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CATEGORIES

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ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

Low Self-Perceived Need for PrEP and Behavioral Indications of MSM Who Recently Refused Daily PrEP: A Mixed Methods Study in Three U.S. Cities

Aids and Behavior | 8 March 2024

Krishna Kiran Kota, Deborah Gelaude, Neal Carnes, Alisú Schoua-Glusberg, Paula M. Frew, et al.

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) reduces sexual risk for HIV transmission by 99% when used appropriately, but remains underutilized among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM). In this mixed-method study, we describe reasons for PrEP refusal associated with low self-perceived need for PrEP among MSM who recently declined daily oral PrEP when offered by a provider. Data are from a quantitative behavioral survey of MSM (N = 93) living in Atlanta, Chicago, and Raleigh-Durham, who also either responded to an in-depth interview (n = 51) or participated in one of 12 focus groups (n = 42).

Experiences of intimate partner violence (IPV) among females with same-sex partners in South Africa: what is the role of age-disparity?

BMC Women's Health | 9 March 2024

Nicole De Wet-Billings & Brendon Billings

South African women have been exposed to epidemic proportions of intimate partner violence (IPV) amongst heterosexual relationships but not much is known about same-sex partnerships. Sexual minorities are excluded from research but are subject to intimate partner violence as much as heteronormative persons. The purpose of this study is to determine the association between age-disparity and IPV outcomes among females with same-sex partners in South Africa.

Impact of ITPA gene polymorphism for predicting anemia and treatment outcome in HCV infected patients taking Sofosbuvir Ribavirin therapy

BMC Infectious Diseases | 11 March 2024

Sameen Amjed, Hafiz Ghulam Murtaza Saleem, Sajjad Ullah, Shahzad Latif, Shabana, et al.

Globally, 80 million people are suffering from chronic Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection. Sofosbuvir ribavirin-based anti-HCV therapy is associated with anemia and other adverse effects. Polymorphisms of Inosine triphosphatase (ITPA) gene may cause functional impairment in the Inosine triphosphate pyrophosphatase enzyme, resulting in enhanced sustained viral response (SVR) and protection from ribavirin-associated anemia in patients on therapy. The study objective was to investigate the effect of Inosine triphosphatase gene polymorphism on SVR achievement, hemoglobin decline and ribavirin dose reduction in patients on therapy.

Innovating with HIV self-testing for impact in southern Africa: Lessons learned from the STAR (Self-Testing AfRica) Initiative

BMC Infectious Diseases | 11 March 2024

Paul Mee, Melissa Neuman, Moses Kumwenda, Wezzie S. Lora, Simon Sikwese, et al.

In Malawi, female sex workers (FSW) have high HIV incidence and regular testing is suggested. HIV self-testing (HIVST) is a safe and acceptable alternative to standard testing services. This study assessed; whether social harms were more likely to be reported after HIVST distribution to FSW by peer distributors than after facility-based HIV testing and whether FSW regretted HIVST use or experienced associated relationship problems.

Prevention of malaria in pregnancy through health education intervention programs on insecticide-treated nets use: a systematic review

BMC Public Health | 11 March 2024

Opara Monica Onyinyechi, Suriani Ismail & Ahmad Iqmer Nashriq Mohd Naza

Malaria is a widespread and prevalent disease that affects human population globally, particularly in tropical countries. Malaria is a major health issue in sub-Saharan Africa and it contributes to morbidity and mortality among individuals in Africa. Pregnant women have been also reported as high risk of people been infected with malaria. This review attempted to evaluate the various methods used for health education programs and the effectiveness of the programs in improving ITNs among pregnant women.

Effects of pubic hair grooming on women's sexual health: a systematic review and meta-analysis

BMC Women's Health | 11 March 2024

Asmaa Eltobgy, Ahmed Aljabali, Ahmed Farag, Mohammad Elshorbg, Mona Hamed, et al.

