

# HST Bulletin



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## ACADEMIC AND PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES

### **Influence of depression and interpersonal support on adherence to antiretroviral therapy among people living with HIV**

*AIDS Research and Therapy* | 29 June 2023

*Jerry John Nutor, Akua O. Gyamerah, Robert Kaba Alhassan, Henry Ofori Duah, Rachel G.A. Thompson, et al.*

Poor adherence and under-utilization of antiretroviral therapy (ART) services have been major setbacks to achieving 95-95-95 policy goals in Sub-Saharan Africa. Social support and mental health challenges may serve as barriers to accessing and adhering to ART but are under-studied in low-income countries. The purpose of this study was to examine the association of interpersonal support and depression scores with adherence to ART among persons living with HIV (PLWH) in the Volta region of Ghana.

### **Acceptability and Effectiveness of a One-Hour Healthcare Provider Intervention Integrating HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis and Cultural Competence Training**

*AIDS and Behavior* | 29 June 2023

*Sarah K. Calabrese, Douglas S. Krakower, Sharanya Rao, Nathan B. Hansen, Kenneth H. Mayer, et al.*

Enhanced provider training could improve PrEP access and equity. We conducted a pilot randomized controlled trial comparing (a) a one-hour, group-based provider intervention integrating PrEP and Cultural Competence (PCC) training with (b) a standard HIV continuing medical education session (n = 56). PCC participants favorably rated the intervention and reported increased PrEP knowledge. The PCC intervention increased their confidence performing PrEP-related clinical activities and intention to prescribe PrEP. The percentage of participants discussing PrEP with patients increased marginally in both study conditions. The percentage of participants who prescribed PrEP and self-rated cultural competence did not change in either study condition.

### **Genetic characterization of HIV-1 viruses among cases with antiretroviral therapy**

## **failure in Suzhou City, China**

*AIDS Research and Therapy* | 29 June 2023

Zefeng Dong, Zhihui Xu, Ying Zhou, Runfang Tian, Kai Zhou, et al.

This retrospective study aimed to characterize the distribution of HIV-1 genotypes and the prevalence of drug resistance mutations in people with antiretroviral treatment (ART) failure in Suzhou City, China.

## **Acceptability of a Combination Adherence Strategy to Support HIV Antiretroviral Therapy and Pre-exposure Prophylaxis Adherence During Pregnancy and Breastfeeding in Malawi**

*AIDS and Behavior* | 1 July 2023

Friday Saidi, Twambilile Phanga, Lauren A. Graybill, Katie R. Mollan, Lauren M. Hill, et al.

In two parallel pilot studies, we implemented a combination adherence intervention of patient-centered counselling and adherence supporter training, tailored to support HIV treatment (i.e., antiretroviral therapy) or prevention (i.e., pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP) during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Using a mixed-methods approach, we evaluated the intervention's acceptability. We investigated engagement, satisfaction, and discussion content via survey to all 151 participants assigned to the intervention arm (51 women living with HIV, 100 PrEP-eligible women without HIV).

## **Effectiveness of a community-based intervention (Konga model) to address factors contributing to low viral load suppression among children living with HIV in Tanzania: a preliminary, cluster, randomized clinical trial report**

*Kihulya Mageda, Khamis Kulemba, Edwin Kilimba, Leornard K. Katalambula, Ntuli Kapologwe & Pammla Petrucka*

*BMC Public Health* | 4 July 2023

Despite effective antiretroviral therapy (ART) coverage in other groups living with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in Tanzania, virologic suppression among HIV-positive children receiving ART remains unacceptably low. This study evaluated the effectiveness of a community-based intervention (Konga model) in addressing the factor contributing to low viral load suppression among children living with HIV in the Simiyu region, Tanzania.

