COVID-19 and HIV: Weekly Digest  
10 July 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.


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<th>UNAIDS Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic Shows that 2020 Targets Will Not Be Met Because of Deeply Unequal Success; COVID-19 Risks Blowing HIV Progress Off Course</th>
<th>London Study Shows People with HIV Not at Greater Risk of Severe COVID-19 Illness</th>
<th>Efforts to Beat the Coronavirus Pandemic Could Cause Over 1 Million Extra Deaths from Other Diseases, Experts Warn</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 July 2020, UNAIDS</td>
<td>4 July 2020, aidsmap</td>
<td>6 July 2020, CNN</td>
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<td>The AIDS 2020 report by UNAIDS outlines progress on global HIV targets but notes that achievements have not been made equally within and between countries. The report also warns that severe disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic can set back progress on HIV targets by ten years or more. <strong>See also:</strong> &quot;AIDS report: Kids are lagging and COVID-19 is harming care&quot; (AP)</td>
<td>According to a study from London, people with HIV did not suffer worse outcomes after being hospitalized with COVID-19. The researchers noted that after controlling for age and other confounding factors, people with HIV experienced more rapid improvement than matched patients without HIV. <strong>See also:</strong> &quot;HIV may not worsen COVID-19 outlook&quot; (Study from US); &quot;HIV raises the risk of death from COVID-19 in South Africa’s Western Cape&quot; (Study from South Africa)</td>
<td>According to a new report by the International AIDS Society, economic shifts and disruptions to health services caused by the COVID-19 pandemic could derail progress made in HIV across the world. Recent models from the WHO, Stop TB Partnership and Imperial College London predicted an extra 1 million deaths from HIV, TB and malaria due to these disruptions.</td>
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### COVID-19: IMPACT ON HIV AND HIV SERVICE DELIVERY

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<td>6 July 2020, Healio</td>
<td>6 July 2020, WHO</td>
<td>9 July 2020, aidsmap</td>
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<td>The article summarizes four sessions on the impact of COVID-19 on HIV. This includes the pandemic’s effects on PrEP services, increasing the vulnerability of certain populations, access to HIV medicines and inequities seen in both epidemiologies. <strong>See also:</strong> COVID-19 forces biggest HIV conference to go virtual… (TimesLIVE)</td>
<td>In a survey by the WHO, seventy-three countries warned that they are at risk of stock-outs of antiretroviral medicines due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Twenty-four of these countries specifically reported having either a critically low stock of ARVs or disruptions in the supply of these life-saving medicines.</td>
<td>Several studies highlighted the impact of COVID-19 on PrEP use, sexual activity and number of partners among men who have sex with men in the US and Australia. Notably, among survey respondents in Australia who stopped using PrEP, 86 per cent noted COVID-19 as one of the reasons.</td>
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### Coronavirus: ‘Brilliant’ opportunity to combat HIV as demand for home tests rises during lockdown

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<th>Coronavirus: ‘Brilliant’ opportunity to combat HIV as demand for home tests rises during lockdown</th>
<th>Unlocking HIV/AIDS Financing during COVID-19</th>
<th>Support for Uzbek Mothers Living with HIV</th>
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<td>5 July 2020, Sky News</td>
<td>6 July 2020, Devex</td>
<td>8 July 2020, UNAIDS</td>
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<td>The number of free HIV self-testing kits issued in London was 20 per cent higher during the first eight weeks of the COVID-19 lockdown than the same period last year. In some parts of London, demand for home testing kits increased by over 70 per cent.</td>
<td>The COVID-19 pandemic is straining country budgets and raising concerns for HIV/AIDS financing, especially for low-income countries that are reliant on foreign aid for their HIV response. Total aid volume is expected to decrease.</td>
<td>In Uzbekistan, maternal health care providers and HIV care providers are working to ensure more protections for mothers and their babies during the COVID-19 pandemic. UNAIDS and UNFPA have donated personal protective equipment to maternal hospitals.</td>
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### GLOBAL IMPACT OF COVID-19

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<th>How Different Countries Have Handled COVID-19, Ranked</th>
<th>COVID-19 Pandemic in Africa Is Now Reaching ‘Full Speed’</th>
<th>Coronavirus: Spanish study casts doubt on herd immunity feasibility</th>
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<td>7 July 2020, UN Dispatch</td>
<td>9 July 2020, AP</td>
<td>7 July 2020, BBC</td>
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<td>A new report, published by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, ranked countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-</td>
<td>Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed over 522,000 cases on the continent with South Africa making up over 224,000</td>
<td>A large study recently published in The Lancet found that only 5 per cent of the population in Spain developed antibodies to the novel coronavirus.</td>
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operation and Development (OECD) on how well they contained COVID-19 and minimized economic damage. It placed South Korea as the most effective and the UK as the least. The results raise questions about the feasibility of reaching herd immunity.