Pubic hair grooming involves the partial or complete removal of pubic hair, and it is a common practice among men and women. Grooming is more prevalent in women, who employ various methods such as shaving, waxing and laser removal. However, it is associated with variable rates of post-grooming adverse outcomes including lacerations and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). To the best of our knowledge, this is the first systematic review and meta-analysis comparing women's sexual health outcomes between those who groom and those who don't.

Experience of social harms among female sex workers following HIV self-test distribution in Malawi: results of a cohort study

BMC Infectious Diseases | 11 March 2024

Paul Mee, Melissa Neuman, Moses Kumwenda, Wezzie S. Lora, Simon Sikwese, et al.

In Malawi, female sex workers (FSW) have high HIV incidence and regular testing is suggested. HIV self-testing (HIVST) is a safe and acceptable alternative to standard testing services. This study assessed; whether social harms were more likely to be reported after HIVST distribution to FSW by peer distributors than after facility-based HIV testing and whether FSW regretted HIVST use or experienced associated relationship problems.

Prevalence, incidence, and trends of epilepsy among children and adolescents in

Africa: a systematic review and meta-analysis

BMC Public Health | 12 March 2024

Gebeyaw Biset, Nigusie Abebaw, Natnael Atnafu Gebeyehu, Natan Estifanos, Endalk Birrie, et al.

Epilepsy contributes to a significant disease burden in children and adolescents worldwide. The incidence of childhood epilepsy is threefold higher in low and middle income countries compared in high-income countries. Epilepsy is a serious neurological condition associated with stigma and discrimination, an impaired quality of life, and other mental health related problems.

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RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

Dapivirine ring and oral PrEP found safe for preventing HIV in pregnant women

Contemporary GY/GYN | 6 March 2024

Utilization of the monthly dapivirine vaginal ring and daily oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) with tenofovir disoproxil fumarate and emtricitabine are both safe among pregnant cisgender women for HIV prevention, according to recent data presented at the 2024 Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections. The risk of HIV is increased 3-fold among pregnant women compared to similarly aged nonpregnant individuals. The World Health Organization recommends the dapivirine ring, a flexible silicone that vaginally administers an antiretroviral drug, to prevent HIV.

SA scientists warn of HIV-like obesity epidemic

Juta Medical Brief | 6 March 2024

With obesity rates rising at an alarming rate, according to a new World Health Organisation (WHO) study, South African researchers say the problem in this country – where more than two-thirds of women are overweight – is akin to a "new HIV epidemic" and calls for urgent measures, writes Medical Brief. In an editorial in the SA Medical Journal, the group respected scientists said the nation needed to pay attention, because "as with the HIV epidemic in the 1990s, we're facing a calamitous threat to the health of the population that has been ignored for too long". Weight-related diseases have eclipsed TB and HIV as leading causes of morbidity and mortality. Type 2 diabetes, stroke and heart disease, conditions all directly linked to the disease of obesity, account for three of the top four causes of death nationally and incur massive health system costs.

Global study finds new genetic risk factors for type 2 diabetes

Juta Medical Brief | 6 March 2024

The risk factors for type 2 diabetes are both environmental and genetic, and while researchers have identified many genetic risk factors thus far, the largest ever genome-wide association study of people with type 2 diabetes has discovered even more locations of risk variants than before. It has also identified different clusters of variants adding to the risk of developing the disease, revealing more about the different mechanisms underpinning the disease, reports Medical News Today.

HIV among older South Africans neglected – Wits-Harvard study

Juta Medical Brief | 6 March 2024

While South Africa has one of the world's most impressive ARV programmes – more than 5m people on

chronic treatment – with one of the highest HIV rates in the world (about 8.2m people), there has been little research on sexual behaviour, risk of HIV transmission, HIV stigma and HIV prevention for adults over 40. Widespread access to antiretroviral therapies since 2008 has led to millions of people ageing with chronic HIV infection, and consequently, people with HIV are older, on average, than they were just a decade ago.

