

COVID-19 and HIV: Weekly Digest

29 May 2020

The Children and AIDS Learning Collaborative’s COVID-19 and HIV digest compiles recent knowledge and updates related to the COVID-19 pandemic of interest to those working on HIV among children, adolescents, and pregnant women. The selections below represent views of the authors and do not reflect UNICEF positions.

COVID-19: IMPACT ON HIV AND HIV SERVICE DELIVERY

<p>HIV: Impact on mental health & quality of life in time of COVID-19 29 May 2020, <i>UNICEF</i></p> <p>From the recent survey of young key populations and young people living with HIV in Asia and the Pacific, UNICEF spotlights findings on the pandemic’s impact on mental health and quality of life, including access to mental health services and peer support.</p>	<p>“We are in this together”: Uganda Young Positives respond to COVID-19 25 May 2020, <i>UNAIDS</i></p> <p>Uganda Young Positives (UYP) is supporting peers living with HIV to access HIV treatment and care during the COVID-19 lockdown.</p> <p><i>See also, in Senegal: “When people are asked to isolate themselves, we also need to make sure...” (UNAIDS)</i></p>	<p>New COVID-19 Lockdown Study Shows Drop in Child Health Visits but Resilience of HIV Care Systems in Rural KZN 25 May 2020, <i>Africa Health Research Institute</i></p> <p>A new study in rural KwaZulu-Natal found that the COVID-19 lockdown affected access to child health services more than adult-focused services, including for HIV care.</p>	
<p>When Uganda Shuts down for COVID, Expert Clients Step up 22 May 2020, <i>EGPAF</i></p> <p>The Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation features the work of a frontline worker in Uganda who is supporting ‘expert clients’ to help deliver drugs during the lockdown.</p>	<p>Rwanda Changes Tack on HIV Amidst COVID-19 Outbreak 26 May 2020, <i>New Times</i></p> <p>To ensure people living with HIV are not left behind during the pandemic, Rwanda is focusing on multi-month prescriptions, community outreach and ensuring HIV commodities.</p>	<p>COVID-19 War Risks Poor HIV Patients’ Health 28 May 2020, <i>Business Daily Africa</i></p> <p>This report from Kenya highlights how people living with HIV are often also affected by poverty, which is exacerbated by the pandemic and increases barriers to HIV treatment.</p>	
<p>Lockdown Hero: One young man, his bike and a big heart 28 May 2020, <i>Frontline AIDS</i></p> <p>In Uganda, a young peer educator discusses how he is delivering HIV medicines during the lockdown.</p>	<p>Maintaining HIV Patients on Drugs Taking Toll on Healthcare Providers 26 May 2020, <i>Independent</i></p> <p>Providers in Uganda note challenges of sustaining HIV services, including travel restrictions, resource constraints and stigma.</p>	<p>COVID-19 Disrupts South Sudan Health Services 21 May 2020, <i>VOA News</i></p> <p>Officials in South Sudan note that the COVID-19 pandemic is disrupting access to health services, including for women and girls and people with HIV.</p>	<p>Coping with HIV in a Pandemic 24 May 2020, <i>The Star</i></p> <p>In Malaysia, COVID-19 has added another layer of anxiety to people living with HIV who are already facing stigma and discrimination.</p>