## **Evaluation of community-based vector surveillance system for routine entomological monitoring under low malaria vector densities and high bed net coverage in western Kenya**

*BMC Malaria Journal* | 3 July 2023

Bernard Abong'o, Michelle C. Stanton, Martin J. Donnelly, Eric Ochomo, Feiko O. ter Kuile, et al.

Entomological surveillance is traditionally conducted by supervised teams of trained technicians. However, it is expensive and limiting in the number of sites visited. Surveillance through community-based collectors (CBC) may be more cost-effective and sustainable for longitudinal entomological monitoring. This study evaluated the efficiency of CBCs in monitoring mosquito densities compared to quality-assured sampling conducted by experienced entomology technicians.

## **Combination HIV prevention during pregnancy and the post-partum period in Malawi and Zambia: a mathematical modelling analysis**

*Journal of the International AIDS Society* | 4 July 2023

Kimberly A. Powers, Wilbroad Mutale, Nora E. Rosenberg, Lauren A. Graybill, Katie R. Mollan, et al.

Despite widespread success in reducing vertical HIV transmission, most antenatal care (ANC) programmes in eastern and southern Africa have not emphasized primary prevention of maternal HIV acquisition during pregnancy and lactation/breastfeeding. We hypothesized that combination HIV prevention interventions initiated alongside ANC could substantially reduce maternal HIV incidence.

## **Patterns of PrEP continuation and coverage in the first year of use: a latent class analysis of a programmatic PrEP trial in Kenya**

*Journal of the International AIDS Society* | 4 July 2023

*Kenneth K. Mugwanya, Adam Palayew, Torin Schaafsma, Elizabeth M. Irungu, Elizabeth Bukusi, et al*  
Effective PrEP use is critical for impact, but data are limited on common patterns of continuation and coverage among persons using PrEP in real-world settings. Data are from the Partners Scale-Up Project, a programmatic stepped-wedge cluster-randomized trial to integrate PrEP delivery in 25 Kenyan public health facilities conducted between February 2017 and December 2021. We evaluated PrEP continuation using visit attendance and pharmacy refill records, and computed medication possession ratio to define coverage during the first year of use. Latent class mixture models were used to identify and characterize membership to different PrEP continuation patterns. Multinomial logistic regression was used to examine the association between group trajectories and demographic and behaviour characteristics.

### **Improving care seeking behavior toward cervical cancer screening participation among Gwafan community women, North-Central Nigeria**

*BCM Women's Health* | 4 July 2023

*Eunice Samuel Ari., Regidor III Poblete Dioso & John Obafemi Sotunsa*

Cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer in women globally and the second most common cancer in low- to middle-income countries, and its screening rate is yet to reach the 70% WHO target. Most interventions that proved effective in improving screening participation in some communities did not achieve the desired behavioral outcome in some settings.

### **Improving care seeking behavior toward cervical cancer screening participation among Gwafan community women, North-Central Nigeria**

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### **Sexual violence and associated factors among reproductive-age females with disabilities in central Sidama National Regional State, Ethiopia: a multilevel analysis**

*BMC Women's Health* | 4 July 2023

*Zelalem Tenaw, Taye Gari & Achamyesh Gebretsadik*

Sexual violence is one of the most common problems in reproductive health that causes different traumatic events that lead to mental, social, and physical problems. Females with disabilities are subjected to more traumatic events and consequences. In Ethiopia, there are limited evidences about the prevalence and associated factors of sexual violence among reproductive-aged females with disabilities. Therefore, this study aimed to assess the prevalence and associated factors of sexual violence among females with disabilities in reproductive-age in central Sidama National Regional State, Ethiopia.

### **Epidemiology of childhood tuberculosis and predictors of death among children on tuberculosis treatment in central Ethiopia: an extended Cox model challenged survival analysis**

*BMC Public Health* | 4 July 2023

*Abay Burusie, Fikre Enquesilassie, Nicole Salazar-Austin & Adamu Addissie*

Childhood tuberculosis (TB) was poorly studied in Ethiopia. This study aimed to describe the epidemiology of childhood TB and identify predictors of death among children on TB treatment.

