

COVID-19 and HIV: AIDS 2020 Special Digest

23 July 2020

This special issue of the Children and AIDS Learning Collaborative's COVID-19 and HIV digest presents updates from recent conferences related to COVID-19 and HIV among children, adolescents, and pregnant women.

Hosted by the International AIDS Society, the **Virtual COVID-19 Conference** took place on 10 July as part of the *23rd International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2020: Virtual)*.

All session recordings are available on the [International AIDS Society's YouTube](#). Presentations and abstracts are also available on covid19.aids2020.org.

Presented below are selected abstracts on COVID-19 among children, adolescents and pregnant women.



AN IAS VIRTUAL CONFERENCE | 10 - 11 JULY

Discussions on COVID-19 and HIV

Special Session: [Making sense of the science](#)

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) Director Anthony Fauci, Director of Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA) Salim Abdool Karim and US Global AIDS Coordinator Deborah Birx discussed scientific developments since SARS-CoV-2 emerged with a reflection on other infectious diseases. Ambassador Birx noted that like for HIV, there are specific vulnerable groups by race, ethnicity or socioeconomic status for COVID-19; as a lesson from the HIV response, tailored messaging and a targeted approach should be used to increase access to testing and care. Professor Karim noted South Africa's investment in setting up community groups for COVID-19 to lead a community-based response, a learning from the country's experience with HIV.

Video: [Preparing for tomorrow](#)

Co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Bill Gates noted that investments currently made in COVID-19 vaccine development, diagnostic tools and libraries of antiviral drugs will also be useful for HIV. The global community displayed a model of collaborating and building a distribution system for HIV drugs and innovations, including through the Global Fund; this is the model of collaboration that COVID-19 tools should follow to ensure equitable distribution.

Session 3: [Country policies and practices: Different pathways and similar intentions](#)

In the plenary speech for this session, Director of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Peter Piot discussed lessons learned from the fight against other infectious diseases like HIV for COVID-19. HIV has shown us that behaviour change is possible but difficult to sustain; political leadership and an enabling environment is key to creating this change. Another lesson is the need for combination prevention; even with a COVID-19 vaccine, certain control measures should be continued. A good response requires good national and global leadership. In addition, context and local action should be prioritized; this includes gathering more ground-level data for decision-making and building trust at the community level. Human rights should not be ignored in policies. Lastly, we need to be thinking about epidemic preparedness and ensuring space for activism, which in turn will facilitate a long-term response.

Oral abstract sessions on HIV, children, adolescents, and pregnant women

[In-Utero Mother-to-Child SARS-Cov-2 Transmission - Viral Detection and Fetal Immune Response](#)

Claudio Fenizia, University of Milan

The researchers analyzed antibody and inflammatory responses in the placenta and plasma of 31 pregnant women who tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 and their babies. Two newborns tested positive for the virus and in both cases, placenta specimens were also positive. According to the presentation, this preliminary study suggests that vertical transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is possible.

[Declining Trends in Maternal and Child Health Service Use Show that COVID-19 May Be Affecting Essential Health Services in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala](#)

Cara Endyke-Doran, Management Sciences for Health

The study examined COVID-19's impact on key maternal and child health service use in Quetzaltenango,

[Evidence of a Significant Secretary-Iga-Dominant SARS-Cov-2 Immune Response in Human Milk Following Recovery from COVID-19](#)

Rebecca Powell, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

The study explored the potential for antibodies in breast milk to be purified and used as a therapeutic. Samples from 15 women with previous SARS-CoV-2 infections showed a strong antibody immune response in breast milk after infection. The study author noted that the results point toward conducting further analysis with a larger sample on potential therapeutic characteristics.

[Policy and Practice Of ARV Multi-Month Dispensing in PEPFAR Supported Countries](#)

Meaghan O'Keefe Douglas, USAID

While PEPFAR has been recommending 3-month and 6-month multi-month dispensing of ART since before the pandemic, rollout has been varied. In the context of

Guatemala. There was a 21 per cent drop and a 29 per cent drop in at least one ANC visit in March and April 2020 compared to the months in 2019. Vaccine coverage was 7 per cent lower in 2020 than in the 2019 period. While there are limitations due to COVID-19 restrictions also affecting data collection, the declining trends suggest that the pandemic impacts maternal and child health.

COVID-19, PEPFAR is promoting the acceleration of multi-month dispensing practices to mitigate ART interruptions. In this review, all 37 countries allow multi-month dispensing but some have barriers or restrictions for 6-month dispensing. The presentation recommended policy changes to improve rollout and support for dispensing ART outside of clinical visits, especially for children.

ePosters on HIV, children, adolescents and pregnant women

Compassionate Use of Remdesivir in Children with Severe COVID-19

Kathleen Chiotos, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

The study included 77 children with severe COVID-19 who received remdesivir for a maximum of 10 days. The efficacy and safety of remdesivir is not known in children though it has shown promise in adults. Of children in this study, 50 per cent received mechanical ventilation. While there was no control group, the authors reported clinical recovery in 80 per cent of children on ventilators and in 87 per cent of those without invasive oxygen support.

#StaySafe: New possibilities and psychological support for teenagers and youth in the COVID-19 pandemic

Yana Panfilova, Teenergizer

Peer support movement Teenergizer presented lessons learned from its #StaySafe campaign, which covered five countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The campaign, which included trainings and messaging on mental health, sexual health and HIV/AIDS, found that young people often need more support than adults to cope with isolation and social distancing. Young people need access to professional and peer support.

Compassionate Use of Remdesivir in Pregnant Women with Severe COVID-19

Richard Burwick, Cedars Sinai

In this study of pregnant or postpartum women, 86 women with severe COVID-19 received a 10-day course of remdesivir. Eighteen of 19 postpartum women and 27 out of the 67 pregnant women needed ventilators. All patients recovered and were extubated. There was no control group for comparison.

Evidence and Recommendations for Women with COVID-19 who Desire to Breastfeed: A narrative review of the literature

Naiá Ortelan, Instituto Gonçalo Moniz, Fundação Os

This review of literature on SARS-CoV-2 and breastfeeding notes areas for policymakers and providers to support breastfeeding during the pandemic. Current evidence suggest that the benefits of breastfeeding outweigh any risk of transmission.

Social, Domestic Violence and Mental Health Impacts of the COVID-19 Lockdown on Pregnant Women in Cape Town, South Africa

Zulfa Abrahams, University of Cape Town

The study explored food insecurity, violence and mental health disorders experienced by pregnant women during South Africa's lockdown period. Perinatal women interviewed in this study experienced increased levels of distress.



The **23rd International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2020: Virtual)** took place online on 6–10 July 2020.

A summary of the latest research and updates on children, adolescents and pregnant women shared at the conference can be found in the Children and AIDS Learning Collaborative's upcoming newsletter on *AIDS 2020: Virtual*.

Presented below are selections from the conference on the COVID-19 pandemic, and the impact on people living with and at risk for HIV.

Discussions on COVID-19 and HIV

Plenary: [Fighting HIV in the Shadow of COVID-19](#)

The Executive Director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Peter Sands noted that “COVID-19 is derailing the fight against HIV in multiple ways”. He highlighted how COVID-19 has disrupted HIV prevention, testing and treatment programmes as well as how health partners and communities are developing new solutions to unite to fight against HIV.

Satellite Sessions

Some session content will be made available on the [AIDS 2020 website](#) on 27 July. Sessions on COVID-19 include:

- Differentiated service delivery in 2020 – Responding to the needs of people living with HIV before, during and after COVID-19 (IAS)
- COVID-19 mitigation approaches for HIV, tuberculosis, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections (WHO)
- Optimized diagnostic networks key to responding the COVID 19 – Doing more with less (ASLM, CHAI, UNICEF, Unitaid)
- HIV, COVID-19 and Global Health at an Inflection Point: Going Forward in Partnership (Global Fund)

New Global Publications

As shared in the COVID-19 and HIV: Weekly Digest 12 (10 July), the International AIDS Society released a new report ([COVID-19 and HIV: A Tale of Two Pandemics](#)) highlighting how COVID-19 could derail progress made in HIV and providing recommendations for policies and programmes; UNAIDS specifically spotlighted how the pandemic could affect HIV treatment in low- and middle-income countries in its 2020 HIV estimates progress report ([Seizing the Moment: Tackling entrenched inequalities to end epidemics](#)); the WHO released results from its [new survey](#) that warned of significant disruptions to HIV treatment availability due to COVID-19; UNICEF shared [recommendations](#) for preventing widening inequalities related to COVID-19 and children living with HIV.

Video Interviews

In an [Opening Series conversation](#) (7 July), the Founder and Chairman of the Elton John AIDS Foundation Sir Elton John and David Furnish discussed stigma and marginalized communities, and the context of COVID-19.

In an [AIDS2020: Virtual DAILY episode](#) (6 July), NIAID's Anthony Fauci discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on HIV research and care. Also in [AIDS 2020: Virtual DAILY](#) (9 July), MTV Shuga's leadership and cast discussed behavioural change campaigns, public health messaging during COVID-19 and the impact of lockdowns.

In [aidsmapLIVE – AIDS 2020 special](#) (9 July), HIV experts discussed whether people living with HIV are at greater risk from COVID-19 as well as the impact of the pandemic on HIV services.

Presentations and Posters on COVID-19 and HIV

Clinical Outcomes by HIV Serostatus, CD4 Count, and Viral Suppression among People Hospitalized with COVID-19 in the Bronx, New York

Abstract OABLB0102

Patel et al. presented a study comparing 100 COVID-19 patients living with HIV and 4513 patients without HIV in New York City. It found no differences in length of hospital stay or mortality. CD4 count was not associated with length of stay or mortality but was associated with risks of intubation. Overall, people living with HIV had a higher risk of intubation; however, no one with a detectable viral load got intubated or died at the hospital.

See: [‘Same COVID Mortality With/Without HIV at NY Center--More Intubations With HIV’](#) (NATAP)

Rapid Adaptation of HIV Differentiated Service Delivery Program Design in Response to COVID-19: Results from 14 countries in sub-Saharan Africa

Abstract LBPEE44

The HIV Coverage, Quality, and Impact Network (CQUIN) outlined the experience of 14 African countries on differentiated service delivery (DSD) for HIV. In response to the pandemic, all countries made substantive changes to their DSD programmes. Ten countries expanded eligibility for multi-month dispensing.

See: [‘COVID-19 pandemic has speeded up the implementation of multi-month dispensing’](#) (aidsmap)

Immunologic Characteristics of Acute COVID-19 in People with HIV

Abstract OABLB0104

Another study from New York City from Ho H et al. examined characteristics of 93 people living with HIV hospitalized for COVID-19. People living with HIV had higher levels of inflammation. Those with HIV who died of COVID-19 had lower total lymphocyte levels compared to those with better outcomes but there were no differences in mortality by CD4 counts, age, sex or body mass index as well as by whether or not they had an undetectable viral load.

