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COVID-19 news from SAMED, Government and Abroad.

**SEDA WEBINAR: INNOVATION IN INCUBATION**

You are invited!



Speakers: Nosipho Khonkwane, Seda STP Executive Manager, Toby Shapshak, International TED speaker and tech expert, Guido Schwartz, Director of the Foundation for Space Development Africa, Aphiwe Adams, entrepreneur and founder of Omnipresent Global and Lana Lovasic, social innovator and entrepreneur, ImpactHub.

Friday: 17 July 2020 | 11:00 - 13:00

Download the invitation with the link [here](#).Download panellist profiles [here](#).[Back to top](#)**GLOBAL RESEARCH COMMUNITY: THE RIGHT RESEARCH IN THE RIGHT PLACES FOR COVID-19**

The report calls for the use of research evidence on the optimal implementation of public health interventions for COVID-19 in varied global settings. In the absence of a vaccine and community-based treatment we are reliant on public health measures to stop this pandemic. From how to implement social distancing in urban informal settlements to how to gain trust and mitigate myths within communities. There is a clear and urgent need to further understand COVID-19.

The Global Health Network (TGHN), the African Academy of Sciences (AAS) and UK Collaborative on Development Research (UKCDR) have published findings of a global study to establish what are the remaining research priorities for COVID-19 and whether they are the same across the globe. A peer reviewed paper reporting these data has just been accepted for publication by BMJ Global, with a global

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world have worked rapidly to increase understanding of COVID-19. But there are still many unknowns as the pandemic accelerates and spreads into new areas. Different studies are needed across the globe and the evidence must be tailored for different settings with the benefits from the research being equitable and widely accessible.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) produced a roadmap that set out the research priorities following a meeting in February, just before COVID-19 was declared a Pandemic. Now, at this point in the evolution of this novel disease across the world, it is important to assess whether these priorities are still current and whether they are the same for all types of communities and health care settings.

GHN, AAS and UKCDR undertook an online survey and held a series of workshops, where researchers representing all WHO regions were able to rank research questions, and identify new ones that need to be tackled within their health care setting and communities, mitigating this and future pandemics. With contributions from over 3,000 healthcare workers and researchers, the results show that the global research community supports the existing WHO Roadmap, but strongly calls out areas where more focus is needed and where new priorities have emerged, particularly from low-resourced settings.

The results demonstrate there is a need for evidence on the relative effectiveness and optimal implementation of public health interventions in varied global settings. Study participants explained how they need data to show when and how best to implement social distancing, for example, in urban informal settlements where families are sharing limited sanitation facilities.

Another clear priority is to understand better how to gain community trust and mitigate myths, to understand the impact on already present diseases within communities and to explore the ethics of research during a pandemic.

Download the report here: <https://coronavirus.tghn.org/>

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### Delivering an accelerated economic recovery strategy

Business for South Africa, the alliance of volunteer resources from across the South African business community, has launched its proposed Economic Recovery Strategy: "A New Inclusive Economic Future for South Africa".

To access the full B4SA Accelerated Economic Recovery Strategy, [click here](#).



The COVID-19 crisis represents an opportunity for all stakeholders to consider what is required for the country to move ahead successfully and with conviction. This will require ruthless prioritisation and difficult decisions. A new social and economic compact must be forged in parallel, and a cohesive plan will need to be jointly developed and implemented by government, business and other social partners. Committed leadership is needed to drive decisions to conclusion with speed.

challenges.

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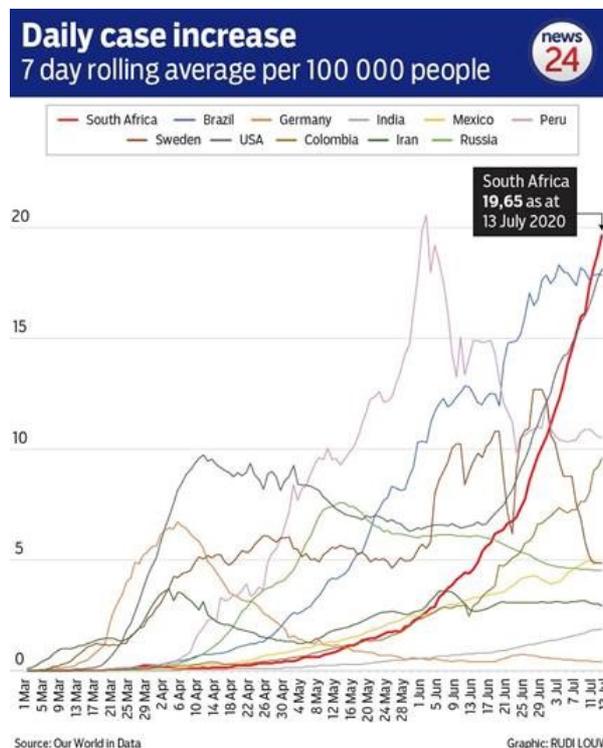
## COVID-19 DEVELOPMENTS