### **Enhancing long-term smoking abstinence among individuals with a history of cervical intraepithelial neoplasia or cervical cancer (Project ACCESS): protocol for a randomized clinical trial**

*BMC Public Health* | 4 July 2023

*Jennifer I. Vidrine, Bethany Shorey Fennell, Vani N. Simmons, Steven K. Sutton, Sarah R. Jones, et al.*

The prevalence of smoking among cervical cancer survivors is high and evidence-based smoking cessation interventions are critically needed. This paper describes the study design, methods, and data analysis plans for a randomized clinical trial (RCT) designed to evaluate the efficacy of a novel, personally tailored SMS-delivered text-based digital treatment adjuvant designed to enhance the long-term efficacy of a “Motivation And Problem-Solving” (MAPS) approach for smoking cessation among individuals with a history of cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN) or cervical cancer.

### **Socioeconomic inequality in early sexual initiation among female youths in sub-Saharan African countries: a decomposition analysis**

*BMC Public Health* | 4 July 2023

*Elsa Awoke Fentie, Atitegeb Abera Kidie, Samrawit Mihret Fetene & Ever Siyoum Shewarega*

Youths are defined as individuals within the age group 15–24 years. It is the transitional stage from childhood to adulthood with biological, social, and psychological change, so it is a time of risk and opportunity for their future life. Early sexual initiation exposes young people to various social, economic, sexual, and reproductive health issues, such as unwanted adolescent pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, unsafe abortion, cervical cancer, and early marriages. Therefore, this study aimed to assess the presence of socioeconomic inequality in early sexual initiation and contributing factors in sub-Saharan African countries.

### **Trends Analysis of HIV Infection and Antiretroviral Treatment Outcome in Amhara Regional from 2015 to 2021, Northeast Ethiopia**

*Dove Press* | 4 July 2023

*Addisu T, Tilahun M, Wedajo S, Sharew B*

The persistent efforts of HIV/AIDS epidemiology remain one of the world’s most important community health threats. To avoid becoming an epidemic, UNAIDS has set three 90% fast-track targets for 2020, and Ethiopia has also changed its implementation since 2015. However, the achievement targets in the Amhara region have yet to be evaluated at the end of the programme period.

### **Pregnancy complications in last pregnancy and mothers’ long-term cardiovascular mortality: does the relation differ from that of complications in first pregnancy? A population-based study**

*BMC Women’s Health* | 4 July 2023

*Abdu Kedir Seid, Nils-Halvdan Morken, Kari Klungsøyr, Liv Grimstvedt Kvalvik, Linn Marie Sorbye, et al.*

Women who experience complications in first pregnancy are at increased risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) later in life. Little corresponding knowledge is available for complications in later pregnancies. Therefore, we assessed complications (preeclampsia, preterm birth, and offspring small for gestational age) in first and last pregnancies and the risk of long-term maternal CVD death, taking women’s complete reproduction into account.

### **Seasonal malaria chemoprevention in Africa and China’s upgraded role as a contributor: a scoping review**

*Infectious Diseases of Poverty* | 5 July 2023

*Ming Xu, Yun-Xuan Hu, Shen-Ning Lu, Muhammad Abdullahi Idris, Shu-Duo Zhou, et al.*

Children under five are the vulnerable population most at risk of being infected with Plasmodium parasites, especially in the Sahel region. Seasonal malaria chemoprevention (SMC) recommended by World Health Organization (WHO), has proven to be a highly effective intervention to prevent malaria. Given more deaths reported during the COVID-19 pandemic than in previous years due to the disruptions to essential medical services, it is, therefore, necessary to seek a more coordinated and integrated approach to increasing the pace, coverage and resilience of SMC. Towards this end, fully leverage the resources of major players in the global fight against malaria, such as China could accelerate the SMC process in Africa.