GLOBAL IMPACT OF COVID-19

<p>Africa Hit by Sustained Community Spread of Coronavirus 28 May 2020, <i>Reuters</i></p> <p>The head of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention said that community transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is growing in Africa, particularly in Ethiopia.</p>	<p>Sudan to Establish Police Force to Protect Health Workers 23 May 2020, <i>Associated Press</i></p> <p>In the context of increased attacks against health workers during the pandemic, Sudan will be creating a police force to protect health facilities and providers.</p>	<p>Study Tells ‘Remarkable Story’ about COVID-19’s Deadly Rampage through a South African Hospital 25 May 2020, <i>Science</i></p> <p>In KwaZulu-Natal, an analysis of the COVID-19 outbreak at a single hospital provides insights on how the virus spreads in a healthcare setting.</p>
<p>How Brazil’s COVID-19 response has fallen to community leaders 27 May 2020, <i>The New Humanitarian</i></p> <p>As cases rise in Brazil, community groups are training first responders, setting up quarantine centres and using telemedicine. <i>See also: WHO says the Americas are new COVID-19 epicenter...</i></p>	<p>Many Girls Won’t Go Back To School When Lockdown Is Over 27 May 2020, <i>Devex</i></p> <p>Past experiences have shown that many girls will not be reenrolled in schools after disruptions like those caused by the pandemic. Early marriages and gender-based violence are likely to increase.</p>	<p>Scientific Networks Are Helping African Countries to Access Coronavirus Lab Supplies 26 May 2020, <i>Nature</i></p> <p>This story on the role of research teams in acquiring supplies such as testing kits includes a discussion of how HIV research programmes contributed to the rollout of ART.</p>
<p>‘It’s Very, Very Different’: COVID-19 forces new era of development cooperation 26 May 2020, <i>Devex</i></p>	<p>As India’s Lockdown Ends, Exodus from Cities Risks Spreading COVID-19 Far And Wide 27 May 2020, <i>Science</i></p>	<p>‘No Masks, no Gloves’: Kenyan government under fire over quarantine centres 27 May 2020, <i>Reuters</i></p>

NGOs say COVID-19 provided an opportunity to increase international cooperation and streamline programmes, in order to respond to the urgent needs of the pandemic.	India's COVID-19 cases have been concentrated in a few states and cities but as people travel home, cases are likely to rise in rural areas.	People who were quarantined in government-run facilities in Kenya are reporting poor conditions and lack of protective gear.
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NOVEL CORONAVIRUS AND CHILDREN

New reports on the multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children related to SARS-CoV-2 infection include:

- [The Hunt to Understand COVID-19's Connection to Kawasaki Disease](#) (*Time*)
- [South Korea Examines First Suspected Cases of Syndrome in Kids Linked to COVID-19](#) (*Reuters*)

Doctors in the U.S. reported cases of the syndrome in young adults, including a 20-year-old in San Diego and several patients in their 20s in New York. A doctor told the *Washington Post* that the young adults had more “overwhelming symptoms” that involved the heart and multiple organs.

Last week, a study [suggested](#) that children with the multisystem inflammatory syndrome may develop acute cardiac decompensation. A new study published in *The Lancet Rheumatology* reports a case of COVID-19 in a child who rapidly developed acute respiratory distress without prior respiratory symptoms. For a study explanation, see:

- [Children with COVID-19 Presenting with Sudden Severe Lung Disease](#) (*News Medical*)

The CDC held a [webinar](#) on Tuesday where providers discussed treating multisystem inflammatory syndrome. Empirical treatment with immunomodulators worked quickly for some severe cases. For a summary of presentations, see:

- [Targeting Immune Responses in Kids' COVID-19 Inflammatory Disorder](#) (*MedPage Today*)

From Russia to South Africa to the Canadian town of Iqaluit, Associated Press reporters asked children about their experience with the COVID-19 pandemic; [Through Kid's Eyes: Virus outbreak brings sadness, fear, joy](#) (*AP*).

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

In the Battle against COVID-19, a Risk of 'Vaccine Nationalism'

27 May 2020, *NPR*

There is global competition for vaccine access even as development of a safe and effective candidate is only underway.

See also: Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, chair of the Board of Gavi, discusses the importance of ensuring equitable access to a viable COVID-19 vaccine ([Bloomberg radio](#)). AVAC CEO Mitchell Warren outlines the importance of looking at lessons from HIV vaccine development ([Devex](#)).

