

COVID-19 and HIV: Weekly Digest

8 May 2020

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

COVID-19 AND THE HIV RESPONSE

[A COVID-19 Conference at AIDS 2020: Virtual](#)

30 April 2020, *The Lancet*

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, AIDS 2020 will be a virtual conference on 6–10 July 2020. The International AIDS Society and partners will focus on HIV science and the theme of resilience. The final day will be the [IAS Virtual COVID-19 Conference](#) on COVID-19 research, policy and frontline experience.

[New Platform for a Coordinated Response against COVID-19 Launched in Central African Republic](#)

1 May 2020, Press release

In the Central African Republic, civil society organizations launched "[Solidarity for Action](#)", a new platform to ensure mobilization and coordinated actions for the continued access to services for HIV, TB and malaria as well as respect for human rights.

[UNAIDS Urges Countries to Stay Focused on HIV Prevention during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

6 May 2020, Press Release

Three new documents by UNAIDS and partners look at how to maintain and prioritize HIV prevention, including measures to address violence against women and children, maintain supply chains and sustain livelihoods.

[Demand for Coronavirus Tests Raises Concerns Over HIV and Malaria](#)

1 May 2020, *The Guardian*

There are fears that the rush for expanding coronavirus testing will come at the cost of producing testing kits for HIV, tuberculosis and malaria.

[U.K. Lockdown Has 'Broken HIV Chain' With Huge Reduction in New STI Cases](#)

1 May 2020, *Forbes*

UK-based sexual health advocates are reporting a reduction in new sexually transmitted infections. This could be due to strict movement restrictions during the lockdown period.

[A Shadow Medical Safety Net, Stretched to the Limit](#)

6 May 2020, *New York Times*

Community health centers in the U.S. serve vulnerable, populations, including people living with HIV. These small centers are even more strained during this pandemic. See also: '[How a Crowded Clinic \[in South Africa\] Makes It Work during COVID-19](#)'

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS AND CHILDREN

[More reports and conversations on an inflammatory syndrome among children related to SARS-CoV-2](#)

The global community is continuing to learn more about inflammatory symptoms similar to the Kawasaki syndrome that were observed in children. According to a news briefing last week, the WHO [is investigating](#) links between the syndrome and coronavirus in children.

On Monday, a New York City [bulletin](#) asked doctors to report cases and mentioned 15 such cases among children, ages 2 to 15, in the city. By May 5, a [health advisory](#) noted 64 potential cases in New York State.

Some doctors are calling it "paediatric multisystem inflammatory syndrome." The cause of the syndrome and reasons for variation are still unclear. See: [New York Times](#), [Washington Post](#)

In the UK, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health [published a working definition](#) of the syndrome, noting possible symptoms and diagnostic information known so far.

[Uncertainty on SARS-CoV-2 transmission among children](#)

While governments across the world consider reopening schools, the evidence around children's susceptibility to the SARS-CoV-2 infection and their rates of transmission remains unclear.

In one study, [published](#) in *Science*, data from Wuhan and Shanghai in China suggests children were about a third as susceptible to the infection as adults but when schools were open, their increased exposure evened out that difference in risk. Some epidemiologists suggest that schools should be kept closed. See: [New York Times](#)

According to experts, research on the impact of the novel coronavirus on children needs to continue even after schools open to understand transmission events in real-time. See: [Science](#)

UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP and World Bank [issued guidelines](#) on the safe reopening of schools and noted documented adverse effects of school closures on safety and learning.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Global research collaboration to identify crucial clinical strategies for people living with COVID-19 and HIV
29 April 2020, Press Release

A multi-country study by the Kirby Institute at UNSW Sydney and funded by Unitaid and ViiV Healthcare will determine risk factors for COVID-19 among people living with HIV.

Study to Determine Incidence of Novel Coronavirus Infection in U.S. Children Begins

4 May 2020, Press Release

The now-enrolling HEROS study from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) will help determine the rate of SARS-CoV-2 infections in U.S children and family.

World leaders pledge billions for research into coronavirus vaccine

4 May 2020, *Euro News*

The European Union led a pledging event that raised €7.5 for COVID-19 research, which will be spent over the next two years to support promising initiatives across the world. See also: [UN News](#)

GLOBAL IMPACT OF COVID-19

Tuberculosis Can Backslide To 2013 Levels, New Study Reveals

6 May 2020, *Devex*

Tuberculosis cases could increase by up to 11 per cent globally between 2020 and 2025 under a 3-month lockdown, according to [modelling](#) by the Stop TB Partnership.