## **Motivations for pre-exposure prophylaxis uptake and decline in an HIV-hyperendemic setting: findings from a qualitative implementation study in Lesotho**

*AIDS Research and Therapy* | 6 July 2023

*Joy J. Chebet, Shannon A. McMahon, Tapiwa Tarumbiswa, Hlalele Hlalele, Chivimbiso Maonga, et al.*

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) has demonstrated clinical efficacy in preventing HIV infection, yet its uptake remains low. This study, conducted in five PrEP implementing districts in Lesotho, examined factors motivating persons at risk of HIV infection to adopt or reject PrEP when offered freely.

## **Lessons learned from community engagement regarding phylodynamic research with molecular HIV surveillance data**

*Journal of the International AIDS Society* | 6 July 2023

*Diana M. Tordoff, Brian Minalga, Alfredo Trejo, Alic Shook, Roxanne P. Kerani, et al.*

The widespread implementation of molecular HIV surveillance (MHS) has resulted in an increased discussion about the ethical, human rights and public health implications of MHS. We narrate our process of pausing our research that uses data collected through MHS in response to these growing concerns and summarize the key lessons we learned through conversations with community members.

## **Facilitating person-centred care: integrating an electronic client feedback tool into continuous quality improvement processes to deliver client-responsive HIV services in the Democratic Republic of Congo**

*Journal of the International AIDS Society* | 6 July 2023

*Cyprien Tendo-Bugondo, Osée Lieke, Pierre Kasongo, Baudouin Diur, Davina S. Canagasabay, et al.*

Engaging communities in the design, implementation and monitoring of health services is critical for delivering high-quality, person-centred services that keep people living with HIV engaged in care. The USAID-funded Integrated HIV/AIDS Project in Haut-Katanga (IHAP-HK) integrated an electronic client feedback tool into continuous quality improvement (CQI) processes. We aimed to demonstrate this system's impact on identifying and improving critical quality-of-care gaps.

## **Person-centred, integrated non-communicable disease and HIV decentralized drug distribution in Eswatini and South Africa: outcomes and challenges**

*Journal of the International AIDS Society* | 6 July 2023

*Deborah Goldstein, Nathan Ford, Nicholas Kisyeri, Maggie Munsamy, Lirica Nishimoto, et al.*

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are highly prevalent in people living with HIV above 50 years of age and account for increasing mortality. There is little published evidence supporting person-centred, integrated models of HIV care, hypertension and diabetes treatment in southern Africa, and no data demonstrating mortality reduction. Where clinical visits for NCDs and HIV cannot be combined, integrated medication delivery presents an opportunity to streamline care and reduce patient costs. We present experiences of integrated HIV and NCD medication delivery in Eswatini and South Africa, focusing on programme successes and implementation challenges. Programmatic data from Eswatini's Community Health Commodities Distribution (CHCD) from April 2020 to December 2021 and South Africa's Central Chronic Medicines Dispensing and Distribution (CCMDD) from January 2016 to December 2021 were provided by programme managers and are summarized here.

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## **RECENT PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS**

**Burden of disease attributable to unsafe drinking-water, sanitation and hygiene: 2019 update**

WHO | 28 June 2023

The report summarizes the estimates of the burden of disease attributable to unsafe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene for the year 2019 for four health outcomes - diarrhoea, acute respiratory infections, soil-transmitted helminthiasis, and undernutrition - which are included in the reporting of the Sustainable Development Goal indicator 3.9.2. The report includes estimates at global, regional and country level for 183 WHO Member States.

## **OPINION: With the right interventions we can help many more men start and stay on HIV treatment**

*Spotlight | 30 June 2023*

June is Men's Health Month and while the focus is mostly on men's attitudes about their health, it is also worth reflecting on the health sector's attitudes toward men. We hear many stereotypes about men and health, but how many of those are actually true? A few years ago representatives of The Mpilo Project spoke to more than 2 000 men in KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga to understand why many find it hard to engage with HIV testing and treatment. We uncovered several myths and misperceptions in the process.