See: [‘New York studies look at COVID-19 outcomes and immune function among people with HIV’](#) (aidsmap)

COVID-19 Pandemic Increases Socioeconomic Vulnerability of LGBTI+ Communities and Their Susceptibility to HIV

Abstract LBPEE53

This analysis from a survey in 138 countries described COVID-19's economic impact as well as impact on HIV treatment and prevention for the LGBTI+ community. Among the respondents, 12 per cent reported HIV and 16 per cent did not know their HIV status. More than 20 per cent of those on ART said their access to treatment had been limited due to COVID-19.

See: [‘Survey shows the impact of COVID-19 lockdown on LGBT communities’](#) (aidsmap)

AIDS 2020: Partner Publications

Prioritizing Children in the COVID-19 Response

13 July 2020, POZ

Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF)'s Charles "Chip" Lyons discusses a key takeaway from *AIDS 2020*: mistakes from the HIV response should not be repeated. Children and young people must be prioritized in the COVID-19 response.

Five Key Takeaways for Human Rights in the Time of COVID-19

17 July 2020, Frontline AIDS

Following the discussions at *AIDS 2020*, Frontline AIDS outlines key points about human rights impacts of COVID-19, roles of communities and how the pandemic affects progress on HIV prevention, particularly among marginalized communities.

Evidence-based Approaches for Reaching HIV Epidemic Control among Children and Adolescents

7 July 2020, Pact

Pact discusses an *AIDS 2020* session on reaching epidemic control among children and adolescents with HIV as well as interventions for paediatric case finding, ART initiation and retention, and viral load suppression.



The **HIV2020 Conference** began on 6 July. It will continue as a series of 2-hour sessions weekly until October (See: [Calendar](#)).

All sessions are available in English, Spanish, French, Portuguese and Russian. [Videos from Weeks 1 and 2](#) include the role of communities in HIV and COVID-19 responses, criminalization and policing in both epidemics, financing HIV programmes in the context of COVID-19, and the social determinants of health.

Featured Resources

The *Journal of the International AIDS Society* launched a [HIV and COVID-19 Virtual Issue](#) for emerging knowledge about SARS-CoV-2 and co-infection with HIV. The Virtual Issue will be updated to include new articles when published.

UNICEF's Children and AIDS Learning Collaborative presented a [webinar](#) (22 July) with Lynne Mofenson, technical advisor to the Research Programme at the EGPAF. The webinar shared a curated overview of the latest updates related to children, adolescents, pregnant women and HIV presented at *AIDS 2020* and the *COVID-19 Conference*.

NAM aidsmap updated [‘COVID-19 and coronavirus in people living with HIV’](#) to include research from *AIDS 2020*.

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

COVID-19 and HIV: August Digest

26 August 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.

The digest is now published monthly. For previous issues: childrenandaids.org/COVID19andHIV-digest

COVID-19: IMPACT ON THE HIV EPIDEMIC AND PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

[The Biggest Monster’ Is Spreading. And It’s Not the Coronavirus](#)

3 August 2020, *New York Times*

This in-depth report describes how lockdowns and supply-chain disruptions caused by COVID-19 threaten progress against HIV, TB and malaria. As evidenced by dozens of interviews with public health officials, doctors and patients, disruptions are pronounced in parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America. One in four people with HIV reported trouble with treatment access.

[‘What if I Die?’: Coronavirus hits India’s tuberculosis care](#)

17 August 2020, *Reuters*

The lockdown in India has limited access to treatment and care for millions of patients with TB. Many people with TB report being scared to seek care, not receiving care at health centres and facing food insecurity.

[South Africa’s Poor Scramble for Anti-HIV Drugs amid Virus](#)

11 August 2020, *Associated Press*

In South Africa and around the world, COVID-19 has disrupted the supply of antiretroviral medications. The effects of the disruptions are particularly troubling for the poor and most vulnerable, who face heightened barriers in accessing treatment and care.

[COVID-19 Threatens Plans to Eliminate And Control Infectious Diseases, PAHO Director Says](#)

11 August 2020, *PAHO*

COVID-19 has caused over 390,000 deaths in the Americas and is now threatening to add more from TB, HIV, hepatitis and other infectious diseases. PAHO Director Carissa F. Etienne highlighted the pandemic’s impact on other diseases. Of people living with HIV, 30 per cent are avoiding seeking care; there are also concerns about antiretroviral supplies. *See also: [Reuters](#)*

[COVID-19 Disruptions Slow HIV Treatment Targets](#)

10 August 2020, *Uganda Radio Network*

The Director-General of Uganda AIDS Commission Nelson Musoba notes the impact of the lockdown on access to care for people living with HIV and gaps in receiving medicine refills. *See also: [Over 600 people living with HIV/AIDS fail to collect ARVs \(Daily Monitor Uganda\)](#)*

[Experts Call for Continued HIV Prevention Awareness](#)

10 August 2020, *Manila Standard*

In the Philippines, new HIV cases are rising, especially among young males, while COVID-19 is a barrier to early testing and linkage to treatment. UNAIDS Country Director noted the difficulties to access prevention services and treatment early in the lockdown and the importance of various stakeholders working together.

ADAPTING HIV PROGRAMMES AND HEALTH SYSTEMS TO COVID-19

[UNICEF’s HIV Programming in the Context of COVID-19: Sustaining the gains and reimagining the future for children, adolescents and women](#)

August 2020, *UNICEF*

UNICEF presents a compendium of innovative approaches to ensure the continuity of HIV services for children and adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic. The paper describes the approaches in Eastern and Southern Africa: Botswana, Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

[PEPFAR’s Response to the Convergence of the HIV and COVID-19 Pandemics in Sub-Saharan Africa](#)

7 August 2020, *Journal of the International AIDS Society*

PEPFAR discusses the guidance adapted to ensure HIV programmes maintain essential services while protecting patients and staff during the pandemic. Efforts included decentralizing services as much as possible, leveraging virtual monitoring and support, and supporting both facility and community programming.

[AIDS: Rwanda Introduces New Testing Strategy to Bypass COVID-19 Limitations](#)

22 August 2020, *Kigali Today Press*

[COVID-19: transformative actions for more equitable, resilient, sustainable societies and health systems in the Americas](#)

3 August 2020, *BMJ Global Health*

PAHO makes recommendations to address gaps exposed by COVID-19 in the Americas. This includes (1) realigning values to better include health and social development with economic development; (2) investing in health, social development and protection, and (3) transforming health systems with a focus on primary health care.

[How to Stop COVID-19 Fueling a Resurgence of AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis](#)

12 August 2020, *Nature*

This editorial discusses what governments and funders can do to protect HIV, TB and malaria programmes during the pandemic. It makes recommendations to sustain priorities, refine models with real-world data, include public information campaigns and increase investments.

[HIV Self-Care and COVID-19: Lessons for the future of the HIV response](#)

4 August 2020, *TheBody*

To address COVID-19 disruptions in accessing care, the Rwanda Biomedical Center and AIDS Healthcare Foundation will distribute HIV self-test kits for free through existing condom kiosks, especially in high risk areas in Kigali and secondary cities.

As a response to COVID-19 and difficulties in accessing care, there have been more efforts to empower patients living with HIV. This includes scaling up self-testing and telemedicine as well as other innovations, such as providing WhatsApp counselling for young people.

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS AND CHILDREN

Understanding Characteristics of COVID-19 among children and adolescents

The US National Institutes of Health (NIH) [announced](#) a project to develop approaches that identify children at high risk for the paediatric inflammatory syndrome related to COVID-19; up to US \$20 million in funding is available for research proposals over four years. Recent research on the syndrome include:

- [COVID-19 and multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children and adolescents](#) (*Lancet Infectious Diseases*)
- [Multisystem inflammatory syndrome associated with COVID-19 in children in Pakistan](#) and [Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children in South Africa](#) (*Lancet Child and Adolescent Health*)
- [COVID-19-associated multisystem inflammatory Syndrome in children — United States, March–July 2020](#) (*Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*)

Transmission Risks Among Children

UNICEF researchers are investigating the burden of COVID-19 among children and young people. Selective testing for the virus might mean that many cases are still undiagnosed. UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti released a [research brief](#) calling for more disaggregated data, especially in low- and middle-income countries where children are at greater risk of other vulnerabilities. *See also: 'COVID-19 may pose greater risk to children than originally thought'*

A [study](#) from Public Health England found low numbers of COVID-19 outbreaks in schools; out of more than 1 million children in preschool and primary school since June, there were only 67 cases and many of them were through transmission at home. Meanwhile, a [study](#) from Harvard Medical School researchers suggest that children may play a larger role in community spread of COVID-19; among 192 children in the study, 49 of which tested positive for the virus and an additional 18 had late-onset symptoms related to COVID-19. The researchers noted that children were especially contagious during the first two days of infection and had higher viral loads than hospitalized adults.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control released a [technical report](#) on COVID-19 in children in EU/EEA countries and the UK, including the role of school settings in COVID-19 transmission.

Policy and Global Recommendations

UNICEF and WHO issued [guidance](#) that children over 12 should wear masks, in line with recommendations for adults. For children ages six to 11, a risk-based approach is recommended with considerations like local transmission and interactions with high-risk individuals. Masks are not recommended for children aged 5 years and under.

UNICEF and WHO [urged](#) governments in Africa to promote the safe re-opening of schools in light of the negative impacts of school closures. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also [updated](#) guidance for schools and child-care centers with a focus on keeping them open as much as possible.

COVID-19 AND INEQUALITY

UNAIDS Calls for Urgent Action to Strengthen Social Protection Programmes in the Face of COVID-19

26 August 2020, *UNAIDS*

UNAIDS released a [call to action](#) for governments to strengthen HIV-sensitive social protection programmes that address the health and socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the most vulnerable people. This includes women and girls, gay men and other men who have sex with men, sex workers, people who use drugs and transgender people.

Economic Impact of Coronavirus Zeroes in on Black LGBT+ Americans

4 August 2020, *Reuters*

According the Human Rights Campaign, Black LGBT+ people in the US are more likely to face high economic impacts of the pandemic compared to heterosexual white peers. *See also: [The COVID-19 Public Health and Economic Crises Leave Vulnerable Populations Exposed](#)*

COVID-19 has “Devastating” Effect on Women and Girls

1 August 2020, *The Lancet*

Experts are calling attention to the pandemic’s impact on women and girls through disrupted health services and increases in gender-based violence. COVID-19 restrictions have hurt reproductive health services and contraception supply chains, which also has potential effects on the risks of HIV transmission. *See also: [African Activists Fight Violence Against Women One Law at a Time](#)*

Extreme Poverty Rises and a Generation Sees Future Slip Away

10 August 2020, *AP*

As an effect of the pandemic, up to 100 million more people globally could fall into living on US \$1.90 a day. Most of those newly at risk of extreme poverty are in sub-Saharan Africa. This in-depth report describes the pandemic’s effects and economic disruptions in Ethiopia.

