

COVID-19 and HIV: Weekly Digest

22 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 IMPACT ON HIV

<p>UPDATE: The high possible cost of COVID-19 on new HIV infections among children 19 May 2020, <i>UNAIDS</i></p> <p>New modelling suggests that with disruptions to HIV services for six months, new child HIV infections will rise drastically, by as much as 83 per cent in Mozambique, 106 per cent in Zimbabwe, 139 per cent in Uganda and 162 per cent in Malawi.</p>	<p>No Increased Risk of Severe COVID-19 in People Living with HIV, But Vigilance over Bacterial Pneumonia Required 18 May 2020, <i>aidsmap</i></p> <p>Recent studies of COVID-19 cases suggest that people living with HIV are not at higher risk of COVID-19, but preliminary results of a case series from New York showed a higher frequency of bacterial pneumonia in people living with HIV hospitalized with COVID-19.</p>	<p>How COVID-19 Has Affected the Needs of Young People Living with HIV and Young Key Populations in Indonesia 20 May 2020, <i>UNAIDS</i></p> <p>UNAIDS highlighted key findings from a survey by the Interagency Task Team (IATT) on Young Key Populations (YKPs) in Asia and the Pacific: 61 per cent of respondents on ART reported availability and security to access ART as an urgent need and 44 per cent of those living with HIV reported having less than one-month supply.</p>	<p>Almost 11,000 HIV-positive patients in Gauteng have skipped ARV collection during lockdown 19 May 2020, <i>Sowetan Live</i></p> <p>In South Africa, the Gauteng health department said thousands of patients living with HIV and TB who have failed to collect their medication since the start of the lockdown in March. The average reduction in medicine collections is 19.6 per cent for HIV. <i>See also:</i> COVID-19: Lockdown takes heavy toll on SA’s TB response</p>
<p>Over 145 TB patients Die in Agra Without Treatment during Lockdown 16 May 2020, <i>India Today</i></p> <p>In the past 54 days in Agra, India, the death toll of those living with TB is more than six times the usual number. Relatives note the lack of health consultations and medicines.</p>	<p>HIV Services Take a Backseat to COVID-19 in Russia 19 May 2020, <i>Inter Press Service</i></p> <p>As COVID-19 cases increase in Russia, those working with people living with HIV say they are experiencing problems in delivering HIV services.</p>	<p>Kenya: COVID-19 Likely to Undo HIV/AIDS Gains 14 May 2020, <i>Daily Nation</i></p> <p>In Kenya, health care facilities are reporting fewer patients living with HIV reporting to pick up their medications.</p>	<p>Uganda Women Fear Food Shortages Will Make Coronavirus and HIV a Deadly Mix 21 May 2020, <i>Reuters</i></p> <p>In Uganda, about 1.4 million people are living with HIV. For women, who are disproportionately affected, food shortages are especially worrying.</p>

ADAPTING HIV SERVICE DELIVERY

<p>You Can Get Tested for COVID-19 and HIV at the Same Time 20 May 2020, <i>The Citizen</i></p> <p>In South Africa, the department of health and Right to Care have included voluntary HIV testing and counselling in the mass door-to-door drive for COVID-19 screening and testing. <i>See also:</i> Actions to eliminate COVID-19 could work for HIV (Newsroom New Zealand)</p>	<p>Telehealth Seen as Future for Managing Patients With HIV 20 May 2020, <i>IDSE</i></p> <p>A University of Florida Health telehealth system presents a model for how to remotely manage patients with HIV during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>During COVID-19, HIV Medication in Ukraine Arrives by Post 19 May 2020, <i>The Global Fund</i></p> <p>In Ukraine, supported by the Global Fund, a local HIV community network 100% LIFE is organizing courier services that deliver ARVs and other medicines to homes. For people living with HIV in remote areas without postal services, their medication is delivered by car.</p>
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NOVEL CORONAVIRUS AND CHILDREN

WHO released its scientific brief, ‘[Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children and adolescents temporally related to COVID-19.](#)’ Last week, the [ECDC](#) and [CDC](#) had released case definitions of the Kawasaki-like inflammatory disease seen in children related to SARS-CoV-2 infections. Discussions on the syndrome continued this week. *See:*

- [Kawasaki disease—how does the coronavirus affect children?](#) (Economist podcast)
- [COVID-19 Chameleon: Has Kawasaki syndrome been linked to a viral illness all this while?](#) (Science Speaks)

Children with the multisystem inflammatory syndrome may develop acute cardiac decompensation, according to a new [study](#) in *Circulation*. Data from 35 children from France and Switzerland were included.

As governments consider reopening schools, policy makers and experts discuss the evidence around viral transmission by children.

- [Children with COVID-19 may be less contagious than adults, two UK epidemiologists say](#) (Reuters, 19 May)
- [Explainer: Do children spread COVID-19? Risks as schools consider reopening](#) (Reuters, 20 May)

Researchers are continuing to examine how and why the virus behaves differently in children compared to adults. Theories include the still-developing immune system in children and the role of T cells.

