

COVID-19 and HIV: Weekly Digest

19 June 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>Global Fund Survey: Majority of HIV, TB and Malaria Programs Face Disruptions as a Result of COVID-19 17 June 2020, <i>Global Fund</i></p> <p>Survey results of Global Fund-supported programs across 106 countries show widespread disruptions to HIV, TB and malaria service delivery due to COVID-19. Among HIV programs, 85 per cent reported disruptions.</p>	<p>Assessing the Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic Among Women and Girls Living with HIV in Asia and the Pacific 15 June 2020, <i>UNAIDS</i></p> <p>The International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS for Asia and the Pacific launched a survey to assess the impact of the pandemic among women and girls living with HIV in Asia and the Pacific.</p>	<p>New HIV Community Group in Guinea Fighting COVID-19 12 June 2020, <i>UNAIDS</i></p> <p>In Guinea, the recently-created National Platform of Civil Society Organizations on HIV and TB is playing a central role in the development of the Ministry of Health's contingency plan to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on health services, particularly HIV services.</p>
<p>HIV and TB Increase Death Risk from COVID-19, Study Finds—But Not by Much 15 June 2020, <i>Science</i></p> <p>According to preliminary data from the Western Cape, living with HIV or active TB increases the likelihood of dying from COVID-19. But neither HIV nor TB are “major” risk factors for COVID-19, noted public health expert Mary-Ann Davies. The analysis controlled for some but not all known COVID-19 risk factors like obesity, and smaller studies in other low-prevalence countries have not found a higher mortality risk for people living with HIV.</p>	<p>We Cannot Ignore Other Diseases like TB and HIV - Health Minister 12 June 2020, <i>IOL</i></p> <p>South African Health Minister Zweli Mkhize noted that as the country battles the pandemic, the healthcare system should not lag behind in addressing diseases such as TB and HIV. Minister Mkhize stressed the importance of long-lasting investments in the health system.</p>	<p>Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health and Quality of Life of Young Key Populations and Young People Living with HIV in Asia and the Pacific 12 June 2020, <i>UNAIDS</i></p> <p>The Interagency Task Team (IATT) on young key populations in Asia and the Pacific released a second set of findings from its survey assessing the needs of young key populations during COVID-19. Pandemic-related uncertainty is increasing levels of stress and anxiety among young key populations and impacting their mental well-being.</p>

GLOBAL IMPACT OF COVID-19

<p>Global Coronavirus Cases Reach over 8 Million as Outbreak Expands in Latin America 16 June 2020, <i>Reuters</i></p> <p>Global cases of the novel coronavirus reached over 8 million on Monday. Infections surged in Latin America and the US while China saw fresh outbreaks. The outbreak is growing fastest in Latin America, now 21 per cent of all cases.</p>	<p>Coronavirus Death Rate Is Higher for Those with Chronic Ills 16 June 2020, <i>AP</i></p> <p>According to a new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report, people with underlying conditions such as heart disease and diabetes were hospitalized six times as often and died twelve times as often as others without underlying conditions with COVID-19.</p>	<p>World Bank Has 'Stretched' Its Capacity in Coronavirus Response, Malpass Says 16 June 2020, <i>Devex</i></p> <p>World Bank President David Malpass noted, “we’ve stretched the capacity of the bank in the commitments that we’ve made”. The bank has currently deployed \$14 billion for emergency response in 100 countries and committed to mobilize \$160 billion in 15 months.</p>	<p>Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam... How Some Countries Kept COVID at Bay 14 June 2020, <i>The Guardian</i></p> <p>Experts say that by acting quickly and drawing on established systems from past epidemics, some countries in Southeast Asia avoided large outbreaks.</p>
<p>The Pandemic Claims New Victims: Prestigious Medical Journals 14 June 2020, <i>New York Times</i></p> <p>There is alarm that the rush for SARS-CoV-2 research is undermining peer review and threatening medical</p>	<p>LMICs Will Face 'Extreme Strain' on Health Systems Despite Younger Populations 12 June 2020, <i>Imperial College</i></p> <p>A new analysis suggests that the protective effects of young populations in low-</p>	<p>Slowing the Coronavirus Is Speeding the Spread of Other Diseases 14 June 2020, <i>New York Times</i></p> <p>After pandemic-related disruptions to immunization, diphtheria, cholera, poliovirus and measles is</p>	<p>Around 9% of Guinea-Bissau health workers have been infected with COVID-19 17 June 2020, <i>Reuters</i></p> <p>More than 170 of Guinea-Bissau's 2,000 health workers have new coronavirus</p>

journals' credibility. See also: Science will never be the same after COVID-19	and middle- income countries are offset by more strained health systems.	reappearing in many countries.	infections, according to the WHO.
African States Contribute \$61m to Africa CDC to Fight COVID-19 17 June 2020, <i>New Vision</i> African countries and the private sector contributed \$61 million for the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention to acquire commodities to tackle COVID-19.	Why Coronavirus Has Placed Millions More Girls at Risk of FGM 16 June 2020, <i>The Guardian</i> Due to pandemic-related disruptions, two million girls are at risk for female genital mutilation (FGM). School closures and economic fallouts are increasing risks of violence and FGM.	Maternal Health and COVID-19: The race to avert a long-term crisis 12 June 2020, <i>Devex</i> Organizations are working to ensure funding and continuity for sexual and reproductive health services. Concerted efforts are needed to ensure safe pregnancies during the pandemic.	African Countries Scramble to Ramp up Testing for COVID-19 16 June 2020, <i>Scientific American</i> Countries across Africa have united to secure 90 million test kits for the next six months. Still, they might not be enough for the region.

