required to submit a brief description/concept note of the research they intend to pursue.

There is more information (admission requirements, how to apply, etc.) on the postgraduate programmes in Education (including Adult Education) at: <https://soe.ukzn.ac.za/postgraduate-information/>

Applications close end-October 2023.

## **The NDoH and CSIR Call for Book Chapters**

### **The Emerging South African National Digital Health System: Strategies, Approaches and Experiences**

#### **About**

The book, a collaboration between NDoH and CSIR, aims to showcase strategies and experiences in developing a National Health Information System that facilitates efficient, personalized healthcare information transfer across various boundaries. Undergoing a double-blind peer review and editing, it serves as a detailed guide to the evolving South African National Digital Health System, reflecting on the substantial research and strategies that have influenced its formation, with a focus on the scholarly depth and validity of the results.

Each chapter, contributing to an enriched discussion, will dissect a specific facet of the system, assisting readers in understanding its integral components and the ensuing challenges and opportunities within the South African Health Ecosystem. Contributions from several authors are encouraged, bringing in diverse perspectives and firsthand experiences to foster a comprehensive narrative on the system's ongoing improvements in the context of South African Digital Health. Opinion pieces in line with the NHI, Digital Health Strategy, and efforts to strengthen the Health System are welcome. Further details can be found in the Submission Guidelines.

#### **IMPORTANT DATES**

- SEPTEMBER, 2023: Presentations
- 22 OCTOBER, 2023: Abstract submissions
- 20 NOVEMBER, 2023: Abstract feedback
- 8 FEBRUARY, 2024: Submission of full paper for review
- 15 MARCH, 2024: Final corrected paper submission

**SUBMISSION LINK** - <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=sadhs24>

**Any queries and abstract submissions to:** [digitalhealth@health.gov.za](mailto:digitalhealth@health.gov.za)

**Subject: SA National Digital Health System Book**

#### **ABSTRACT FORMAT**

- Title of the Chapter
- Purpose
- Study design/methodology/approach
- Findings
- Originality/value
- Keywords Author/s

#### **The Public Health Association of South Africa (PHASA) – calling all public health champions!**

PHASA is a voluntary organisation of individuals passionate about population health improvements and the reduction of health inequities, and whose work focuses on the prevention of disease, the promotion of health, and the improved functioning of the country's health care system. Are you

passionate about improving the health and wellbeing of communities? Do you want to expand your professional network and stay current in the field of public health? Do you want to be part of the movement to improve Public Health? Then join the Public Health Association of South Africa today to make a difference and enhance your career!

As a member, you will:

- Gain access to cutting-edge research, resources, and best practices
- Connect with public health professionals from around the country
- Participate in educational events and conferences
- Contribute to shaping the future of public health
- Have access to mentors in the field
- Be at the forefront of advocacy initiatives.

To become a member, simply visit our [website](https://phasa.org.za/index.php/get-involved/membership) and complete the membership application. Don't miss this opportunity to advance your career and improve public health.

<https://phasa.org.za/index.php/get-involved/membership>

## **PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS**

### **The 2022 South African Health Review is available!**

We are pleased to release the 25th edition of the South African Health Review (SAHR). Entitled 'health systems strengthening after COVID-19', the journal provides valuable insights and recommendations on how to improve the response to the pandemic and build more resilient health systems.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the world, and the health sector has been at the forefront of the response. Curated as a supplement to the 2021 edition, which addressed the response of government and the broader health sector to COVID-19, the 2022 South African Health Review provides a platform for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to share their experiences and insights on how they navigated this crisis and build more robust health systems for the future.

The journal encompasses a diverse array of subjects, including reflections on the work of the Ministerial Advisory Committee during COVID-19 and the knowledge gained and lessons learned from these processes. Additionally, it explores the ramifications of COVID-19 on maternal, women, and child health and highlights the gendered implications of the pandemic, revealing that women experienced more pronounced effects of stress, fear, and depression during the lockdown period compared to men.

Commenting on its release, CEO and co-editor of the Review Dr Themba Moeti said that "This edition of the South African Health Review offers promising examples of COVID-19 response, mitigation and recovery strategies for us to use the emerging lessons to enhance our health system resilience and better prepare for future pandemics."

