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ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

Turning the tide in HIV through health communication research

Journal of the International AIDS Society | 23 June 2022

Collene Lawhorn, Michael J Stirratt and Diane M Rausch

Integrating health communication tools with behavioural and social science theories may improve learning, motivation and multilevel impact in HIV. One example is behavioural economics, which combines tenets from psychology and economics to understand influences on human decision making and behaviour and leverages cognitive processes to “nudge” people to make healthy choices and adopt healthy behaviours. The application of behavioural economics to health communications research can open new opportunities.

Hepatitis B and C in Children

Elsevier | 24 June 2022

A Sperry, A Bennet and J Wen

Viral hepatitis is a significant global health burden. Hepatitis B and C specifically pose public health challenges given the development of chronic infections. Together, hepatitis B and C account for nearly 95% of deaths worldwide from viral hepatitis, surpassing human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and tuberculosis. In 2016 the World Health Organization (WHO) recognized viral hepatitis as a pandemic, focusing on reducing transmission, increasing vaccination rates, and broadening access to treatment. Hepatitis B and C are bloodborne infections. They are a particular risk to the pediatric population because of mother-to-child transmission and subsequent chronic disease. Engaging with the pediatric population plays a key role in reducing transmission and adult morbidity and mortality.

SARS-CoV-2 infection in HIV-infected patients: potential role in the high mutational load of the Omicron variant emerging in South Africa

Springer Link | 24 June 2022

Katalin Tarcsai, Oliga Corolciuc, Attila Tordai and József Ongrádi

A new variant of SARS-CoV-2 named Omicron (B.1.1.529) was isolated from an HIV-infected patient in Botswana, South Africa, in November 2021. Whole genome sequencing revealed a multitude of mutations and its relationship to the mutation-rich Alpha variant that had been isolated from a cancer patient. It is conceivable that very high prevalence of HIV-infected individuals as susceptible hosts in South Africa and

their immunocompromised state may predispose for accumulation of coronavirus mutations. Coronaviruses uniquely code for an N-terminal 3' to 5' exonuclease (ExoN, nsp14) that removes mismatched nucleotides paired by the RNA dependent RNA polymerase. Its activity depends preferably on Mg²⁺ and other divalent cations (manganese, cobalt and zinc). On the contrary, methyl transferase activity of non-structural protein (nsp) 14 and nsp16 both complexed with nsp10 requires Mn²⁺. Enzymes in successive stages of HIV infections require the same cations. In HIV-infected organisms, a subsequent coronavirus infection encounters with altered homeostasis of the body including relative starvation of divalent cations induced by interleukin production of HIV-infected cells.

Spatial Variation and Factors Associated with Unsuppressed HIV Viral Load among Women in an HIV Hyperendemic Area of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

HIV-AIDS - Updates, Perspectives and Applications | 24 June 2022

Adenike Soogun, Ayesha Kharsany, Temesgen Zewotir and Delia North

New HIV infections among young women remains exceptionally high and to prevent onward transmission, UNAIDS set ambitious treatment targets. This study aimed to determine the prevalence, spatial variation and factors associated with unsuppressed HIV viral load at ≥ 400 copies per mL. This study analysed data from women aged 15–49 years from the HIV Incidence Provincial Surveillance System (HIPSS) enrolled in two sequential cross-sectional studies undertaken in 2014 and 2015 in rural and peri-urban KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Bayesian geospatial model with spatial effect for a small enumeration area was adopted using Integrated Nested Laplace Approximation (INLA) function to analyze the findings. The overall prevalence of unsuppressed HIV viral load was 45.2% in 2014 and 38.1% in 2015. Factors were associated with unsuppressed viral load having no prior knowledge of HIV status, having a moderate-to-low perception of acquiring HIV, not on antiretroviral therapy (ART), and having a low CD4 cell count.

Is virtual reality suitable for hand hygiene training in health care workers? Evaluating an application for acceptability and effectiveness

*BMC (Original source: **Antimicrobial Resistance & Infection Control**)* | 25 June 2022

Vanessa M Eichel, Christian Brandt, Juliane Brandt, Jonas M Jabs and Nico T Mutters

Healthcare-associated infections (HAI) are the most frequent adverse event in health care facilities and it is assumed that about one third could be prevented. In addition to the immense health risk for patients, this places a massive financial burden on the health care system. In the United States for example, costs of annually \$4.5 billion have been estimated in this context. Though, adequate hand hygiene can significantly reduce health-care associated infections and the World Health Organization (WHO) states that an improvement in hand hygiene is a key factor in reducing global health care associated infections. However, studies have shown poor compliance with hand hygiene in HCW with an overall compliance rate of about 40%.