Evaluating GeneXpert point-of-care testing for STIs

Contemporary OB/GYN | 6 March 2024

GeneXpert point-of-care (POC) testing can detect chlamydia (CT), gonorrhoea (NG) and trichomonas (TV), according to a recent study published in BMC Infectious Diseases. Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) remain a major global health concern, with 374 million new STI cases globally in 2020 caused by Ct, NG, and TV. Untreated infections in women may lead to pelvic inflammatory diseases, human immunodeficiency virus (H.IV), low birth weight, neonatal death, stillbirth, and prematurity and congenital abnormalities.

NIH study finds long-acting ART safe for HIV suppression in adolescents

Contemporary OB/GYN | 7 March 2024

Adolescents with HIV viral suppression can safely use long-acting, injectable antiretroviral therapy (ART), which has displayed improved HIV suppression compared to oral ART in individuals with difficulty taking daily oral regimens, according to data presented at the 2024 Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Denver. The National Institutes of Health funded research to expand upon the 2021 FDA approval of long-acting cabotegravir and rilpivirine for individuals with viral suppression. Two trials were conducted to evaluate use of the drug regimen in populations with lacking data.

Could many dementia cases actually be liver disease?

The Conversation | 7 March 2024

A recent study of US veterans found that 10% of those diagnosed with dementia actually had a liver condition called hepatic encephalopathy (HE) – a treatable condition. The liver can be damaged by several things, including alcohol, fatty deposits and hepatitis viruses. When the damage continues over several years, the liver becomes scarred (known as cirrhosis) and, at a certain point, can no longer perform one of its critical tasks: detoxifying the blood. Toxins (mainly ammonia) can build up and get into the brain, interfering with brain function. This is HE.

Some children who start antiretrovirals very early may control HIV after stopping treatment

Aidsmap | 7 March 2024

A small proportion of children who start HIV treatment within the first two days of life may achieve ongoing viral suppression after stopping antiretrovirals, according to study results presented yesterday at the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI 2024). While these promising findings hold clues for HIV cure research, such early therapy is out of reach for many, and treatment interruption remains risky without careful monitoring. Out of 54 children who acquired HIV in the womb and started combination antiretroviral therapy (ART) within 48 hours after birth, six had undetectable HIV and met other eligibility criteria for a closely monitored treatment interruption. Of these, four had sustained viral remission for at least a year.

Investing in equality: How young women are innovating to improve their health, rights and lives

United Nations Population Fund | 7 March 2024

“I lead a team of six amazing women, with specialties from pharmaceutical supply chains to software engineering and digital marketing – our journey so far in empowering young women to take charge of their health, has been nothing short of amazing,” said 26-year-old Chioma Uzoma from Nigeria. Ms. Uzoma is among 14 winners of the female-led 4HerPower Challenge, an initiative between UNFPA – the United

Nations sexual and reproductive health agency – MIT Solve and Organon, to support innovations in sexual and reproductive health and rights access for young people across the world.

Community influencers do their bit to reduce the number of HIV infections in young women across Southern Africa

IOL | 7 March 2024

On International Women's Day, celebrated on March 8, the spotlight is on the remarkable community influencers who have dedicated themselves to reducing HIV prevalence, particularly among young women. Dr Ziyanda Makaba, Clinical Specialist for HIV and Paediatrics at BroadReach Health Development, highlighted the concerning statistic that women and girls accounted for over 60% of new HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa in 2022.

Examining a Newer Therapy for Heavily Treated HIV Patients

ContagionLive | 7 March 2024

People with multi-drug resistant (MDR) HIV have limited antiretroviral therapy (ART) options, which can leave their disease management very challenging. “The patients who meet this definition tend to be very well known to us,” Onyema Ogbuagu, MBBCh, FACP, FIDSA, director of HIV Clinical Trials program at Yale School of Medicine, said. “I provide HIV care, and we all know many of these patients tend to be people who have long [been] in HIV care—it is typically not the newly infected.”

International Women's Day: Protect women and girls rights to protect their health

IOL | 8 March 2024

The United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) has called for protecting women's rights to protect their health on International Women's Day which is celebrated on March 8. UNAIDS' call this International Women's Day, is to protect women and girls' health, protect women and girls' rights. In doing so, the world will end Aids and will overcome the inequalities driving it.