### TRACKING THE PANDEMIC



SA COVID cases growing at a higher rate than any other country - but we have one of the lowest mortality rates

- South Africa is now recording new coronavirus cases every day at a rate higher than any other country in the world when reported COVID-19 infections are compared by population size.
- On average for the week of 6 to 13 July, the country recorded 19.6 cases per 100 000 people – a growth rate higher than every other country in the world currently.
- The calculation is made by taking the daily case increases over time and finding the proportion per 100 000 people of the population these daily new cases represent. To make sense of this visually, this daily case increase per 100 000 people is then placed on a seven-day rolling average scale, as seen in the graph below.



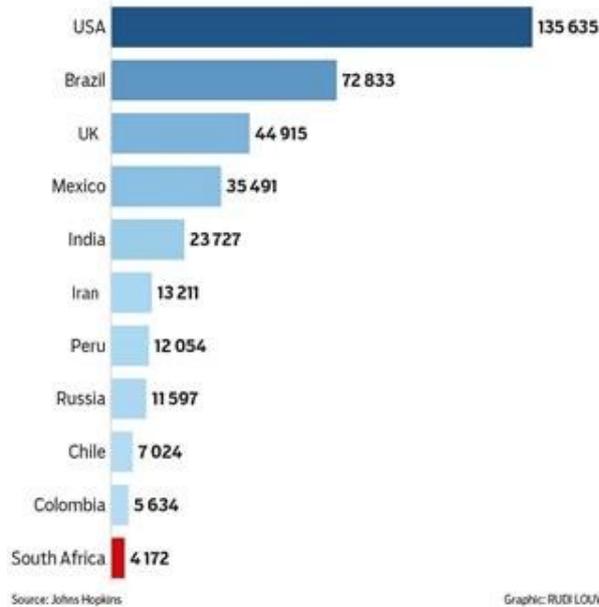
- It is clear from the graph that on this seven-day rolling average, only Peru has historically exceeded an average rise of more than 20 cases per 100 000 people a day. The daily increase rate in Peru, while still significant, has declined steeply in recent weeks when compared with other countries.

many of the "top 10" countries with the highest cumulative infections, but lags behind countries that have found a similar number of cases, such as the United Kingdom.

- On Tuesday, SA also overtook the UK in terms of cumulative confirmed COVID-19 cases with a reported 298 292 cases, which means it is now 8th in the world in terms of the most cases recorded over time. As of Tuesday, UK health authorities reported 291 393 confirmed cases.
- The surge in cases in SA in July has been driven by significant increases in cases in Gauteng, which became the first province to record more than 100 000 coronavirus cases at a case doubling rate hovering around 10 days, compared with more than 20 days in the Western Cape, where the majority of the country's cases were initially found.
- Low testing numbers in SA mean a high number of cases could potentially be going undetected. As of Tuesday Health Minister Zweli Mkhize reported that 2.2 million tests had been conducted for COVID-19, translating into roughly 3 864 tests per 100 000 people – lower than Chile, the US, the UK and Russia.



- The South African Health Products Regulatory Authority recently approved the country's first serological rapid test kit, which could significantly amplify efforts to find COVID-19 cases.
- But crucially, the country has recorded 4 346 deaths compared with the UK's 44 915 deaths (as of 14 July) and has one of the lowest crude mortality rates globally.

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- The explanations offered by scientists as to [why the death rate is so low compared with European countries has varied](#) – but a leading theory is that COVID-19 is yet to spread to vulnerable communities where access to healthcare and living conditions do not provide an opportunity for social distancing.
- South Africa also has a comparatively young population, and death trends observed in other countries and here show older people are at higher risk of falling seriously ill from the COVID-19 disease.

### CLINICAL, SCIENTIFIC

#### COVID-19 vaccine hopes raised by fresh trials

- Hopes of an effective [COVID-19](#) vaccine being developed in the near future have been raised after two separate studies showed potential positive results, British media reported Thursday. A University of Oxford trial showed its prototype vaccine generated an immune response against the virus, the reports said.
- Blood samples taken from a group of some 1,000 volunteers who were given the vaccine stimulated antibodies and "killer T-cells", according to the [Daily Telegraph](#) newspaper.
- Previous research has shown that T-cells can remain in the body for years and help fight viruses. Results of the trial are expected to be published in *The Lancet* medical journal next week, Oxford said in a statement.
- The potential development comes after US biotech firm [Moderna said on Tuesday it would start the final stage of human trials](#) for its vaccine candidate on 27 July. It said it had had promising results from earlier testing. Up to 30,000 Americans are expected to take part in the trials.

