IHP news  684 :  Gearing up for September

( 29 August 2022)

The weekly International Health Policies (IHP) newsletter is an initiative of the Health Policy unit at the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp, Belgium.

Dear Colleagues,

With IHP in the safe hands of my colleague John de Maesschalck in the past few weeks, I managed to stay a full two weeks away from Twitter (well, sort of :) ). The third week of my holidays I gave in, though, and immersed myself once again in a world in crisis. Amidst all the doomscrolling, I’m probably not the only one seeking some relief from time to time in my Twitter feed from cuddly animals doing cuddly things. Anyway, if we – Billy Joel wise – “all have to go down together” in the years to come, I sure hope that will include Musk, Branson, Putin, O’Leary and other Bancel’s & Bourla’s.

While awaiting that sorry fate, this newsletter issue will provide you with an update of the last ten days in global health (policies & governance). In the Highlights section, among others, we pay a fair amount of attention to the (72nd) WHO Afro session of last week, the start of Tedros’ second term at the helm of WHO, updates on the FIF, and there’s also a hefty Access to Medicines and Health Technology section, as you’ll notice.

But make sure you also go through the other sections, if you want to be “ready for September”. As for getting ‘ready for our world in crisis’, I’m afraid there I’ll have to disappoint you.

Enjoy your reading.

Kristof Decoster
Highlights of the week

2nd term dr Tedros begins

Lancet Editorial - Tedros: Tigray, the Triple Billion, and a second term

https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(22)01636-1/fulltext

Important Lancet Editorial from last Friday, for various reasons. A few chunks:

“Maybe the reason is the colour of the skin of the people in Tigray.” Dr Tedros confronted world leaders last week for their neglect of “the worst disaster on earth”—a storm of conflict in Ethiopia, extreme weather across the Horn of Africa, and soaring food, fuel, and fertiliser prices exacerbated by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Tedros is not politically neutral, given his Tigrayan background and former high-level roles in the Ethiopian Government. But his suggestion that racism underpins the world’s apparent indifference is worthy of consideration, by both the political and health communities.....”

“... His comments came the day after he began his second term as WHO Director-General. Tedros’ re-election was uncontested, but his first term was by no means uncontroversial...”

“... WHO’s functioning, if not its very purpose, is under increasing scrutiny from politicians, who are hostile towards international institutions. These are challenges of governance as much as technical ability. Power has been increasingly centralised around the Director-General’s office under Tedros’ leadership. This strategy might be advantageous in a crisis that demands a commander-in-control. But a lack of depth in wider leadership leaves shortcomings in the organisation. WHO needs people of high calibre in programmatic leadership positions. A wealth of expertise is available in WHO regional offices, and they deserve more support, engagement, and visibility. Member states might in fact prefer to fund regional offices rather than the Geneva headquarters. .... In its wider leadership, the WHO of today suffers a knowledge and expertise vacuum, with a heavy reliance on external experts and management consultants. Tedros would be wise to think about how leadership and responsibility is devolved to other dimensions and domains of his team.”

Related coverage by HPW - Tedros’ Second Term: WHO’s Triple Billion Goals Fall Short as Agency Sees Power Centralized, Over-Reliance on Consultants.

72nd session of WHO Afro (22-26 August)

With some key coverage & highlights of the 72nd WHO Afro session in Lomé, capital of Togo.

WHO Afro - Africa’s top health forum opens to tackle major challenges

The 22 – 26 August meeting—the first to be held in-person since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic—is taking place in Lomé, the capital of Togo, a leader in the region on innovative ways to respond to health problems. Togo is the first country in the world to be recognized by WHO for eliminating four neglected tropical diseases: lymphatic filariasis (commonly known as elephantiasis), human African trypanosomiasis, or sleeping sickness, trachoma – an eye infection that can cause irreversible blindness – and Guinea worm.

HPW - Health Promotion and Fighting Disease Through ‘Urgent Paradigm Shift’ Emphasized at WHO Meeting in Africa


“Urgently needed efforts at promoting public health and fighting disease “by addressing its root causes” was among the key messages at the opening of the 72nd World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Committee for Africa weeklong meeting in Togo’s capital Lomé.”

“....“Realizing our vision for the highest attainable standard of health starts not in the clinic or the hospital, but in schools, streets, supermarkets, households and cities,” WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told the meeting in his opening remarks. ... “Much of the work that you do as Ministries of Health is dealing with the consequences of poor diets, polluted environments, unsafe roads and workplaces, inadequate health literacy, and the aggressive marketing of products that harm health,” said Tedros. “That’s why,” he said, “we are calling on all member states to make an urgent paradigm shift, towards promoting health and well-being and preventing disease by addressing its root causes, and creating the conditions for health to thrive.””

“Tedros also pledged WHO’s continued financial and technical support for regional institutions such as the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), which he proposed creating at an African Union summit in July 2013 when he was Ethiopia’s foreign minister. “So, Africa CDC is my daughter, and not only me, but WHO and our regional office, all of us, will do everything to strengthen it. The strengthen of continental institutions is very important to the advancement of health and other sectors in our continent,” he said.”

WHO Director-General’s opening remarks at the 72nd session of the Regional Committee for Africa – 22 August 2022

https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/WHO-Director-Generals-opening-remarks-at-the-72nd-session-of-the-Regional-Committee-for-Africa%E2%80%9322-August-2022

Worth reading in full, Tedros’ remarks. Another chunk, related to Covid vaccination progress in SSA:

“....And despite the many competing priorities you face, we are now seeing encouraging progress in vaccination coverage in the region, supported by the COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership WHO established with UNICEF and Gavi to accelerate vaccine coverage in the 34 countries that were below 10% coverage at the beginning of this year – all but six of which are in Africa. Just six months later, only 10 countries still have less than 10% coverage, most of which are facing humanitarian emergencies. It’s especially pleasing to see that coverage of high-priority groups is
improving, with 10 Member States having now reached 100% vaccination coverage of health workers. This is very encouraging progress. However, we still have a lot of work left ahead of us. Our continent is by no means out of the woods. So, we continue to urge all Member States to commit to vaccinating 100% of health workers and 100% of people aged over 60, while still targeting the 70% overall. ...."

WHO Afro - African health ministers endorse new strategy to curb chronic disease crisis


“With the burden of cardiovascular disease, mental and neurological disorders and diabetes rising in the region, African health ministers today endorsed a new strategy to boost access to the diagnosis, treatment and care of severe noncommunicable diseases. The health ministers, gathering for the Seventy-second session of the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Committee for Africa in Lomé, Togo, adopted the strategy known as PEN-PLUS, A Regional Strategy to Address Severe Noncommunicable Diseases at First-Level Referral Health Facilities. The strategy supports building the capacity of district hospitals and other first-level referral facilities to diagnose and manage severe noncommunicable diseases early, resulting in fewer deaths.....”

UN News - UN steps up post-COVID support in Africa


“In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced on Wednesday a new drive to find ways of revamping the African region’s health systems. .....A special event launched at the Regional Committee kicks off a collective process to support African countries as they ramp up efforts to recover from the pandemic-triggered disruptions and work to rebuild their health systems. A series of consultations and actions will follow to support countries in achieving universal health coverage and health security.....”

See also WHO Afro – Transforming Africa’s health system in wake of COVID-19 pandemic

“At a special event on Rethinking and rebuilding resilient health systems in Africa during the 22 – 26 August Regional Committee meeting in Lomé, Togo, delegates examined the measures that have worked in achieving universal access to health care as well as the shortfalls. They also explored ways to maintain essential services during outbreaks and the investments and actions needed to ensure equitable access to quality medical products and health technologies....”

HPW - Africa Has Not Received a Single Dose of Monkeypox Vaccine – Even Though Virus is Endemic and Often More Deadly

With more key news from Lomé. “Another COVID rerun: WHO and Africa CDC officials lament the complete lack of access to monkeypox vaccines on the continent where the virus is endemic – as well as often more deadly than elsewhere. Meanwhile, Mozambique and Malawi have seen a total of six wild poliovirus cases, although WHO officials continue to insist that since the cases are imported, this won’t affect Africa’s status as ‘wild poliovirus free.’”

“…. at a special African Regional Committee session on polio, WHO, African health ministers and their partners said they would work together to tackle wild poliovirus, which is seeing a comeback in east Africa due to the spread of a virus strain imported from Pakistan. There have now been six cases reported in the African Region from the outbreak which began last year in Malawi and has now reached Mozambique, all apparently with links to an imported case from Pakistan. WHO said the “imported” cases should not impact Africa’s certification as wild poliovirus free, and that “any child paralyzed from polio is one too many.”…”

“… New regional health security strategy calls for 90% rapid response capacity by 2030: At the WHO Regional Committee meeting, African health ministers adopted a new eight-year strategy to transform health security and emergency response. Called the Regional Strategy for Health Security and Emergencies 2022–2030, it is intended to reduce the health and socioeconomic impacts of public health emergencies. The strategy includes goals for strengthening mechanisms for partnerships and multisectoral collaboration; ensuring sustained and predictable investment; and repurposing resources from polio eradication and COVID-19 to support strategic investments in systems and tools for public health emergencies. The adoption of the strategy means WHO’s member nations have now agreed to reach 12 strategy targets by 2030 – all aimed at strengthening capacity to prevent, prepare for, detect and respond to health emergencies. The strategy calls for 80% of member nations to have “predictable and sustainable” health security financing by 2030, with 90% able to mobilize an effective response to public health emergencies within 24 hours of detection. ….”

FIF update

Financial Intermediary Fund for Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response - Engagement and Overview


Some updates via the World Bank’s webpage on the FIF.