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

How COVID-19 Could Benefit Tuberculosis and HIV Services in South Africa

3 August 2020, *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine*

Authors from Médecins Sans Frontières discuss how innovations developed for COVID-19 could be an opportunity for long-term change that can improve TB and HIV services in South Africa. This includes scaling up interventions that improve system-wide efficiency.

The Response to a New Pandemic Should Not Capture the Continued Treatment of Known Diseases

21 August 2020, *Namibia Economist*

Aeneas C. Chuma, UNAIDS Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa, writes that the focus on and investments in HIV and TB services should continue despite the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 response should not derail progress in other epidemics.

HIV/AIDS and COVID-19 Require Global Solidarity

29 July 2020, IDN

In an interview, UNAIDS Country Director for Kenya Medhin Tsehaiu discusses recommendations for HIV programmes and policies in the context of COVID-19.

Global Health and Human Rights for a Postpandemic World

3 August 2020, BMJ Global Health

The piece discusses reimagining global health for the post-pandemic world. While calls for global solidarity continue, COVID-19 has unveiled gaps in how we work together and stressed the need for a new social contract based on human rights.

Q&A: The impact of COVID-19 on HIV/AIDS

13 August 2020, Devex

Jun Yong Choi, director of the AIDS Research Institute at Yonsei University in South Korea discusses the impact of COVID-19 on the fight against HIV.

COVID-19: Patient voices and perspectives in Uganda

6 August 2020, BMJ Opinion

Executive Director Community Health and Information Network (CHAIN) Mariam Regina Namata Kamoga writes about how Uganda slowed down COVID-19 transmission and supported other health services, particularly through patient organizations and patient empowerment.

UPDATES ON RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

A collaboration was [announced](#) between the Serum Institute of India, Gavi and Gates Foundation to accelerate manufacturing and delivery of COVID-19 vaccines for low- and middle-income countries in 2021. The vaccines will be available to up to 92 countries in Gavi's COVAX Advance Market Commitment at a ceiling price of US \$3 per dose.

Moderna, which had previously said it would exclude people with HIV from its vaccine trials, [changed](#) its stance after pressure from HIV advocates in recent weeks. People living with HIV will be a part of its late-stage clinical trial.

STAT [featured](#) the evidence gap in COVID-19 vaccine safety for children and pregnant women. Clinical trials for COVID-19 vaccines have so far not included women who are pregnant or breastfeeding; only one trial has included children. While vaccines are always tested in healthy adults first, the current state of urgency makes it possible that there could be emergency authorization for a vaccine that does not have safety data available for pregnant women and children.

The US Food and Drug Administration [issued](#) emergency authorization for the use of blood plasma from patients who have recovered from COVID-19 as a treatment. Some experts have called for caution, noting that there is still limited evidence on using convalescent plasma to treat COVID-19. A study by the Mayo Clinic and the NIH indicated that plasma treatments appeared to reduce mortality in hospitalized COVID-19 patients who received infusions within three days of symptom onset compared to patients who got plasma after four days or later. However, the study did not include a placebo group, was not randomized and has not been peer-reviewed. Several NIH officials stressed that more data from randomized controlled trials are needed to assess benefits ([New York Times](#)).

SELECTED RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

Modelling the Epidemics

Potential Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic in HIV, Tuberculosis, and Malaria in Low-Income and Middle-Income Countries: A modelling study

1 September 2020, Lancet Global Health

The researchers constructed four scenarios with potential responses to the COVID-19 pandemic (no action, mitigation for 6 months, suppression for 2 months, or suppression for 1 year) and established models of HIV, TB and malaria to estimate the additional impact of the pandemic. In high-burden settings, deaths due to HIV, TB and malaria over 5 years could increase by up to 10 per cent, 20 per cent, and 36 per cent compared to projections without COVID-19.

Potential Effects of Disruption to HIV Programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa Caused by COVID-19: Results from multiple mathematical models

6 August 2020, Lancet HIV

Five models of HIV epidemics were used to estimate the effect of potential disruptions to HIV prevention, testing, and treatment services on HIV-related deaths and new infections in sub-Saharan Africa lasting 6 months over 1 year. The paper examines disruptions to ART access, prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) programmes, condom distribution and voluntary medical male circumcision. See, comment: [Modelling the impact of COVID-19 on HIV](#)

Characteristics and Outcomes of COVID-19 in People Living with HIV

Two pre-print articles on COVID-19 mortality in the UK suggested that having HIV raised the risk of death for COVID-19 patients, after adjusting for age ([aidsmap](#), 13 August). The British HIV Association and partners released a [statement](#) calling for caution in interpreting these findings due to limited figures, under-recording and confounding factors that affect COVID-19 mortality. Both papers have not yet been peer-reviewed. Meanwhile, a number of recent publications suggested similar characteristics and outcomes among COVID-19 patients with HIV and those without HIV:

- [COVID-19 in patients with HIV-1 infection: A single-centre experience in northern Italy](#) (*Infection*, 3 August)
The case series included 26 patients with HIV and COVID-19. Among them, 5 patients were hospitalized with interstitial pneumonia but there were no admissions to intensive care. The researchers noted that COVID-19 associated with HIV infection had a clinical presentation comparable to the general population.
- [No significant effect of COVID-19 on immunological and virological parameters in patients with HIV-1 infection](#) (*Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes - JAIDS*, 1 September)
In this letter, investigators from Italy report on 14 patients with COVID and HIV. There was no difference in clinical characteristics and outcomes from cohorts of patients without HIV.
- [Outcomes among HIV-positive patients hospitalized with COVID-19](#) (*JAIDS*, 1 September)
This study described COVID-19 characteristics in 21 patients with HIV and 42 patients without HIV in the US. There was a trend toward increased rates of intensive care, mechanical ventilation, and mortality in patients with HIV compared to those without HIV; however, these differences were not statistically significant.

- [Coronavirus disease of 2019 in patients with well-controlled human immunodeficiency virus on antiretroviral therapy \(JAIDS, 1 September\)](#)

In this letter, investigators in the US discuss a retrospective chart review of 125 patients with COVID-19, of whom five also had HIV. All patients continued ART and had similar clinical outcomes to those without HIV.

In a recent issue of *AIDS*, publications described COVID-19 characteristics among people living with HIV:

- [Characteristics and outcomes of COVID-19 in patients with HIV: A multi-center research network study \(US\)](#)
- [Factors associated with hospital admission for COVID-19 in HIV patients \(Italy\)](#)
- [HIV infection and COVID-19 risk factors for severe disease \(France\)](#)
- [Clinical characteristics, risk factors, and incidence of symptomatic COVID-19 in adults living with HIV a single-center, prospective observational study \(Spain\)](#)

Some researchers are examining associations between ART use and COVID-19 characteristics. Recent papers include:

- [Effect of a previous history of antiretroviral treatment on clinical picture of patients with co-infection of SARS-CoV-2 and HIV: A preliminary study \(International Journal of Infectious Diseases, 22 August\)](#)
Through retrospective interviews, researchers examined how ART affects clinical characteristics of patients with SARS-CoV-2 and HIV. Among 20 COVID-19 patients with HIV, 12 had a history of ART. A milder inflammatory response to COVID-19 might be associated with a history of ART in patients living with HIV.
- [Coinfection with HIV and SARS-CoV-2 in Wuhan, China: A 12-person case series \(JAIDS, 1 September\)](#)
This survey from China described 12 people with HIV who had COVID-19. Of the ten patients on ART, nine reported mild symptoms. Two were ART-naïve until hospitalization and had severe symptoms with COVID-19.

Impact of COVID-19 on People Living with HIV

[PrEP Retention and Prescriptions for Pregnant Women During COVID-19 Lockdown in South Africa](#)

3 August 2020, *Lancet HIV*

The researchers evaluated the effect of the COVID-19 lockdown in South Africa on PrEP prescriptions and ANC visits among pregnant women enrolled in an ongoing cohort study. Before lockdown, 29 per cent of study participants on PrEP missed their one-month visit; this increased significantly to 63 per cent during the lockdown. Missing three-month visits increased to 55 per cent during the lockdown compared to 41 per cent before March 2020.

[The Psychosocial Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Youth Living with HIV in Western Kenya](#)

20 August 2020, *AIDS Behavior*

This survey conducted through telephone calls assessed psychosocial effects of COVID-19 among adolescents (aged 10-24) living with HIV in Kenya. Of 486 respondents, 9 per cent had mild depression symptoms and 1 per cent had moderate-to-severe depression symptoms. Young adults 20-24 years old had more depressive symptoms than the younger age groups.

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

[Stigma, Discrimination and Gender-based Violence in the COVID-19 Pandemic: Young key populations in Asia and the Pacific](#)

11 August 2020

The Interagency Task Team (IATT) on Young Key Populations (YKPs) in Asia and the Pacific discuss the need to address stigma, discrimination and all forms of violence against YKPs during the pandemic.

[Technical Brief on COVID-19 and HIV Programming](#)

31 July 2020

Frontline AIDS released technical guidance on programming in areas where COVID-19 and HIV intersect.

[Socio-economic Impact and Social Protection for YKP And YPLHIV In Time of COVID-19](#)

11 August 2020

The IATT on YKPs in Asia and the Pacific assessed how the COVID-19 pandemic affects the lives of YKPs and young people living with HIV. and provided recommendations to address the socio-economic impact of the pandemic on young people.

[Communities Speak Out](#)

UPDATED August 2020

Aidsfonds published a series on how COVID-19 affects the HIV response. In the latest story, Nicholas Niwagaba of the Uganda Network of Young People Living with HIV [speaks](#) about local work and challenges faced.

[Zero Discrimination in the Time of COVID-19](#)

10 August 2020

The IATT on YKPs with partners developed a social media package to advocate against stigma and discrimination in the time of COVID-19. Drawing on lessons from the HIV response, this resource centers kindness and respect for the COVID-19 discourse online and offline.

[How COVID-19 is Affecting the Global Response to AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria](#)

21 August 2020

Friends of the Global Fight presents information on the impact of COVID-19 on HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria including recent research and news.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **6 July-October 2020:** The HIV2020 Conference began on 6 July. It will continue as a series of 2-hour sessions weekly until October. *Multiple times, free of charge* >> [Calendar](#)
- **9 September 2020:** The International Antiviral Society-USA hosts researchers discussing HIV PrEP and the impact of COVID-19 on PrEP use. *10am PT | 7:00pm SAST* >> [More](#)

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

COVID-19 and HIV: September Digest

23 September 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.

The digest is now published monthly. For previous issues: childrenandaids.org/covid19/digest

COVID-19: IMPACT ON THE HIV EPIDEMIC AND PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

HIV and COVID-19: A unique moment in time to learn, leverage and build resilient systems for health

9 September 2020, *UNAIDS*

A new [report](#) from UNAIDS describes how countries are using experiences and infrastructure from the HIV response to tackle both pandemics. Three important issues for countries are highlighted: (1) lessons from the HIV response should inform COVID-19 responses; (2) the HIV infrastructure is already driving COVID-19 responses and has the potential to catalyze accelerated progress; and (3) COVID-19 and HIV responses offer a historic opportunity to build a bridge to adaptable, results-driven systems for health.