For updates on vaccine development, see:

- [\\$1.2 Billion from U.S. to AstraZeneca...](#) (*New York Times*)
- [COVID-19 Vax Safe... in Chinese Adults](#) (*MedPage Today*)
- [Merck Leaps into COVID-19 Vaccine Race...](#) (*STAT*)

Remdesivir Data from NIAID Trial Published

23 May 2020, *MedPage Today*

Peer-reviewed findings were [published in NEJM](#) late Friday from a key trial of remdesivir for COVID-19, adding to the press release from April. Hospitalized patients with COVID-19 who received remdesivir had a median recovery time of 11 days versus 15 days with placebo.

World Health Organization Pauses Study of Hydroxychloroquine in Global Trial

25 May 2020, *POLITICO*

Amid a review of safety data, the WHO paused the use of hydroxychloroquine in a global trial of COVID-19 treatments. The decision follows a [large observational study](#) that reported increased risk of heart problems and death. See also: [MedPage Today](#)

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

COVID-19 Threatens to Derail Fight Against HIV, TB and Malaria

27 May 2020, Global Fund

These abridged remarks from Global Fund's Peter Sands call for maintaining the focus on HIV, TB and malaria and ensuring global health security protects everyone, not just rich countries.

Winning the War Against Maternal and Child Deaths

21 May 2020, Project Syndicate

The WHO Director-General, UNICEF Executive Director, UNFPA Executive Director and Save the Children UK CEO highlight how the pandemic jeopardizes gains in maternal and child mortality.

See also: [A call to action from the Partnership of Maternal, Newborn and Child Health \(PMNCH\)](#)

Children are Being Sidelined by COVID-19

27 May 2020, *BMJ*

The authors stress that children's rights require special attention during COVID-19; children are especially vulnerable to determinants of health and to the systemic shocks to these determinants that the pandemic will bring.

A Virus-Hunter Falls Prey to a Virus He Underestimated

26 May 2020, *New York Times*

HIV researcher and Director of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine Peter Piot discusses his experience as a COVID-19 patient and links to his work on the HIV response. See also: [LSHTM Podcast](#)

How UNICEF Australia Is Providing Life-Saving Support to Children on the Front Lines of COVID-19

27 May 2020, Global Citizen

Global Citizen interviewed UNICEF Australia's Director of International Programs Felicity Wever about UNICEF's work during

Lockdown Fears for Key Populations

21 May 2020, *The Lancet HIV*

This editorial notes that access to HIV services during the pandemic and lockdowns is a significant issue for people living with HIV, especially key populations who are

Millions at Risk of Gender-Based Violence if COVID-19 Pandemic is Prolonged

26 May 2020, Council on Foreign Relations

UNFPA's Natalia Kanem stresses the risks women and girls face during the pandemic and in its aftermath, including more

A Reminder during COVID-19—Africa is Not a Monolith

27 May 2020, *Devex*

A single narrative is not helpful in understanding the course of COVID-19 in Africa. Countries have varying health systems, constraints and strengths

COVID-19 and its role in the global response.	disproportionately penalized by restrictions.	domestic violence and sexual exploitation.	as well as experience with past epidemics.
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AROUND THE UNITED NATIONS

- UNICEF and Save the Children launched a [technical note](#) on COVID-19 impacts on children in poor households.
- The WHO Foundation [was launched](#) on Wednesday; the new foundation will broaden the WHO's donor base.
- UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank and the World Food Programme released a [framework for reopening schools](#).
- The ILO [noted](#) that disruptions to the job market disproportionately affect young people, especially women.
- UN Secretary-General António Guterres [outlined](#) a unified global action needed in financing for development.

RECENT RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

Description of COVID-19 in HIV-infected Individuals: A single-centre, prospective cohort

28 May 2020, *The Lancet HIV*

The authors compared characteristics of 51 individuals living with HIV diagnosed with COVID-19 with a sample of people living with HIV before the pandemic in Madrid. Age and CD4 counts in both groups were similar; but most people with COVID-19 had at least one comorbidity.

Hospitalized Patients With COVID-19 and HIV: A case series

27 May 2020, *Clinical Infectious Diseases*

This correspondence reports characteristics of 18 people living with HIV hospitalized with COVID-19 in London. Compared to the general HIV outpatient cohort, those hospitalized with COVID-19 were more likely to be of black ethnicity and have lower median CD4 cell counts.

