

# Focus on health financing

This April 2021 issue of the *Africa Health Journal* (AHJ) has a focus on health financing, a subject described by Sam Okuonzi as the “most intractable challenge of health systems in LMICs”. His article is one of the most educative summaries on the topic of health financing that I have ever seen and should be a must-read for all. This is followed by a review of the National Health Insurance Scheme in Ghana by veteran health system experts, Delanyo Dovlo and Chris Atim. This is one of the oldest such schemes in Africa, founded in 2004 and is now a major source of financing for health care in Ghana. It was estimated to cover approximately 35.8% of the population in 2018. There are lessons here for all African countries on their respective challenging journeys towards UHC.

Health financing is dependent on capacities to raise funds from domestic sources. It is befitting that to this discussion the Uganda National Academy of Sciences has contributed a summary of a Consensus Study Report on domestic financing in Uganda. This article shines a torch on the apparent lack of people ownership of the national development agenda and the issue of capital flight from externalisation of profits and other illicit fund transfers from LMICs through much lauded direct foreign investment.

The theme on ownership is continued in a think-piece I wrote with two fellow Commissioners for the Africa Health Agenda International Commission (AHAIC) on the Status of UHC in Africa. Participation and ownership in health and development is gaining relevance in approaches to achieving the SDGs.

This is reinforced in the reports from two conferences. The 4th edition of the Africa Health Agenda International

Conference (AHAIC) was hosted virtually from March 8-10 under the theme “Decade for Action: Driving Momentum to Achieve UHC in Africa.” The launch of the AHAIC Commission report on the State of UHC in Africa took place at this conference. Opening the conference, President Kenyatta called for greater political will, collaboration and coordination among African nations to make UHC a reality, and highlighted the need for countries to focus on investment in primary health care, expand affordability and harness the innovativeness of youth to promote uptake of e-health solutions.

The second conference reported is on “Partnerships during COVID-19”, hosted by Tropical Health and Education Trust (THET), African Center for Global Health and Social Transformation (ACHEST) and ESTHER from Ireland. The take-home message is that we live in a globalised world where COVID-19 ably illustrated that a problem in one corner of the world is a problem across the world. This leaves us with no choice but to partner and ensure that the world is a better place for us all, a core message of UHC on leaving no one behind.

Returning to health financing theme, Elsie Kiguli-Malwadde relates distribution of radiology equipment to population densities and the achievement of UHC in Africa. She underscores the important role that Diagnostics Medical Imaging plays in diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis of disease pointing out that such imaging required for management of 30% of all medical conditions.

There is a bold proposal by Richard F Heller, Osita Okonkwo and colleagues to establish a new virtual institution in Africa. They argue for the need for research leadership to come from the Global South in the wake of the current debates on decolonising global health. They hope that the publication of this paper will

help to identify those who might want to be part of this development.

An authoritative article on childhood stunting by Rachel Musoke highlights the global nutrition targets and expounds on when childhood stunting occurs, what causes it and what actions need to be taken to stop it.

The article on compassion by David Okello touches a critical issue of caring for the health workforce which has been thrown into the limelight by the COVID-19 pandemic. Health workers are often taken for granted by the public as well as their employers; yet they have real needs which have to be catered for so that they can care effectively.

The obituary is of our dear colleague and friend Professor James Hakim of the University of Zimbabwe who passed on 26 January. James has been widely eulogised including in the *Lancet* among others. Among the African Forum for Research and Education in Health (AFREhealth) community, a scholarship has been named after him. We are honoured to have worked closely with him over many years.

The AHJ is available online as an open access web-based publication ([Africa-health.com](http://Africa-health.com)). This website is active daily with current affairs, social media such as Twitter, Facebook and is visited by a large audience. Those wishing to advertise are welcome to use the print and electronic channels of the AHJ using guidelines that are in the journal.



**Professor Francis Omaswa**

(omaswaf@achest.org)

# The Africa Health website

The website includes:

- The latest issue, and the back issues of [Africa Health](#)
- Latest news
- The TRIP searchable database for evidence based articles and guidelines
- Continuing Professional Development courses
- Conference and meetings calendar
- An insight into African scientific publishing
- Subscription information
- Banner advertisements

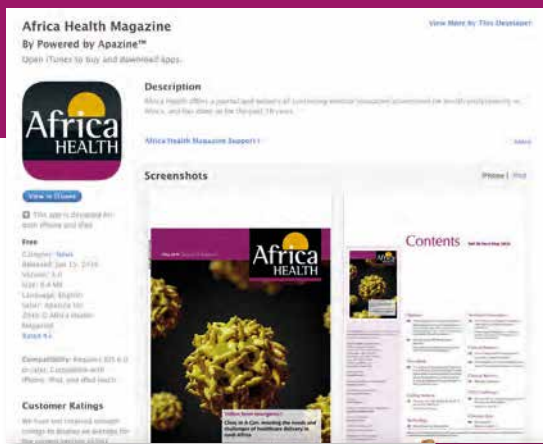
## Search the TRIP database for free

Here is a free database which gives you access to millions of articles, all indexed and uniquely ranked.

Content is entirely evidence-based and peer-reviewed, and in addition to the scientific

articles on every medical subject you can imagine; the database also includes a host of guidelines on treatment and management protocols.

Crucial in the use of the database is the need to understand the filtering options (see image to the right) or you will find yourself



# Get Africa Health on the go

The Africa Health app is available to download. You can now read the latest edition and archived editions of Africa Health on the go.

You can find the Africa Health app is available for both iPhone and Android via the app stores.

The app and it's content is completely free to download from the app store.

Please note that the app currently shows a couple of years worth of journals. More of the archive will be added in due course.



View the latest edition and back issues of the Africa Health journal

Subscribe for free to the Africa Health e-alerts. This enables you to read every edition online as soon as they are available



with a 'selection' of several thousand papers. Having carefully chosen the search words (be as specific as you can) you will then see (down the right hand side) a number of refinements that you can make to your search. You'll then have a much more manageable and relevant search outcome.