In WHO Global Pulse Survey, 90% of Countries Report Disruptions to Essential Health Services Since COVID-19

31 August 2020, *WHO*

The WHO published a [survey](#) on the impact of COVID-19 on health systems with reports from 105 countries in five regions. Almost every country experienced disruption to its health services; low- and middle-income countries reported the greatest difficulties. Cancer screenings and treatment, and HIV therapy has seen significant interruptions in low-income countries.

People with HIV Face New Challenges to Care Continuity During COVID Lockdown

15 September 2020, *TheBody*

TheBody surveyed people living with HIV about their health care experiences during the pandemic. While some reported that their access to services continued, particularly through innovations such as telehealth sessions, a number of respondents noted related challenges such as worsened mental health.

Pandemic vs. Pandemic: COVID-19 hampers fight against HIV

14 September 2020, *Associated Press*

In the United States, COVID-19 has threatened the progress made in the fight against HIV. Experts are concerned about a spike in new HIV infections, particularly in agricultural regions of the South. Testing for HIV has dropped and health workers who usually track patients have been redirected to COVID-19 efforts.

See also: [How Were HIV Care Services in South Carolina Interrupted by the COVID-19 Pandemic?](#) (*AJMC*)

COVID-19 Sets HIV Treatment and Testing Back

4 September 2020, *Mail & Guardian*

In South Africa, testing for HIV at public health facilities declined 57 per cent during the first month of the COVID-19 lockdown. The data from the national health department suggests that community testing of HIV was stopped due to the shutdown and accounted for the largest decreases in HIV testing. The restrictions on movement also hindered treatment rates.

About 900,000 People Living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria Unaccounted for — Group

17 September 2020, *Premium Times*

The Civil Society for HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (CiSHAN) highlighted the gaps in HIV testing and treatment; currently, around 900,000 persons living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria are unaccounted for. A national campaign for HIV self-testing began with an aim of reaching 10 mil people with self-testing kits by the end of 2020. The group noted the impact of the COVID-19 in limiting access to HIV testing, especially for vulnerable populations.

ADAPTING HIV PROGRAMMES AND HEALTH SYSTEMS TO COVID-19

Adapting HIV Services for Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women, Infants, Children, Adolescents and Families in Resource-Constrained Settings during COVID-19

12 September 2020, *JIAS*

Authors from USAID discussed strategies to maintain essential HIV services for pregnant and breastfeeding women and children. Recommended programme adaptations include bundling services in a visit, providing testing outside of facilities to the extent possible to reduce exposure risk to COVID-19, using virtual platforms to identify vulnerable children, community-based ART initiation, and multi-month ART.

Going the Last Mile for HIV in Zimbabwe during COVID-19

11 September 2020, *PSI*

COVID-19 Brings Jamaican People Living with HIV Closer Together

18 September 2020, *UNAIDS*

Community organizations like the Jamaica Network of Seropositives (JN+) connected with their networks immediately after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic to better understand their needs, and played a critical role in supporting people to start and remain on ART.

See also: [Providing HIV treatment to people living with HIV stranded in foreign countries in Middle East and North Africa region during COVID-19](#) (*UNAIDS*)

Guyana's HIV Food Bank Comes to the Rescue during COVID-19

4 September 2020, *UNAIDS*

After Zimbabwe began a lockdown in March, many health services were paused, including voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC). PSI worked with government partners to ensure services delivered by the Last Mile for HIV team, including VMMC, were declared essential and service delivery was adapted to the COVID-19 context.

In the last fourteen years, the National AIDS Programme in Guyana has invested in developing a food bank for people living with HIV, including those coinfecting with TB. This food bank has played a critical role in providing a nutrition support solution for people living with HIV during the COVID-19 pandemic.

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS AND CHILDREN

Understanding COVID-19 among Children and Adolescents

In the UK, a group of practitioners and experts developed a [national consensus management pathway](#) as guidance for clinicians caring for children with the paediatric inflammatory multisystem syndrome associated with COVID-19.

Recent publications on COVID-19 in young people include:

- [Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children: A systematic review](#), *EClinicalMedicine*
- [Reconsidering assumptions of adolescent and young adult SARS-CoV-2 transmission](#), *Clinical Infectious Diseases*
- [A Systematic Review of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children Associated With SARS-CoV-2 Infection](#), *The Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal*
- [Syndrome Resembling Kawasaki Disease in COVID-19 Asymptomatic Children](#), *Journal of Infection and Public Health*

A [new study](#) from Yale researchers examined serum and cell samples obtained from paediatric and adult patients with COVID-19 and found that children express higher levels of two specific serum cytokines. The researchers believe this might be associated with the less severe COVID-19 characteristics and outcomes in children.

Impact of COVID-19 on Children

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus [noted](#) that more research is needed to understand risk factors of severe COVID-19 in children and adolescents. The long-term effects of infection remain unknown. ([UN News](#)) UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore highlighted the long-term impacts of the pandemic on children, especially due to the closure of schools. Around a third of children (463 million) were unable to access any kind of remote learning when schools closed. School closures also have impacts for health, protection, and nutrition. ([The Telegraph](#))

Global agencies have recommended that the decision to close schools be taken only as a last resort and temporary measure at the local level. UNESCO, UNICEF and WHO issued [updated guidance](#) on school-related public health measures in the context of COVID-19.

COVID-19 AND SECONDARY IMPACTS

Gates Offers Grim Global Health Report, and Some Optimism

14 September 2020, *New York Times*

The Gates Foundation launched its fourth annual [Goalkeepers report](#), which discusses how the pandemic is affecting progress toward the Global Goals. Bill Gates noted that one of his aims is to double foreign aid from the US from less than 0.25 per cent of the gross domestic product to 0.5 per cent or more.

The Other Way COVID Will Kill: Hunger

11 September 2020, *New York Times*

Global levels of hunger are on the rise. According to the World Food Programme, the number of individuals experiencing food insecurity in the developing world is expected to nearly double to 265 million. The number of children younger than 5 experiencing wasting is likely to grow by nearly seven million this year.

COVID is Widening Educational Inequalities for Children Around the World

16 September 2020, *Inequality.org*

As schools remain closed in many countries and families consider keeping their children home even where schools are open, inequalities in education are set to rise. For those without internet access and facing other barriers at home, the adapted methods many schools are using to deliver education will remain more unreachable.

See also: [COVID-19 Pandemic an Opportunity to Re-evaluate How We Treat World's Starving Children](#) (*IPS*)

Why COVID School Closures Are Making Girls Marry Early

7 September 2020, *The Guardian*

As schools closed in March due to COVID-19, child protection experts predicted that many children might never return to the classroom. There is now growing evidence that school closures have led to an increase in gender-based violence and early marriages.

See also: [School Closures Heighten the Risks of Unwanted Pregnancy and Contracting HIV for Adolescent Girls and Young Women](#) (*aidspace*), ['It ruined my life': School closures in Kenya lead to rise in FGM](#) (*Al Jazeera*)

From Leprosy to COVID-19, How Stigma Makes It Harder to Fight Epidemics

16 September 2020, *Science*

Stigma is a critical barrier to the COVID-19 response, as it has been for other health issues in the past including HIV. COVID-19 often provides an excuse to stigmatize communities who are already marginalized. Stigma is preventing individuals from getting the testing and treatment they need.

Coronavirus: Why are women paying a heavier price?

11 September 2020, *Al Jazeera*

The COVID-19 pandemic is worsening existing gender inequalities. Economic hardships due to the pandemic are particularly devastating for women, who account for 54 per cent of overall job losses despite being 39 per cent of the global workforce. Women are also more likely to be at increased health risks at the frontline and face additional barriers in access to health care.

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

COVID-19 Is a Turning Point for Infectious Diseases

16 September 2020, *Devex*

Peter Sands, executive director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, describes findings of the [Results Report](#) for 2019 and notes that the 2020 results will look different. He writes that we are at an inflection point and risking the gains made thus far in infectious diseases unless quick, coordinated actions are taken.

Fighting the COVID Infodemic

18 September 2020, *Project Syndicate*

Professors Anton Pozniak, Linda-Gail Bekker and Chris Beyrer write about the need to counter the COVID-19 infodemic with coordinated and strategic advocacy like for the HIV epidemic. Scientists must counter lies and myths while addressing the spread of misinformation in today's age.

The Need to Continue Testing for HIV, Even During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

2 September 2020, *HIV Medicine*

Researchers from Italy report a series of four patients who were hospitalized between March and April with suspicion of COVID-19 but were instead diagnosed with HIV infection. They strongly advocate for continued HIV testing even during the COVID-19 context.

Impact of COVID-19 on Women and Children

16 September 2020, *Inter Press Service*

Chair of The Elders and former President of Ireland Mary Robinson writes about the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 crisis on women. Women are facing increased rates of violence, the loss of livelihoods, limited access to contraception and other sexual and reproductive health services, and other risks.

What One Pandemic Can Teach Us in Facing Another

1 October 2020, *AIDS*

Global HIV expert Wafaa El-Sadr outlines the similarities and differences between the HIV and COVID-19 pandemics as well as the lessons learned from years of fighting HIV that are relevant to the COVID-19 response.

See also: [Preserving 2 decades of healthcare gains for Africa in the coronavirus disease 2019 era](#) (*AIDS*)

More Testing Alone Will Not Get Us Out of This Pandemic

1 September 2020, *Nature*

Health and other disparities, distrust in health systems faced by many communities, and other complexities must be explicitly factored into solutions for COVID-19. We cannot assume that we should first find a technological solution and only then engage with communities to learn what is needed for their access and participation.

SELECTED RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

COVID-19 More Prevalent Among General vs HIV-Positive Population, Barcelona Study Says

11 September 2020, *AJMC*

An observational cohort study from Spain [published](#) in *AIDS* reported that people living with HIV may not be at greater risk for COVID-19. The researchers investigated clinical characteristics, risk factors of COVID-19 diagnosis and severity, and standardized incidence rate ratios for people diagnosed COVID-19 in the cohort and in the general population of Barcelona. The results did not indicate an association between HIV or ART-related factors and a greater likelihood of being positive for SARS-CoV-2 or having a more severe form of COVID-19.

Characteristics, Comorbidities, and Outcomes in a Multicenter Registry of Patients with HIV and Coronavirus Disease-19

9 September 2020, *Clinical Infectious Diseases*

This prospective study from the US included 286 people living with HIV with lab-confirmed COVID-19. Several comorbidities, including hypertension and lung disease, were associated with worse outcomes. The study also reported a link between severe outcomes and lower CD4.

