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

HIV: Impact on mental health & quality of life in time of COVID-19
29 May 2020, UNICEF

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.

"We are in this together": Uganda Young Positives respond to COVID-19
25 May 2020, UNAIDS

Uganda Young Positives (UYP) is supporting peers living with HIV to access HIV treatment and care during the COVID-19 lockdown. See also, in Senegal: “When people are asked to isolate themselves, we also need to make sure…” (UNAIDS)

When Uganda Shuts down for COVID, Expert Clients Step up
22 May 2020, EGPFAF

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.

Rwanda Changes Tack on HIV Amidst COVID-19 Outbreak
26 May 2020, New Times

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.

Lockdown Hero: One young man, his bike and a big heart
28 May 2020, Frontline AIDS

In Uganda, a young peer educator discusses how he is delivering HIV medicines during the lockdown.

Maintaining HIV Patients on Drugs Taking Toll on Healthcare Providers
26 May 2020, Independent

Providers in Uganda note challenges of sustaining HIV services, including travel restrictions, resource constraints and stigma.

COVID-19 Disrupts South Sudan Health Services
21 May 2020, VOA News

Officials in South Sudan note that the COVID-19 pandemic is disrupting access to health services, including for women and girls with HIV.

Coping with HIV in a Pandemic
24 May 2020, The Star

In Malaysia, COVID-19 has added another layer of anxiety to people living with HIV who are already facing stigma and discrimination.

GLOBAL IMPACT OF COVID-19

Africa Hit by Sustained Community Spread of Coronavirus
28 May 2020, Reuters

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.

Sudan to Establish Police Force to Protect Health Workers
23 May 2020, Associated Press

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.

Study Tells ‘Remarkable Story’ about COVID-19’s Deadly Rampage through a South African Hospital
25 May 2020, Science

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.

How Brazil’s COVID-19 response has fallen to community leaders
27 May 2020, The New Humanitarian

As cases rise in Brazil, community groups are training first responders, setting up quarantine centres and using telemedicine. See also: WHO says the Americas are new COVID-19 epicenter...

Many Girls Won’t Go Back To School When Lockdown Is Over
27 May 2020, Devex

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.

Scientific Networks Are Helping African Countries to Access Coronavirus Lab Supplies
26 May 2020, Nature

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.

'It’s Very, Very Different': COVID-19 forces new era of development cooperation
26 May 2020, Devex

As India’s Lockdown Ends, Exodus from Cities Risks Spreading COVID-19 Far And Wide
27 May 2020, Science

‘No Masks, no Gloves’: Kenyan government under fire over quarantine centres
27 May 2020, Reuters
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.

**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 Plot 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.

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.
- 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.

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.

“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.

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.

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. Bam ET / 2pm SAST >> More

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