Only by protecting women's rights can we protect women's health

Mail & Guardian | 8 March 2024

The world is way off track to meet the gender targets that were set in the sustainable development goals. At the current rate of progress, it will take an estimated 300 years to end child marriage, 140 years for women to be represented equally in positions of power and leadership in the workplace, and 47 years to achieve equal representation in parliaments. The global debt crisis is squeezing out investment in education, health and social protection, particularly hurting women and girls. Unequal access to education has left 122 million girls out of school, denying them lifesaving information on how to protect themselves from HIV.

Advancement of women's health in the African region

Omnia Health | 8 March 2024

Around the world, women play vital roles that support entrepreneurship, community development, caregiving responsibilities, resilience, leadership potential, and cultural influence. It is important to note that the proportion of women in Africa has increased dramatically, making up more than half of the continent's population. The number of women in the African region increased by 73 per cent from 336.6 million in 2000 to an estimated 583.2 million in 2021. This indicates a growth rate of roughly 3.4 per cent per year. In 2021, women made up 50.14 per cent of the region's overall population.

Six-country African PrEP study achieves high levels of persistence and good adherence in young women

Aidsmap | 8 March 2024

A demonstration project of oral PrEP for young women, conducted in six African countries with high HIV prevalence, achieved high levels of PrEP uptake and persistence, and good levels of adherence among

its 3000 participants. Dr Brenda Mirembe of Makerere University told the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI 2024) that the use of a rapid urine test to measure tenofovir levels and confirm adherence was generally seen as supportive by the participants. But despite high levels of PrEP use, HIV annual incidence remained quite high at 1.38% – or one infection in every 72 participants a year. This is not much lower than the current estimated incidence among young women in South Africa (about 1.5% a year).

National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day 2024

Poz | 8 March 2024

Sunday, March 10, is National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NWGHAAD) 2024. This year marks the 19th annual observation of NWGHAAD, the theme of which is “Prevention and Testing at Every Age. Care and Treatment at Every Stage.” Organized by the Office on Women’s Health, a division of the Department of Health & Human Services, NWGHAAD is important, according to WomensHealth.gov fact sheet, because: HIV and AIDS are still widespread public health issues, and women continue to remain vulnerable to infection—especially African-American and Hispanic women. In fact, any woman who has sex can get HIV, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, or sexual orientation. An estimated 1 million people in the United States had HIV at the end of 2020, the most recent year for which this information is available.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP DRIVING PROGRESS TO ELIMINATE MOTHER-TO-CHILD HIV TRANSMISSION IN INDONESIA

UNAIDS | 8 March 2024

Ibu Mawar (not her real name) learned she was living with HIV after receiving a test during an antenatal care visit. “I was surprised, of course, when they told me. But I didn't really doubt or deny the result,” she remembered from the Sorong City Health Office in West Papua. She immediately started treatment to prevent transmission to her son. “Even though I'm positive,” she said, “our child is not.” In principle, since 2009 every pregnant woman receiving antenatal care in Indonesia should receive an HIV test. And every woman found to be living with HIV should receive medicines to prevent transmission to their babies just as Ms Mawar did. But this isn't yet the reality. In 2022 more than one-third (37%) of all pregnant women in Indonesia did not get screened for HIV and just 18% of mothers living with HIV had access to antiretroviral therapy. There were an estimated 2800 new HIV infections among children that year.

Free State schools reports human rhinovirus outbreak

Mail & Guardian | 8 March 2024

The Free State department of education has confirmed that it had to shut schools in the Xhariep district after 100 pupils were infected with influenza B and human rhinovirus. The grades R to grade 5 classes at Philippolis Primary School and Bergmanshoogte Primary School were the hardest hit, with six out of 96 pupils who tested positive having to be admitted to hospital.