See also: [High prevalence of underlying health conditions explains increased COVID-19 mortality seen in people with HIV in US study](#) (*aidsmap*)

Risk Factors For COVID-19 Death in a Population Cohort Study from the Western Cape Province, South Africa

28 August 2020, *Clinical Infectious Diseases*

In a study from South Africa, HIV and TB were independently associated with an increased risk for COVID-19 mortality. The study included more than 22,000 patients with COVID-19. The researchers noted that the increased risk of COVID-19 death may be overestimated if there is residual confounding due to socioeconomic status or comorbidities. However, they also concluded that the results with sensitivity analyses suggest that people living with HIV or TB are at increased risk of severe COVID-19. *See also, summary:* [Healio](#)

Clinical Outcomes of Patients with COVID-19 And HIV Coinfection

19 September 2020, *Journal of Medical Virology*

This retrospective cohort study of HIV patients who were admitted for COVID-19 in the U.S. compared their clinical characteristics and outcomes with a matched control group of COVID-19 patients without HIV. There were 23 patients with HIV. The rates of in-hospital deaths, the need for mechanical ventilation and intensive care admission were 13 per cent, 9 per cent and 9 per cent, respectively. Outcomes were comparable between the HIV and control groups.

A recent issue of *AIDS* included a special section on how COVID-19 manifests among people living with HIV. Submissions describe outcomes of COVID-19 among people with HIV from Europe and the United States in comparison to people not living with HIV. Articles include:

- [Coronavirus disease 2019 attack rate in HIV-infected patients and in preexposure prophylaxis users](#) (France)
- [HIV infection and COVID-19: risk factors for severe disease](#) (France)
- [Clinical characteristics, risk factors, and incidence of symptomatic coronavirus disease 2019 in a large cohort of adults living with HIV: a single-center, prospective observational study](#) (Spain)
- [Disproportionate burden of coronavirus disease 2019 among racial minorities and those in congregate settings among a large cohort of people with HIV](#) (U.S.)
- [Clinical characteristics, comorbidities and outcomes among persons with HIV hospitalized with coronavirus disease 2019 in Atlanta, Georgia](#) (U.S.)
- [Comorbidity indices in people with HIV and considerations for coronavirus disease 2019 outcomes](#) (UK)

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

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| <p>COVID-19 and HIV: 1 moment, 2 epidemics, 3 opportunities—how to seize the moment to learn, leverage and build a new way forward for everyone’s health and rights 9 September 2020</p> <p>The report from UNAIDS discusses lessons from HIV for COVID-19, how the HIV infrastructure is driving COVID-19 responses, and how the response offers a historic opportunity to build strong health systems.</p> | <p>PEPFAR Technical Guidance in Context of COVID-19 Pandemic UPDATED 9 September 2020</p> <p>PEPFAR updated its technical guidance. The latest additions include mental health resources for health workers and information on older adults with HIV as well as presentations on adapting DREAMS programmes in Botswana, Namibia, and Zambia.</p> | <p>Are Funders Still Focusing On HIV/AIDS? September 2020</p> <p>GrantWatch from <i>Health Affairs</i> tracks funding on HIV/AIDS, including from major private philanthropies. This round-up includes examples of foundation activities related to HIV and AIDS.</p> |
| <p>The IATT on YKPS Launches a New Website to Highlight Young People’s Leadership in Response to COVID-19 Across Asia and the Pacific WEBSITE 27 August 2020</p> <p>The Interagency Task Team on Young Key Populations in Asia Pacific, with support from Youth LEAD, UNAIDS, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office and UNDP announced the launch of www.ykptaskteam.org.</p> | <p>Updated Website from the HIV and Humanitarian Emergencies Interagency Task Team WEBSITE September 2020</p> <p>Partners of the Interagency Task Team on HIV in Emergencies (HIV-E) released a new website, www.hivinemergencies.org, with tools and resources on addressing HIV in the context of humanitarian emergencies.</p> | <p>COVID-19 in Africa: Webinar with Africa CDC, WACI Health and civil society VIDEO 16 September 2020</p> <p>WACI Health, AVAC, and Friends of the Global Fight Against AIDS, TB and Malaria hosted a virtual dialogue to discuss how COVID-19 is impacting Africa and learn about the collective response in different countries.</p> |
| <p>COVID-19 Resources for People Working in the HIV Sector UPDATED 11 September 2020</p> <p>Avert compiled a list of timely resources for people working on the HIV response globally, including updated guidance, communication tools, resources for community health and peer support, information on COVID-19 and HIV, and COVID-19 in Africa.</p> | <p>Live with Dr. Anthony S. Fauci: COVID-19 and its global impact on AIDS, TB and malaria VIDEO 11 September 2020</p> <p>Friends of the Global Fight Against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria hosted a conversation with Dr. Anthony Fauci on how COVID-19 is impacting low- and middle-income countries and the role of the US.</p> | <p>AidsmapCHAT: COVID-19 and HIV – Series 2 VIDEO 2 September 2020</p> <p>Aidsmap released a second virtual chat on HIV and COVID-19. Speakers were Davina Conner from the Prevention Access Campaign; Jason Domino, sex worker, activist and PrEP advocate; and Dr Vanessa Apea, sexual health and HIV doctor.</p> |
| <p>Antigen-detection in the Diagnosis Of SARS-Cov-2 Infection Using Rapid Immunoassays 11 September 2020</p> <p>This document from WHO provides guidance on the potential role of antigen-detecting rapid diagnostic tests (Ag-RDT) for COVID-19 and explains the need for careful test selection.</p> | <p>Corticosteroids for COVID-19 2 September 2020</p> <p>WHO partnered with Magic Evidence Ecosystem Foundation (MAGIC), investigators of seven trials on corticosteroids, and a panel of experts to conduct trials and develop living guidance for COVID-19 drug treatments.</p> | <p>Diagnostic Testing for SARS-CoV-2 11 September 2020</p> <p>WHO released guidance for laboratories and other stakeholders about COVID-19 testing. This covers lab testing, assessment and biosafety strategies and tools; point-of-care immunodiagnostic tests; rapid immunoassays; investigations of clusters; and surveillance.</p> |

UPCOMING EVENTS

- *September-October 2020*: From Global Health Strategies, the UNGA Guide Virtual is a crowdsourced calendar for events around the UN General Assembly (UNGA) including those focused on COVID-19. >> [More](#)
- *29 September 2020*: PMNCH, White Ribbon Alliance and Every Woman Every Child will host ‘Accountability Breakfast 2020: Advancing Women, Children and Adolescent Health During COVID-19’. *8am ET* >> [Register](#)
- *6 July-October 2020*: The HIV2020 Conference began on 6 July. It will continue as a series of 2-hour sessions weekly until October. *Multiple times, free of charge* >> [Calendar](#)
- *15 October 2020*: CHIVA annual conference on ‘Breaking through barriers: Achieving health and wellbeing for young people growing up with HIV’. *9am-5pm UK* >> [Register](#)
- *13-15 October 2020*: Women Leaders in Global Health Conference 2020 will take place over the course of three days, with the first two focused on South Asia and Africa. *Multiple times* >> [More](#)

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

COVID-19 and HIV: October Digest

3 November 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.

The digest is now published monthly. For previous issues: childrenandaids.org/covid19/digest

COVID-19: IMPACT ON THE HIV EPIDEMIC AND PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

COVID-19's Impact on HIV Treatment Less Severe Than Feared

16 October 2020, *UNAIDS*

UNAIDS, WHO and UNICEF collected data through an [online platform](#) to identify national, regional and global disruptions of routine HIV services caused by COVID-19. Data from 22 countries suggest that the pandemic's impact on HIV treatment might be less severe than initially predicted. Only five countries reported monthly declines in the number of people on HIV treatment since April. One challenge in interpreting this trend is that many countries have a three-month lost-to-follow-up definition so there might be a delay in counting people who are disengaged from treatment.

See also: [COVID-19's impact on HIV vertical transmission services reversed](#) (UNAIDS)

Seven Months On, Pandemic Still Threatens AIDS Care

12 October 2020, *The Jakarta Post*

In Indonesia, there are about 543,000 people living with HIV/AIDS. The COVID-19 pandemic has created challenges in ensuring ARV drug supplies, especially in the early weeks of the pandemic. Two organizations noted in March that 47.6 per cent of survey respondents living with HIV had only a month's worth of ART. To note, even before the pandemic, ART coverage in Indonesia was among the lowest in the Asia-Pacific region.

See also, from the Philippines: [Covid-19 pandemic delays HIV/AIDS interventions](#) (SunStar)

PrEP Uptake Defies COVID-19 in 2020

14 October 2020, AVAC

According to the Q3 updates to the Global PrEP Tracker by AVAC, uptake of PrEP continued to increase globally despite disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of people who have started on PrEP has reached 773,474 this year, which is an increase in new initiations of more than 23 per cent since the beginning of 2020.

COVID-19 Impacting HIV Testing in Most Countries

13 October 2020, *UNAIDS*

Data on HIV testing services, [collected](#) by UNAIDS in collaboration with WHO and UNICEF show that there have been sustained decreases in testing access across 56 countries who reported at least one month of HIV testing data in the period between January and June, only 17 had enough data to calculate these trends over time. Five countries (Myanmar, Mozambique, Madagascar, Rwanda and Armenia) have rebounded to pre-pandemic levels of HIV testing; however, testing coverage remains low in other countries, such as Guyana and Peru.

COVID-19 Has Created Serious Challenges for Nigeria's HIV Organizations

23 September 2020, *TheBody*

The pandemic-related lockdown affected how many HIV organizations deliver services in Nigeria. The AIDS Prevention Initiative in Nigeria (APIN), noted difficulties in getting ART to their clients while AIDS Healthcare Foundation Nigeria discussed the delays in getting ART refills from abroad. People living with HIV faced challenges in accessing the services during the lockdown.

See also: [Africa: 'HIV/AIDS deaths may have soared due to virus'](#) (Anadolu Agency)

'Corona Carriers': Stigma halts medication and meet-ups for HIV+ Malawians

12 October 2020, Reuters

Stigma against people living with HIV in Malawi is making it harder for them to access health care services during the COVID-19 pandemic. There has also been a 35 per cent drop in HIV testing. A youth-led support group for those living with HIV noted how lockdown restrictions have complicated how their support groups function.