## **Cholera: vaccines can stop the spread, but the biggest deterrent is clean water**

*Money Web | 2 July 2023*

South Africa has experienced outbreaks of cholera since January. The worst was in May in Hammanskraal, north of Pretoria, where nearly 30 people died. Cholera is a bacterial disease which spreads via the faecal-oral route mostly through ingestion of contaminated food and water. It causes severe diarrhoea and dehydration, and in extreme cases death. The source of the outbreak in Hammanskraal is still not known. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations for responding to a cholera outbreak include ensuring that communities have access to safe drinking water and sanitation, and treating sick people quickly.

## **WHO report flags concerning levels of unsafe water, poor access to sanitation, hygiene**

*News24 | 3 July 2023*

A World Health Organisation (WHO) study has found unsafe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene practices in South Africa were responsible for more than 7 000 deaths and more than 640 000 disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) in children under the age of five. This was revealed in the study titled - Burden of disease attributable to unsafe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene: 2019 update.

## **HEALTH STAFF SHORTAGES A MAJOR CONCERN FOR MPUMALANGA**

*Health-e News | 3 July 2023*

The Mpumalanga Department of Health is faced with a dire shortage of human resources, which include doctors, pharmacist assistants, professional nurses and other staff. The recently released Mpumalanga State of Health report by Ritshidze, a community monitoring organisation, indicates that human resource shortages within health facilities in the province have worsened over the past year.

## **COVID-19 digital contact tracing worked — heed the lessons for future pandemics**

*Nature | 3 July 2023*

The National Health Service launched a digital contact-tracing app for COVID-19 in England and Wales in September 2020. Credit: Simon Dawson/Bloomberg via Getty During the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, around 50 countries deployed digital contact tracing. When someone tested positive for SARS-CoV-2, anyone who had been in close proximity to that person (usually for 15 minutes or more) would be notified as long as both individuals had installed the contact-tracing app on their devices. Digital contact tracing received much media attention, and much criticism, in that first year. Many worried that the technology provided a way for governments and technology companies to have even more control over people's lives than they already do.

## **Raising awareness about Multiple Sclerosis (MS): Everything you need to know**

*IOL | 3 July 2023*

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a little-understood disease that has gained attention in recent years due to high-profile diagnosed cases like those of Hollywood stars Selma Blair and Christina Applegate. Mayo Clinic describes MS as a disease in which the immune system eats away at the protective covering of nerves, resulting in nerve damage that disrupts communication between the brain and the body.

## **Vaginal infections: beat thrush with probiotics for optimal vaginal health**

*IOL | 3 July 2023*

Vaginal infections might not be a topic that we openly discuss but they are more common than you might think. But what's most important is to take charge of our vaginal healthcare. Bacterial vaginosis (BV): It can cause unpleasant symptoms like strange discharge, itchiness, and a funky odour. Did you know that around 20-30% of South African women experience BV?

## **[WATCH] A tale of two systems: How public and private cancer services compare**

*Bhekisisa | 3 July 2023*

Portia Njangwini's elation, finding out she was pregnant, vanished when she heard that the lump in her left breast was cancer. Almost a year after finishing chemotherapy, she's still on the waiting list for radiation treatment at Charlotte Maxeke Academic Hospital in Johannesburg. But survivors who have private medical aid say it's not a guarantee for great treatment either. Our TV team takes you to two hospitals — one public and the other private — and shows you what it's like to battle breast cancer in the different health systems.

## **Face to face: "Fail your way to success", says Prof behind pioneering drug discovery group at UCT**

*Spotlight | 3 July 2023*

Inside Professor Kelly Chibale's office the bookshelves are packed with awards. On the walls, framed photographs include his class photo at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom, dated 1989. Chibale is a professor of organic chemistry and founder of the pioneering Holistic Drug Discovery and Development Centre – H3D – at the University of Cape Town. While many important clinical trials have been conducted by Africans in Africa, the kind of drug discovery work that Chibale is doing is rare on the continent.