Exclusive: Virus exposes gaping holes in Africa's health systems

7 May 2020, *Reuters*

A Reuters survey of 48 countries in Africa highlight the shortage of critical care infrastructure and gaps in testing in the context of COVID-19.

Combating Coronavirus

5 May 2020, *Financial Times*

This special report describes efforts to ensure fair access to new COVID-19 vaccines and treatments in low-income countries and to address the threat of antimicrobial resistance.

Development Heavyweights Back Bigger Role for DFIs in COVID-19 Response

4 May 2020, *Devex*

European development finance institutions (DFIs) need more resources and policies to better support the private sector in Africa through the COVID-19 crisis. See also: [Virus 'could undo 30 years of UK's international development work'](#).

South Africa's Mass Screening Helps Stem the Coronavirus Tide

5 May 2020, *Financial Times*

South Africa's active case finding approach, drawn from the country's experiences with HIV and TB, differs from most European governments who have relied on citizens reporting for tests and then tracing contacts.

President Trump Announces Remdesivir Authorized for Emergency COVID-19 Treatment

1 May 2020, *HIV.gov*

The investigational drug remdesivir was authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat adults and children hospitalized with severe COVID-19. President Trump's [remarks](#) also mentioned 'Ending the HIV Epidemic: A Plan for America'.

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Listen: Things can change in an instant

5 May 2020, *The Atlantic*

Gregg Gonsalves, an epidemiologist and AIDS activist, describes parallels between HIV/AIDS in the 1980s and 1990s and today's pandemic.

What Asian Nations Know About Squashing Covid-19

3 May 2020, *CNN*

Professor Jeffrey Sachs highlights lessons for the U.S. and other regions from countries in the Asia Pacific that have successfully controlled the pandemic.

COVID-19 Exposes Global 'Frailties and Inequalities'

3 May 2020, *UN News*

UN Secretary-General Amina Mohammed discusses the compounding threats, calling COVID-19 a health, humanitarian and development emergency.

We Must Act Together to Beat COVID-19 In Africa

1 May 2020, *UN DESA*

Winnie Byanyima of UNAIDS recommends COVID-19 approaches for Africa, drawing on HIV experiences in community-led services and prioritizing human rights.

Ethiopia's Prime Minister Calls on Developed Countries to Help Africa through COVID-19

3 May 2020, *World Economic Forum*

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed calls for debt relief and financial aid to support Africa's COVID-19 response and mitigate the impact of shutdowns.

Modi Government's Targeting of Minorities for COVID Repeats Old Mistakes of HIV Pandemic

2 May 2020, *The Caravan*

With consideration of the effects of stigma in the initial years of the HIV epidemic, India should note the stigmatization of minority communities in the COVID-19 response.

COVID-19 Crisis Underlines Value of African Research Investment

5 May 2020, *Science Business*

The European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) issued grants in 37 African countries. Its director describes the role of these investments.

COVID-19: Shining the light on Africa

5 May 2020, *American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*

This editorial describes the current landscape and successes of the COVID-19 response in Africa, and describes tools and approaches for regional and global partners.

AROUND THE UNITED NATIONS

- The Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility (PEF) [allocated](#) US\$195.84 million to 64 of the world's poorest countries with reported cases of COVID-19.
- The 'Protect Our Children' initiative was [launched](#) by the European Union, Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) and members of the Group of Friends of Children and the SDGs.
- UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti is [mobilizing](#) a rapid research response covering reviews of evidence, education analysis, and social and economic policies.
- UNFPA launched a [campaign](#) to highlight the impact of COVID-19 on midwifery and maternal health.
- OCHA released [South Africa's emergency appeal](#) for the pandemic, including its impact on people with HIV.
- UN officials highlighted the [situation in Malawi](#) and warned that the pandemic could have a disastrous toll in the country. See also: [Stories from the field](#)
- UNAIDS [featured](#) a civil society organization that is ensuring access to ART during the outbreak in Indonesia.

- There has been a 70 to 80 per cent reduction in shipments for vaccines since late March and help is urgently needed for vaccine distribution, [according to UNICEF](#).