Determinants and reasons for switching anti-retroviral regimen among HIV-infected youth in a large township of South Africa (2002–2019)

AIDS Research and Therapy | 28 June 2022

Anita Kabarambi, Sheila Balinda, Andrew Abaasa, Dolphina Cogill and Catherine Orrell

There are limited data exploring antiretroviral therapy (ART) changes and time to change among South Africa young people living with HIV/AIDS. We describe the time to first drug switch, which includes ART regimen change (three drug switch) and substitutions (single drug switch). We describe common reasons for ART switch among young people aged 10 to 24 years in South Africa.

Evaluating patient data quality in South Africa's National Health Laboratory Service Data Warehouse, 2017-2020: implications for monitoring child health programmes

The BMC | 29 June 2022

Lebohang Radebe, Ahmad Mazanderani and Gayle Sherman

The National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS) is the largest and sole diagnostic pathology service provider to the South African public health sector, serving over 80% of the population. As a unique source of public health information, NHLS data has been used to monitor and evaluate numerous diseases and public health programmes including tuberculosis, Hepatitis A, syphilis and HIV. Furthermore, NHLS data has been validated against costly national surveys monitoring the Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) of HIV programme and found to yield accurate results, thereby demonstrating its cost-effective utility for routine public health surveillance. Despite being a rich source of information,

important limitations exist with the use of routine laboratory data. In particular, the absence of a national unique patient identifier (UPI) hampers the ability to analyse patient-level data.

Efficiency of 6-month PrEP dispensing with HIV self-testing in Kenya: an open-label, randomised, non-inferiority, implementation trial

The Lancet HIV | 1 July 2022

Kenneth Ngunjiri, Katrina Ortblad, Peter Mogere, Ashley R Bardon, Katherine K Thomas, et al

Oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention is highly effective and is being implemented at scale at health clinics throughout sub-Saharan Africa. However, barriers to clinic-based PrEP delivery remain. We aimed to establish the efficiency of semiannual PrEP clinic visits supplemented with interim home-based HIV self-testing (HIVST) versus standard of care for HIV testing, drug refilling, and adherence among PrEP users.

Purpose study: understanding the burden of stillbirths in south Asia

The Lancet HIV | 1 July 2022

Joao Paulo Souza, Rajiv Bahl

Stillbirth prevention is a global health priority and a crucial step towards better maternal and newborn health and wellbeing. In 2019, 2 million babies were stillborn, with over three-quarters of these stillbirths occurring in sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia. However, progress has been slow, and unless there is a substantial acceleration in progress, the Sustainable Development Goal target 3.2 and Every Newborn Action Plan target of 12 stillbirths per 1000 births will not be met by 2030. Slow progress is partly due to the limited emphasis on stillbirth reduction in maternal and child health programmes and a paucity of accurate, complete, and actionable information on stillbirths, particularly in high-burden areas.

Tackling childhood cancer in sub-Saharan Africa

The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health | 1 July 2022

Sub-Saharan Africa is facing an under-recognised burden of cancer and substantial failures in its oncology care systems. Deficiencies in care are pronounced for children with cancer, partly due to low prioritisation, with foundational issues exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2018, WHO launched the Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer, with the aim of reaching 60% survival for children with cancer aged 0–19 years by 2030. The initiative is focused on boosting survival in low-income and middle-income countries, where a third or less of children diagnosed with cancer are expected to survive, compared with 80% in high-income countries. Estimates for sub-Saharan Africa, highlighted in a 2022 Lancet Oncology Commission led by Wilfred Ngwa and colleagues, indicate the region will fall critically short of this target. Based on largely incomplete cancer registries, cancer incidence in children aged 0–14 years ranged from 27.6 per million (The Gambia, 2002–11) to 308.2 per million (Malawi, 2003–10) in sub-Saharan Africa. By 2050, almost 50% of the global cancer burden in children younger than 15 years will be in Africa.