## **Certain genetic mutations linked to treatment-resistant breast cancer, new study discovers**

*IOL | 3 July 2023*

A study performed by Sanford Burnham Prebys researchers discovered that specific genetic abnormalities are linked to treatment-resistant breast cancer in young women. These mutations do not appear to be associated with treatment-resistant breast cancer in older women.

## **Women's risk for chronic reflux can rise with hormone replacement therapy**

*UPI | 3 July 2023*

Some women take hormone replacement therapy to combat the hot flashes and night sweats that accompany menopause, but a new study review suggests hormone therapy may increase a woman's risk for developing heartburn.

## **Africa: Tuberculosis - A Disease of the Poor Begs for Rich Funding**

*AllAfrica | 3 July 2023*

The United Nations General Assembly is convening a high-level meeting on Tuberculosis (TB) to get a political commitment for increased funding for programmes and research to end an old disease that today

kills more people than AIDS and COVID. TB, an infectious disease caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis, kills 1.5 million people annually, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Despite being curable at a relatively low cost, TB has remained a health burden, especially in developing countries, because of a combination of poor diagnosis and treatment and inadequate funding for research in developing new vaccines.

## **SA, WE HAVE A PROBLEM: THE LINK BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE – AND WHAT CAN HELP**

*Health-e News | 4 July 2023*

South Africa has been fighting more than just the Covid pandemic for the past few years. The country has been trying to stem a rising tide of mental health issues and substance abuse. New research has found that more than a quarter of South Africans suffer from probable depression and anxiety – higher than other countries, including the US, Australia and Brazil – but that the majority are not receiving help or treatment.

## **How do alcohol and drugs affect young people's sexual behaviour?**

*Be In The Know | 4 July 2023*

There is limited evidence on the link between young people's sexual behaviour and their alcohol and drug use. A new study from Uganda has cast light on the issue.

## **Pandemic Financing: Losing on All Fronts?**

*Health policy watch | 4 July 2023*

With a drop in government spending on preparedness and woefully inadequate donor pledges, how can the ambitious new commitments envisioned for a WHO Pandemic Accord ever be financed? This second issue of Governing Pandemics Snapshot, looks at this conundrum and possible solutions, including creative forms of debt relief for low-income nations.

## **Migrants must be included in NHI, and retain basic healthcare access: activists**

*Times Live | 4 July 2023*

Migrant health experts have criticised the National Health Insurance Bill (NHI) in its current form, saying it is unconstitutional because it excludes asylum seekers and other migrants from a raft of basic services. In June the National Assembly approved a law meant to pave the way for the introduction of universal health insurance. The health financing system is designed to pool funds to provide access to quality affordable healthcare for all South Africans.

## **SA AIDS 2023: New treatments and guidelines to benefit kids, with more advances on the horizon**

*Spotlight | 4 July 2023*

Several sessions at the 11th SA AIDS conference, recently held in Durban, highlighted the worrying fact that key HIV numbers such as treatment coverage are much lower in children than in adults. There is hope, however, that new treatments and new treatment guidelines might help close the gap. In a plenary session, Dr Sandile Buthelezi, Director General of the National Department of Health, told delegates that on UNAIDS' 95-95-95 targets, children in South Africa are at 81-65-68. This means that 81% of children living with HIV have been diagnosed, 65% of those diagnosed are on antiretroviral treatment, and 68% of those on treatment are virally suppressed. For the South African population as a whole, the numbers are at 94-76-92.