- [Why the Coronavirus Hits Kids and Adults So Differently](#) (The Atlantic, 15 May)
- [T cells play a role in fighting coronavirus; COVID-19 affects children differently](#) (Reuters, 19 May)

The Institute for Advanced Clinical Trials (I-ACT) for Children [announced](#) the launch of its COVID-19 Emergency Access Program, which allows any company developing COVID-19 treatments and vaccines to use the organization's paediatric research network and trial-planning experts to conduct clinical trials.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Governments Strike a Deal on COVID-19 Review, Equal Treatment Access

20 May 2020, *Devex*

At the World Health Assembly, countries backed an EU-led resolution on equal access to treatment and conducting an independent review of the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The resolution called for promoting access to health technologies, including through “existing mechanisms for voluntary pooling and licensing of patents.”

See also: [Drugs and Vaccines Are Coming—But to Whom?](#) (Foreign Affairs)

A New Entry in the Race for a Coronavirus Vaccine: Hope

20 May 2020, *New York Times*

More than 100 research teams around the world are conducting studies on a coronavirus with different approaches. Policymakers are also discussing how a successful vaccine will be scaled-up and distributed.

Skilled Partners in the Conduct of HIV Prevention Trials Join COVID-19 Response

14 May 2020, Press Release

The NIH-funded HIV Vaccine Trials Network (HVTN) and HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) have initiated a clinical trial for a SARS-CoV-2 vaccine.

Moderna Coronavirus Vaccine Trial Shows Promising Early Results

18 May 2020, *New York Times*

On Monday, Moderna announced that in eight healthy volunteers, its experimental vaccine was safe and provoked developing neutralizing antibodies. The vaccine is on an accelerated timetable to begin larger human trials soon.

Vaccine experts say Moderna didn't produce data critical to assessing COVID-19 vaccine

19 May 2020, *STAT*

Experts noted that Moderna did not release enough information to make conclusions about its vaccine. Gaps include data from all trial participants and durability of the antibodies.

GLOBAL IMPACT OF COVID-19

Why COVID-19 Seems to Spread More Slowly in Africa

16 May 2020, *The Economist*

Undercounting, early lockdown measures and worse transport links are suggested as reasons for a slower pandemic in Africa.

Coronavirus in Africa: Contained or unrecorded?

20 May 2020, *BBC*

BBC reporters from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Uganda present a snapshot of COVID-19 and response.

How the COVID-19 Pandemic Could End

1 June 2020, *Scientific American*

As part of a special report on COVID-19, this article discusses the future of the outbreak based on lessons from past pandemics.

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Leading SA health experts Warn that COVID-19 Response is Hurting Other Health Priorities

17 May 2020, *GroundUp*

Experts call for integrated resources and focus on infectious diseases and NCDs that may kill more South Africans than the COVID-19 pandemic.

Accelerating COVID-19 Therapeutic Interventions and Vaccines (ACTIV)

18 May 2020, *JAMA*

National Institutes of Health Director Francis S. Collins and Johnson & Johnson Chief Scientific Officer Paul Stoffels outline R&D efforts of public-private initiative, ACTIV.

Opinion: We cannot underestimate young people in the COVID-19 response

19 May 2020, *Devex*

Restless Development's Perry Maddox writes about the critical role young people play in mobilizing communities and changing behavior in a pandemic.

Contact Tracing and COVID-19: Lessons from HIV

15 May 2020, *ACLU*

This presents lessons from the HIV response that can guide the implementation of widespread contact tracing for COVID-19, including building trust and maintaining confidentiality.

What Years of HIV Vaccine Research Can Teach Us about the Search for a COVID-19 Vaccine

18 May 2020, *IAS*

As researchers race to find a COVID-19 vaccine, IAS suggests looking at the lessons from HIV vaccine research.

The Fight against COVID-19 Should Not Mean Forgetting the 37 Million People Living with HIV

19 May 2020, *ILO*

During the pandemic, we should not forget those in vulnerable situations. HIV prevention, testing and treatment services should not slow down.

The Impact of COVID-19 on HIV Financing in Nigeria: a call for proactive measures

May 2020, *BMJ Global Health*

The authors call to protect HIV funding from the ongoing shocks to the Nigerian economy so that progress made in the last few decades is not lost.

Confronting Another Pandemic: Lessons from HIV can inform our COVID-19 response

12 May 2020, *AIDS and Behaviour*

The authors reflect lessons from the HIV epidemic on testing, service delivery, political response and impact on care providers.