“The FIF is expected to be launched in September 2022. …. We are now working to set the FIF up. This process is ongoing and led by the founding donors and supported by an Interim Secretariat at the World Bank and staffed by the World Bank and the World Health Organization (WHO), in consultation with partners and stakeholders....”

“As part of the proceedings, the European Union (EU) facilitated a hybrid donor meeting in Brussels on July 19-20, 2022 to help prepare for the establishment of the FIF. The meeting allowed for exchanges on the objectives and scope of the FIF and its governance and operating framework. Agreement was reached to further engage partner countries, civil society organizations (CSOs),
potential implementing entities, and other stakeholders on the FIF’s design in the coming weeks ahead of its launch.”

“CSO Consultation for the PPR FIF: The Interim Secretariat for the PPR FIF is pleased to share with you the details, as below, of the official CSO consultation process on the FIF. ....The donors tasked with CSO consultation (the Wellcome Trust, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation) are working with the Pandemic Action Network (PAN), the Eastern Africa National Networks of AIDS and Health Service Organisations (EANNASO), Center for Indonesia’s Strategic Development Initiatives (CISDI), and WACI Health to convene such consultations. “

“Two global CSO consultations were held on August 16 and 17, 2022. These first two sessions were focused on the topics of the FIF governance framework, civil society engagement, and the Technical Advisory Panel. The next set of CSO consultations will be held on Aug. 30 and 31, 2022 at various times. These dates and times have been set to engage partners from multiple geographies and in multiple languages. The focus of these sessions will be the same, covering the FIF scope and priorities.....”

Summary of Proceedings and Key Messages: First Round of Civil Society Consultations for the Financial Intermediary Fund for Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Db8EteWx6ALkh40OZud_yrhGcDivyb_C/view

“Pandemic Action Network, Center for Indonesia’s Strategic Development Initiatives (CISDI), Eastern Africa National Network of AIDS Service Organisations (EANNASO), and WACI Health, jointly hosted the first in a series of consultations with civil society organizations (CSOs) on the new Financial Intermediary Fund (FIF) for Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response (PPR) on Tuesday, August 16 and Wednesday, August 17 2022. These first two CSO consultation events were focused on the topics of the FIF governance framework, civil society engagement, and the Technical Advisory Panel, given the fast-moving decisions on these issues.....”

“.... The next round of virtual CSO consultations will take place on Tuesday 30 August....” “...Below is a summary of these first consultations with key takeaway messages.....”. Check it out.

Devex - Opinion: Here we go again ... Pandemic preparedness financing


Op-ed, also on the state of affairs re the FIF. And arguing for inclusive governance.

“The World Bank Group’s board has agreed to host a new global financing facility for pandemic preparedness and response called the Financial Intermediary Fund. The World Bank’s commitment along with a range of G-20 donors to fund this effort is very welcome. The increasingly central partnership role for the World Health Organization is encouraging. However, critical decisions about the fund’s operation and governance remain under negotiation.....”
“The question of who will be placed in decision-making roles is crucial. Will it be G-20 governments and wealthy private foundations, or will lower-income countries and civil society be given equal voice with full voting rights? The time to steer the governance model in the right direction is now. The balance of seats for high-income country donors vis-a-vis other stakeholders contributing in kind — through increased domestic pandemic preparedness and response, or PPR, investment, or technical expertise, for example — is currently unclear. Every day that these questions remain unresolved, the largely high-income country and private foundation donors continue to design the FIF and its operational modalities, including at a recent meeting in Europe.....”

Access to Medicines & Health Technology

With some rather ‘remarkable’ news from the past ten days. Although I have to say, at this stage nothing really surprises me anymore from Big Pharma’s ‘pandemic profiteers’.

The Intercept - Moderna among firms quietly granted powers to seize patent rights during early days of Covid pandemic


“Knowledge Ecology International, an advocacy group that campaigns for access to medicine, recently released the results of a Freedom of Information Act request showing that the Trump administration quietly invoked a World War I-era law to give companies racing to produce Covid-19 medications, vaccines, tests, and other pandemic-related products special authority to seize virtually any patent they wished without authorization.....”

“.... KEI has identified 62 federal pandemic-related contracts — including with major companies such as Corning Inc., Eli Lilly and Co., Merck & Co. Inc., Qiagen, Sanofi, Moderna, and Siemens — with clauses that reference regulations associated with Section 1498, a statute that grants a compulsory license for the completion of the contract. A compulsory license allows the use of patented inventions without the permission of patent holders. In the case of the statute, such broad suspension of traditional patent rights are granted as long as the patented invention is used in service of a critical government function, typically in areas of national security or a national emergency.....”

Guardian - Moderna sues Pfizer and BioNTech over coronavirus vaccine


“Company is suing pharmaceutical rival and its German partner for patent infringement.”

PS: “Moderna not seeking removal of Comirnaty® from market or injunction against future sales; Company not pursuing monetary damages on sales to the 92 low- and middle-income countries in the GAVI COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC 92)”

- For more analysis, see:

**Stat** - Moderna sues Pfizer and BioNTech over Covid-19 vaccine

**FT** - Moderna accuses BioNTech/Pfizer of copying mRNA technology

“Experts say the stakes are high, with Pfizer, BioNTech and Moderna forecast to generate $52bn in vaccine sales in 2022, according to Airfinity, a health data analytics firm. A host of companies are seeking to develop new medicines based on the same mRNA technology. ....”

- And some tweets for the necessary ‘context’:

Els Torreele

“Instead of sharing its technology as common goods for public health, @Moderna goes in the offensive and takes the mRNA vaccine patent war to a new level by suing @pfizer and @BioNTech_Group.”

Ellen ‘t Hoen

“This is going to be interesting. A patent battle between 2 companies that have spent the last 2 years trying to convince us that patents aren’t an issue (one of which is operating under generous US compulsory licences.) ”

“Funny to see that pharma and their patent lawyers seem to think the pandemic is over. All while expecting to rake in $52Bn in covid vaccine sales in ‘22   @FT “

HPW - Poor Vaccines Coverage in Pandemic Blamed on Multiple Barriers


Coverage of a vital new report. A few chunks:

“Some of the biggest obstacles to expanded vaccines coverage in the world’s poorest and most conflict-ridden nations are lack of cold chain storage, unpredictable supply chains, and transport barriers, not claims of “vaccine hesitancy” in the Global South, according to a new report. The picture of the steep challenges faced by 14 nations during the COVID-19 pandemic “is more nuanced than a simple attribution to ‘hesitancy’ or ‘poor education,’ consistent with findings elsewhere,” two advocacy groups and a research company conclude in a joint 55-page report Friday. “Our findings demonstrate that as the world moved and transitioned from COVID-19, massive inequities remain in access to all COVID-19 tools, including oxygen and rapid tests,” the report says. “
“Among developed nations, some 1.1 billion COVID-19 vaccines were likely wasted since the global rollout began, according to findings in July by Airfinity, a global health surveillance firm. The two groups — International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC) and People’s Vaccine Alliance — and the Malaysian research company, Matahari Global Solutions, say “numerous structural access barriers exist” to the fair, widespread distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.”

“…. Study Dismisses Claims About Importance of Skepticism About Vaccines: That contrasts with the so-called vaccine hesitancy that some pharmaceutical companies have blamed for low vaccination rates among poorer countries. The study looked at Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Haiti, Jamaica, Liberia, Madagascar, Nepal, Nigeria, Peru, Senegal, Somalia, Uganda and Ukraine, reflecting a variety of factors.”

“…. Report Cites Role in Vaccines of ‘Modern Day Slavery: The unsalaried community health workers that are essential for pandemic response also are a top concern. “Across the 14 countries and territories, community health workers play an essential role in deployment of tools, community engagement, and vaccine uptake,” it says. “Yet they largely remain unpaid — a phenomenon some have described as modern day slavery.””

HPW - Despite Reforms, WHO 'Prequalification' Program for Vital Medicines and Diagnostics Is Inconsistent and Full of Delays
https://healthpolicy-watch.news/who-prequalification-program/

“Recent reforms to the World Health Organization “prequalification” program that certifies the safety and efficacy of health products procured in bulk by donors for low and middle-income countries have speeded up the process and thus accelerated access to lifesaving medicines and diagnostic tools in low- and middle-income countries. However, long lead times for product approvals, averaging 17 months, as well as a lack of transparency and clarity about the process, can delay procurement of critical health products for countries in need. The lack of clarity about certain steps in the process can also be confusing for manufacturers seeking WHO’s “PQ” label in order to sell their products in bulk procurement deals to global health agencies such as Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance or The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.”

“These are the key findings of a report released by the Global Health Technologies Coalition (GHTC) and the Duke Global Health Innovation Center (GHIC) that reviewed the WHO prequalification program.”

See also Devex - WHO product review process needs better clarity: External report

“A recently released report found inefficiencies in a key World Health Organization program that assesses the safety and quality of health products in low- and middle-income countries, stating that the organization needs to provide greater clarity. While WHO is pushing back on some of the report’s assertions, the researchers are standing by their findings.”

“…. The report is published by the Global Health Technologies Coalition and the Duke Global Health Innovation Center. At a webinar last week hosted by GHTC and Duke, Dr. Rogério Gaspar, director of regulation and prequalification at WHO, said parts of the report contain “misrepresentations
and factual errors.” But researchers behind the report are standing by their recommendations on the need for greater clarity and efficiency of the WHO’s prequalification process...."

“....While researchers stand by their findings, they are also ready to “amend any aspects of the report if warranted,” Dr. Krishna Udayakumar, founding director of the Duke Global Health Innovation Center, told Jenny by email. But their call remains: greater transparency and engagement with a diverse group of stakeholders, which include product developers and regulators....”

Think Global Health - Wanted: Global Access to Paxlovid
K Leach-Kemon et al ; https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/wanted-global-access-paxlovid

“Equitable access to COVID-19 antiviral therapy remains elusive, with many middle-income nations left out.” Important analysis.