## **Africa CDC Renews Its Commitment to Reduce Vaccine-Preventable Diseases and Outbreaks in Africa**

*AllAfrica | 4 July 2023*

The President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), H.E. Mr Felix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo,



alongside key health stakeholders and partners, hosted the third National Forum on immunization and polio eradication from 27 to 28 June 2023 in Kinshasa. The Africa CDC, under the leadership of Director General H.E. Dr Jean Kaseya, joined the government of DRC Congo in reviewing progress on the commitments made during the adoption of the Kinshasa Declaration for the immunization and eradication of poliomyelitis. The meeting provided the impetus for the continued commitment to results and accountability for implementing the Kinshasa Declaration and Mashako 2.0 plan.

## **Sharing U=U With Women**

*Poz | 5 July 2023*

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1.2 million Americans were living with HIV in 2019. Of those, 263,900 were women. Although new HIV diagnoses among women have been declining in recent years, nearly 7,000 women were newly diagnosed in 2019. A 2018 study found that 40% of women living with HIV had not been informed by their medical providers about Undetectable Equals Untransmittable (U=U), the fact that a person living with HIV on effective treatment with an undetectable viral load cannot transmit the virus sexually.

## **18 million doses of first-ever malaria vaccine allocated to 12 African countries for 2023–2025: Gavi, WHO and UNICEF**

*WHO | 5 July 2023*

- In response to high demand for the first-ever malaria vaccine, 12 countries in Africa will be allocated a total of 18 million doses of RTS,S/AS01 for the 2023–2025 period
- Malaria Vaccine Implementation Programme countries Ghana, Kenya and Malawi will receive doses to continue vaccinations in pilot areas
- Allocations were also made for new introductions in Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Niger, Sierra Leone and Uganda

## **Is Dolutegravir Alone Enough to Control HIV?**

*Poz | 5 July 2023*

The potent integrase inhibitor dolutegravir kept HIV suppressed when used as monotherapy in a small study of people who started treatment at the earliest stages of infection, according to a recent report in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. But experts caution that this approach is risky and could lead to the loss of viral control and the development of drug resistance if widely used.

## **UNAIDS uses simplistic gender norms to inform its HIV prevention guidelines**

*Aidsmap | 5 July 2023*

UNAIDS' HIV prevention guidelines rely on reductive gender stereotypes placing a burden on girls and women, according to Dr Catherine Merriman of Queen Mary University London and Dr Kevin Deane of the Open University. The researchers found an overwhelming absence of targeted and precise guidelines for engaging boys and men, while girls and women were categorised as victims. Across sub-Saharan Africa, adolescent girls and young women are disproportionately affected by HIV. While it is important to acknowledge the biological, social, cultural and economic factors that contribute to this, simplistic cultural and social framing will impede HIV prevention progress and feed into the infantilisation and degradation of African people.

## **Poorer adherence and higher HIV incidence among event-driven PrEP users in West African study**

*Aidsmap | 6 July 2023*

A West African PrEP cohort study, published in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, has found that men using event-driven PrEP had poorer adherence and a higher risk of acquiring HIV compared to those using daily PrEP. Men who acquired HIV during the study described major difficulties adhering to the event-driven regimen, particularly in relation to planning for sex and remembering to continue to take their PrEP for two days after having sex. The authors highlight that in the context of West Africa, men had fewer

opportunities for sex with male partners and sex could happen at a moment's notice, making it difficult to plan for. They argue that their findings indicate that men "should be informed, before choosing between event-driven and daily PrEP, of the specific adherence difficulties with the former regimen... Those who choose event-driven PrEP should then receive enhanced support to guarantee adequate adherence."

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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.

### THE OLIVER TAMBO FELLOWSHIP (OTFP) PROGRAMME: A POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN HEALTH LEADERSHIP

#### An Opportunity to Grow

- To HR components - This value-for-money health leadership programme directly relates to the manager's workplace within the health system. Acquired skills and competencies have been well-researched. Nominating people from the same team offers the possibility of greater impact, including across successive cohorts.
- To Line managers - Students develop capabilities to lead and to bring improvements in their workplaces. Nominate teams.
- To Health Care Workers and Health System Influencers - Invest in yourself to show up as a leader who lead with confidence.