How to start your next HPV test at home

Bhekisisa | 8 March 2024

The human papillomavirus (HPV) is a bug that can cause cervical cancer if the infection is left untreated for too long. If the infection is caught early, it can be treated before cancer develops. Doing a self-sampling test can help women check for an HPV infection more regularly than waiting to get a Pap smear — which is only every 10 years if you use state healthcare — and so help them get treatment before things get out of hand. In this video experts break down how these self-sampling screening tests work.

Watch HIV Scientists at CROI 2024 Discuss a Promising Study on Newborns

Poz | 8 March 2024

On the final day of the 2024 Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI), HIV.gov spoke with Deborah Persaud, MD, Professor of Pediatrics at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and Director of the Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at Johns Hopkins Children's Center, who reported findings from a study about whether very early initiation of antiretroviral therapy (ART) may

limit the establishment of HIV reservoirs in newborns, potentially enabling ART-free remission. Dr. Persaud spoke with Catey Laube of NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID). Watch our conversation with Dr. Persaud at the top of this article.

Study finds no increased stress urinary incontinence recurrence risk from childbirth

Contemporary OB/GYN | 11 March 2024

Stress urinary incontinence (SUI) recurrence risk is not increased by subsequent pregnancy and childbirth, according to a recent study published in the American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology. Approximately 20% to 25% of women worldwide experience SUI, which adversely impacts quality of life. The midurethral sling (MUS) procedure is the recommended treatment with success rates up to 85%.

Tuberculosis bacteria also present in 90% of those with symptoms who are not diagnosed with TB, finds study

Medical Xpress | 11 March 2024

Mycobacterium tuberculosis (Mtb), the bacteria that causes a tuberculosis infection, is present in exhaled breath of 90% of those presenting with suspected tuberculosis. This includes those who were negative on conventional sputum testing and not diagnosed with TB. This raises the possibility that those who have tested negative may be unknowingly transmitting the infection.

At the 68th Commission on Status of Women UNAIDS calls for action to achieve gender equality and end AIDS

UNAIDS | 11 March 2024

UNAIDS is gearing up for the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (#CSW68) which begins today and will run until 22 March 2024. #CSW68, the United Nations largest annual gathering on gender equality and women's empowerment, is being held this year under the priority theme, Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective.

Close research partnership with African scientists helps solve mystery of malaria-like illnesses

Medical Xpress | 11 March 2024

Malaria prevalence has decreased drastically over the past two decades, but clinics in West Africa are still full of patients with fevers and symptoms similar to, but not exactly like, malaria. Little is known about the pathogens that cause these infections, and so these "non-malarial febrile illnesses" (NMFI) often fly under the radar of infectious disease surveillance programs because researchers don't know which pathogens to look for. Understanding how genomics could help detect and identify these mysterious infections has been the focus of a multi-year research partnership between University Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar, Senegal and the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard.

NAVIGATING SEXUAL HEALTH: A GUIDE FOR YOUNG WOMEN

Health Systems Trust | 11 March 2024

Young women face unique challenges concerning their sexual and reproductive health. Understanding these issues is essential for promoting the well-being of young women and ensuring they have the knowledge and resources to make informed decisions about their health.

Gauteng government ramps up efforts to curb STIs with free condoms

IOL | 11 March 2024

The Gauteng Department of Health wants to assure the public that male and female condoms are still available for free at a variety of locations, including universities, clinics, taverns, hostels, hospitals, motels, brothels, workplaces, primary distribution sites, and key population hot spots. These facilities get condom supplies on a regular basis that corresponds with their storage capacity. Delivery can take place on a

daily, weekly or monthly schedule.

HIV medication dolutegravir not linked with increased blood pressure during pregnancy

Aidsmap | 11 March 2024

Dolutegravir did not increase the risk of high blood pressure during pregnancy in a large international study, but mildly raised blood pressure was common in young women with HIV, Professor Risa Hoffman reported on behalf of the IMPAACT 2010 study team at the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI 2024) in Denver last week.

