

IDI COVID-19 Science Summary Compiled by Dr Andrew Mujugira (30th Aug to 5th Sept 2020)

30th August 2020

A bad word may kill a soul ~ Runyankore proverb

COVID-19 stigma

'Stigma is associated with a lack of knowledge about how COVID-19 spreads, a need to blame someone, fears about disease and death, and gossip that spreads rumours and myths'.

'People who experience COVID-19 stigma include health care workers, people with the disease and their family and those released from quarantine. Stigma makes them feel isolated, abandoned, depressed, hurt and angry when people avoid them for fear of getting COVID-19'.

'Research from past epidemics has shown that people who worry about being shunned may be less likely to get tested or seek medical care, which increases infection risks for them and for others. Stopping stigma is important to making all of us safer and healthier'.

Sources: CDC, Mayo Clinic

31st August 2020

The pit which is known does not kill the cow ~ Nyoro proverb

Obesity and COVID-19

- 1) People with obesity have higher risk of severe COVID-19 including hospitalization, intensive clinical care and death.
- 2) A meta-analysis of ~400 000 COVID-19 patients (~55% male) found that obesity increased risk of hospital admission by 113%, intensive care by 74%, and death by 48%.
- 3) How factors associated with obesity - host microbiome, genetic or epigenetically inheritable traits and dietary patterns - influence COVID-19 outcomes is not well understood.

Obes Rev. 2020 Aug 26

1st September 2020

A cooking pot cannot be used as a drum nor a drum as a cooking pot ~ Ganda proverb

Boosting Immunity?

It is commonly believed that taking vitamins or mineral supplements results in a "strong" immune system. However, there is little to no evidence that they work. In general, vitamin supplementation is not necessary for most adults who eat a balanced diet.

The immune system is complex and finely balanced between: a) actively stopping bacteria, viruses, and parasites from causing infection, and b) not being hyperactive and causing allergies and autoimmune disorders. Too much of an immune response is just as bad as a weak response.

Regular physical activity, eating a healthy diet and adequate sleep are beneficial for the immune system. Diabetes, obesity and smoking are not. The main way to prevent infections is to stay away from sick people, wash your hands, reduce stress levels and get all recommended vaccines.

2nd September 2020

The buffalo killed the man who thought he knew it all ~ Lugbara proverb

SARS-CoV-2 Seroprevalence in HCW

- 1) 'Little is known about the prevalence and features of SARS-CoV-2 infection among frontline U.S. health care personnel'.
- 2) 'Among 3,248 personnel observed, 6% had antibody evidence of previous SARS-CoV-2 infection; 29% of personnel with SARS-CoV-2 antibodies were asymptomatic in the preceding months, and 69% had not previously received a diagnosis of SARS-CoV-2 infection. Prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 antibodies was lower among personnel who reported always wearing a face covering while caring for patients (6%), compared with those who did not (9%)'.
- 3) 'A high proportion of SARS-CoV-2 infections among health care personnel appear to go undetected. Universal use of face coverings and lowering clinical thresholds for testing could be important strategies for reducing hospital transmission'.

MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep. ePub: 31 August 2020

3rd September 2020

Troubles make hens miscarry ~ Kiga proverb

Depression Risk Factors

Harvard researchers followed 112,000 older British adults for 6-8 years to assess factors linked with depression. Depression is a common, serious mood disorder.

Factors linked with lower chances of depression included confiding in others, sleep duration, engaging in exercises like swimming or cycling, and a faster walking pace. Daytime napping, time spent using the computer, watching television, or a cell phone, and unhealthy diet had the highest associations with depression.

These data suggest that getting enough social support and limiting how much media you use may help prevent depression.

Am J Psychiatry. 2020 Aug 14

4th September 2020

Laughter is the best medicine

- 1) Laughter is central to relationships

'Women laugh about 126% more than men; men seem to instigate laughter the most. Women rate a sense of humor as a top-three trait for potential husbands. Men rate women who laugh a lot (i.e.

laugh at their jokes) higher than those who don't. Couples who laugh together have higher-quality relationships.'

2) Laughter has an effect similar to antidepressants

'Laughing activates the release of the neurotransmitter serotonin, the same brain chemical affected by the most common types of antidepressants (SSRIs). Serotonin activation through laughter therapy may help lessen depression'.

3) Laughter protects your heart

'Laughter has an anti-inflammatory effect that protects blood vessels and heart muscles from the damaging effects of cardiovascular disease. Laughter can decrease stress hormones, reduce artery inflammation and increase HDL, the "good" cholesterol. These positive effects of laughter last 24 hours, says the American Heart Association.

Sources: Pers Relationship, 22: 573-590; J Korean Acad Nurs. 2015 Apr;45(2):221-230; Ballantine, 1991; Forbes

5th September 2020

A burden shared is a burden halved— T.A. Webb

'Six-time Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton says he has had "a lot of difficult days" during the coronavirus pandemic'.

"There are two sides to me. First, the one you see on TV. The competitive, cut throat, hungry racer in me that comes out when I close the visor. When the visor is down, I come alive, all my fears, insecurities and doubts are cast aside and my focus kicks in and will not break until the job is done".

"Second, there's just me. Someone who is figuring life out, day by day, just like you. Trying to find inner peace, manage time, balance work and life, finding time for family and friends, working on managing my emotions, and trying to find time for the other things I am passionate about. Like many of you, I'm just trying to be and do my best in everything".

"I guess what I'm trying to say is, it's never a bad thing to ask for help if you need it, or to tell somebody how you feel. Showing your vulnerable side doesn't make you weak, instead, I like to think of it as a chance to become stronger."