Monkeypox vaccine supply (inequity)

Bloomberg - Monkeypox Vaccine Maker Seeks Partners in Race to Meet Demand

“Bavarian Nordic holding conversations with multiple parties; Danish firm is the only producer of an approved shot for virus.”

“Bavarian Nordic A/S, the only company with an approved vaccine for monkeypox, said it’s no longer certain it can meet demand and is talking to multiple production partners as cases rise across the world. The Danish company is exploring the possibility of outsourcing some of its production, including a technology transfer to a US contract manufacturer, to meet accelerating demand. Bavarian Nordic “is in conversations with multiple companies to further expand manufacturing capacity globally,” a company spokesperson said in an email. ....”

See also Reuters – Bavarian Nordic vows to boost monkeypox vaccine supply to combat shortfall

“Co says demand is exceeding its current supply capacity; Co exploring viability of technically expired vaccine doses; Co expects to deliver 4mln newly made doses by end of 2022.”

“Bavarian Nordic, the maker of the only approved monkeypox vaccine, said on Wednesday it was exploring the viability of using technically expired doses to help bridge a growing gap between demand and supply due to the current outbreak.....”

And a tweet from Global Justice Now:
“We've written to @BavarianNordic to demand they share the intellectual property rights to the monkeypox vaccine. As the US hordes millions of doses, the entire content of Africa hasn't been able to purchase a single jab. This is a serious threat to international public health.”

Human Resources for Health

Lancet Global Health - Payment of community health workers

M Ballard et al; https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(22)00311-4/fulltext

“We applaud Karen Hanson and colleagues from the Lancet Global Health Commission on financing primary health care for their excellent work showing that countries must invest more and better in primary health care. We were dismayed, however, by their characterisation of “whether” to pay community health workers as a “key financing policy choice” in section 1 of the report.”

“.... Like Hanson and colleagues, we acknowledge that securing sustained financing for community health programmes, including for community health worker payment, is a challenge. To solve this challenge, we must first recognise that whether is the wrong question, and focus together on how.....”

Global health events

World Mosquito Day (20 August)

HPW - Open Access 240 Compound Collection Launched in Fight Against Infectious and Mosquito-Borne Illnesses for World Mosquito Day

https://healthpolicy-watch.news/open-access-compound-world-mosquito-day/

“To mark World Mosquito Day, 20 August, the Global Health Priority Box has been launched to provide free access to 240 compounds to stimulate research into new drugs and insecticides. The initiative, launched by the Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) and the Innovative Vector Control Consortium (IVCC), provides scientists with starting points to advance the development of tools that can tackle several priorities set out by the WHO in late 2021, including drug resistance and communicable diseases. ....”
TICAD8 (Tunisia, 27-28 August)

Nature - Bringing neglected tropical diseases into the spotlight
https://www.nature.com/articles/d42473-022-00258-z

“Why Japan is taking a leading role in the fight against a raft of infections that receive little global attention, but have devastating impacts.”

“.... Underlying their significance, NTDs will be at centre stage during The Eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD8) which [will be] held in Tunisia on August 27–28. The TICAD conferences began in 1993 in Tokyo, as an initiative of the Japanese government, the UN, the UN Development Programme, World Bank, and the African Union Commission. Ahead of TICAD8, Japan’s Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Shingo Miyake, signed the Kigali declaration on NTDs, a commitment to accelerating the industry-academic-government partnerships, such as the GHIT fund, aimed at ending NTDs.....”

Reuters - Japan pledges $30 billion in African aid at Tunis summit

“Japan pledged $30 billion in aid for development in Africa on Saturday, saying it wants to work more closely with the continent, with the rules-based international order under threat after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.”

“....Kishida said the $30 billion would be delivered over three years, promising smaller sums for food security in coordination with the African Development Bank.....”

See also Nikkei Asia: “.... emphasize human resources at TICAD and discuss his concept of a "new capitalism," to differentiate Tokyo from Beijing and its sometimes disruptive lending practices. Japan will focus on fostering talent with expertise in a wide range of fields, including infrastructure, medicine and health, agriculture, and business. With infrastructure, for example, Tokyo will offer know-how not only on building roads and bridges, but also maintaining them.....”

Global Fund Applauds Japan’s Major Commitment to Help End AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and Strengthen Systems for Health

Some news ahead of the GF replenishment meeting in the US, later this year.

“The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria praises Japan for its outstanding leadership in global health with a strong commitment of up to US$1.08 billion to help end the three diseases by 2030 and build stronger and more resilient and sustainable systems for health, with a view to achieving universal health coverage (UHC). Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio announced Japan’s
commitment of up to US$1.08 billion to the Global Fund’s Seventh Replenishment at the Eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD8) held in Tunisia.....”

Global Summit on IP and Access to Medicines (Istanbul, July 19-21)

People’s Dispatch - Access to medicines summit urges for more decisive action against Big Pharma domination

https://peoplesdispatch.org/2022/08/19/access-to-medicines-summit-urges-for-more-decisive-action-against-big-pharma-domination/

“Activists and academics discussed future of the access to medicines movement at the Global Summit on Intellectual Property and Access to Medicines in Istanbul at the end of July.”

“One of the suggestions emerging from the conference was that we increase pressure on our governments to “normalize compulsory licensing.....”

Global health governance & governance of health

BMJ GH - Does global health governance walk the talk? Gender representation in World Health Assemblies, 1948–2021

K Robin van Daalen et al; https://gh.bmj.com/content/7/8/e009312

Among the results: “While upwards trends could be observed in the percentage of women delegates over the past 74 years, men remained over-represented in most WHA delegations. Over 1948–2021, 82.9% of delegations were composed of a majority of men, and no WHA had more than
30% of women Chief Delegates (ranging from 0% to 30%). Wide variation in trends over time could be observed across different geographical regions, income groups and countries. Some countries may take over 100 years to reach gender parity in their WHA delegations, if current estimated trends continue.”

G20 Health Working Group – Third meeting focuses on strengthening research and manufacturing in developing countries

Update on a meeting in Indonesia (G20).

(18 August) “Ministry of Health Republic of Indonesia (in Bahasa Indonesia): G20 Health Working Group (HWG) third meeting focuses on strengthening research and manufacturing in developing countries – Other aims of the meeting include to share mechanisms and harmonization of regulations to facilitate the global capacity building process to ensure accelerated availability of vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics (VTD) during public health emergencies, as well on agreeing on the principles to establish a VTD Multicenter Clinical Trial collaboration for PPR. …”

CFR (Backgrounder) – A new era for the CDC?

https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-does-cdc-do

“Responding to criticism of the CDC’s COVID-19 response, Director Rochelle Walensky has announced plans to overhaul the agency. Get the background on the U.S. agency mandated with protecting Americans’ health.”

See also Science - ‘It’s an incredible place’: CDC Director Rochelle Walensky on how she hopes to reform her battered agency

“Acknowledging its failings during the pandemic, she promises faster, clearer public health advice.”

Finally, a link:

World Development – Governance for global integration: Designing structure and authority in international advocacy NGOs

Global health financing

Devex - Exclusive: Fitch warns MDBs risk downgrade from G-20 report adoption


“A report commissioned by the G-20 says multilateral development banks are holding back hundreds of billions of dollars in desperately needed lending because they’re worried about losing
their coveted AAA credit rating. In an exclusive, Fitch Ratings tells us why some of those fears may be justified.”

“In an exclusive interview, Fitch Ratings analysts are warning that development banks risk a credit downgrade if they adhere to recommendations of a recent report to the G-20 on relaxing capital adequacy regulations. A recent report commissioned by the Group of 20 leading and emerging economies promised that multilateral development banks could release hundreds of billions of dollars in new lending without any negative side effects, but analysts at Fitch Ratings warn that adoption of the recommendations could lead to a credit downgrade. … … But the analysts hedged their bets by noting that if shareholder nations put up more guarantees, the ratings could stay intact....”

HP&P - Effects of Public and External Health Spending on Out-of-Pocket Payments for Healthcare in Sub-Saharan Africa

“.... We examined the relative effects of public and external health spending on OOP healthcare payment in SSA. We used the system generalised method of moments (GMM) estimator and data from the World Bank’s World Development Indicators for 43 SSA countries from 2000 to 2017. The results show reductions in OOP payments are higher with increases in public spending than external spending. This means increases in public health spending, compared to external health spending, will increase the pace towards achieving the financial protection goal of UHC in SSA. But since government spending is limited by fiscal space and parliamentary approval, public health spending through social health insurance might provide a regular means of financing healthcare to speed up achieving the financial protection goal in SSA countries.”

Project Syndicate - A Fork in the Road for Development Financing

“A majority of developing countries are facing debt distress, and their financing problems are sure to grow worse as global financial conditions continue to tighten. The moment is quickly approaching when the world will have to decide between two futures for development finance.....” Read what this entails.

Devex: Local letdown

Paragraph on USAID’s (rather flawed) locatisation drive:

“.... Speaking of money, we found that USAID made obligations worth $5.5 billion in fiscal year 2021, but only $95 million went to local organizations implementing projects in their own countries. That’s a whopping 35% drop from the year earlier, according to our data expert Miguel
Antonio Tamonan. The decline stems from a change in funding for Kenya. In plain speak, USAID has a big localization problem. Critics say Administrator Samantha Power hasn’t lived up to her lofty promises to shift more money to local partners. Instead, lucrative contracts are still going to large, legacy organizations based far outside the borders of the countries they’re supposed to help.....”

**UHC & PHC**

WHO - Tracking Universal Health Coverage in the WHO African Region, 2022
[https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/361229](https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/361229)

Exec summary on p. 10-11.