#### A leading antibody expert says you can get coronaviruses again

- Roughly [six months into the coronavirus pandemic](#), emerging evidence is starting to suggest that people who've been [infected with this virus](#) could still be susceptible to getting it again. "We know that from other coronaviruses, from regular human, common cold coronaviruses, that you probably get immunity for some time once you're infected," Florian Krammer, a [vaccine scientist and virus expert](#) at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York, told Business Insider. "But it's not perfect."
- Krammer says that a person's second coronavirus infection could be milder, or [even asymptomatic](#) - where they display no outward signs of sickness at all. But his assertion backs up what new data around the world is also starting to suggest: that the body may, after a few months, start to forget it had the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, COVID-19.
- This prospect of a potential for waning coronavirus memory in our immune systems may make it more difficult to rid the world of this virus, permanently, especially without a vaccine.

#### 73 countries are running out of HIV medication due to pandemic. Is SA on that list?

- The [World Health Organisation \(WHO\) warned last week](#) that 73 countries have reported in a survey that their supply of antiretroviral (ARV) medication for HIV-positive people is at risk of running out due to global distribution disruptions caused by the [coronavirus](#) pandemic. About 24

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HIV treatment continue to access it. We cannot let the COVID-19 pandemic undo the hard-won gains in the global response to this disease."

- In South Africa, where more than five million people are on ARV therapy, the South African National Aids Council (SANAC) says that while current supplies are adequate nationally despite a few facilities running out, if the pandemic persists it's safe to assume medicine shortages will become more prevalent.

#### [Access to healthcare more difficult during the lockdown, SA's largest household study finds](#)

- South Africa's current largest household study, which surveyed about 7 000 households, has found that [access to medical services](#) was hindered during the nationwide lockdown. The healthcare section of the National Income Dynamics Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey (NIDCRAM) looked at unmet health needs, including findings which provide "supplementary evidence to address concerns about the unintended health effects of COVID-19 due to large observed drops in ART (antiretroviral therapy) visits and TB (tuberculosis) tests".
- It seems that some of the reasons are that those who needed medical care were either too scared of coronavirus or simply unable to go.
- Some participants were unable to access medication, condoms and contraceptives during the period.

#### [More scientific reasons why children are largely sheltered from COVID-19](#)

- Children have been shown to be more resilient against COVID-19, the disease caused by SARS-CoV-2, and emerging research has been shedding light on why this is the case. Among the ongoing research is a study that found differences between the lung physiology and immune function of children and adults.
- The study was done by researchers from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) and Baylor College of Medicine, and was published in the journal [American Journal of Physiology-Lung Cellular and Molecular Physiology](#). The findings resulted from a collaboration between paediatric and adult physicians, as well as experts in paediatric surgery, adult critical care, neonatology, and molecular biology.
- For a number of months, researchers studying the virus have found a pivotal link between Angiotensin-converting enzyme 2s, called ACE2, and SARS-CoV-2. ACE2 are the receptors (or doors) that allow the virus to enter the body's cells. What's interesting is that children naturally present with less ACE2 in their lungs than adults.
- "ACE2 are important for viral entry and there seems to be less of them in children, because they increase with age," said Matthew Harting, assistant professor in the Department of Pediatric Surgery at McGovern Medical School at UTHealth and senior author of the paper.
- In addition to the above, the researchers also explained that children's immune systems respond differently to viruses than those of adults. In essence, this leaves a smaller chance for severe illness in paediatric patients.
- "In severe cases of adult COVID-19 patients, we've seen that those T-cells are reduced, so the ability to fight the virus is also reduced. In kids, those T-cells seem to be maintained, so they are still able to prevent the virus," said Harry Karmouty-Quintana, an assistant professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at McGovern Medical School, and co-author of the paper.

#### [Medical Research Council records 11 000 'excess deaths' between May and June](#)

- The South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) has recorded almost 11 000 "excess deaths" from natural causes in their Weekly Death Report on Tuesday. "Excess deaths" means that nationally, from 6 May to 7 July, 10 994 more deaths from natural causes were recorded than anticipated, the report said. It also means that reported deaths have shown a pattern that are completely different to those indicated by historical trends.
- While the cause of this is probably due largely to [COVID-19 and the lockdown](#), it is too early to tell what the main cause of death is. "It is important to point out that although the bulk of these estimates of the 'excess deaths' are due to [COVID-19 and related causes](#), a proportion could be due other natural causes associated with a relaxing of lockdown".