Ultra-long-acting cabotegravir could be taken three times a year for HIV PrEP and treatment

Aidsmap | 12 March 2024

A longer-acting formulation of cabotegravir may offer an HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and treatment option that could be administered once every four months, according to early study results presented last week at the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI 2024). A small phase I trial showed that the new ultra-long-acting formulation given by subcutaneous or intramuscular injection every four months achieves comparable drug exposure but lasts longer in the body than the approved formulation administered every two months, reported Dr Kelong Han of GSK, the parent company of ViiV Healthcare.

Tuberculosis: MSF launches unprecedented project to tackle underdiagnosis among children

Reliefweb | 12 March 2024

Tuberculosis (TB) in children is a silent scourge: one child dies of tuberculosis every three minutes and more than half of all children with TB are never diagnosed. Taking the opportunity of a set of new recommendations by the World Health Organisation (WHO), MSF has launched a worldwide project aiming to increase the number of children diagnosed with TB as well as improve their treatment experience and prevent new cases.

What's behind the worldwide shortage of cholera vaccines? For starters, they're only made by one company

The Conversation | 12 March 2024

In February 2024 the World Health Organization announced southern Africa was suffering the deadliest regional outbreak of cholera in at least a decade. At the epicentre of the disaster were Malawi, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, where cholera cases surged more than four-fold between 2022 and 2023. Over 1,600 deaths were reported in the three countries.

The cornerstone of HIV treatment may be losing some of its power: will dolutegravir resistance become a problem?

Aidsmap | 12 March 2024

A number of presentations at last week's Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI 2024) looked at whether HIV is starting to develop resistance to dolutegravir, one of the most widely used antiretrovirals in the world. Guidelines in most parts of the world recommend dolutegravir (or its close cousin, bictegravir) as a component of most people's first HIV treatment regimen.

Mixed Digital Intervention Increases HIV Prevention Adherence in Young People

Infectious Disease Advisor | 12 March 2024

HealthDay News — A synergistic effect is seen for multimodal strategies to improve uptake of and adherence to HIV prevention among young people at risk for acquisition, according to a study published in the March issue of *The Lancet Digital Health*. Dallas Swendeman, Ph.D., from the University of California,

Los Angeles, and colleagues assessed the efficacy of automated text messaging and monitoring (AMMI), online peer support, and strengths-based telehealth coaching to improve uptake of and adherence to preexposure prophylaxis (PrEP), condom use, and postexposure prophylaxis among 895 young people (aged 16 to 24 years) at risk for HIV acquisition.

WHO report reveals gender inequalities at the root of global crisis in health and care work

WHO | 13 March 2024

A new report published by the World Health Organization (WHO), "Fair share for health and care: gender and the undervaluation of health and care work" illustrates how gender inequalities in health and care work negatively impact women, health systems and health outcomes. The report outlines underinvestment in health systems results in a vicious cycle of unpaid health and care work, lowering women's participation in paid labour markets, harming women's economic empowerment and hampering gender equality.

Global child deaths reach historic low in 2022 – UN report

WHO | 13 March 2024

The number of children who died before their fifth birthday has reached a historic low, dropping to 4.9 million in 2022, according to the latest estimates released today by the United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME). "Behind these numbers lie the stories of midwives and skilled health personnel helping mothers safely deliver their newborns, health workers vaccinating and protecting children against deadly diseases, and community health workers who make home visits to support families to ensure the right health and nutrition support for children," said UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell.

How South Africa is intensifying efforts to combat HIV-TB co-infection

IOL | 13 March 2024

In South Africa, the intersection of tuberculosis (TB) and HIV remains a significant health challenge and TB accounts for most deaths among individuals living with HIV. In a bid to tackle this dual threat, the Department of Health has launched a concerted effort to integrate HIV and TB services within healthcare facilities, aiming to accelerate testing and treatment initiation.

Women with HIV need tailored advice on statins and heart disease risk

Aidsmap | 13 March 2024

Counselling about heart disease risk and statin use for women with HIV should highlight the similar levels of risk for men and women with HIV when communicating the results of the REPRIEVE study, one of the study's investigators told the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI 2024) in Denver, US, last week. Advice also needs to make women aware of how the symptoms of heart disease differ in women and men.