Among the findings: “....Over the past two decades, substantial progress has been made in the Region in the UHC SCI (Service coverage index). In 2019, the latest year for which data is available, the SCI ranged from 28 to 75 (out of 100) across all Member States. Of these, seven had high service coverage (index of 60 and above), 29 had a service coverage index value of between 40 and 59, and 12 had low coverage (index between 20 and 39). Although SCI values in some countries remain low, none of the countries had a value below 20. The highest values were recorded in the Southern and Northern African subregions (75 and 53 respectively). The most significant progress between 2000 and 2019 was observed in the Eastern African subregion (24 index points), followed by the Western and Southern African subregions (23 index points)....”

Also with three crucial lessons on moving forward with the UHC agenda in the region.

Plos Med - Universal healthcare coverage and health service delivery before and during the COVID-19 pandemic: A difference-in-difference study of childhood immunization coverage from 195 countries
S Kim et al; [https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1004060](https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1004060)

Authors empirically explored whether countries’ progress toward UHC is associated with differential COVID-19 impacts on childhood immunization coverage.

FT - Nigeria and Ghana’s health systems stand in contrast
[https://www.ft.com/content/88ecd9f7-3bb5-45cc-9521-2cb6279ae04d](https://www.ft.com/content/88ecd9f7-3bb5-45cc-9521-2cb6279ae04d)

“Africa’s largest economy has some of the worst outcomes in the world.”

And some links:
• Health Systems & Reform - The Landscape of Strategic Health Purchasing for Universal Health Coverage in Burkina Faso: Insights from Five Major Health Financing Schemes (by Joël A Kiéndrébeogo et al)

• Health Systems & Reform - Strategic Health Purchasing in Nigeria: Exploring the Evidence on Health System and Service Delivery Improvements

Pandemic preparedness & response/ Global Health Security

TWN - WHO: PHEIC declaration on monkeypox falls short on equity


“--- The World Health Organization Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has issued a declaration characterizing multi-country outbreak of monkeypox as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) under the International Health Regulation (IHR) 2005. This occurred on 23 July even though there was a divergence of opinion amongst members of the IHR Emergency Committee about the PHEIC status of monkeypox, and the Director-General (DG) proceeded to declare monkeypox as PHEIC and issued temporary recommendations under Article 15 of the IHR 2005. However, this declaration shows the reluctance of the WHO Secretariat led by the DG to invoke relevant IHR 2005 provisions that could enhance the compliance of States Parties with regard to equity. It also reveals the limitations of the current functioning of IHR 2005 in addressing equity concerns during a PHEIC. ....... This continued reluctance to invoke IHR 2005 provisions shows where the functioning of IHR 2005 needs reforms.....”

Nature (World View) - Fragmented outbreak data will lead to a repeat of COVID-19

A Kucharsky; https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-022-02268-9

“To break the vicious cycle of patchy understanding and poor virus control, we need to talk about privacy.”

Health Affairs (Forefront) - Equity And The Pandemic Instrument: Lessons From The Framework Convention For Tobacco Control


“....Below we examine the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)—the one and only example of WHO using Article 19 and arguably one of the most significant international accords for health—in order to identify areas within the agreement that have contributed to inequities in global health outcomes and illustrate how they might enrich our understanding of potential
consequences of a new WHO treaty. We hope that drawing on these learnings from the FCTC can better inform and shape the use of Article 19 in adopting a pandemic instrument in ways that maximize equity arising from global governance processes.....”

Nature (News) - Tens of thousands of people exposed to bat coronaviruses each year

https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-022-02153-5

“These infections increase the risk of the next pandemic.”

“Every year, tens of thousands of people are silently infected with previously unknown bat coronaviruses related to the one that causes COVID-19, according to a study that maps ‘spillover’ hotspots across southeast Asia..... The study, published in Nature Communications on 9 August, “highlights how often these viruses have the opportunity to spillover”....”

CGD (blog) - The Unaddressed Health Security Risks in Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine


“.... The Russian invasion of Ukraine has created a historic lacuna for European security. A neglected dimension of the wider security conversation is the war’s consequences for global health security. We map these emerging threats from food insecurity to radiation risks, and call for the immediate development of effective strategies in the ongoing conflict and as a means to forge a durable recovery.....”

And a link:

• BMJ GH (Commentary) - Developing forecasting capacity for public health emergency management in Africa using syndemics approach: lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic

Planetary health

Guardian - ‘Time has run out’: UN fails to reach agreement to protect marine life


“The latest round of talks at the United Nations aimed at securing protections for marine life in international waters that cover half the planet ended without agreement Saturday.”

“The fifth round of discussions, which began two weeks ago, were designed to establish a UN Ocean Treaty that would set rules for protecting biodiversity in two-thirds of the world’s oceanic
areas that lie outside territorial waters. But UN members failed to agree on how to share benefits from marine life, establish protected areas, or to prevent human activity with life on the high seas...."

Guardian (Long read) - The century of climate migration: why we need to plan for the great upheaval


“People driven from their homes by climate disaster need protection. And ageing nations need them.”

Globalizations - From Luddites to limits? Towards a systematization of growth critiques in historical perspective

M Schmelzer; https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14747731.2022.2106044

“This paper advances a systematization of various currents of growth critiques in historical perspective. Going beyond standard accounts, it demonstrates that next to a narrow and mainly ecological critique of growth, which emerged starting in the 1950s and criticized GDP accounting and growth as a policy goal, there were also broader critiques of the phenomenon of growth itself, which emerged already since at least the eighteenth century and criticize the phenomenon of economic growth itself. To substantiate this argument, eight currents of growth critiques are analysed by focusing on their core arguments and historical trajectories: ecological, socio-economic, feminist, South–North, cultural, anti-capitalist, critique of industrialization, as well as reactionary growth criticism.”

Great Transition Initiative journal – Discussion on population and the environment

https://greattransition.org/gti-forum/the-population-debate-revisited

“The explosion of human numbers after World War Two triggered a passionate “population debate.” Did population growth portend a catastrophic future, or were such fears misguided? Then, the Green Revolution quelled the specter of famine, declining fertility rates tempered population growth, and the topic became rather taboo in policy circles. The old neo-Malthusian obsession with population now seems simplistic, but population remains an important contributing factor to ecological overshoot. The forum revisits this “elephant in the room.” Environmental scholar Ian Lowe’s opening essay urges returning population to the policy foreground. Three panels join the debate: the first fleshes out the case for action, the second responds that population is a dangerous distraction, and the third dives into the issue’s vexing complexities.....”

Do check out the contributions of Céline Delacroix and Manisha Anantharaman in particular.
Infectious diseases & NTDs

Nature (News) - Spate of polio outbreaks worldwide puts scientists on alert

https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-022-02233-6

“Cases of paralysis in the United States and Israel suggest vaccine-derived poliovirus has infected many people.”

“…. The discovery of poliovirus in New York state, London and Jerusalem this year has taken many by surprise — but public-health researchers fighting to eradicate the disease say it was only a matter of time. “No country in the world is immune to the effects of polio,” says Zulfiqar Bhutta, a global-health researcher at the Aga Khan University in Karachi, Pakistan. “It’s all interconnected.” .... .... Nature talked to researchers about the scale of the outbreak, and what can be done to stop it.....”

TGH - Tackling Tuberculosis with Strategic Health Diplomacy


“Cutting drug prices for tuberculosis holds diplomatic, humanitarian, and economic promise.” A few chunks:

“.... Macleods Pharmaceutical and Lupin Limited have agreed to slash the price of their TB prevention regimen — 3HP, a three-month, oral drug treatment taken once-a-week—from $45 to $14.25 in 138 LMICs. This heavy discount, agreed upon as "part of a determined effort by partners to increase access to and improve supply security of short-course TB preventive treatments" (though competition from other big pharmaceutical makers may be a motivating factor, too), comes at a critical moment. More than a decade of global progress against TB has been reversed because of COVID-19. The Macleods and Lupin deal, however, should be a catalyst for greater investment in TB and new models of prevention and treatment. .....”

“.... "Competition for funding is very strong," the World Health Organization (WHO)’s Regional Eastern European and Central Asian TB team noted in a 2017 report. But TB seems to be losing. From the petri dish to the boardroom, TB is often falsely perceived as unpopular, unstable, and unworthy of attention—in part because its ties to poverty may make TB investments seem more like foreign aid rather than contributions to global health security, and private sector research is not profitable. Further, for diseases of poverty like TB, successful programs target entire health and social systems, making it difficult to measure impact and cost-effectiveness for donors. ....”

“.... TB investments can be leveraged, as well, through strategic health diplomacy (SHD), whereby investments in targeted global health interventions can both save lives and advance national interests by opening up opportunities for transnational dialogue and geopolitical engagement....”

Read how.
Lancet Infectious Diseases (Editorial) - Designing infectious disease programmes for the future

https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(22)00532-1/fulltext

“On July 29, WHO published a new resource for designing public health responses that address HIV, viral hepatitis, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among key populations: the Consolidated guidelines on HIV, viral hepatitis and STI prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care for key populations. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the significant disparities that individuals and communities face in access to essential health services and, consequently, in disease outcomes. WHO’s new guidelines for key populations take note of pandemic lessons and decades of disappointing results from well-intentioned infectious disease programmes. They recognise that successful infectious disease services must be relevant to everyday life, equitable, and non-stigmatising; engage the relevant communities (from the beginning, to avoid tokenism); and take a person-centred approach....”

Covid

Covid related news

UN News - World reaches ‘tragic milestone’ of one million COVID-19 deaths so far in 2022


Coverage of last week’s WHO media briefing. “There have been one million COVID-19 deaths so far this year – a “tragic milestone” that must lead to more people being vaccinated against the disease, World Health Organization (WHO) chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus reported on Thursday.