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RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

UNAIDS, Global Fund and PEPFAR leaders make a united call to action to resource the global AIDS response

UNAIDS | 24 June 2022

The leaders of UNAIDS, the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief have made a powerful joint call for a fully funded global AIDS response during the 50th meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB), taking place in Geneva, Switzerland. The call by the United States Global AIDS Coordinator, John Nkengasong, the Executive Director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Peter Sands, and the Executive Director of UNAIDS, Winnie Byanyima comes ahead of the crucial 7th replenishment meeting of the Global Fund which will take place in the United States in September and against the backdrop of the continued underfunding of the UNAIDS Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework.

Monkeypox: Our top 10 questions answered

Spotlight | 24 June 2022

On Thursday morning Minister of Health Dr Joe Phaahla announced that a 30-year-old man from Gauteng

with no recent travel history had become the first person in South Africa to be diagnosed with monkeypox. According to a statement by the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), more than 3 000 people have been diagnosed with monkeypox since May 2022 in several European countries, the United States, Canada, Morocco, and the United Arab Emirates. This is the first multi-country outbreak of the disease, according to the NICD and is also the largest outbreak of monkeypox that has been recorded.

UNAIDS Board closes with significant decisions made on strengthening the global HIV response

UNAIDS | 24 June 2022

The 50th meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) which began on 21 June has closed with decisions to strengthen access to HIV services for the people most vulnerable to the HIV pandemic and measures to help close the funding gaps in the global HIV response, including financing for UNAIDS. Financing shortfalls in the global HIV response continue to limit progress in key areas, especially for vulnerable groups of people. At the end of 2020, only US\$ 21.5 billion was available for the HIV response in low- and middle-income countries—far short of the US\$ 29 billion needed by 2025 to get on track to end the AIDS pandemic as a global health threat by 2030. Similarly, UNAIDS capacities have been eroded by the underfunding of the Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF). To achieve progress, save lives and ensure that people living with and at risk of HIV have access to the services and resources they need, the global AIDS response must be fully resourced.

Statement: Reproductive rights are women's rights and human rights

UN Women | 24 June 2022

Reproductive rights are integral to women's rights, a fact that is upheld by international agreements and reflected in law in different parts of the world. To be able to exercise their human rights and make essential decisions, women need to be able to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to information, education, and services. When safe and legal access to abortion is restricted, women are forced to resort to less-safe methods, too often with damaging or disastrous results—especially for women who are affected by poverty or marginalization, including minority women. The ability of women to control what happens to their own bodies is also associated with the roles women are able to play in society, whether as a member of the family, the workforce, or government.

Sexual abuse: The shame and pain of men and boy survivors

Health-e News | 24 June 2022

Matthew (26), is a Cape Town-based copywriter who was sexually abused by his domestic worker. The abuse began when he was eight years old and ended two years later. “My mother would work long hours and would get back home late. Sometimes I would be dropped off from school by a man we all called uncle John. He had a taxi where he'd drop off children who lived nearby, but I would always be dropped off last because I was the furthest,” he explained. Matthew said he'd dread having to go home and often felt anxious. The little boy would make up excuses like last-minute school activities.

RSV: Virus that threatens infants again circulating in 2022

Spotlight | 27 June 2022

According to the United States National Institutes of Health, Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is estimated to affect 64 million people around the world every year and claim around 160 000 lives. Infants are most vulnerable and there is no effective vaccine. In South Africa, it is estimated that between 178 000 and 443 000 children under the age of five will be infected with RSV annually. Numbers were, however, dramatically lower in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions – although substantial increases were correctly predicted for 2022. RSV is the most common cause of lower respiratory tract infections (LRTI) in young children globally and in South Africa, says Professor Cheryl Cohen, head of the Centre for Respiratory Diseases and Meningitis at the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD). LRTI, in turn, she says, is among the most common causes of death in young children in South Africa.

New TB testing strategy brings hope, but work remains

Health-e News | 24 June 2022

A new tuberculosis (TB) testing strategy has been available in South Africa since April this year, hoping to

diagnose more people. Labelled a potential game-changer, an expert warns that issues like stigma and treatment barriers mustn't be left behind. Known as Targeted Universal Testing (TUT), people who are identified as being more at risk of contracting the disease are being offered a molecular TB test, despite not showing any symptoms.