New WHO Report Finds Women Perform 76% of Unpaid Healthcare Activities

Health Policy Watch | 13 March 2024

Women perform an estimated 76% of all unpaid healthcare activities, according to a new WHO report on gender-based discrimination in healthcare. Globally, it has been estimated that women spend between two and ten times more time on unpaid health care work than men, amounting to a total of 16.4 billion hours per day.

Deadly Mpox Transmission in DR Congo Happening Under Radar; Most Victims are Children

Health Policy Watch | 13 March 2024

A leading Geneva-based global health organization has decried the lack of tests available for mpox in the

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) – where an outbreak declared in 2023 continues unchecked – saying that children are the main victims. “The mpox situation in the DRC is deeply alarming and the lack of tests for both mpox and HIV means it's unclear just how bad the mpox situation is and what the underlying comorbidities are,” said Dr Ayoade Alakija, Chair of the Board at FIND in a press release.

Poor management of ballooning diabetes in SA

Juta Medical Brief | 13 March 2024

Management of diabetes in South Africa – which has seen a notable rise in the prevalence of type 2 diabetes, due to changing diets and the consumption of more processed foods, sugary drinks and high-calorie meals – is not optimal, suggest local experts. Other factors responsible for the proliferation of the disease are the lack of physical activity and high levels of obesity, write Patrick Ngassa Piotie and Paul Rheeder in *The Conversation*, with one in nine South African adults having diabetes – around 4.2m people.

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Zimbabwe Surpasses 4 Million Polio Vaccination Target

allAfrica | 13 March 2024

The Ministry of Health and Child Care (MOHCC) in collaboration with UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), US Centre for Disease Control (USCDC) and other partners have surpassed the four million target for polio vaccination using the nOPV2 vaccine. This follows the confirmation of circulating poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) in Zimbabwe.

'Pandemic babies' have stronger gut health – Irish study

allAfrica | 13 March 2024

Scientists have discovered that Covid-19 “pandemic babies” appear to have developed a “protection” against allergies that is unique to them, saying lockdown restrictions allowed them to develop more beneficial microbes in their gut that are acquired post-birth from their mothers. Social distancing rules, they added, seemed to have a significant difference in the gut ecosystem of these infants, compared with those born pre-pandemic, which could help protect them against developing allergies.

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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!

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](#) and complete the membership application. Don't miss this opportunity to advance your career and improve public health.

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PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

District Health Barometer launch soon!

After a two-year hiatus, it is with great pleasure that I introduce the eagerly anticipated 2022/23 edition of the District Health Barometer (DHB), a vital statistical and analytical resource that provides an overall view of district health performance on key health systems indicators.

This 16th edition of the DHB provides information across a wide range of district health services, covers over 30 indicators and continues to provide policy-makers, health workers, planners, researchers, academics and stakeholders a unique overview of the performance of public health services in South Africa. By providing a detailed analysis of health indicators, trends, and challenges at the district level, the DHB equips district managers and other stakeholders with the data necessary to identify priorities, plan and implement targeted interventions, and monitor progress. This year's Barometer also includes a chapter on air quality and health as we introduce environmental drivers of health in the publication in response to the effects of climate change on health.

As an innovation for the publication, an online interactive dashboard has been developed. This dashboard will include all the indicators that have been compiled in the publication along with accompanying narratives on the key findings for the most recent year of data. It provides userled navigation, with the ability to drill down geographically from provincial to district level. Users will be able to decide what indicators to focus on, over what time window, and at the level of aggregation they choose. There are also

timesliders available to navigate the most recent 5 years of data.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the HST team and the various contributors and collaborators who have dedicated their time, expertise and passion to the development of this invaluable resource.

We trust that the DHB will continue to serve as a catalyst for evidence-informed decision-making and action, propelling us toward a future where every district is able to make a meaningful impact towards a long and healthy life for all South Africans. As always, we welcome commentary and feedback on the DHB's usefulness and suggestions for improvement of future editions.