**COVID-19 AND INEQUALITY**

Coronavirus Lockdowns Increasing HIV Risk to Women and Girls 6 July 2020, Thomson Reuters Foundation

UNAIDS highlighted how lockdowns are increasing the risk of HIV infections among women and girls globally. COVID-19 lockdowns affect education, protection from sexual violence and access to medical care.

Study of 17 Million Identifies Crucial Risk Factors for Coronavirus Deaths 8 June 2020, New York Times

In a new study in Nature, analysis of more than 17 million people in England identified older people, men, racial and ethnic minorities as well as those with underlying health conditions as being more vulnerable to COVID-19.

In France, Study Shows Virus Hit African Immigrants Hardest 8 June 2020, AP

According to a study by NSEE, the French government’s statistics agency, death rates among immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa doubled in France and tripled in the Paris region during the peak of the pandemic in the area.

**NOVEL CORONAVIRUS AND CHILDREN**

Recent publications on the multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children related to SARS-CoV-2 infections include a small case series from London describing brain damage associated with the syndrome (summary) and an analysis of the systemic inflammation and antibody responses seen (summary). See:

- Neurologic and radiographic findings associated with COVID-19 infection in children (1 July, JAMA Neurology)
- Mapping Systemic Inflammation and Antibody Responses in Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (4 July, pre-print)

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved an investigational allogenic mesenchymal stem cell product for the paediatric multisystem inflammatory syndrome. Children aged between 2 months and 17 years may receive one or two compassionate use doses of a stem cell therapy.

Science described considerations for policies and programmes on reopening schools across the world. All schools in Kenya will remain closed until January 2021. The government had been providing school programmes on the radio, television and online since March but as in other countries, access to these resources remain uneven.

According to a report by World Vision, millions more children around the world are being forced into begging and experiencing hunger due to the pandemic. Meanwhile, an analysis in the Canadian Medical Association Journal notes that indirect effects of the pandemic on children will have long-term consequences. This includes delayed medical care and mental trauma. See also: “Children could be facing long-term health effects indirectly linked to COVID-19”

**RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

Updates on Vaccine Development

The South African Medical Research Council’s Professor Jeffrey Mphahlele discusses the features and challenges of the first COVID-19 vaccine trial in the country. In the UK, Imperial College’s Professor Robin Shattock discusses the experimental RNA vaccine candidate with ‘cautious optimism.’ A recent survey in the study suggests that nearly one in six British adults would refuse the COVID-19 vaccine after it becomes available.

The US National Institutes of Health established a new clinical trials network that will enroll thousands of volunteers in clinical trials for COVID-19 vaccines and monoclonal antibodies. The US government also committed $2 billion to Novavax Inc. and Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc. for vaccine development and manufacturing treatment.

Meanwhile, POLITICO featured the dangers of international competition to develop a novel coronavirus vaccine and the WHO published landscape documents of COVID-19 vaccine candidates.

Treatment Updates: Hydroxychloroquine, Lopinavir-Ritonavir, Remdesivir

The WHO said on Saturday that it was discontinuing trials of hydroxychloroquine and combination HIV drug lopinavir/ritonavir for patients hospitalized with COVID-19 based on results showing a failure to reduce mortality. A study from China published in the Journal of Medical Virology indicated that the use of lopinavir/ritonavir is associated with pneumonia resolution for patients with COVID-19.

The European Commission allowed authorization for remdesivir to treat COVID-19. A case report from The Hague highlighted concerns on liver toxicity linked to remdesivir.

South Africa will be looking at African herbs and formulations for treating COVID-19, particularly through the work of the newly-established Natural Indigenous Products Fund.
We Can’t End AIDS Without Fighting Racism
9 July 2020, The Atlantic
Elton John writes about racial disparities seen in the HIV epidemic as well as during the COVID-19 pandemic, and urges a stronger focus on addressing racism and inequality.