AROUND THE UNITED NATIONS

- UNAIDS [urged](#) governments to ensure community-led organizations that provide essential services to marginalized and underserved populations are supported to continue their work.
- United Nations launched a [policy brief](#) on the impact of COVID-19 on Africa. At the launch, Secretary-General António Guterres [urged the world](#) to stand in solidarity to protect progress made in Africa.
- UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet and Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Solomon Dersso [issued](#) a joint call for urgent measures in Africa.
- ECOSOC's Operational Activities for Development Segment [discussed](#) how to coordinate, deepen efforts and rethink methods to continue progress toward the SDGs in the context of COVID-19.
- The World Bank Group [announced](#) that 100 developing countries will get support for COVID-19 emergency operations, including 39 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.
- UNICEF [highlighted](#) the dual threats of COVID-19 and Cyclone Amphan in India and Bangladesh, which is putting 19 million children at risk.

RECENT RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

<p>Social and Behavioral Health Responses to COVID-19: Lessons Learned from Four Decades of an HIV Pandemic June 2020, <i>Journal of Behavior Medicine</i></p> <p>Researchers discuss multiple levels of disease interventions for the HIV epidemic as well as social and behavioral approaches in outline lessons learned for COVID-19 from HIV prevention and research.</p>	<p>COVID-19 in Patients with HIV 14 May 2020, <i>The Lancet HIV</i></p> <p>This letter advises caution before drawing conclusions from the <i>Blanco et al.</i> report of people living with HIV hospitalized with COVID-19 in Barcelona including on the efficacy of boosted protease inhibitors and the incidence of severe COVID-19 among people living with HIV. See also: COVID-19 in patients with HIV – Authors' reply</p>
<p>HIV Care in Times of the COVID-19 Crisis - Where Are We Now in Central and Eastern Europe? 10 May 2020, <i>International Journal of Infectious Diseases</i></p> <p>Researchers examined the impact of current pandemic on HIV care and continuity of ART in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) countries. HIV clinics were operating normally in only six of 19 countries in the survey.</p>	<p>Clinical Features and Outcomes of HIV Patients with Coronavirus Disease 2019 14 May 2020, <i>Clinical Infectious Diseases</i></p> <p>This brief report describes 47 patients living with HIV hospitalized with proven or probable COVID-19 in Italy. The risk of severe disease in COVID-19 patients with HIV compared favorably with other COVID-19 patients.</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>Guidance: PrEP during COVID-19 15 May 2020</p> <p>The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a new Dear Colleague letter that reaffirms PrEP as an essential health service and makes recommendations to ensure availability for new and continuing patients.</p>	<p>Multi-Sectoral Interventions to Ensure Uninterrupted Access to ART During COVID-19 Lockdowns WEBINAR 19 May 2020</p> <p>ICAP at Columbia University and DSD hosted a discussion on multi-sectoral interventions to maintain ART access featuring experiences from Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Eswatini.</p>	<p>COVID-19 & PEPFAR: Implications for the Future 20 May 2020</p> <p>As COVID-19 impacts PEPFAR's priority countries, the Kaiser Family Foundation examines potential implications for PEPFAR, how it is responding to the outbreak and issues at stake in this issue brief.</p>
<p>Five "P"s to Watch: Platforms, process, partnerships, payers and participatory practices that drive vaccine development May 2020</p> <p>AVAC outlines how HIV vaccine research is making COVID-19 vaccine development faster, smarter and more inclusive.</p>	<p>The Intersections of HIV and COVID-19 in Real-Time PODCAST 24 May 2020</p> <p>AVAC's <i>Px Pulse</i> podcast takes a comprehensive look at the intersection of HIV and COVID-19 with speakers from IAVI, Wits RHI, Uganda Virus Research Institute and Kenya Medical Research Institute.</p>	<p>Summaries of the COVID-19 Literature So Far VIDEO May 2020</p> <p>As published literature around COVID-19 increases exponentially each day, two HIV clinical fellows, Eric Meyerowitz and Aaron Richterman present biweekly deep dives into selected data. See: May 19 video</p>
<p>PEPFAR Technical Guidance in Context of COVID-19 Pandemic UPDATED 15 May 2020</p> <p>Updates can be found in the sections on preparing for clinic closure and incorporating HIV testing into COVID-19 contact tracing activities.</p>	<p>SARS-CoV-2 Serological Testing: What is it and what does it mean? WEBINAR 13 May 2020</p> <p>ICAP at Columbia University, Treatment Action Group and the COVID-19 Working Group (NY) hosted a discussion on serological testing.</p>	<p>Policy Brief: COVID-19 & Risks to Children's Health and Nutrition 14 May 2020</p> <p>World Vision outlines implications of the pandemic on children's immediate and long-term health and well-being.</p>

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **26 May 2020:** The ICAP and DSD series on differentiated service delivery and COVID-19 will continue with a discussion on supporting TB preventive therapy. *8am ET / 2pm SAST* >> [More](#)
- **28 May 2020:** The Children and AIDS Learning Collaborative will host a webinar on COVID-19, children and HIV with scientific updates, programmatic implications and frontline voices. *9am ET / 3pm SAST* >> [More](#)

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