“We cannot say we are learning to live with COVID-19 when one million people have died with COVID-19 this year alone, when we are two-and-a-half years into the pandemic and have all the tools necessary to prevent these deaths,” said Tedros, speaking during his regular briefing from Geneva. He again urged all governments to step up action to vaccinate all health workers, older persons, and others at highest risk, as part of efforts towards inoculating 70 per cent of the global population. Tedros said he was pleased to see that some countries with the lowest vaccination rates are now gaining ground, especially in Africa.

“In January, WHO and partners launched the COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership, focused mainly on the 34 countries that were at or below 10 per cent coverage. All but six are on the continent. Today, only 10 countries still have less than 10 per cent coverage, most of which are facing humanitarian emergencies. Although welcoming progress on coverage of high-priority groups, Tedros stressed that more must be done as one-third of the world’s population remains unvaccinated. This includes two-thirds of health workers, and three-quarters of older persons in low-income countries. ....”
Cidrap News - BA.5 descendants increase globally

https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2022/08/moderna-files-emergency-use-ba4ba5-omicron-booster

“In its weekly report on the pandemic, the WHO today said cases declined 9% last week, with deaths down by 15% compared to the previous week. Countries reported more than 5.3 million new cases last week, with the most in Japan, South Korea, the United States, Germany, and Russia. Also, the number of weekly cases declined or were stable across all six WHO regions.”

….Regarding the global variant picture, the WHO’s review of the most recent SARS-CoV-2 sequences show that BA.5 descendent lineages are still dominant, increasing from 71% to 74% over roughly the first half of August. The WHO added that there is increasing diversity among BA.5 lineages, with a rise in prevalence among some of them. Those include BA.5.1 and BA.5.2……”

Devex - COVID inquiry into UK government should probe global response, NGOs say


“A coalition of health and development NGOs are calling to expand an official inquiry into the U.K. government’s domestic response to COVID-19 to also consider what role the country played in increasing global inequality during the pandemic, Devex can exclusively report.”

“…. Oxfam GB is one of the nine organizations, including Save the Children UK, Médecins Sans Frontières UK, and Health Poverty Action, that have signed onto the letter sent Monday to broaden the scope of the inquiry, led by Heather Hallett, a retired appeals court judge. The request comes alongside a new report from another signatory, RESULTS UK, entitled, “Paternalism and Power in UK Pandemic Preparedness and Response.” The report details what the NGO sees as the country’s role “in the global failure to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 health tools, including decisions which actively undermined access, and thus recovery, in low- and middle-income countries.”……”

Science - Anywhere but here

https://www.science.org/content/article/pandemic-start-anywhere-but-here-argue-papers-chinese-scientists-echoing-party-line

“China now insists the pandemic didn’t start within its borders. Its scientists are publishing a flurry of papers pointing the finger elsewhere…..”

WSJ - Variant-Targeted Covid-19 Boosters Test the Promise of mRNA Technology

WSJ:

“Moderna, Pfizer are racing to make different boosters for U.S. than the Omicron-specific shots rolling out for other countries…..”
Pfizer and BioNTech ask US regulator to authorise variant-specific jab

https://www.ft.com/content/4284e706-3457-464c-b4d9-cb0f31735105

“Vaccine targeting BA.4/BA.5 could become first shot to win green light without human trials.”

“Pfizer and BioNTech have applied to US regulatory authorities for emergency authorisation of a Covid-19 vaccine specifically tailored to target the most dominant strain of the Omicron variant ahead of a nationwide booster programme planned for the autumn. The companies said on Monday they had rapidly increased production of the newly developed shot targeting the fast spreading BA.4/BA.5 sub-variants and stand ready to deliver doses from September. Shipping could begin immediately if regulators authorised the new “bivalent” vaccine, which contains the original Covid strain and the genetic code for the now dominant sub-variants, they added. Last month, the US Food and Drug Administration asked vaccine makers to tweak their shots to target the BA.4/BA.5 sub-variants, which together make up more than 90 per cent of Covid infections. For the first time since the pandemic began, the regulator told companies it may authorise the latest generation of boosters without requiring clinical data from tests on the new jab to accelerate distribution. In contrast, EU regulators say they want to review clinical data before authorising the latest generation of Covid boosters.”

Covid science & analysis

WP - Your First Brush with Coronavirus Could Affect how a Fall Booster Works


“When it comes to viral infections, past is prologue: The version of a virus to which we’re first exposed can dictate how we respond to later variants and, maybe, how well vaccines work. It’s a phenomenon known by the forbidding name of original antigenic sin, and, in the case of the coronavirus, it prompts a constellation of questions. The answers to those questions will influence our long-term relationship with the coronavirus — and the health of millions of people. . .”

SS&M - Vaccine nationalism among the public: A cross-country experimental evidence of own-country bias towards COVID-19 vaccination


“Dataset covers nearly 15,000 individuals across 14 democracies during March and June 2021. Causal effect of own-country bias is explaining the preference in favor of vaccines developed locally.”

LA Times - Op-Ed: We’re starting to understand long COVID. Next we can fight it

E Topol; https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2022-08-21/long-covid-treatment-research
Eric Topol’s analysis of some of the latest research re Long Covid.

The Conversation - How African countries coordinated the response to COVID-19: lessons for public health

“.... In our recent study we traced policies retrospectively and related them to patterns of the disease. We set out to understand how the 47 countries forming the World Health Organisation (WHO) African region coordinated the response to COVID-19 – and what we could learn from their strategies. By coordination we mean management to ensure unity of effort. Our analysis showed that decentralisation strategies and innovation played key roles in coordination. Financing was a challenge to coordination....”

“Three levels of coordination: All 47 countries in the WHO African region instituted three distinct layered coordination mechanisms: strategic, operational and tactical.....”

Indoor Air - What were the historical reasons for the resistance to recognizing airborne transmission during the COVID-19 pandemic?

“The question of whether SARS-CoV-2 is mainly transmitted by droplets or aerosols has been highly controversial. We sought to explain this controversy through a historical analysis of transmission research in other diseases.....”

Guardian - Regular physical activity may lessen Covid risks, study finds
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/22/regular-physical-activity-may-lessen-covid-risks-study-finds

“Regular exercise lowers your risk of developing Covid-19 or falling seriously ill with the disease, with about 20 minutes a day providing the greatest benefit, a global analysis of data suggests. Regular physical activity is linked to a lower risk of Covid-19 infection, severity, hospitalisation and death, according to the new pooled data analysis of the available evidence published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine. A weekly total of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity appears to afford the best protection, the study suggests.....”

BMJ GH - SARS-CoV-2 infection in Africa: a systematic review and meta-analysis of standardised seroprevalence studies, from January 2020 to December 2021
H C Lewis et al; https://gh.bmj.com/content/7/8/e008793
The authors undertook a meta-analysis of population-based seroprevalence studies to estimate SARS-CoV-2 seroprevalence in Africa to inform evidence-based decision making on public health and social measures (PHSM) and vaccine strategy.

NEJM Study: Pfizer’s Paxlovid Reduces COVID-19 Death by 81% in Older Adults

“Pfizer’s COVID-19 oral antiviral Paxlovid was found to reduce the mortality rate among people over the age of 65 by 81% in a new Israeli study published Wednesday in the New England Journal of Medicine. It is the first peer-reviewed study on the effectiveness of the drug in real-world conditions, one of its lead researchers told Health Policy Watch. ....”

PS: “.... Paxlovid works very well at keeping people over 65 out of the hospital and alive after they’re infected with Covid-19, a new NEJM study says, but it doesn’t help younger adults.....”

Lancet Letter - Trust made the difference for democracies in COVID-19
T Bollyky, J Dieleman et al ; https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(22)01532-X/fulltext

“Richard Horton argues that COVID-19-related struggles of leading democracies, especially the USA, necessitate reassessing the claims made regarding healthful effects of that form of government, including the ones we put forward in 2019. Horton’s Offline elicited several responses, and we write to contribute to that ongoing debate.....”

Lancet Infectious Diseases - COVID-19 sequelae: can long-term effects be predicted?
https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(22)00529-1/fulltext

“....In conclusion, although no accurate prediction models exist for who will develop severe COVID-19 or sequelae, risk factors of vascular damage have emerged as important predictors.....”

Nature - COVID vaccines slash risk of spreading Omicron — and so does prior infection
https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-022-02328-0

“But the benefit of vaccines in reducing Omicron transmission doesn’t last for long.”

“People who become infected with the Omicron variant are less likely to spread the virus to others if they have been vaccinated or have had a prior SARS-CoV-2 infection, according to a study in US prisons. And people who have had a prior infection and been vaccinated are even less likely to pass on the virus, although the benefit of vaccines in reducing infectiousness seems to wane over time.....”
And some Covid-related links:

- Reuters - Mexico to protest to U.N. over missing COVAX vaccines. By now, COVAX already reacted, see Reuters - COVAX offers Mexico 10 mln COVID shots for kids after president protests delays

**Monkeypox**

HPW - Monkeypox Cases Drop 21% Globally As WHO Weighs ‘Fractional’ Vaccine Dose Strategy


“The global number of weekly new cases of monkeypox reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) declined by 21% for the first time since the infection that has been endemic to central and west Africa began to appear around the world earlier this year. Cases continued rising sharply in the Americas, however, in contrast to recent declines in European hotspots, WHO said in a report on Thursday showing 5,907 new monkeypox cases were reported in the past week, down from 7,477 new cases the previous week. That is a dramatic reversal from the 20% weekly increases in reported new monkeypox cases over the past month. More than 45,000 cases have been reported in 98 countries since late April.....”