Sinovac's Covid-19 shot approved for use in South Africa

Daily Maverick | 27 June 2022

Sinovac Biotech Ltd.'s Coronavac Covid-19 vaccine has been registered for use in South Africa, the national health products regulator said. The vaccine has a shelf-life of two years when stored between 2 and 8 degrees Celsius, the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority said in a statement on Friday.

School Nurses Help Keep Students Healthy

CDC | 28 June 2022

In 1902, the first school nurse reduced absenteeism by helping students and their families manage contagious diseases. Learn how school nurses care for students in their evolving role. In the United States, more than 40% of school-aged children and adolescents have at least one chronic health condition, such as asthma, diabetes, seizure disorders, food allergies, or poor oral health. For these students, school nurses—who are often the only health care provider in a school—play a large role in the daily management of their conditions. School nurses or other school health services staff may also be the first to identify chronic health conditions in students through routine health exams.

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation on launch and processing of COVID-19 1st edition country report, 30 Jun

South African Government | 28 June 2022

The Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation in collaboration with the Government Technical Advisory Centre (GTAC), the National Research Foundation (NRF) and experts in various research institutions across South Africa will be hosting the Launch of the 1st EDITION OF THE SA COVID-19 COUNTRY REPORT on 30 June 2022. The DPME spearheaded the writing of a Country Report to record the storyline and broad understanding of how the country managed, responded to and combated the negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic between March 2020 and March 2021.

Can you stand on one leg for 10 seconds? It may be a sign of good overall health

Health24 | 28 June 2022

The inability to balance on one leg for 10 seconds in later life may indicate an increase in the risk of death – from any cause – within the following decade, according to new research. Based on these findings, it may be useful to include a simple balance test in routine check-ups for people in middle and old age, the study researchers say. The team recruited 1 702 participants in Brazil, aged 51 to 75. About two-thirds of the participants were men. They were asked to stand on one leg. The front of the free leg had to be placed behind the standing leg, and they had to keep their arms by their sides while looking straight ahead. Each participant got three attempts to perform the task and were allowed to stand on either leg.

Travel as therapy for dementia? Here's what science has to say

Health24 | 29 June 2022

Taking a road trip or flight to a holiday destination is known to help people feel refreshed and relaxed. Now, a new study has found that leisure travelling can be a non-pharmacological intervention to improve well-being in patients with dementia. The study published in *Tourism Management* assessed how leisure travelling could help improve dementia outcomes.

Tshwane records marked decrease in Covid-19 cases

IOL | 29 June 2022

Despite the bitterly cold winter, the number of active Covid-19 cases has continued to drop dramatically in recent weeks in Pretoria. The City of Tshwane said it had noticed a week-on-week decrease in the number of active cases, a trend that had continued throughout June. City spokesperson Selby Bokaba said during the first week of this month, their report showed a decrease in cases by up to 41%, moving from 1 966 active cases during the month of May, to 1 160 cases.

HIV Child Medicine That Cut the 'Yuck' Cleared in South Africa

Bloomberg | 29 June 2022

South Africa's approval of two HIV therapies for children is likely to improve treatment compliance in the world's worst affected nation as the new products are more palatable for infants than previous incarnations. Babies and toddlers are prone to spit out medications they don't like and the newly approved treatments take away the "yuck" factor, Linda-Gail Bekker, director of the Desmond Tutu HIV Center, said Tuesday.

Phila Ndoda men's health campaign brings hope for control of South Africa's HIV epidemic

Health Systems Trust | 29 June 2022

The narrative that South African men refuse to attend their nearest clinic for medical attention, even when they are ill, is slowly being dispelled. Instead, there are other factors to be considered. This is visible in KwaZulu-Natal's Zululand District where the Department of Health's (DoH) Phila Ndoda campaign is making a considerable difference! The campaign is an increasingly well-received men-friendly clinic designed to address men's health issues, with the main focus being on HIV, TB, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Critical role of clinical research

Health-e News | 29 June 2022

Across the globe, research helps find the root cause of the health challenges or diseases in our society, identify ways to improve behaviours of the affected community, and find solutions to our health issues. Clinical research has critical in bringing new vaccines to our health system. Clinical research – aimed at evaluating a medical, surgical, or behavioural intervention – conducted by scientists in our communities helps resolve complex challenges in our societies. It is the primary way for researchers to establish whether or not a new treatment is safe and effective.