Strong messages emerging from this edition emphasise that in order to effectively promote national vaccination programmes, it is imperative to equip healthcare workers (HCWs) with comprehensive, relevant, and current information. This will enable them to enhance patient communication and increase vaccine acceptance. Subsequent chapters delineate an inventive collaboration between the public and private sectors aimed at mitigating the accumulated volume of elective surgical procedures at Groote Schuur Hospital and reflect on the importance of consulting, involving and deploying

community based organisations such as clinic committees in public health emergencies from the outset.

The crucial importance of inter-country collaboration is emphasised in mitigating disease transmission and impact, with authors advocating for a more coordinated approach to managing cross-border health measures.

Additionally, the Review highlights the intersection between climate change and health systems and reinforces the imperative to prioritise health within the framework of a 'just transition' and to enhance the capabilities of healthcare systems to be low-carbon and climate-resilient as crucial focal points for improving pandemic preparedness.

For more information on the journal and to access the latest edition, please go to <https://www.hst.org.za/publications/Pages/SAHR2022.aspx>

## **CONFERENCES AND EVENTS**

### **Towards Universal Health Coverage, Strengthening Primary Health Care: A whole of Government, whole of Society approach conference**

The South African National Department of Health, the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, the World Health Organization and Health Systems Trust cordially invites you to participate in a Primary Health Care (PHC) themed, **Towards Universal Health Coverage, Strengthening Primary Health Care: A whole of Government, whole of Society approach**, conference.

When: 14-17 November 2023

Where: to be held at the East London International Conference Centre

The goals of the conference are to reinvigorate South Africa's commitment to the PHC approach as a strategic component of comprehensive health services in a unified health system, within a National Health Insurance (NHI) dispensation and to re-commit the country (i.e. government, citizens and social partners) to the PHC principles as being central to health promotion, disease prevention, and building a people-centred and resilient health system that is able to adapt and respond to emerging health challenges in a rapidly changing world.

For more information do go to the [conference web page](#).

<https://www.hst.org.za/media/Pages/PHC-Conference.aspx>

### **Critical Care Society of SA Congress**

When: 12-15 October 2023

Where: Boardwalk Convention Centre, Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth)

For more information, go to: <https://criticalcare.org.za/event/save-the-date-ccssa-congress-2023/>

### **13th World Congress of the World Society for Pediatric Infectious Diseases (WSPID)**

When: 12-17 November 2023

Where: Durban ICC, Durban

For more information, go to: <https://www.emedevents.com/medical-hybrid-events-2023/13th-world-congress-of-the-world-society-for-pediatric-infectious-diseases-wspid>

<https://www.wce2024.org/>

## **JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

### **ADVANCED CLINICAL CARE (ACC) CLINICIAN**

Closing date: 17 October 2023

[https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Health-Systems-Strengthening-\(HSS\)-Unit-ADVANCED-CLINICAL-CARE-\(ACC\)-CLINICIAN.aspx](https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Health-Systems-Strengthening-(HSS)-Unit-ADVANCED-CLINICAL-CARE-(ACC)-CLINICIAN.aspx)

### **CLINICAL ADVISOR**

Closing date: 17 October 2023

[https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Health-Systems-Strengthening-\(HSS\)-Unit--Unfinished-Business-Project-Clinical-Advisor.aspx](https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Health-Systems-Strengthening-(HSS)-Unit--Unfinished-Business-Project-Clinical-Advisor.aspx)

### **CROSS-SITE FACILITATOR: PAEDIATRIC AND ADOLESCENT CO-ORDINATORS**

Closing date: 17 October 2023

[https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Health-Systems-Strengthening-\(HSS\)-Unit-----Cross-Site-Facilitator-----Paediatric.aspx](https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Health-Systems-Strengthening-(HSS)-Unit-----Cross-Site-Facilitator-----Paediatric.aspx)

### **DATA CAPTURER**

Closing date: 17 October 2023

[https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Health-Systems-Strengthening-\(HSS\)-Unit--Data-Capturer.aspx](https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Health-Systems-Strengthening-(HSS)-Unit--Data-Capturer.aspx)