“.... WHO officials, meanwhile, say they are examining proposals to split scarce monkeypox vaccines doses to stretch supplies — a strategy adopted by the United States on August 10, in response to the global shortage of monkeypox vaccines. .... Dr. Kate O’Brien, WHO’s Director of the Department of Immunization, Vaccines and Biologicals, said a strategic advisory group of experts will meet at the beginning of October to evaluate “some of these fractional dose issues” and the evidence for and against the strategy.....”

See also AP News - WHO: Monkeypox cases drop 21%, reversing month-long increase

“.... The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Thursday the continent had 219 new cases reported in the past week, a jump of 54%. Most were in Nigeria and Congo, the agency said.....”

“.... WHO’s latest report said 98% of cases are in men and of those who reported sexual orientation, 96% are in men who have sex with men. “Of all reported types of transmission, a sexual encounter was reported most commonly,” WHO said. “The majority of cases were likely exposed in a party with sexual contacts,” the agency said.....”

Related: NPR – There's a bit of good news about monkeypox [at last]. Is it because of the vaccine?
BMJ News - Monkeypox: what we know about the 2022 outbreak so far
https://www.bmj.com/content/378/bmj.o2058

“With WHO declaring monkeypox a public health emergency of international concern, Mun-Keat Looi explains the current state of the global outbreak.”

Reuters - British scientists behind key COVID trial launch study to test monkeypox treatment

“British scientists behind one of the major therapeutic COVID-19 trials have turned their focus to treatments for monkeypox.... The team from Oxford University behind the so-called RECOVERY trial - which honed in on four effective COVID treatments - on Tuesday unveiled a new trial, dubbed PLATINUM, to confirm whether SIGA Technologies’ (SIGA.O) tecovirimat is an effective treatment for monkeypox.....”

Reuters - Analysis: Experts question reliance on monkeypox vaccine with little data, short supply

Must-read analysis. Some chunks:

“A reliance on vaccines in short supply and questions over their best use are hampering efforts to curb the global spread of monkeypox which has hit dozens of countries for the first time, health officials say.”

“There are just 1.5 million vials of Bavarian Nordic's (BAVA.CO) monkeypox vaccine either administered or currently available in the ten worst-affected countries, which account for nearly 90% of all cases. The vast majority of doses are in the United States. The figures are based on a Reuters tally of government statements, and highlight the extent of the global supply gap for the first time. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates 10 million doses will be needed to protect the people at highest risk, with a current focus on certain men who have sex with men and contacts of people infected.”

“Other experts say an equitable global response would also prioritise an undetermined number of high-risk people in the 11 countries in Africa where monkeypox has been a public health problem for years.....”

“....the Bavarian Nordic shot has not undergone clinical trials to evaluate the vaccine’s ability to prevent monkeypox in humans, though initial studies suggest it will provide some protection.

“The whole vaccination strategy for monkeypox is associated with a lot of uncertainties,” said Dr Dimie Ogoina, a professor of medicine at Niger Delta University in Nigeria and member of the WHO’s monkeypox emergency committee. .....”
“…. In total, only 40% of countries experiencing monkeypox outbreaks currently have access to the vaccine, according to a WHO spokesperson. Brazil and Peru, for example, among the worst-hit countries globally, have no vaccines yet, although negotiations are under way and deliveries are due later this year. The WHO is trying to set up an equitable distribution mechanism, but has no access to vaccines. “You can’t allocate doses you don’t have,” said Nicole Lurie, director of preparedness at the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), who has been involved in the discussions.”

“Until more supply and data on efficacy are available, governments should prioritise the vaccine for the most vulnerable, such as immunocompromised men who have sex with multiple male partners, some disease experts said. ....Disease experts are wary of the heavy emphasis wealthy countries have placed on vaccination as the first line of defence given these questions, as well as signs that behavioural change, testing and contact tracing are also important.....”

HPW - Monkeypox Vaccine: 62% of Recipients Experience No Side Effects, Says New Survey
https://healthpolicy-watch.news/monkeypox-vaccine-new-survey/

“A first-of-its-kind survey examining the side effects of the monkeypox vaccine in Israel found that the majority of recipients had no general symptoms. “Most of the side effects reported by the vaccinated are local and mild, which in most cases pass within one to three days,” said Miri Mizrahi Reuveni, Deputy CEO and Head of the Health Division at Maccabi Healthcare Services, which conducted the survey. Maccabi is one of Israel’s four active HMOs. Specifically, some 62% of 155 vaccine recipients reported a return to routine without any general symptoms, Maccabi reported on Monday. The other 38% experienced side effects......”

NYT – Why experts want to rename monkeypox

“Public health researchers say the term evokes racist stereotypes, reinforces offensive tropes about Africa and abets stigmatization that can prevent people from seeking care.”

Economist - Monkeypox has spread rapidly in male sex networks. Will it spread further?

“Disease modelling suggests that is unlikely.”

Nature News - Can a smallpox drug treat monkeypox? Here’s what scientists know
https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-022-02245-2

“Tecovirimat, a little-known antiviral, shows promise against monkeypox. But human data and supplies of the drug are limited.”
**NCDs**

Plos Med - Urban-rural differences in hypertension prevalence in low-income and middle-income countries, 1990–2020: A systematic review and meta-analysis

O T Ranzani et al; [https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1004079](https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1004079)

Conclusions: “...The prevalence of hypertension in LMICs increased between 1990 and 2020 in both urban and rural areas, but with a stronger trend in rural areas. The urban minus rural hypertension difference decreased with time, and with country-level socioeconomic development.....”

**Mental health & wellbeing**

HP&P - Economic Evaluation of Psychological Treatments for Common Mental Disorders in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Systematic Review


“This systematic review examines methods, reports findings, and appraises the quality of economic evaluations of psychological treatments for CMDs in LMICs.....”

**Social & commercial determinants of health**

WHO Bulletin - Modelling the global economic costs of tobacco product waste

J Lam et al; [https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/bulletin/online-first/blt.22.288344.pdf?sfvrsn=3f626a2_1](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/bulletin/online-first/blt.22.288344.pdf?sfvrsn=3f626a2_1)

“Tobacco smoking continues to cause considerable premature mortality and morbidity worldwide. Most of the approximately six trillion cigarettes sold globally each year are discarded improperly as toxic environmental waste. Tobacco product waste, including cigarette butts, is the most commonly collected waste item worldwide. Of particular concern is the cellulose acetate filter, a poorly degradable plastic additive attached to most commercially manufactured cigarettes. This filter was introduced by the tobacco industry to reduce smokers’ perception of harm and risk but it has no health benefit. To inform health policy and practice and improve public health outcomes, governments and society can benefit from cost estimates of preventing, properly disposing of and/or cleaning up tobacco product waste. Estimating the costs of tobacco product waste to communities and responsible authorities could encourage the development of health, environmental and fiscal policy interventions and shift accountability for the costs of tobacco product waste onto the global tobacco industry. To support health and environmental policy-making, we therefore propose an empirical approach to estimate the economic costs of tobacco product waste based on its negative environmental externalities. .... Interventions against tobacco product waste may be new channels to regulate tobacco products across sectors – for example, health, environment and finance – and consequently reduce overall tobacco use.....”
BMJ (Opinion) - Conflict, climate change, and covid-19 combine to create a breeding ground for sexual and gender based violence

https://www.bmj.com/content/378/bmj.o2093

“We are faced with a global plague of sexual and gender based violence and urgently need targeted interventions, say Helen Clark, Michelle Bachelet, and José Manuel Albarés.”

UN News - Africa drought: Some children just ‘one disease away from catastrophe’ UNICEF warns


“When water either isn’t available or is unsafe, the risks to children multiply exponentially,” said UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell. “Across the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, millions of children are just one disease away from catastrophe.” In Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger and Nigeria, drought, conflict and insecurity are driving the water insecurity problem, as World Water Week gets underway, in the Swedish capital, Stockholm. According to WHO data, 40 million children are facing high to extremely high levels of water vulnerability. Already more children die as a result of unsafe water and sanitation in the Sahel than in any other part of the world. This will only be heightened by the nascent crisis, said UNICEF.....”

Feminist Anthropology - Obstetric Violence: An Intersectional Refraction through Abolition Feminism


“Obstetric violence, a term coined by activists in Latin America to describe violence during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum, is a controversial feminist term in global health policymaking as well as in obstetric and midwifery practice and research. We reflect on the term both theoretically and autoethnographically to demonstrate its feminist value in addressing the problem of violence as embedded within the obstetric institution. We argue that obstetric violence as an activist and critical feminist concept can only be effective for change when it is clearly understood as institutionalized intersectional violence. Therefore, we propose an abolitionist framework for further study. Through this lens, we refract the concept of obstetric violence as institutionalized, intersectional, and racializing violence by (1) making an abolitionist historiography of the obstetric institution, and (2) centering anti-Black obstetric racism as the anchor point of obstetric violence, where the afterlife of slavery, racial capitalism, the impact of systemic racism, and the consequences of patriarchal biopolitics come together.”
Global Public Health - Bodies in peril: Healthcare workers on the frontlines of global maternal health interventions

“Drawing on long-term ethnographic fieldwork in maternity settings in Tanzania and Pakistan, we argue that ‘bodywork’ condenses all politically and practically at stake for maternal healthcare providers. Our research confronts how global health programmes expect paramedical providers working on the frontlines of obstetrics to implement interventions without also attending to violent everyday realities of providing care amidst structural constraint and precarity. We demonstrate this approach’s dire aftermaths. Healthcare workers’ bodies evidence risks and injuries not only attendant on care in lower-resource settings, but which unfold specifically from their efforts to meet the onerous demands of global health systems. Toxic hospital environments represent a paradox of care – medicine exposes patients and providers to greater risks than if medicine were not involved – but this inherent riskiness barely registers. Elisions of healthcare providers’ experiences of harm are telling; they reveal global health’s neglect of occupational risk and a racialised under-attention and under-valuing of the risks carried by bodies of colour, and women especially.....”