## Why the OTFP?

- Affiliated to the internationally renowned University of Cape Town.
- Proudly bears the name of an exceptional African Leader.
- Nearly 30 years' experience of growing health leaders.
- Offers a unique perspective on leadership, rooted in systems thinking & policy analysis, tailored to the complex challenges of our health system.

## What Does the Programme Entail?

- Four sequenced and interrelated 6-day learning blocks, covering:
  - The complex nature of health systems and their challenges.
  - Leading everyday health system strengthening.
  - Engaging health system hard- and software resources for implementing improvement.
  - Sustaining workplace-based interventions for system improvement.
  - Mentorship during and after the course.
  - Direct engagement with senior health leaders, other experts with national and international insights, as well as peer leaders.

## What Will You Learn?

- Personal, relational, and technical competencies to lead across the system complexities.
- How to show up as a leader for your team and the wider system.

## Who Should Attend?

- Mid- and senior level leaders (managers and clinicians) in the public health sector.
- Mid- and senior level leaders in NGOs and the private sector with public value goals.
- Teams of leaders from the same setting.

## Fees and Registration

- The fees for 2024/25 intake is approximately R65 505, thus an average cost of R32 500 per year.
- Students arrange own travel and accommodation.
- Registration open until 9 December 2023.
- The course commences in February 2024.
- How to register? Apply online by clicking on [Application Link](#)

## Contact

- Contact Fahiemata.titus@uct.ac.za or the Program Convener at Maylene.shungking@uct.ac.za or visit us at <https://health.uct.ac.za/school-public-health>

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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.

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## CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

**The Public Health Association of South Africa (PHASA)** hosts an annual conference, with the aim of engaging public health practitioners from around the country, region and world to share their experiences and research, discuss topical public health issues, and mentor public health students and young researchers.

This year it will be from 10 – 13 September in Qheberha, Eastern Cape. The theme is, **Transforming Research Translation, Reimagining Public Health Evidence, Policies and Practice.**

The 2023 Public Health Association of South Africa's conference will provide an opportune setting for engaging with the most recent public health research and evidence, for rethinking current models of research translation, for identifying barriers and opportunities for change, and for exploring new strategies for knowledge exchange and dissemination.

Join fellow public health experts, academics, researchers, students, non-governmental organisations, and civil society members at this year's annual PHASA Conference; as we transform the ways we think about and approach priority areas of public health research, policy, and practice, to ultimately improve health outcomes for all.

### **World Congress of Epidemiology – WCE 2024 – 24 to 27 September 2024**

WCE is well-known for bringing epidemiologists and public health experts working in different sectors together in an atmosphere designed to promote dialogue, the interchange of ideas, and state-of-the-art scientific research. The theme of WCE2024 is “**Epidemiology and complexity: challenges and responses**” which will engage the full depth and breadth of methods and practice in contemporary epidemiology. The meeting will feature top-calibre invited speakers presenting plenary lectures, workshops and interactive sessions. The abstract-driven programme will include oral and poster presentations including theory and application from every sub-discipline of epidemiology. With more than 1000 delegates expected, WCE2024 promises to be a unique opportunity to share experiences and expertise – the opportunities to learn, grow and network within the field will be phenomenal.

This is the first time the congress will be hosted on the African continent and the Cape Town International Convention Centre provides a world-class venue for this meeting.

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## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

### **Communications Unit, Support Services: Layout Artist-Desktop Publisher**

Closing date: 12 July 2023 @ 16: 30

<https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Layout-ArtistDesktop-Publisher.aspx>

### **Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) unit: Genetic Counsellor – Pregnancy Exposure Registries (PER) project**

Closing date: 18 July @ 16:30

<https://www.hst.org.za/Pages/Genetic-Counsellor-%E2%80%92-PER-Project.aspx>

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