

# HST Bulletin



## 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

### **Are vaccine passports and covid passes a valid alternative to lockdown?**

*BMJ | 3 November 2021*

*Daniel Sleat, Kirsty Innes, Imogen Parker*

As countries reopen while the pandemic continues, “passports” indicating a person's covid or vaccination status are the only obvious way to leave lockdowns behind, say Kirsty Innes and Daniel Sleat. But the risks are big—and if we start down that road we may struggle to go back, argues Imogen Parker

### **“Clinical Care Pathway” for Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease**

*Journal Watch | 4 November 2021*

*Allan Brett*

Because the prevalence of nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) is high in the general population, the AGA convened a multidisciplinary panel to develop an algorithmic “clinical care pathway” for NAFLD that is appropriate for primary care clinicians.

### **Understanding the differential impacts of COVID-19 among hospitalised patients in South Africa for equitable response**

*South African Medical Journal | 5 November 2021*

*N Phaswana-Mafuya, O Shisana, W Jassat, S D Baral, Keletso Makofane, E Phalane, et al*

There are limited in-depth analyses of COVID-19 differential impacts, especially in resource-limited settings such as South Africa (SA).

### **Validity of the Food Insecurity Experience Scale and prevalence of food insecurity in The Bahamas**

*Remote and Rural Health | 10 November 2021*

*Allison Karpyn, Gail Headley, Zeleka Knowles, Erecia Hepburn, Nicole Kennedy, et al*

Despite UN recommendations to monitor food insecurity using the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), to date there are no published reports of its validity for The Bahamas, nor have prevalence rates of moderate or severe food insecurity been reported for the remote island nation. At the same time, food security is a deep concern, with increasing incidence of natural disasters and health concerns related to diet-related disease and dietary quality plaguing the nation and its food system. This article aims to

examine the validity of the FIES for use in The Bahamas, the prevalence of moderate and severe food insecurity, and the sociodemographic factors that contribute to increased food insecurity.

### **COVID antiviral pills: what scientists still want to know**

*Nature* | 10 November 2021

Drugs like molnupiravir and Paxlovid could change the course of the pandemic if clinical trial results hold up in the real world.

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

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## **RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS**

### **Five developments in paediatric tuberculosis**

*Spotlight News* | 4 November 2021

The screening, diagnosis, and treatment of tuberculosis (TB) in children remain far from optimal – and in many respects lag behind what can be done for adults. Below we pick out five developments in paediatric TB presented at the 52nd Union World Conference on Lung Health recently held online. It is a big conference and we no doubt missed some interesting studies – you can browse the conference abstracts for yourself [here](#).

### **Intervention Lowers Toxicity Burden for Older Patients With Advanced Cancer**

*Medpage Today* | 5 November 2021

A geriatric assessment intervention for older patients with advanced cancer significantly reduced the toxic effects from cancer treatments in the GAP70+ trial

### **The Seven Steps South Africa Is Taking To Get It Closer To Eliminating Malaria**

*NICD* | 5 November 2021

Jaishree Raman, National Institute for Communicable Diseases and Shūné Oliver, National Institute for Communicable Diseases. There were dire warnings that malaria cases would surge across Africa after the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak as a global pandemic in early March 2020. Many felt that the already overburdened healthcare systems would not be able to cope with increased patient loads. There was also concern that the pandemic would disrupt the delivery of essential malaria services. Fortunately, these predictions have not fully materialised. Most malaria control programmes on the continent took action to keep delivering essential malaria services.

### **Two new tobacco cessation medicines added to the WHO essential medicines list**

*World Health Organization* | 5 November 2021

Tobacco use causes 8 million deaths every year from health consequences such as cardiovascular diseases, lung disorders, cancers, diabetes, and many other debilitating diseases. Quitting can be challenging, especially with the added social and economic stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the 1.3 billion tobacco users globally, as many as 60% have expressed the desire to quit – however only 30% have access to the tools to help them to do so successfully.

### **Pfizer's Covid-19 pill is shaking up the global recovery trade**

*Times Live* | 8 November 2021

Shares tied to reopening trades from casinos to airlines surged in Asia on Monday after Pfizer said its Covid-19 pill could reduce hospitalisation and deaths in high-risk patients by 89%. A Bloomberg gauge of Macau casino shares jumped 7.2%, the biggest move in more than two months, while an index of Asia-Pacific airline stocks rallied as much as 5.5%, the most since March. Luggage manufacturer Samsonite International SA climbed 15% in Hong Kong.

### **Retention in care a growing concern**

*UNAIDS* | 8 November 2021

Data from South Africa highlight the challenge faced by many treatment programmes when it comes to successfully retaining people in HIV care. The HIV treatment programme in South Africa reaches more people living with HIV than any other in the world, with more than 5 million adults (aged 15 years and older) receiving antiretroviral therapy in 2020. Among the 2.5 million adults living with HIV in South Africa

who are not on treatment, a steadily increasing percentage are people who had started treatment but are no longer receiving it.

### **COVID-19 trauma: Picking up the pieces mentally**

*Health-E News | 9 November 2021*

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to take a toll on the mental health of South Africans, with many suffering from the aftermath of trauma. Aphiwe Gwala from KwaZulu Natal still experiences feelings of grief and loss after losing her grandmother to the coronavirus in October last year. "Some days I just cry. I still experience a lot of anxiety and a deep sense of sadness has stayed with me," said Gwala.