Reckoning with Mortality: Global health, HIV, and the politics of data
3 July 2020, The Lancet
The authors describe the politics of data, such as the type of data collected, for what use and by whom. A lesson from HIV is that to reduce mortality, a more robust approach to tracking is needed.

Opinion: Ensuring services for people with advanced HIV disease — more important than ever
3 July 2020, Devex
Patients with advanced HIV disease are more likely to be affected by pandemic-related HIV service delivery disruptions. In addition, because HIV testing services have been affected, new HIV diagnoses are delayed and risks of developing advanced HIV disease are increasing.

Women are most affected by pandemics — lessons from past outbreaks
8 July 2020, Nature
The authors note that, like during the Ebola and Zika outbreaks, the social and economic impacts of COVID-19 will impact women harder than men. Women’s socio-economic security is being challenged across the world, and governments need to take action.

How the coronavirus pandemic impacts HIV patients
8 July 2020, DW
In a video interview, an expert HIV researcher discusses the pandemic’s impact on the supply chain of antiretroviral medicines for HIV.

The forgotten pandemic—the fight against HIV continues
8 July 2020, The Economist
In a segment of the Economist Radio, the Director of HIV programmes at WHO outlines the impact of COVID-19 on access to HIV medications.

HIV and SARS-CoV-2 Co-Infection: A retrospective, record based, case series from South India
7 July 2020, Journal of Medical Virology
In this letter from Tamil Nadu, India, the authors describe characteristics of six people living with HIV with SARS-CoV-2 co-infection. All patients were hospitalized but did not have coronavirus-related complications and were discharged after recovery.

Multimonth Dispensing of Antiretroviral Therapy for HIV
1 July 2020, The Lancet HIV
This letter discusses the implementation of multimonth dispensing of ART for HIV. While these recommendations were made earlier, reducing the number of refills has been especially relevant in the context of COVID-19.

Attendance to HIV Antiretroviral Collection Clinic Appointments During COVID-19 Lockdown. A Single center study in Kigali, Rwanda
25 June 2020, AIDS and Behavior
This single center study examined attendance at clinic appointments for collecting ART during the lockdown in Kigali, Rwanda. Factors associated with attendance included place of residence and WHO clinical stage.

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.childrenandaidst.org/COVID19

Start Free Stay Free AIDS Free - 2020 report
7 July 2020
This report from UNAIDS shows that while much progress has been made on global HIV targets, progress on eliminating new infections and preventing AIDS-related deaths among children is lagging.

Children, HIV and AIDS: How will progress be impacted by COVID-19?
July 2020
UNICEF notes that while recent data shows that the gap in HIV service delivery for pregnant women and children have been steadily closing, pandemic-related service disruptions threaten to reverse this progress.

COVID-19 and HIV: A tale of two pandemics
6 July 2020
This report from the International AIDS Society outlines how COVID-19 disrupts the HIV response and makes recommendations for policy makers, healthcare providers, researchers, communities and funders.

AIDS 2020: Virtual DAILY - Episode One ft. Dr Anthony Fauci & Community Members
6 July 2020
During AIDS2020: Virtual, daily videos feature HIV science and community leaders. In this episode, NIAID’s Anthony Fauci discusses the impact of COVID-19 on HIV research and care.

COVID-19 2020
This global AIDS meeting, the Woodstock of science gatherings, goes virtual amid COVID-19
2 July 2020, Science
In this interview, infectious disease physician António Poźniak discusses AIDS2020: Virtual, the impact of COVID-19 on HIV science and the focus of the conference.

Disease and the disorder in the COVID-19 crisis
6 July 2020, Mail and Guardian
The commentary discusses narratives that shame and stigmatize those affected by a disease. These serve to further historical inequities and prevent equitable access to health care. These narratives seen during the HIV epidemic and its response are again emerging as a feature of the COVID-19 pandemic.

HIV, COVID-19 and the importance of public health
8 July 2020, The Hill
An infectious disease physician writes about the need to have a strong public health system to maintain HIV testing and treatment services.

Take as Directed / Coronavirus Crisis Update
May-July 2020
The CSIS Global Health Policy Center highlights global perspectives and analysis on COVID-19, including a discussion on South Africa’s COVID-19 response and its impact on those living with HIV.