RECENT RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

<p>Report 19: The Potential Impact of the COVID-19 Epidemic on HIV, TB and Malaria in Low- and Middle-Income Countries 1 May 2020, <i>Imperial College London</i></p> <p>Researchers modelled the impact of COVID-19 on HIV, TB and malaria in low- and middle-income countries and predicted significant rises in cases and deaths. The greatest impact on HIV is estimated to be from interruption to supply and administering of ART; this could cause a 10 per cent rise in deaths over five years.</p>	<p>The Potential Impact of Interruptions to HIV Services: A Modelling Case Study for South Africa 27 April 2020, Preprint</p> <p>According to this modelling study in South Africa, the numbers of deaths caused by HIV could increase substantially if the COVID-19 epidemic leads to interruptions in the availability of HIV services. The paper compares COVID-19 mortality with predicted HIV-related mortality that are additional based on possible interruptions in HIV services.</p>
<p>Children with Covid-19 in Pediatric Emergency Departments in Italy 1 May 2020, <i>New England Journal of Medicine</i></p> <p>In this correspondence about the Coronavirus Infection in Pediatric Emergency Departments (CONFIDENCE) study, the author describes a cohort of 100 children with COVID-19 who were assessed between March 3 and March 27 in paediatric emergency departments in Italy.</p>	<p>The anti-HIV Drug Nelfinavir Mesylate (Viracept) is a Potent Inhibitor of Cell Fusion Caused by the SARS-CoV-2 Spike (S) Glycoprotein Warranting further Evaluation as an Antiviral against COVID-19 infections 6 May 2020, <i>Journal of Medical Virology</i></p> <p>A study on the impact of nelfinavir mesylate (brand name Viracept), a protease inhibitor developed for HIV, showed positive results in limiting the spread of the SARS-CoV-2.</p>
<p>COVID-19 pandemic in the African continent: Forecasts of cumulative cases, new infections, and mortality 28 April 2020, Preprint</p> <p>This pandemic model for Africa is intended to help policymakers and healthcare systems prepare for the outbreak by forecasting new cases and mortality rates in the region. See also: Yale News</p>	<p>Coronavirus Infections in Children Including COVID-19 An Overview of the Epidemiology, Clinical Features, Diagnosis, Treatment, Prevention Options in Children May 2020, <i>The Pediatrics Infectious Disease Journal</i></p> <p>In this review, the authors summarize characteristics and treatment and prevention options for coronavirus infections with a focus on infections in children.</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

<p>BHIVA COVID-19 interim adult antiretroviral guidance 1 May 2020</p> <p>The British HIV Association (BHIVA), the professional body of HIV clinicians in the UK, issued additional treatment guidelines during the pandemic and lockdown.</p>	<p>Dashboard: An analysis of COVID-19 funding in West and Central Africa 7 May 2020</p> <p>Devex is tracking and analyzing COVID-19-related pledges and relevant funding announcements directed to countries in West and Central Africa.</p>	<p>Synthesized Guidance for COVID-19 Message Development UPDATED 1 May 2020</p> <p>Breakthrough ACTION, a project funded by USAID, compiled resources from WHO, UNICEF, CDC and academic resources in this message guide for COVID-19.</p>
<p>Interim Guidance on Public Health and Social Measures for COVID-19 Preparedness and Response in Low Capacity and Humanitarian Settings 6 May 2020</p> <p>The Inter-Agency Standing Committee outlines key measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread and its impact, adapted for use in low capacity and humanitarian settings.</p>	<p>COVID-19: 4 Ways to Keep Gender in Focus 1 May 2020</p> <p>This brief from the Partnership to Inspire, Transform and Connect the HIV response (PITCH) describes four different areas where gender, HIV and COVID-19 intersect and how communities can respond.</p>	<p>Dashboard: COVID-19 Racial Disparities in U.S. Counties 2 May 2020</p> <p>amfAR released a dashboard based on its paper showing how disproportionately black counties in the U.S. are bearing the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>
<p>The Provision of Family Planning Services During COVID-19 – Considerations for DSD WEBINAR 5 May 2020</p> <p>This webinar from ICAP at Columbia University’s HIV Coverage, Quality, and Impact Network (CQUIN) project discussed sexual and reproductive services during COVID-19.</p>	<p>The power—and pitfalls—of modeling for COVID-19 and HIV WEBINAR 7 May 2020</p> <p>AVAC hosted a discussion on current COVID-19 models, and the benefits and limitations of mathematical models as they apply to both COVID-19 and HIV prevention.</p>	<p>COVID-19 Expert Series: Child and Adolescent Health with Zulfi Buttha VIDEO 27 April 2020</p> <p>Every Woman Every Child spoke with Zulfiqar Bhutta of the International Pediatric Association about the health and well-being of children and adolescents during the pandemic.</p>

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 12 May 2020: The CQUIN project’s series on differentiated service delivery and COVID-19 will continue with country updates from Zambia and Sierra Leone. 8am ET / 2pm SAST >> [More](#)

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