### **Early cancer diagnosis: 'SA needs to step up'**

*Health-E News | 9 November 2021*

A Wits professor has labelled cancer 'a national crisis' with early diagnosis still a huge obstacle within the public healthcare system. Although chemotherapy is now readily available in all nine provinces, patients are still slipping through undetected. Professor Paul Ruff, head of Medical Oncology at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits), stressed the importance of early and proper diagnosis. He spoke during the National Department of Health webinar titled 'Early cancer diagnoses save lives, cut treatment costs' on Sunday.

### **Fears over sexual dysfunction stop men vaccinating**

*Health-E News | 9 November 2021*

A new campaign #vacciNATION4MEN which aims to put men at the centre of efforts to get more South Africans vaccinated against COVID-19 has been launched by the Community Constituency Front (CCF) for COVID-19. South African men currently make up less than 40% of 12,7 million South Africans who have been fully vaccinated. This is according to a report by the Health Department released in August. This prompted several civil society organisations to find a way to overcome the hesitancy held by men.

Supported by Solidarity Fund, these organisations have spent the last two months gaining insight from men about their hesitancy.

### **Pandemic Treaty Offers Opportunity to Correct COVID-19 Weaknesses, Address Equity**

*Health Policy Watch | 9 November 2021*

An international pandemic treaty based on equity could be the antidote to current weaknesses and imbalances in the global response to COVID-19, according to a group of influential authors in a Lancet paper published on Tuesday. A number of the authors are associated with The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response chaired by Helen Clark and Ellen Sirleaf Johnson, which was set up to assess the World Health Organization's (WHO) response to COVID-19. Based on a timeline developed by the panel that lays out the global COVID response, the authors conclude that the International Health Regulations (IHR) are too weak and slow to

### **Global progress against measles threatened amidst COVID-19 pandemic**

*World Health Organization | 10 November 2021*

The largest increase in unvaccinated children in 20 years and critical gaps in disease surveillance increase risk of measles outbreaks, putting lives at risk: WHO, CDC

### **International organizations, vaccine manufacturers take stock of COVID-19 vaccine roll out, share views for 2022**

*World Health Organization | 10 November 2021*

The heads of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank Group, World Health Organization and World Trade Organization held on 9 November the 2<sup>nd</sup> High-Level Consultations with the CEOs of leading COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing companies. At the meeting, all participants agreed on the urgency of delivering more vaccine doses to low-income countries, where less than 2.5% of the population has been fully vaccinated.

### **Experts urge registration of new child-friendly ARV formulation**

*Spotlight | 10 November 2021*

Children living with HIV have to take multiple different antiretroviral (ARV) pills or syrups twice a day, while

most adults in South Africa have been offered one pill once a day regimens for around a decade. At the recent South African HIV Clinicians Society (SAHCS) conference, various speakers argued that better treatment regimens for kids are needed urgently.

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

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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'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.

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

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## PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

### **IQVIA White Paper: A summary of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the South African healthcare market**

The pharmaceutical industry has been through extraordinary times that have forced it to accomplish things that weren't believed possible before the pandemic; from implementing digital solutions, addressing at-home patient care to developing a vaccine in less than a year. We have seen it all over the last year.

### **Bulletin of the World Health Organization: Bulletin of the World Health Organization**

In the editorial section, WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, provides an overview of the ways in which behavioural science can be applied to improve health programmes and policies.

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

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## CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

### **Invitation to @womenlifthealth's annual Women Leaders in #GlobalHealth Conference**

The conference will focus on #COVID19 recovery strategies for marginalized women most affected by the pandemic.

Date: November 15 – 16

### **WHO Global Evidence-to-Policy (E2P) Summit**

15 – 17 November 2021 Virtual Conference, Global

Evidence as a catalyst for policy and societal change. Towards more equitable, resilient and sustainable global health

### **World Health Organization | Marking the first year of the Cervical Cancer Elimination movement**

On 17 November 2021, WHO will mark the first anniversary of a historic movement, celebrating the first time the world has committed to eliminate a cancer.

### **International Diabetes Federation Virtual Congress 2021**

The IDF Virtual Congress 2021 offers attractive individual and group rates to facilitate attendance from across the world. You can choose to follow the full congress or just participate in the special sessions planned on the opening day.

### **Global Forum for Children and Youth**

A Virtual Event | 7-9 December 2021

The inaugural Global Forum for Children and Youth (#ChildYouthForum) will virtually convene children and young people together with leaders from the United Nations, government, business, philanthropy and civil society, as well as authors, artists and influencers on 7–9 December 2021. Over three days, they will together brainstorm and accelerate proven and new solutions, inspire commitments from participants to create change, and mobilize resources to advance child rights to meet the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

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

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## **JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

### **HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING UNIT: Facility Team Leaders (x3)**

*Closing date: 17 November 2021*

### **HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING UNIT: UB Clinical Advisor – Zululand District**

*Closing date: 22 November 2021*

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

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[hst@hst.org.za](mailto:hst@hst.org.za)

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