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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 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!

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.

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PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

South African Health Review 2021

Health Systems Trust | 2021

When it comes to service delivery and access in both the public and private health sectors, COVID-19 has put everything to the test. It has demonstrated how central public health security is to health and livelihoods, and how pandemic health emergencies expose the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of health systems, costing lives and causing immeasurable damage to economies. Few could have imagined the impact of COVID-19 when this pandemic reached our shores in March 2020.

This edition considers the government's and broader health sector's response to COVID-19, explores the current challenges facing the health system at this unprecedented time, and reflects on lessons learnt for future for public health emergencies. The chapters offer information on, inter alia, the challenges of balancing lives with livelihoods, and the impact of COVID-19 on different cadres of healthcare workers, especially Community Health Workers who found themselves at the forefront of our COVID-19 response. Other areas covered include the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations like children, persons with disabilities, farmworkers, migrants, and the poorest in our society.

Interim Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices for Use of Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccines in Children Aged 6 Months–5 Years — United States, June 2022

CDC | 28 June 2022

What is already known about this topic?

On June 17, 2022, the Food and Drug Administration granted Emergency Use Authorization for the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines for children aged 6 months–5 years and 6 months–4 years, respectively.

What is added by this report?

On June 18, 2022, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) issued interim recommendations for the use of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine for children aged 6 months–5 years and for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for children aged 6 months–4 years in the United States for prevention of COVID-19. ACIP determined that the benefits of vaccination outweigh risks for this population.

What are the implications for public health practice?

Vaccination is important for protecting children aged 6 months–5 years against COVID-19.

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CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

PHASA (Public Health Association of South Africa) 17th annual public health conference

Date: 11 – 14 September

Location: Durban

Late Registration: 16 July – 26 Aug 2022

The Public Health Association of South (PHASA) invites you to attend their annual conference in Durban (eThekweni), on the east coast of South Africa. PHASA hosts an annual conferences, with the aim of engaging public health practitioners and interested people from around the country and world to share their experiences and research, discuss topical public health issues, and mentor public health students and young researchers. Hosting the national PHASA conference in Durban aims to add stimulus to the local economy, and contribute to enhanced awareness and widespread advocacy, for health, the social determinants of health, and healthcare in the region.

World Health Summit 2022: Registration now opened and key speakers announced

World Health Organization | 27 June 2022

The World Health Summit (WHS) and the World Health Organization (WHO) join forces to organize the 2022 edition of one of the world's leading international, inclusive and inter-sectoral global health conference to bring global health actors closer to setting agenda for a healthier future. Registration for on-site participation is now open. The Summit will take place on 16-18 October 2022 in Berlin, Germany. Participants will focus on “Making the Choice for Health” by reflecting on pressing topics such as

Investment for Health and Well-Being, Climate Change and Planetary Health, Architecture for Pandemic Preparedness, Digital Transformation for Health, Food Systems and Health, Health Systems Resilience and Equity, and Global Health for Peace.

Enhanced use of data to monitor safety and effectiveness of paediatric medicines

Date: 6 July 2022

Time: 15:00 – 16:30

Join us for another webinar of the GAP-f **#BetterMeds4Kids** webinar series, GAP-f's quarterly webinar series on paediatric medicines, which features deep dives in paediatric drug prioritization, evaluation, development, and delivery to promote discussions to close paediatric medicines gaps. Through GAP-f, we collect best practices across therapeutic fields and promote innovations that can help accelerate the development and use of better medicines for children. We look forward to working with you to realize this goal. Our next webinar, *Enhanced use of data to monitor safety and effectiveness of paediatric medicines*, will be hosted by GAP-f's Clinical Research Working Group and take place on 6 July, 1500 CET/0900 ET/1830 IST. The webinar will discuss the design and development of a Paediatric Data Hub which aims to use innovative methods and real-world data to rapidly monitor the safety and effectiveness of new paediatric medicines. Please register for the webinar [here](#), and share within your network and among your collaborators.

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JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Health Systems Trust has no vacancies at this time.

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