Access to medicines & health technology

HPW - WHO Recommends Two Monoclonal Antibodies for Ebola Treatment; Calls to Expand Access in Developing Countries

“In its first guidelines ever for Ebola treatment, the World Health Organization (WHO) advises using two monoclonal antibodies — mAb114 (Ansuvimab®, also known as Ebanga®) and REGN-EB3 (Inmazeb®) — that were first approved by the US Food and Drug Administration for use against the Zaire ebolavirus species in 2020......”

World Trade Review - From Necessity to Flexibility: A Reflection on the Negotiations for a TRIPS Waiver for Covid-19 Vaccines and Treatments
B. Mercurio; Cambridge University Press;

Brand new paper. With a debatable conclusion, I guess.

People’s Dispatch - Cuban Vaccine to be produced in Italy in attempt to solve WHO prequalification hurdle

“Cuba–Italy collaboration on COVID-19 moves forward as memorandum for production of vaccines is signed between Finlay Institute of Vaccines and Italian biotech company.”
HPW - First African Manufactured Medicine to Prevent Malaria in Pregnant Women and Infants Quality-Approved by WHO


“Kenyan manufacturer Universal Corporation LTD (UCL) has become the first African manufacturer to be issued a World Health Organization quality certification of a key antimalarial drug used to prevent infection in pregnant women and children. This certification, known as prequalification, will enable UCL to support regional efforts to combat malaria through local production of high-quality sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine (SP). ....”

Reuters - Exclusive: AstraZeneca may not stay in vaccines, but CEO has no COVID regrets

Reuters;

“CEO ‘can’t be sure’ company will be in vaccines long term; Looking for bolt-on deals in oncology, cardiovascular etc.....”

“AstraZeneca (AZN.L) may not stay in the vaccine business in the long run, its CEO told Reuters on Tuesday, showing how quickly fortunes have changed for the drugmaker that produced one of the first COVID-19 shots but has since lost out to rivals.”

Bloomberg - Part of Billionaire Soon-Shiong’s Africa Vaccine Plant For Rent


“Part of a Covid-19 vaccine manufacturing plant in South Africa launched by US biotech billionaire Patrick Soon-Shiong and President Cyril Ramaphosa is available to rent after a plunge in demand for the shots. The facility in Cape Town, announced in January after the continent had struggled to secure vaccines, is meant to produce a billion doses a year by 2025.....”

Africa: Why COVID vaccine inequity is still a big, and deadly, problem for all of us


Some coverage from a recent conference hosted by The UPS Foundation, UPS (UPS) Impact Summit. A few chunks, with quotes & views from A Prabhala, John Nkengasong & Konyndyk (USAID), among others.

“... “Nothing has fundamentally changed from 2020 to now,” Achal Prabhala, coordinator of the Access IBSA project, which advocates for equitable medicine access in India, Brazil and South Africa, said in an interview with Yahoo Finance. “So when we get the reformulated [COVID] vaccines
out late this fall, we will follow exactly the same pattern as the mRNA vaccines have followed to-date,” he added....

“The situation has improved somewhat, with supply no longer the hurdle. But distribution and labor issues remain. .... longer-term manufacturing efforts by companies are now underway to increase future vaccine supplies in Africa, explained John Nkengasong, who once led the Africa Centers for Disease Control and is now U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Special Representative at the U.S. State Department. The timelines are still too long—and that’s not ideal, experts say. But Nkengasong noted "the momentum is there, to regionalize manufacturing capacity."....

“....But even with COVID-19 vaccine makers ramping up interest in Africa, timing remains an obstacle, Prabhala said. So even with new formulations of vaccines in the works, the African continent and poorer countries are likely to get them only after wealthier countries. “I think it’s a clamor of press release more than a clamor of action,” Prabhala said of the announced agreements. “It’s a clamor to get attention, to get attention and be seen as doing something for the African continent. Because you really have to go through the press releases to understand how long these things will take to be operational,” he said. He added: “In some cases, the manufacturing sites could take years to build out, and in the few existing spaces, it is unlikely the latest formulations of the vaccine will be produced — at the same volume, if at all — in the next few months.” The drug companies, he and other advocates have said, are ignoring existing capacity. ....”

PS: “I think we should work towards, and certainly the private sector could work towards, a norm or a best practice that intellectual property — when there’s a declared a public health emergency of international concern — will be broadly shared, will be licensed, and there will be an effort towards tech transfer,” USAID’s Konyndyk said.

Health Affairs (Forefront) - How The Next NIH Director Can Ensure Global Equitable Access To Medical Technologies

https://www.healthaffairs.org/content/forefront/next-nih-director-can-ensure-global-equitable-access-medical-technologies

By A S Goldman et al.

Human resources for health

Anthropology today - Striking health workers: Precarity and healthcare in neoliberal Kenya


« Precarity is increasingly a condition of life for Kenyan health workers as even professionals face costs of living and forms of debt that exceed their (unstable) salaries. Years of austerity and chronic scarcity have eroded healthcare infrastructures and rendered crises part of everyday work. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in Kenya from 2018 to 2020, we explore health workers’ experiences and concerns about the precarity of their working conditions, livelihoods, health and
futures amidst the government’s attempts to experiment with ‘universal health coverage’ (UHC) and improve access to healthcare. While UHC appears to call for greater state responsibility for healthcare futures, healthcare provision is being further outsourced and privatized, underlining that seemingly progressive health policies like UHC are sustaining and replicating neoliberal trends.

Decolonize Global Health

Nature (News) - Wellcome says it has perpetuated ‘systemic racism’ in science

“The research funder’s admission has been largely welcomed, but experts say many institutions need to do much more to implement anti-racism pledges.”

“Wellcome, one of the world’s largest philanthropic funders of research, has allowed institutional racism to fester in the organization and is “perpetuating and exacerbating systemic racism” in the research sector, according to an independent evaluation of its efforts to become an anti-racist organization. The report, published on 10 August, comes after the March resignation of Wellcome’s anti-racism expert group, whose members expressed their disappointment with the leadership’s slow implementation of previously agreed anti-racism principles. It makes several recommendations for combating racism....”

“.... Responding to the findings, Wellcome director Jeremy Farrar announced a dedicated stream of research funding for people of colour, and said that when grant proposals have similar merit, the organization will favour funding researchers who increase the diversity of its pool of grant recipients. “We have done too little to use this power to counter racial inequity in research,” said Farrar in a press release announcing the report. Wellcome — which spent £1.2 billion (US$1.4 billion) on research in 2021 — will also create a position on its executive leadership team dedicated to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).....”

BMJ GH - An exploration of practices affecting research integrity in global health partnerships

L Troughton et al.; https://gh.bmj.com/content/7/8/e009092

Authors aimed to identify and explore factors which promote or constrain adherence to research integrity principles in global health research partnerships, specifically at a UK higher education institution (HEI) and its LMIC partners.

“...Analysis found that understanding of research integrity focused on issues relating to rigour and did not include ‘care and respect’. Barriers to research integrity included, supra institutional factors such as funding flows, inequitable power relations, the competitive culture of the global health ecosystem and institutional psychosocial safety. Most respondents had direct or indirect knowledge of incidences of research misconduct.”
Africa Evaluation Journal- Decolonising and indigenising evaluation practice in Africa: Roadmap for mainstreaming the Made in Africa Evaluation approach

A Diakavu et al;
https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10539/33109/Aya%20article.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

“This article endeavours to provide recommendations on how to make the Made in Africa Evaluation (MAE) paradigm practical (applicable) for evaluators in Africa, based on decolonisation and indigenisation methodological prescriptions.”

Miscellaneous

CGD (blog) - If We Want the World Bank to Solve Global Challenges, It Has to Be Bigger—but Also More Cuddly

C Kenny; https://www.cgdev.org/blog/if-we-want-world-bank-solve-global-challenges-it-has-be-bigger-also-more-cuddly

“A lot of people working in global development—including many at CGD like me—would like to see the World Bank’s lending arm for richer developing countries play a larger role financing global public goods like climate change mitigation and pandemic preparedness. That would take a larger IBRD, likely requiring a capital increase. But that only deals with one half—the supply side—of the financing challenge. The World Bank also has a demand problem: a lot of countries don’t want to borrow from it for the kind of long-term sustainable development projects that deliver global benefits. That has implications when it comes to how much World Bank shareholders can ask in return for providing additional capital…..”

“…. That a lot of eligible countries simply don’t borrow very much from the IBRD might suggest the need for a rethink of the current country engagement model…..”

CGD (blog) - A Look into the IMF’s New Gender Mainstreaming Strategy


“ Last month, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Board approved the institution’s first Gender Mainstreaming Strategy. This is good news —and the process used by the IMF gender team to draft and seek feedback on the strategy bodes well for the implementation of this important work. But the proof of the pudding will, of course, be in the eating…..”

“A first step in testing out some of the proposals in the strategy [will come] on August 25th, when we are set to host a panel discussion featuring IMF Senior Advisor on Gender Ratna Sahay, IMF Board Executive Director Philip John Jennings, African Development Bank Gender Director Malado Kaba, and former State Bank of Pakistan Governor Reza Baqir. Ahead of the event, here are three key questions we plan to bring into the discussion…..”
ODI - Changing gender norms in displacement: Venezuelans in Bogotá, Cúcuta and Pasto, Colombia


New Working paper.

Economist - Faced with an overseas debt crisis, will China change its ways?

“It may have no choice.”

“... Sri Lanka will be a critical test of Chinese willingness to co-ordinate with other lenders, potentially at the expense of Mr Xi's original geostrategic goals...” “... The hope now for Sri Lanka is that Zambia's deal has set a precedent for China to co-ordinate with other creditors, even though the island’s middle-income status excludes it from the Common Framework...”