#### **ECONOMICS, POLITICS, EDUCATION, ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL**

##### [Primedia starts the retrenchment process as COVID-19 continues to shake up media](#)

- Primedia announced on Thursday that it is starting a retrenchment process in terms of Section 189 of the Labour Relations Act. The group includes radio stations 702, KFM and CapeTalk, as well as national news brand EWN. It also has an advertising arm. It did not say how many jobs may be affected.
- In a statement, the group said the decision to start a retrenchment process followed an "extensive strategic review process which scrutinised every facet of the business". It blamed the current poor

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)**OTHER**[How smugglers are shifting staggering amounts of contraband despite the pandemic](#)

- On July 1, Italian police made the [largest amphetamine seizure](#) in the world. At the port of Salerno, just south of Naples, they used chainsaws to open large cylinders of paper and industrial machinery that were inside shipping containers from Syria and found 14 tonnes of pills.
- In Hong Kong, customs officials seized [record numbers](#) of illegal shark fins in April and May, from an estimated 38,500 sharks. Meanwhile, the trade in counterfeit drugs and medical equipment has been in overdrive. US border authorities [recently confirmed](#) that they had seized nearly a million units by the beginning of June.
- These record seizures are puzzling, since they suggest that such activities are increasing. The trade in illicit and legitimate goods are usually closely connected, with traffickers and smugglers often using [legitimate goods](#) to conceal their commodities – just like in the Italian amphetamine bust. Yet the global trade in legitimate goods has declined sharply during the pandemic and is [forecast to be](#) down 10% year on year in 2020.
- To some extent, illicit traffic will be more visible to authorities because legal trade flows have shrunk and there is additional checking at national borders. The seizures are also a sign of criminals taking greater risks because they can make higher returns on scarce goods.

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**COVID-19 EVENTS****WEBINAR: ORT PUBLIC-PRIVATE COLLABORATION IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Join Us for a Webinar on **Public-Private Collaboration in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**.  
**Sunday, 19 July 2020 |16:00 – 18:00**

The webinar is the first broad effort in the ORT district towards building cross cutting collaborations for an integrated response from home and community, through level one to tertiary care levels. We envisage exploring the strengthening of ward-based outreach teams (WBOTS), tracers and trackers through the leadership of family doctors.

**Webinar Theme:** Pandemics have no boundaries - COVID-19 as a Social Regulator

**Moderator:** Prof Busisiwe Cawe (Family Medicine, Mthatha Regional Hospital)

**Welcome and Introduction:** Nomvume Ntshanga (District Manager) and Dr Zweli Mbambisa

**Panelists:**

- Prof Francis Hyera - *Principles in Public Health Emergencies*
- Dr Mark Human (SAMA) - *Towards Health Services Integration*
- Dr Adri Kok (FCPSA/SAPPF) - *The Western Cape Collaboration model*
- Dr Stacy Rossouw (Senior Neurologist) - *Relationships, Referrals and Results*

**Interactive Engagements for Improvements:** Focus on the Eastern Cape province.

**Register in advance for this webinar, click on the link below:**

[https://samrc.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_sDw0StleT4C5LCxO1cY1yg](https://samrc.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_sDw0StleT4C5LCxO1cY1yg)

We look forward to your participation.

Kind regards

**SOUTH AFRICAN MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL**

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Tanya Cohen



Nolitha Fakude



Dr Charles Mbekeni



## WEBINAR

Functioning in the Age of COVID-19 | Leadership & Operational Lessons from Anglo American & Return2Work

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



**DATE**

Tuesday 21st July



**TIME**

10am – 11.30am

Join Nolitha Fakude, Chairperson of Anglo American's Management Board in South Africa, Dr Charles Mbekeni, Lead for Health for Anglo American in South Africa, and Tanya Cohen from Return2Work on Tuesday 21st July at 10am – 11.30am where they will share leadership lessons and practical tips for how business can adapt to operate safely in "the age of Covid-19".

COVID-19 will be an enduring reality for all SA businesses and citizens for the foreseeable future. Every South African business will need to learn how to "function in the age of COVID-19" if it is to survive. Over the last few months, Anglo American has adapted to this reality, and changed how over 50,000 South African employees and contractors work. Their approach goes beyond their own workspaces to include a response that collaborates extensively with local government and that looks into the communities where their employees reside to try and provide safe environments.

This Business for SA webcast will share what Anglo American did through: employee health and hygiene controls, de-densifying the workplace, shift and behaviour change, and staff/community support and much more which allowed it to restart operations. We will also explain the free practical tools and guidance available to businesses from Return2Work and how it links to the Solidarity Fund's behavioural change campaign.

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### IHRM: Webinar Update on the Impact of COVID-19

IHRM invites you to join them for a webinar on 31 July at 09h00 when Christoff Raath, Joint CEO of Insight Actuaries and Consultants, will provide an updated analysis on the Impact of COVID-19 on Medical Schemes and Private Hospitals, as South Africa reaches the peak of the pandemic.

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SAMED is the voice of the South African medical technology industry. The not-for-gain-association was formed in 1985 and aims to provide members with a collective, objective and credible platform to engage with stakeholders. SAMED's members include individual medical technology companies, associate members and associations.

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