HIV and SARS-CoV-2 co-infection: A case report from Uganda

21 May 2020, *Journal of Medical Virology*

This letter presents characteristics of a COVID-19 patient living with HIV in Uganda. The author noted atypical clinical presentation, undetectable HIV viral load and the use of hydroxychloroquine and antibiotics.

Adapting to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Continuing HIV Prevention Services for Adolescents Through Telemonitoring, Brazil

21 May 2020, *AIDS and Behavior*

The authors describe telemonitoring strategies and other adaptations for the pandemic for a PrEP demonstration programme among adolescent key populations in Brazil.

"Everything Is a Mess": How COVID-19 is impacting engagement with HIV testing services in rural southwestern Uganda

25 May 2020, *AIDS and Behavior*

This authors conducted in-depth interviews about COVID-19's impact on HIV testing uptake. Travel restrictions prevented participants from accessing HIV testing and COVID-related stigma discouraged going to facilities.

Reimagining the Future of HIV Service Implementation in the Philippines Based on Lessons From COVID-19

25 May 2020, *AIDS and Behavior*

This note presents innovative approaches employed during COVID-19 that should be considered for future HIV services, including: online HIV services; interventions to improve supply and delivery of ART; and policy changes to facilitate ART uptake from multiple treatment hubs.

New resources for global, regional and country level practitioners working on HIV during the COVID-19 pandemic are presented below. To find additional documents and join the discussion, visit: www.childrenandaids.org/covid19

RESOURCES

COVID-19 and Paediatric HIV Programme Delivery

WEBINAR 28 May 2020

UNICEF's Children and AIDS Learning Collaborative presented scientific updates on SARS-CoV-2 and HIV, children and pregnant women, programmatic implications for HIV services and frontline voices.

See: [Voices from the Frontline](#) (PATA)

COVID-19 and HIV: Adapting community-based HIV services during a pandemic

WEBINAR 28 May 2020

This webinar from the International AIDS Society focused on pandemic-related adaptations of HIV services, including for key populations, young people and women.

Contact Tracing and Inflammatory Syndrome: COVID-19 update no. 27

22 May 2020

This update from WHO's EPI-WIN focuses on contact tracing guidance and provides a global update on the multisystem inflammatory syndrome seen in children related to COVID-19.

COVID-19 & HIV: Continuing services with and for marginalised people

WEBINAR 20 May 2020

Frontline AIDS partners from Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe discussed changing needs of marginalised people and adapting HIV interventions during COVID-19.

BHIVA, DAIG, EACS, GESIDA & Polish Scientific AIDS Society Statement on Risk of COVID-19 for People Living with HIV (PLWH)

25 May 2020

BHIVA and partners shared current evidence and guidance on COVID-19 and its impact on people with HIV.

WHO Q&A on HIV and Viral Hepatitis and COVID-19

UPDATED 22 May 2020

This Q&A is for national programmes and health workers to provide guidance to people affected by HIV and viral hepatitis and maintain continuity of services.

PEPFAR Technical Guidance in Context of COVID-19 Pandemic

UPDATED 22 May 2020

Updates can be found in sections on resuming activities after lockdowns, HIV drug delivery and clinical care, and supply chain for ARVs.

Supporting TB Preventive Therapy for Clients Accessing DSD

WEBINAR 26 May 2020

ICAP at Columbia University and DSD hosted a discussion on supporting TB preventive therapy to continue during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Films about Coronavirus (COVID-19)

VIDEOS

Picturing Health along with research organisations, UNICEF and NGOs produced films and messages on COVID-19 in Africa and South Asia.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 2 Jun 2020:** The ICAP and DSD series on differentiated service delivery and COVID-19 will continue with a webinar on policy and practice adaptations in Mozambique and DRC. *8am ET / 2pm SAST* >> [More](#)

To submit feedback or content for inclusion in our weekly digests, please email Rikke Le Kirkegaard at rlekirkegaard@unicef.org.