Stat - White House directs health, science agencies to make federally funded studies free to access

Stat News;

“...In what could be a watershed moment for publishers of scientific journals, the White House yesterday told health and science agencies to make federally funded studies immediately available to the public after publication, rather than after papers have spent 12 months behind a paywall. Open-access advocates — and both President Biden and former President Trump — have been pushing for such a move, which could upend the business models of scientific journals reliant on subscription fees...”

Papers & reports

Working paper - The analysis of inequality in the Bretton Woods Institutions

Francisco H. G. Ferreira International Inequalities Institute, LSE
http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/116018/1/Ferreira_analysis_of_inequality_in_bretton_woods_institutions.pdf

“This paper assesses the evolution of thinking, analysis, and discourse about inequality in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund since their inception in 1944, on the basis of bibliometric analysis, a reading of the literature, and personal experience. Whereas the Fund was largely unconcerned with economic inequality until the 2000s but has shown a rapidly growing
interest since then, the Bank’s approach has been characterized by ebbs and flows, with five different phases being apparent. The degree of interest in inequality in the two institutions appears to be largely determined by the prevailing intellectual profile of the topic in academic research, particularly in economics, and by ideological shifts in major shareholder countries, propagated downward internally by senior management. Data availability, albeit partly endogenous, also plays a role. Looking ahead, Bank and Fund researchers continue to have an important role to play, despite a much more crowded field in inequality research. I suggest that this role involves holding firm to an emphasis on inequality “at the bottom” and highlight four themes that may deserve special attention.”

Lancet - A new Lancet Commission on the future of health and economic resiliency in Africa

M Pate, R Horton et al; https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(22)01435-0/fulltext

« The African continent’s population, growing at an average of 2·6% per annum, is expected to double by 2050. .....” « Faced with this reality, the continent has urgent challenges as well as opportunities.....”

“These challenges and opportunities in reimagining health systems will inform the work of The Lancet Commission on Future of Health and Economic Resiliency in Africa, which is convened as a multidisciplinary, multistakeholder platform hosted at the Harvard T H Chan School of Public Health, Boston, MA, USA. Building on the previous Lancet Commission on the future of health in sub-Saharan Africa, this new Commission will present innovative and evidence-based recommendations and provide a clear pathway for implementation of actions by key African institutions and national governments. The Commission comprises African experts and practitioners in public health, health systems, economics, financing, nutrition, climate, youth representation, and the private sector. The Commissioners are largely, but not exclusively, drawn from African institutions, and are co-chaired by Awa Coll Seck, Minister of State to the President, Senegal, and Muhammad Ali Pate, Julio Frenk Professor of Public Health Leadership at the Harvard T H Chan School of Public Health. The Commissioners represent an intentionally diverse group (appendix), with a global African perspective—not one of an Africa in isolation. The Commission gratefully acknowledges seed support from the Rockefeller Foundation and a pledge from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. »

« Our first virtual meeting was held at the end of 2021, followed by the first meeting of Commissioners in Dakar, Senegal, in March, 2022. The Commission’s work towards reimagining health systems will focus on broad thematic priorities, including reshaping the African narrative towards autonomy and self-sufficiency, emphasising citizens’ voices, gender and sexual and reproductive health and rights, and primary care. The ambition of the Commission includes an emphasis on domestic financing, the strengthening of public health institutions, and appropriate governance of health markets and trade. It will also specifically address food systems and nutrition at the interface of climate change and health and have a particular focus on cross-disciplinary issues in the Sahel region.....”
Policy Sciences - Mapping the use of knowledge in policymaking: barriers and facilitators from a subjectivist perspective (1990–2020)

https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11077-022-09468-0#article-info

By G Capano et al.

Global Public Health - Health and human rights: Contributions of hermeneutics to a necessary dialogue

J Ricardo de Carvalho Mesquita Ayres et al;

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17441692.2022.2113814

“The relationship between health and human rights has gained growing importance, whether in activist agendas or in governments strategies to face the challenging scenarios of global public health. However, there are important gaps to be filled so that the articulation between these two fields develops its full potential, and the question of knowledge plays a key role in this regard. This study aims at examining the possibilities and challenges of integrating a human rights perspective into the construction and validation of health knowledge, based on the contribution of authors from various theoretical traditions that have discussed the so-called ‘hermeneutic turn’ in contemporary philosophy and science.....”

IISD - Report Calls for “Unbundling” ESG Metrics for Impactful Investment for SDGs

IISD;

“Util – a financial technology company with a focus on sustainability – has published a report ranking the top ten positive- and negative- contributing investment funds for each of the 17 SDGs. The report warns about bundled scores, which it describes as “the Schrödinger’s cat of sustainability,” and calls for an “unbundling” of ESG metrics to optimize investment impact....”

“Companies, industries, and funds deliver positive impacts for some Goals – and negative impacts for others, necessitating an “unbundling” of “catchall” concepts of ESG and “planet, people, prosperity.”

“The report calls for unbundling “catchall” concepts of ESG and “planet, people, prosperity,” which, it argues, represent “a suite of different, even conflicting, objectives”. It finds that ESG, which is first and foremost a risk mitigation tool, “is biased towards large companies with reporting resource[s] and against those in developing markets, due to perceived social and governance flaws and ... data gaps”. .... It further warns of critical trade-offs in “a very un-green green transition” to a low-carbon economy.....”
BMJ GH (Editorial) - Facilitating access to medicines and continuity of care for Ukrainian refugees: exceptional response or the promise of more inclusive healthcare for all migrants?

S Aljadeeah, R Ravanitto, K Kielmann et al; https://gh.bmj.com/content/7/8/e010327

The authors conclude: “...There is an urgent need to bridge the short-term emergency response and medium-to-long-term actions, to integrate migrant populations in the mainstream European health systems which ensure continuous access to medicines. Research can shed light on the health needs of migrants including those living with chronic diseases and complex multimorbidities and can inform policies and strategies for inclusive, sustainable, equitable and compassionate care. We need to better understand the implementation of legal and policy provisions for access to health and essential medicines and how these affect migrants’ pathways to care, both within European countries and across transnational networks. This will help European health policy-makers to adapt health policies and the systems that implement these towards longer-term and more equitable perspectives on sustained provision of care for all migrants, which goes beyond emergency care."

Links:

Global Health Action - Effects of decentralization on the functionality of health facility governing committees in lower and middle-income countries: a systematic literature review

Blogs & op-eds

Nature (Comment) - To ease the world food crisis, focus resources on women and girls

E Bryan et al; https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-022-02312-8

“The global effects of the Ukraine war hit girls and women the hardest, exacerbating inequalities. Aid programmes must adapt.”

Speaking of Medicine (blog) - Is global health ignoring global human development?

T Khan; https://speakingofmedicine.plos.org/2022/08/24/is-global-health-ignoring-global-human-development/

“Global health has dominated world headlines since the emergence of COVID-19. More so at times, than other world events like war, famine and even terrorism. Rightly so. Health has long been a neglected human right. But the discussion on global health as a result of COVID-19 has one drawback. It is eclipsing, and as a result, doing a disservice to the various intersections of human development.....”
Tweets of the week

Albert Bourla
“\textit{I would like to let you know that I have tested positive for #COVID19. I am thankful to have received four doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, and I am feeling well while experiencing very mild symptoms. I am isolating and have started a course of Paxlovid.}”

James Love
“\textit{The most important consequence of the Moderna patent suit against Pfizer will be to chill the development of other mRNA products, and to normalize more litigation for this new platform.}”

Podcasts & upcoming webinars

Global Health Matters – Global Health Career Paths: Learn, Mentor, Practice, Repeat
https://www.buzzsprout.com/1632040/11138434

This one went viral.

“\textit{Are you a professional looking to progress further or perhaps a global health student at the early stage of your career? There are so many routes to get into a career in global health, so this podcast episode discussion is with two career professionals sharing their knowledge of how they chose their path and giving clear guidance on ways to get the support needed to increase opportunities to make a difference in the ever pressing global health challenges.}”

\textbf{Stephanie Topp:} Associate Professor, Global Health and Development, College of Public Health, James Cook University; and \textbf{Renzo Guinto:} Chief Planetary Health Scientist, Sunway Centre for Planetary Health and Director, Planetary and Global Health, St. Luke’s Medical Center.

Stephanie Topp looks at how global health can support the next generation of thinkers and leaders, and suggests that networked capacity building and an emerging voices model is a critical example. Renzo Guinto wants to listen to different voices and challenge power structures to address the inequities that global health is trying to address.”

For some \textit{key messages of this podcast}, see also HPW - \textbf{How to Know if You Should Work in Global Health}

CGD - Pandemic Proof: Evaluating the Monkeypox Response
https://www.cgdev.org/blog/pandemic-proof-evaluating-monkeypox-response
“On this episode of Pandemic Proof from CGD, Dr. Boghuma Titanji, Assistant Professor of Medicine at the Emory University School of Medicine, joins Javier Guzman to reflect on the ongoing monkeypox outbreak and response. Together they discuss the parallels between monkeypox and previous infectious disease outbreaks such as COVID-19; inequities in access to vaccines and treatments; and the role national, regional, and international entities must play in preparedness and response to avoid making the same mistakes when the next—in inevitable—pandemic hits. ....”

Upcoming webinar – Frontline in Focus (8 Sept) : How African-Led Innovation is Transforming Global Health

https://jnjmeetings.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_sqHDEwyURsCbPPStvlZRmw

Just one of many upcoming webinars in September, as you know....

“...The webinar will bring together researchers, community health leaders, tech entrepreneurs and investment partners to discuss the most successful and promising African-led digital innovations and how we can amplify and invest in them to further universal health coverage....”