COVID-19 AND INEQUALITY

Race Gaps in COVID-19 Deaths Are Even Bigger Than They Appear 16 June 2020, <i>Brookings</i> New data from CDC show that the death rates among Black and Hispanic/Latino people are much higher than for white people in all age categories and differences are especially stark in middle age groups.	Racism and Social Inequality behind BAME COVID-19 Disparities 16 June 2020, <i>GP Online</i> A report from Public Health England notes that racism, socioeconomic inequalities and prevalence of obesity and diabetes contribute to the unequal impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and other minority groups.	Coronavirus Pandemic Exposes South Africa's 'Brutal Inequality' 16 June 2020, <i>Brookings</i> The pandemic in South Africa is hitting Black-majority townships hardest and exposing deep-seated inequality in the country. Townships in the Western Cape province have high rates of infection.	Inequality and Poverty Effects of the Lockdown in Europe 16 June 2020, <i>Vox EU</i> Workers who cannot telework were especially affected by enforced social distancing and lockdowns. An analysis shows that wage losses are uneven and inequalities within countries are worsening.
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NOVEL CORONAVIRUS AND CHILDREN

Discussions on the multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children related to SARS-CoV-2 include:

- [More Questions Than Answers About MIS-C, Experts Say](#) (*Medscape*, 16 June)
- [Characteristics, Cardiac involvement, and Outcomes of Multisystem Inflammatory Disease of Childhood Associated with SARS-CoV-2 Infection](#) (*The Journal of Pediatrics*, 13 June)

Gilead [announced](#) that it will soon start trials of remdesivir in children who have moderate-to-severe COVID-19. The phase 2/3 trial will test the drug in about 50 participants, from newborn to adolescents, in the US and Europe. The National Institutes of Health [is launching](#) an effort to evaluate COVID-19 drugs for infants, children and adolescents.

According to a new study published in [Nature](#), children and adolescents are only half as likely to get SARS-CoV-2 infections compared to people over the age of 20 years. The authors note that this suggests school closures may not be effective in reducing the impact of the pandemic ([The Washington Post](#)). Overall, experts agree that the evidence on the impact of the virus on children remains weak and more questions remain on their susceptibility ([STAT](#)).

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Updates on Vaccine Development

CoronaVac, a SARS-CoV-2 vaccine candidate from Sinovac Biotech in China, [showed](#) success in preliminary results of a Phase 2 clinical trial. The Phase 2 trial data indicate that the vaccine induced neutralizing antibodies in 90 per cent of participants after the second dose of the vaccine. The company also [announced](#) new Phase 3 clinical trials in Brazil.

Meanwhile, researchers at Imperial College London [began](#) its trials of a vaccine candidate. The European Commission presented a [new European strategy](#) to accelerate the development and deployment of COVID-19 vaccines.

Treatment Updates: Dexamethasone, Hydroxychloroquine, Remdesivir

Dexamethasone, an inexpensive and widely available medication, is the first drug to be shown to improve survival in COVID-19. In a randomized study, dexamethasone reduced deaths by one-third in ventilated patients. The topline interim results were shared by press release and researchers are working to publish details soon ([MedPage Today](#)). The WHO [noted](#) that it will coordinate a meta-analysis after results are shared and update clinical guidance.

After more evidence on the use of hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine for COVID-19, the US Food and Drug Administration [withdrew](#) emergency use authorizations for the two drugs. The WHO [halted](#) the hydroxychloroquine arm in its multi-country trial of treatments for COVID-19 after new studies showed no benefit.

As research continues, advocates warn that the lack of transparency in new drug agreements are a barrier to equitable access to proven treatments. Recently, Gilead made an agreement with generic pharmaceutical companies in Egypt, India and Pakistan to allow them to produce remdesivir and distribute it in 127 countries ([Devex](#)).

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

10 Lessons from HIV for the COVID-19 Response

12 June 2020, *Open Society Foundations*

We Need DSD Now More Than Ever: The frontier of human rights-centered services for HIV treatment & prevention

How African Nations Can Respond to the Challenges of Both COVID-19 and Future Pandemics

16 June 2020, *Forbes*

Director of the International Harm Reduction Development Program at the Open Society Foundations Daniel Wolfe outlines and describes lessons from HIV for the COVID-19 response.