ADAPTING HIV PROGRAMMES AND HEALTH SYSTEMS TO COVID-19

Rapid Adaptation of HIV Treatment Programs in Response to COVID-19 — Namibia, 2020

23 October 2020, *Morbidity and Mortality Report*

Steven Y. Hong of the Division of Global HIV and TB at the CDC and colleagues write about Namibia's experience coordinating its national HIV treatment program with the COVID-19 response. The Ministry of Health's adapted plan aimed to minimize the frequency of patient contact with the health care system and reduce burden on facilities. This plan included facility readiness,

CDC Tanzania and Partners: Ensure HIV services amidst the COVID-19 pandemic

28 October 2020, *CDC*

The CDC with the Government of Tanzania, non-governmental partners, and healthcare facilities supported COVID-19 prevention measures and aimed to optimize the continuity of essential services for people living with HIV. This included promoting key COVID-19 prevention measures such as social distancing, face masks, and hand hygiene as well protocols to minimize

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| <p>multimonth dispensing of ART, and the expansion of community ART dispensing.</p> | <p>disruptions in facility-based care, prevent long queues, and congested waiting areas.</p> |
| <p>How the HIV Response is Adapting in the Face of COVID-19 9 October 2020, <i>Frontline AIDS</i></p> <p>A new report Transforming the HIV response highlight some innovations from Frontline AIDS partners to continue HIV services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Civil society and community organizations have stepped in where governments have failed to support services for marginalized communities. These organizations developed differentiated services designed to meet the varied needs of people during the pandemic.</p> | <p>“Physical Distance, Not Social Distance”: Supporting Jamaican women living with HIV during COVID-19 21 September 2020, <i>UNAIDS</i></p> <p>The Jamaica Community of Positive Women (JCW+) noted that many clients received only one month’s supply of HIV treatment, although they were hoping for the recommended three months. The new screening protocols during the pandemic have also contributed to unexpected disclosure of HIV status. JCW+ is using hygiene supply packages supported by UNAIDS as an entry point to connect with clients during the pandemic.</p> |
| <p>Bringing HIV and COVID-19 Testing Services to Hard-to-Reach Areas in Uzbekistan 30 September 2020, <i>UNAIDS</i></p> <p>A mobile clinic with medical equipment and diagnostic systems, including for HIV and COVID-19, in Uzbekistan is providing people in different regions with access to HIV testing and counselling. The clinic was donated as part of a technical assistance programme supported by the Russian Government implemented by UNAIDS in partnership with the Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer Rights Protection and Human Wellbeing (Rospotrebnadzor) and AIDS Infoshare.</p> <p>See also, in the U.S.: Why Not Test for HIV Along With COVID-19? (POZ)</p> | <p>Maintaining Robust HIV and Tuberculosis Services in the COVID-19 Era: A public health dilemma in Zimbabwe 23 September 2020, <i>International Journal of Infectious Diseases</i></p> <p>In Zimbabwe, many resources meant for HIV and TB programmes are being diverted to the COVID-19 response. This includes labs, equipment, health workers, and other resources. Fewer people are conducting HIV and TB testing. Strong mass media campaign on COVID-19 may be increasing fear and contributing to why patients with HIV, TB, and other chronic disease are not attending facilities. The author notes that there is an urgent need to protect HIV and TB services from the verticalization of COVID-19 services, especially at some of the better-resourced national health institutions.</p> |

SELECTED RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

COVID-19 Characteristics in People Living with HIV

According to research presented at IDWeek, held virtually 21-25 October 2020, the prevalence of HIV among patients hospitalized with COVID-19 appears to be higher compared with the general population. The analysis examined 14 studies with 144,795 patients hospitalized with COVID-19; 592 among those were living with HIV. The pooled prevalence of HIV in patients with COVID-19 was 1.22% (95% CI, 0.61-2.43%), double the prevalence of 0.65% (95% CI, 0.48-0.89%) in the general population. See: [People with HIV May Have a Higher Susceptibility to COVID-19](#)

R&D for COVID-19 Vaccines and Therapeutics

A commentary for [The Lancet](#) suggested that some COVID-19 vaccines contain a certain adenovirus strain that could make people more susceptible to HIV. The researchers refer to four vaccine candidates containing adenovirus 5, or Ad5, as a “vector” to carry in the surface protein gene of SARS-CoV-2. They noted that in a clinical trial they conducted for an experimental HIV vaccine more than 10 years ago, they found that uncircumcised men who had been naturally infected with Ad5 before receiving the vaccine were more vulnerable to HIV. See: [Could certain COVID-19 vaccines leave people more vulnerable to the AIDS virus?](#)

The clinical trials for a vaccine candidate at Oxford University [will soon include](#) a subgroup study to understand immune responses in people living with HIV. The HIV substudy will enroll 60 adults with HIV and continue for a year. Pfizer [broadened](#) the clinical trials of its vaccine candidate to include children as well as people with HIV, hepatitis B, or hepatitis C.

The combination antiretroviral pill Kaletra (lopinavir/ritonavir), which is used to treat HIV, [did not appear](#) to be useful to treat COVID-19 in people with moderate to severe symptoms in the large RECOVERY trial. The trial enrolled around 12,000 COVID-19 patients at 176 hospitals in the UK. Findings were published in [The Lancet](#). From Madrid, a study in the [Open Forum Infectious Diseases](#) suggests that tenofovir-based HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) does not provide protection against SARS-CoV-2 infections or improve the course of COVID-19 disease.

Impact of COVID-19 on People Living with HIV

The Union’s Centre for Operational Research released the [mid-term report](#) of the impact of COVID-19 on TB case detection and treatment and HIV testing and treatment in the capital cities of Kenya, Malawi and Zimbabwe. The analyses included: (1) a direct comparison of 6-month aggregate TB and HIV numbers between March-August 2019 and March-August 2020 and (2) trends in key TB and HIV numbers in the COVID-19 period related to interventions designed to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus on TB and HIV services. Overall, Nairobi, Lilongwe and Harare saw marked declines in TB case finding and HIV testing during the first six-months of the COVID-19 outbreak.

A study presented at IDWeek noted that the COVID-19 pandemic did not cause HIV treatment interruptions during the numerous global trials assessing long-acting cabotegravir and rilpivirine for ART. The analysis included 1,744 patients in six trials conducted in 16 countries; overall, 93 per cent saw no pandemic-related interruptions to their dosing schedule. See: [Pandemic did not interrupt HIV treatment during trials assessing long-acting ART](#)

A [short report in *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*](#) described the early impact that COVID-19 and associated control measures on the sexual behaviour of PrEP users in Wales. The researchers used online surveys that questions about PrEP use, sex and relationships, health behaviours and beliefs, symptoms commonly attributed to PrEP use, and healthcare contacts. The introduction of social distancing measures and changes to PrEP services in Wales was associated with a marked reduction in reports of condomless sexual intercourse. There was a larger reduction in those who were single compared with those who were not.

The recent issue of *AIDS and Behaviour* included the following articles on the impact of COVID-19 on HIV services and people living with HIV:

- [Covid-19 and Gender in LMICs: Potential Lessons from HIV Pandemic](#)
- [“Everything is a Mess”: How COVID-19 is Impacting Engagement with HIV Testing Services in Rural Southwestern Uganda](#)
- [Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on HIV Testing and Assisted Partner Notification Services, Western Kenya](#)
- [Reimagining the Future of HIV Service Implementation in the Philippines Based on Lessons from COVID-19](#)
- [COVID-19 Lockdowns: Impact on Facility-Based HIV Testing and the Case for the Scaling Up of Home-Based Testing Services in Sub-Saharan Africa](#)
- [When Home is Not a Safe Place: Impacts of Social Distancing Directives on Women Living with HIV](#)

COVID-19 AND SECONDARY IMPACTS

UN Chief Urges Greater Investment in Universal Health Coverage, Starting Now

7 October 2020, *UN News*

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres launched his latest policy brief, “[COVID-19 and Universal Health Coverage](#)”. The Secretary-General called for greater investments in universal health coverage in light of the COVID-19 pandemic’s renewed emphasis on the need for strong public health systems and emergency preparedness globally.

WHO: Global TB progress at risk

14 October 2020, *WHO*

A report from WHO suggests that global targets for TB prevention and treatment will likely be missed without urgent action. In 2019, approximately 1.4 million people died from TB-related illnesses and disruptions in services due to COVID-19 have led to further setbacks. Data from over 200 countries show significant reductions in TB case notifications; in the three high-burden countries (India, Indonesia, Philippines), there were 25-30 per cent drops in case notifications between January and June 2020 compared to the same period in 2019.

See also: [1.8M people could die from tuberculosis in 2020: WHO](#) (*Devex*)

Africa 'Needs \$1.2tn' to Recover Coronavirus Losses

10 October 2020, *BBC*

The International Monetary Fund notes that Africa needs US\$1.2 trillion over the next three years to recover from the economic damage and health costs caused by the pandemic. IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva called for an extension of the moratorium by the G20 of debt repayments and asked for more funds to be available to lend.

Pandemic Driving Children Back to Work, Jeopardizing Gains

15 October 2020, *Associated Press*

The COVID-19 pandemic is disrupting children’s access to education and causing more instances of child labor. UNICEF noted that the repercussions would be felt in economies and societies for decades to come. For at least 463 million children, there is no possibility of remote learning during the pandemic when the schools are closed. In many countries, children are going to work to support families facing financial crises due to COVID-19 and related restrictions.

See also: [Keeping girls in school seen worth billions to developing nations](#) (*Reuters*)

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Leveraging the Advances in HIV for COVID-19

3 October 2020, *The Lancet*

In this commentary, experts note how advances in confronting the global HIV epidemic have had a positive impact on the COVID-19 response. Lessons learnt from scaling up community testing for HIV and delivering ART particularly to people with limited access to care or those experiencing disproportionate barriers will be applicable in the roll-out of COVID-19 treatments and vaccines. Investments in COVID-19 research will also benefit HIV testing, treatment, and prevention.

COVID-19, Ebola, and HIV — Leveraging Lessons to Maximize Impact

7 October 2020, *The New England Journal of Medicine*

Researchers with experience in HIV/AIDS and Ebola write about the need to build COVID-19 responses based on the lessons the response to both infectious diseases. A specific point is ensuring interventions are not siloed into biomedical and behavioral categories since preventive and therapeutic interventions such as testing, masking, and staying in quarantine all have social components. There is also a need to build and sustain public trust particularly through community partnerships.

Lessons from AIDS for the COVID-19 Pandemic

3 October 2020, *Scientific American*

Professor William A. Haseltine writes about how the COVID-19 response should be built on the lessons learned from tackling HIV. From the decades of the war against AIDS, doctors, virologists, epidemiologists and public health experts have learned crucial lessons that can be applied to COVID-19. This includes not relying on vaccines as guarantees, understanding the importance of human behavior, and building on the knowledge and tools gained while fighting earlier outbreaks.