Dr Themba L. Moeti
Chief Executive Officer

HIV Prevention: From Crisis to Opportunity - Key findings from the 2023 Global HIV Prevention Coalition scorecards

Reliefweb | 13 March 2024

A new report, HIV Prevention: From Crisis to Opportunity shows that HIV infections continue to decline in countries that are part of the Global HIV Prevention Coalition (GPC) faster than in the rest of the world.

Eleven GPC focus countries have reduced their annual number of new HIV infections by at least 66% since 2010. By comparison, the average reduction in new HIV infections since 2010 globally is 38%. The GPC is a coalition of 38 countries working together to accelerate declines in new HIV infections to achieve the target of having 95% of the people who are at risk of HIV accessing effective combination prevention options.

The GPC countries that have prioritised primary prevention and treatment and that have focused on reaching people most at risk have secured the strongest consistent declines in new HIV infections.

Globally, progress in HIV prevention has been highly uneven and a majority of the world's countries are not currently on track to achieve the 2025 targets. Indeed, several countries are experiencing prevention crises with low access to services and face record rising new HIV infections.

"The findings of this report offer crucial lessons for action," said Angeli Achrekar, Deputy Executive Director Programme, UNAIDS. "The report shows that sustained political leadership, investment in effective HIV prevention programmes, and an enabling policy environment are crucial to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030."

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CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

HIMSS 2024 Global Health Conference & Exhibition

The 2024 HIMSS European Health Conference & Exhibition brings together over 30,000 healthcare industry professionals, innovators, and educators from around the world to connect, learn, and experience innovative tech products and solutions that support the transformation of the health ecosystem through information and technology.

When: March 11-15, 2024

Where: Orlando, FL | McCormick Place Convention Center

For more information: <https://healthcaretransformers.com/healthcare-business/healthcare-conferences/healthcare-conferences-2024/>

3rd Edition of International Public Health Conference

The theme for this year's conference is "Restraining Pandemics Through Exploration of Trends and Public Health Challenges." With over 40 scientific sessions, attendees are sure to gain insights across a wide range of topics including infectious diseases, preventative medicine, chronic diseases, clinical trials and research, global health, health economics, and more.

When: March 21 – 23, 2024

Where: Singapore

For more information: <https://healthcaretransformers.com/healthcare-business/healthcare-conferences/healthcare-conferences-2024/>

8th SA TB Conference 2024

In keeping with the conference theme, the 8th SA TB conference will focus on innovations that will move South Africa further towards ending TB. Look out for exciting plenary presentations, Round Table discussions and Skills Building Workshops. Be part of the conference and submit your abstract early! Your abstract submission ahead of schedule will make a significant impact.

When: 4-7 June 2024

Where: Durban ICC

For more information: <https://tbconference.co.za/>

International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) Conference

FIP holds the World Congress of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, which takes place in a different country each year. In addition to this annual congress, FIP hosts the Pharmaceutical Sciences World Congress every three to four years. At the annual congress thousands of pharmacists meet, learn, share and exchange views. Our varied programme, offering something for everyone, makes this congress the premier international event in pharmacy each year. The theme for this year's congress is "Innovating for the Future of Health Care".

When: 1-4 September 2024

Where: Cape Town, South Africa

For more information: <https://capetown2024.fip.org/>

World Congress of Epidemiology Congress

When: 24-27 September 2024

Where: Cape Town, South Africa

For more information: <https://www.wce2024.org/>

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JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Clinical Advisors X2 (HSS)

Closing Date: 2024-03-20

[https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Clinical-Advisors-X2-\(HSS\).aspx](https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Clinical-Advisors-X2-(HSS).aspx)

Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officers

Closing Date: 2024-03-20

<https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Senior-Monitoring-and-Evaluation-Officers.aspx>

Differentiated Models of Care (DMoC) Co-Ordinator – eThekweni District

Closing Date: 2024-03-20

[https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Differentiated-Models-of-Care-\(DMoC\)-Co-Ordinator-%E2%80%93-eThekweni-District.aspx](https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Differentiated-Models-of-Care-(DMoC)-Co-Ordinator-%E2%80%93-eThekweni-District.aspx)

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