12 June 2020, AVAC

AVAC urges the expansion of differentiated service delivery (DSD) models to ensure HIV services are continued during the pandemic.

Sierra Leone Vice President Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh and Seed Global Health's Vanessa Kerry discuss how African countries can use their COVID-19 responses to transform health systems.

AROUND THE UNITED NATIONS

- A new UN [report](#) highlights potential for a food crisis in Latin America and the Caribbean due to COVID-19.
- UNICEF [featured](#) its work in Pakistan to prevent COVID-19 among adolescents.
- According to a new [report](#) by the Overseas Development Institute and UNICEF, universal child benefits provided to children are important to mitigate the economic devastation of COVID-19.
- WHO [outlines](#) evidence and expert opinion on the impact of COVID-19 on older people.
- Karin Hulshof, UNICEF Regional Director East Asia and Pacific and Maalla M'jid, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children [urged](#) children to be centered in the COVID-19 response.

RECENT RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

Addressing Health Inequities Exacerbated by COVID-19 Among Youth With HIV: Expanding Our Toolkit

8 June 2020, *Journal of Adolescent Health*

The Johns Hopkins Intensive Primary Care clinic in Baltimore, Maryland describe the approaches taken by its HIV care programme to address the inequities faced by young people living with HIV from marginalized communities that is worsened by the pandemic.

SARS-CoV-2 Infection in a Highly Experienced Person Living With HIV

1 July 2020, *AIDS*

This correspondence from Rome describes the case of a 75-year-old male individual living with HIV for 23 years who was hospitalized with COVID-19 symptoms.

Global, Regional, and National Estimates of the Population at Increased Risk of Severe COVID-19 due to Underlying Health Conditions in 2020: A modelling study

15 June 2020, *The Lancet Global Health*

This modeling study suggests that roughly 1.7 billion people are at increased risk of severe COVID-19 due to at least one underlying condition. The estimate excluded other risk factors like ethnicity, poverty and obesity.

COVID-19 in 3 People Living with HIV in the United Kingdom

15 June 2020, *Journal of Medical Virology*

This correspondence reports clinical characteristics of three people living with HIV admitted to a hospital in the UK with severe COVID-19 symptoms.

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 the World of Work: A focus on people living with HIV

8 June 2020

ILO released a brief describing the impact of the pandemic on people living with HIV and makes recommendations for a COVID-19 response in the world of work that is inclusive of people living with HIV.

Dual Pandemics: Global youth perspectives on fighting HIV & COVID-19

WEBINAR 17 June 2020

The Edward M. Kennedy Institute and EGPAF hosted a conversation with youth leaders from Africa and US to discuss young people's experiences with HIV and COVID-19.

Modeling of COVID-19 and Other Infectious Diseases

WEBINAR 17 June 2020

ICAP, Treatment Action Group and the COVID-19 Working Group – New York hosted a webinar on modelling COVID-19 and infectious diseases.

Six Concrete Measures to Support Women and Girls in All Their Diversity in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic

15 June 2020

UNAIDS released a report outlining six areas to address the needs, and protect the rights, of women and girls during the pandemic.

COVID-19 Impact on HIV Services & Procurement in Asia-Pacific

WEBINAR 10 June 2020

The Positive Indonesia Network and Global Fund Advocates Network Asia-Pacific co-hosted a webinar on the impact of pandemic-related restrictions on HIV services and procurement in Asia and the Pacific.

aidsmapWOMEN: Emotional well-being/COVID-19 special

VIDEO 16 June 2020

NAM began a three-part video series for women living with HIV. This first episode discusses emotional wellbeing and COVID-19.

Continuity of Care for persons with HIV and NCDs during COVID-19 Learning from Chronic Care Model

WEBINAR 13 June 2020

The Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS and PAHO highlighted recommendations to ensure continuity of care for people with living with HIV during COVID-19.

Where Are We Now? Policy and Practice Updates from Côte d'Ivoire and Perspectives from Global Stakeholders

WEBINAR 16 June 2020

ICAP at Columbia University and DSD hosted a webinar with country updates from Cote d'Ivoire and a panel of global perspectives.

HIV & COVID-19 – What do we know so far?

PODCAST 4 June 2020

The Sexually Transmitted Infections journal hosted a discussion on information for clinicians and patients about HIV and COVID-19.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **23 Jun 2020:** The final webinar in the series from ICAP at Columbia University and DSD will discuss global perspectives and feature breakout sessions. *8am ET | 2pm SAST* >> [More](#)
- **23 Jun 2020:** Imperial College London and Positively UK invites people living with, affected by, or working in HIV to contribute to discussions on COVID-19 research in the UK. *12pm ET | 6pm SAST* >> [More](#)
- **29 Jun 2020:** UNICEF's Children and AIDS Learning Collaborative presents a third webinar on what paediatric HIV programmes need to know about COVID-19. *9am ET | 3pm SAST* >> [More](#)

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