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

| | | |
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| <p>The Pandemic Paradox - HIV on the Edge VIDEOS Jul-Oct 2020</p> <p>The CSIS Global Health Policy Center (GHPC) presents a docuseries and feature film on the risk of a resurgent HIV/AIDS epidemic. The project features many prominent voices on HIV/AIDS, such as the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony Fauci and former UNAIDS Chief Peter Piot.</p> | <p>ENGAGED AND HEARD! Guidelines on Adolescent Participation and Civic Engagement October 2020</p> <p>UNICEF released guidelines to support meaningful and equitable adolescent participation and civic engagement, included for HIV. This includes guidance on: conceptual understanding, main strategies and key interventions, organizational commitment and processes, and monitoring and evaluation.</p> | <p>The Impact of COVID-19 on Adolescent Girls and Young Women and Needed Responses 15 October 2020</p> <p>The Friends of the Global Fight released an issue brief on the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on adolescent girls and young women, who are particularly impacted by HIV/ AIDS, TB and malaria.</p> |
| <p>PEPFAR Technical Guidance in Context of COVID-19 Pandemic UPDATED 28 October 2020</p> <p>PEPFAR updated its technical guidance. The latest additions are included in the sections on HIV treatment for children, integrated women's health, OVC, and faith and community-based organizations.</p> | <p>aidsmapWOMEN: Taking care of your health/COVID-19 special VIDEO October 2020</p> <p>In this Aidsmap series for women living with HIV, Susan Cole talks to her guests about the issues women with HIV are experiencing during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> | <p>Conference Bulletins: HIV Glasgow 2020 October 2020</p> <p>The 2020 International Congress on Drug Therapy in HIV Infection (HIV Glasgow) took place from 5 to 8 October 2020. <i>NAM aidsmap</i> has summaries of the research presented.</p> |
| <p>The HIV and COVID-19 Global Pandemics - Lessons for responding to both viruses WEBINAR 26 October 2020</p> <p>The 2020 Melbourne University Chemical Society's Lady Masson Lecture featured Professor Sharon Lewin AO, Director of the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection Control and Immunity, discussing lessons from HIV and COVID-19 responses.</p> | <p>Highlights from the 51st Union World Conference on Lung Health October 2020</p> <p>Conference sessions and e-posters from the 51st Union World Conference on Lung Health are available for registered participants to watch on the conference platform until 30 November.</p> | <p>Live with Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim: COVID-19 and its Global Impact WEBINAR 29 October 2020</p> <p>Friends of the Global Fight Against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria hosted a conversation with Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim to discuss focusing on women in the COVID-19 and HIV responses.</p> |

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 4 November 2020: Frontline AIDS hosts a discussion on "A People's vaccine for COVID-19: What does it mean to the HIV movement and why should we get involved?." 11a-12p CET. >> [Register](#)
- 12 November 2020: CHAI hosts a webinar to discuss key trends in the HIV space, including COVID-19's impact. "Ensuring HIV Care Continuity and Market Stability During COVID-19." 8am-9am ET. >> [More](#)
- 16-17 November 2020: The International Workshop on HIV Pediatrics focuses on research in HIV prevention and treatment in a paediatric population. This year, it will include sessions on COVID-19 in children. >> [More](#)
- 2 February 2021: The International AIDS Society (IAS) announced its second COVID-19 virtual meeting focused on infection prevention ahead of HIV Research for Prevention Conference (HIVR4P). >> [More](#)

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

COVID-19 and HIV: November Digest

4 December 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.

The digest is now published monthly. For previous issues: childrenandaids.org/covid19/digest

COVID-19: IMPACT ON THE HIV EPIDEMIC AND PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

Study Shows How COVID-19 Is Impacting Access to HIV Care in the Russian Federation

27 November 2020, *UNAIDS*

A [new study](#) described the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to HIV care in the Russian Federation, noting that people living with HIV were less likely to seek testing for COVID-19. More than 900 people from 68 regions of the Russian Federation responded to a survey. Of those living with HIV, more than a third reported some impact on HIV services; however, the majority did not experience problems obtaining ART.

320,000 children and adolescents newly infected with HIV in 2019, 1 every 100 seconds – UNICEF

25 November 2020, *UNICEF*

UNICEF's [new report](#) highlights gaps in the global HIV response for children adolescents and pregnant women. Inequities in accessing HIV services have been exacerbated by COVID-19. In a survey of 29 HIV priority countries, a third noted that HIV service coverage for children, adolescents and women living with and vulnerable to HIV decreased by 10 per cent or more compared to coverage before the pandemic. *See also:* [Media launch](#)

Can HIV Meds Interact With COVID-19 Treatment? Here's What We Know So Far

24 November 2020, *TheBody*

In the U.S., the Centers for AIDS Research Network of Integrated Clinical Systems (CNICS) is studying drug interactions between approved COVID-19 medicines and antiretrovirals for HIV with data from 15,000 people living with HIV. The researchers present the findings thus far on COVID-19 treatments in people living with HIV.

COVID-19 Controls Used to Arrest, Torture HIV Sufferers

25 November 2020, *SciDev.Net*

A report by SciDev.Net and the Bureau of Investigative Journalism notes that people living with HIV have been arrested and denied medication during the pandemic. Lockdown regulations have been exceptionally discriminatory against members of the LGBTQI community.

Unstable Housing Explains Higher Rates of COVID-19 in People with HIV in San Francisco

5 November 2020, *Aidsmap*

A [report](#) in the *JAIDS* from San Francisco notes that half of people living with HIV who tested positive for COVID-19 had housing problems. While the city averaged a positivity rate of 3.5 per cent when testing for COVID-19 among those without HIV, the positivity rate among people with HIV was 4.5 per cent.

HIV Infections Drop by a Third

23 November 2020, *SWI*

In Switzerland, new HIV infections reported at the end of 2020 dropped by about a third compared to the same period last year. The Swiss AIDS Federation attributes this to the COVID-19 pandemic, noting that the drop may be due to decreases in HIV testing coverage or because the restrictions have impacted sexual behavior.

Progress in AIDS Fight Despite Corona

20 November 2020, *The Southern Times*

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Executive Secretary noted that SADC member states have made significant progress in the HIV response despite challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the virtual conference, progress in Eswatini, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe toward the 90-90-90 targets were highlighted.

HIV: New diagnoses among gay and bisexual men at lowest level in 20 years

6 November 2020, *The Guardian*

A Public Health England (PHE) report found that new HIV diagnoses dropped by 10 per cent this year and noted the infection rate was falling even before the pandemic and lockdown reduced sexual contacts. PHE said the decline could be attributed to HIV prevention measures and more effective treatment options that reduce viral loads to undetectable and untransmissible levels.

See also: [COVID-19 Committee Chair Notes Decrease in TB and HIV Testing in South Africa](#)

COVID-19 RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Updates on Vaccine Development

Pfizer and BioNTech [reported](#) results from a COVID-19 vaccine trial of almost 44,000 participants showing a 95 per cent efficacy rate. The primary analysis included 170 cases of COVID-19 in study participants without prior infection of SARS-CoV-2; among these, there were 162 cases of COVID-19 in the placebo group and 8 cases in the group receiving the vaccine candidate. They also reported meeting the safety milestones defined by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for Emergency Use Authorization. *See also:* [Bloomberg](#)

Moderna [reported](#) a 94.5 per cent efficacy rate with 30,000 volunteers in Phase 3 trials of its vaccine candidate. The primary analysis included 196 cases of COVID-19; of these, 185 cases were in the placebo group and 11 were in the

group receiving the vaccine candidate. There were no severe cases of COVID-19 in the group receiving the vaccine. The company also reported meeting the safety milestone set by the US FDA for Emergency Use Authorization. See also: [NPR](#)

The University of Oxford and AstraZeneca's vaccine candidate [reported](#) that their vaccine is 70.4 per cent effective when combining data from two dosing regimens. The results showed a 90 per cent efficacy rate when trial participants received a half dose followed by a full dose at least one month apart; when two full doses were given at least one month apart, the study reported 62 per cent efficacy. See also: [Wall Street Journal](#)

Other vaccine topics of note: Efficacy, which is reported by these clinical trials, and effectiveness, which is how well the vaccine prevents infections in the real world, are not the same measurement ([New York Times](#)). The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and the Moderna candidates are mRNA vaccines while the AstraZeneca-Oxford candidate is adenovirus-based using a chimpanzee viral vector ([BioSpace](#)). There are also other COVID-19 vaccine candidates with different mechanisms currently in Phase 3 trials ([Regulatory Focus tracker](#)). See also:

- Clinical Outcomes of a COVID-19 Vaccine: Implementation over efficacy ([Health Affairs](#))
- COVID-19 Vaccines Poised for Launch, But Impact on Pandemic Unclear ([Nature](#))

Vaccine Approvals and Policy

The UK [authorized](#) the vaccine from Pfizer and BioNTech, becoming the first country to approve the vaccine. The Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisations (JCVI) recommended priority groups to receive the vaccine, including healthcare workers, care home residents, the elderly and the clinically extremely vulnerable. Roll-out will begin in the first week of December with 800,000 doses ([Al Jazeera](#)).

In the US, a decision on the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine by the FDA is expected in the first week of December. The CDC noted that once the FDA provides authorization for a vaccine, its Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) will hold a public meeting to review available data and make recommendations. The [current recommendations](#) once a COVID-19 vaccine is authorized for the initial phase (Phase 1a) of vaccine delivery is for healthcare personnel and residents of long-term care facilities.

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) is [considering](#) conditional marketing authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines, and conducting a rolling review of the Oxford-AstraZeneca candidate. The agency also [started](#) a rolling review of a candidate from Johnson & Johnson.

The American Academy of Pediatrics [called](#) for vaccine manufacturers to include children in vaccine trials. Due to limited data, COVID-19 vaccines [may not be recommended](#) for children by the US CDC.

Updates on COVID-19 Therapeutics

The ANTICOV study, which involves a network of 13 African countries and global researchers, was [launched](#). It is an adaptive platform trial that is also the largest clinical trial of potential COVID-19 treatments in Africa. The study will test treatments among 2,000 to 3,000 persons with mild-to-moderate symptoms in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Sudan, and Uganda. It will include testing the HIV combination drug lopinavir-ritonavir and the malaria medicine hydroxychloroquine. ([The Guardian](#))

In the US, the Food and Drug Administration [granted](#) emergency authorization for the experimental antibody treatment from Regeneron Pharmaceuticals for individuals aged 12 and over who have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 and are at high risk for developing severe symptoms. The antibody cocktail is made up of casirivimab and imdevimab. ([New York Times](#)) Earlier this month, the agency [issued](#) emergency use authorization for the investigational monoclonal antibody therapy bamlanivimab from Eli Lilly, also for patients over age 12 who tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 viral testing and are at high risk for severe COVID-19 and/or hospitalization. ([BMJ](#))

- See also: [Doctors Deploy Antibody Drugs Against COVID-19 and Hope Effort's Worthwhile](#) (NPR)

Updates on Global Initiatives for Access and Delivery

UNICEF is [partnering](#) with Gavi and WHO to prepare for deployment of COVID-19 vaccines and vaccine supplies. It is working with 350 global airlines and freight providers to facilitate transport and delivery of nearly [2 billion](#) COVID-19 vaccines to 92 low- and middle-income countries next year. ([Devex](#))

- See also: [Launch and Scale Speedometer](#), a data and analyses tool mapping publicly available data on vaccine agreements between countries and pharmaceutical companies ([Duke Global Health Innovation Center](#))

The International Coalition of Medicines Regulatory Authorities (ICMRA) and the WHO [committed](#) to take actions to improve global regulatory alignment for therapeutics and vaccines against COVID-19 that are supported by robust scientific evidence. They also pledged working together to ensure equitable access to safe, effective and quality-assured medicines for COVID-19 treatment or prevention.

