

# From COVID 19 to Monkeypox and many other matters



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The African Health Journal July issue has a range of articles on climate change, reproductive health and infectious diseases specifically Monkeypox. It also has specific short highlights on important issues like personal attributes or characteristics of a good counselor using the acronym 'WELCOME' for family planning, a fact sheet on Pre-eclampsia and what a critical incidence is and how to deal with it. All these are important for front line health workers as they give them quick summaries to look at.

The opinion piece highlights how climate change is affecting the social and environmental determinants of health like clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter. Omaswa elaborates on how this crisis threatens to undo the last fifty years of progress in development, global health, and poverty reduction, and how it further widens existing health inequalities between and within populations. He also notes that it severely jeopardizes the realization of Universal Health Coverage (UHC.)

Two conferences have been reported on one was global and hybrid (physical and virtual) while another was regional in Africa and virtual. Both addressed the post COVID 19 period and discussed its effects on society. Prof Gostin and Prof Oyewale give a narrative on the activities shaping up health security in Africa. This was as a precursor to the 75th World Health Assembly. The 75th WHA, focused on how to handle public Health Emergencies of international concern in the future. For the first time Network Towards Unity for Health (TUFH) held a regional conference for Africa with a theme "Building Better Together in Africa". Though TUFH is an international organization, it has realized that it is important to think globally

and also act locally because regions have their unique aspects. That is why they are holding regional conferences in all the WHO regional blocks to address local matters.

A team of experts from UNICEF have contributed 3 articles based on their work in West Nile, Uganda on reproductive health. Two others were published in the April issue. In the current issue, one is on the role of postnatal care in reproductive health, an area that is often neglected. Some of the reasons why it is neglected being due to inadequate human resource, inappropriate and/or insufficient logistics, and cultural obstacles. All these could easily be handled or improved leading to a reduction in maternal deaths. The second article is on a study they carried out on the uptake of first trimester Antenatal Care (ANC) that showed that investment in health education and communication to community members and mothers is essential to improving ANC attendance. ANC has been shown to improve the quality of maternal and child health outcomes at delivery. The authors investigated the barriers, enablers, and relationships with health workers at the community and facility levels. The third article is on understanding Community Health Workers' (CHWs) motivation, function and role in Uganda. The role of CHWs has been a hot topic of discussion in the African region, therefore it is important to do research on this topic to inform policy. They note that investing in a financial incentive package for the community health workforce requires significant cost over the medium to long-term. Therefore, the government should take the time to consider the evidence, the position of stakeholders, the gender implications, and the long-term financing sustainability to avoid a high risk of getting it wrong.

Omaswa in his article on the Social Determinates of Health explains how the role of the individual person and the community calls for more discussion and attention when discussing health. He says that in order to promote health and keep healthy people healthy, individuals need to know what the right thing to do is. He quotes a message he coined many years back but which remains relevant today "Health is made at home and only repaired in health facilities when it breaks down".

Monkeypox, a zoonotic infectious illness caused by the monkeypox virus, it has given the world another scare after COVID 19 and something to speculate on. While it has been seen before, the fact that it was coming up in regions where it was not been endemic has been puzzling. Dr. Talisuna from WHO describes what Monkey pox is, how to recognize it, its modes of transmission, how to diagnose it, how to mitigate its spread, how to treat it, the vaccine availability and what actions WHO is taking to stop its spread. All in all, infectious diseases continue to greatly impact the livelihoods and economies of communities and countries. Looking at outbreaks like plague, yellow fever, influenza, Ebola, and COVID-19 to mention a few that have disrupted lives from time to time.

There is our usual medicine digest and quiz, plenty of news and advertisements.

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