Over US \$2 billion [has been raised](#) for the COVID-19 Vaccines Advance Market Commitment (COVAX AMC) so far with contributions from governments, the private sector and philanthropic sources. The [COVAX Facility](#) now includes 94 higher-income countries that will be self-financing and 92 low- and middle-income countries that will be supported by the COVAX AMC.

ADAPTING HIV PROGRAMMES AND HEALTH SYSTEMS TO COVID-19

Maintaining the HIV response in a world shaped by COVID-19

28 November 2020, *The Lancet*

Study: Delay lab tests in low-risk HIV patients to minimize COVID-19 exposure

23 November 2020, *Healio*

This editorial highlighted how the HIV response is being adapted in the COVID-19 context and how these adaptations may help rejuvenate the HIV response. While in many countries, HIV services including prevention, testing and treatment were disrupted, there were also increases in home deliveries of medicines, multi-month ART delivery, and the use of digital platforms.

[A Tale of Two Jamaican Clinics during COVID-19](#)

3 November 2020, *UNAIDS*

HIV service providers in Jamaica are responding to new challenges caused by COVID-19 as well as the long-standing barriers in service delivery. In this brief, UNAIDS Country Director Manoela Manova speaks about these issues with providers at two treatment sites.

A poster presentation in IDWeek recommended that it may be beneficial to delay liver, renal and lipid testing in low-risk patients living with HIV to minimize their exposure to COVID-19. Current guidelines recommend periodic laboratory renal, liver and lipid testing in patients with HIV on ART.

[COVID-19 antibody testing for HIV positive people in the UK: HIV organisations reverse previous exclusion](#)

11 November 2020, HIV i-Base

Several organizations led by the British HIV Association (BHIVA) challenged a UK guideline excluding people living with HIV from getting a free COVID-19 antibody test. Due to their intervention noting the lack of evidence for this exclusion criteria, HIV and other immune-related conditions have now been removed.

SELECTED RESEARCH ON HIV AND COVID-19

[The interplay between HIV and COVID-19 summary of the data and responses to date](#)

11 November 2020, *Current Opinion in HIV and AIDS*

This review describes the evidence so far on the HIV and COVID-19 epidemics, including the impact of HIV on COVID-19 susceptibility and severe disease, the effect of the COVID-19 epidemic on HIV prevention and treatment, and the influence of the HIV epidemic on responses to COVID-19. Studies do not support a higher risk of severe COVID-19 among those living with HIV but the pandemic is threatening progress made in the fight against HIV.

[New pathogen, same disparities: Why COVID-19 and HIV remain prevalent in U.S. communities of colour and implications for ending the HIV epidemic](#)

28 October 2020, *Journal of the International AIDS Society*

This article discusses why communities of color in the US are at greater risk for both COVID-19 and HIV, and assesses challenges to the country's Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) Initiative after the pandemic. The authors cite racism and discrimination as a risk for COVID-19 as well as HIV, and calls for structural change to eliminate conditions that give rise to and maintain disparities.

[The COVID-19 pandemic as a catalyst for differentiated care models to end the HIV epidemic in the U.S. – applying lessons from high-burden settings](#)

5 November 2020, *AIDS*

The authors outline the role of differentiated service delivery (DSD), an HIV care model that combines aspects of facility- and community-based care and healthcare worker- or peer-led care processes that originated in sub-Saharan Africa. They describe its potential for improving the COVID-19 response in the US.

[HIV and COVID-19: Twin Epidemics](#)

30 October 2020, *Infectious Disease Special Edition*

This review article summarizes the literature through August 2020 on the intersection of the HIV and COVID-19 epidemics, including questions like: does HIV infection increase susceptibility to SARS-CoV-2 infection or severe outcomes? Does ART affect the risks of SARS-CoV-2 infection or worse outcomes? Are there any considerations for COVID-19 treatments in people living with HIV? Is the COVID-19 pandemic affecting HIV care and prevention?

[COVID-19 pandemic and continuum of care in people living with HIV: the experience of a hospital in Northern Italy](#)

4 November 2020, *BMC*

In this observational study from a hospital in Brescia, Italy, the percentage of missed clinic visits for those living with HIV increased, routine HIV testing decreased, and the distribution of ART decreased during the pandemic. The authors note the importance of new strategies, such as telephone interviews and telemedicine programs for improved continuity of HIV care. Women and immigrants were more likely to experience disrupted care.

[COVID-19 infection among people with HIV in New York City: A population-level analysis of linked surveillance data](#)

30 November 2020, *Clinical Infectious Diseases*

The researchers working with data from New York City described characteristics and outcomes of people living with HIV who were diagnosed with COVID-19 compared to people living with HIV in the city and people who were diagnosed with COVID-19. Compared to cases of COVID-19 overall, people living with HIV had more severe symptoms of COVID-19 and adverse outcomes. The researchers noted that this could be due to higher prevalence of other risk factors associated with poor COVID-19 outcomes, such as age and comorbidities.

COVID-19 AND IMPACTS ON CHILDREN

[COVID-19: A catastrophe for children in sub-Saharan Africa](#)

26 November 2020, *UNICEF*

A UNICEF analysis examined how the wellbeing of children in sub-Saharan Africa was affected by COVID-19 and other shocks, particularly among children already facing many challenges. The report presents evidence on cash transfers for children, families and economies.

See also: [5 ways COVID-19 has affected children in Sub-Saharan Africa](#) (World Economic Forum)

[Sweden Recommends Children of COVID Sufferers Should Stay at Home](#)

30 November 2020, *Financial Times*

Sweden's public health agency published new [recommendations](#) asking children who live with someone with a SARS-CoV-2 infection to stay at home, revising previous advice that they should go to school unlike adults who should quarantine. The agency has generally not advised restrictions for asymptomatic individuals.

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| <p>Child Marriages Are Up in the Pandemic. Here's How India Tries to Stop Them 5 November 2020, <i>NPR</i></p> <p>There are reports globally that the COVID-19 pandemic is increasing the number of child marriages. In the Maharashtra state in India, officials stopped 208 child marriages between April through August 2020 compared to 116 in the 12 months from April 2019 and March 2020.</p> <p>See also: <i>From Schoolboy to Tea Seller: Covid poverty forces India's children into work</i> (<i>The Guardian</i>)</p> | <p>Vulnerable Children in Lockdown 'National Concern' 30 November 2020, <i>BBC</i></p> <p>England's chief inspector of schools noted that with long absences from school, signs of child abuse may be missed, and more efforts are needed to find overlooked cases. There are also concerns about additional pressure on families of children with special educational needs.</p> <p>See also, video: Burnley: 'Children ripping bags open for food' during pandemic (<i>BBC</i>)</p> |
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EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

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| <p>Turning the Tide: The fight to reclaim gains and accelerate progress for women and children 10 November 2020, <i>World Bank</i></p> <p>The blog comes out of a discussion organized by the GFF and held on the sidelines of the World Health Summit. Panelists highlighted a need to double down on efforts to protect gains and promote progress for women, children and adolescents.</p> | <p>We need these two policies to drive our recovery from COVID-19 17 November 2020, <i>World Economic Forum</i></p> <p>Director of HIV, Health and Development Group, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Mandeep Dhaliwal writes about the importance of temporary basic income and universal health coverage for COVID-19 recovery.</p> | <p>COVID crisis is threatening an HIV resurgence 16 November 2020, <i>NOW</i></p> <p>Laurie Edmiston, executive director of CATIE, highlights the importance of efficiently delivering HIV services during the pandemic to continue the progress made in the HIV response. This includes scaling up HIV self-testing and providing at-home PrEP services.</p> |
| <p>The pandemic is Triggering Another Disaster: Untreated diseases 19 November 2020, <i>The Washington Post</i></p> <p>This editorial notes the impact of the pandemic on other diseases, including HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and noncommunicable diseases. Lockdowns, transportation disruptions, reallocated resources, shortage of staff have all affected programmes for other diseases.</p> | <p>Why exciting results from vaccine research are just the beginning of efforts to end COVID-19 19 November 2020, <i>Devex</i></p> <p>AVAC Executive Director Mitchell Warren outlines lessons from the HIV response to argue that more than biomedical tools like vaccines are needed for COVID-19. For example, as with HIV, we need harm reduction approaches that reduce risks even if they cannot be eliminated.</p> | <p>COVID-19, Ebola, and HIV — Leveraging Lessons to Maximize Impact 5 November 2020, <i>The New England Journal of Medicine</i></p> <p>HIV researchers write about lessons from HIV and Ebola outbreaks for this pandemic; these include engaging communities to build trust, including well-designed clinical trials and a combination of interventions, and having multidisciplinary teams.</p> |

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

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| <p>Prevailing against Pandemics by Putting People at the Centre 26 November 2020</p> <p>In this new report, UNAIDS calls on countries to make more investments in global pandemic responses and adopt a new set of bold, ambitious but achievable HIV targets.</p> | <p>Averting a Lost COVID Generation November 2020</p> <p>On World Children's Day, UNICEF released a six-point plan to respond, recover and reimagine a post-pandemic world for every child. It takes stock of the global impact of COVID-19 on children and young people. See: New York Times</p> | <p>Beyond Masks: Societal impacts of COVID-19 and accelerated solutions for children and adolescents November 2020</p> <p>This report from UNICEF Office of Research provides a review of the societal impacts of COVID-19 on children and adolescents along with a review of past health and economic shocks, and possible solutions for mitigating impact.</p> |
| <p>Challenges and Opportunities for Patients with HIV During COVID-19 VIDEO 20 November 2020</p> <p>On AJMC, experts discuss myths about HIV and COVID-19, explain which patients are at risk, and outline strategies to help reduce risks.</p> | <p>PEPFAR Technical Guidance in Context of COVID-19 Pandemic UPDATED 18 November 2020</p> <p>PEPFAR updated technical guidance highlights the feedback form for civil society organizations to comment on the guidance.</p> | <p>HIV/AIDS and SRHR in Asia Pacific RECORDING 23 November 2020</p> <p>At the Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Health Rights (APCRSHR10), the UNAIDS Regional Director spoke about solidarity, accountability and the intersection of HIV and COVID-19 (slides).</p> |

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **7 December 2020:** The International AIDS Society (IAS) is hosting the next webinar in the COVID-19 and HIV webinar series – “Latest updates and guidance”. 13:30 CET >> [Register](#)
- **2 February 2021:** IAS announced its second COVID-19 virtual meeting focused on infection prevention ahead of HIV Research for Prevention Conference (HIVR4P). >> [More](#)

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