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**To:** gphin / rmisp (PHAC/ASPC)  
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Good morning,

Please find below the daily Summary and articles collected by GPHIN for your review and risk assessment.

### GPHIN Daily Report Email Summary

#### Special Section on Coronavirus

##### [Canada \(Update\) - Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) Outbreak \(Official\)](#)

As of 25 October 2020 at 19:00 EDT, a total of 216,104 cases have been recorded in Canada including 9,946 deaths. The cases are reported in Newfoundland and Labrador (290 confirmed cases, 4 deaths), Prince Edward Island (64 confirmed cases), Nova Scotia (1,110 confirmed cases, 65 deaths), New Brunswick (328 confirmed cases, 6 deaths), Quebec (100,114 confirmed cases, 6,143 deaths), Ontario (70,373 confirmed cases, 3,093 deaths), Manitoba (4,249 confirmed cases, 54 deaths), Saskatchewan (2,729 confirmed cases, 25 deaths), Alberta (24,261 confirmed cases, 300 deaths), British Columbia (12,331 confirmed cases, 256 deaths), Yukon (20 confirmed cases), Northwest Territories (9 confirmed cases), Nunavut (0 confirmed case), and repatriated travellers (13 confirmed cases). A detailed [epidemiological summary](#) is available. The risk will vary between and within communities, but given the increasing number of cases in Canada, the risk to Canadians is considered [high](#).

##### [International \(Update\) - Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) Outbreak \(Media\)](#)

As of 26 October 2020, 10:48 GMT, there were 43,405,696 cases of COVID-19 and 1,159,835 deaths reported globally. Top 10 countries with the highest number of cases, by alphabetical order are: Argentina (1,090,589 cases, 28,896 deaths), Brazil (5,394,128 cases, 157,163 deaths); Colombia (1,015,885 cases, 30,154 deaths); France (1,138,507 cases, 34,761 deaths); India (7,909,050 cases, 119,030 deaths); Mexico (891,160 cases, 88,924 deaths); Peru (888,715 cases, 34,149 deaths); Russia (1,531,224 cases, 26,269 deaths); Spain (1,110,372 cases, 34,752 deaths); United States (8,889,577 cases, 230,510 deaths).

#### Canada – Coronavirus disease (COVID -19) Outbreaks and Outcomes (Official and Media)

- On 23 October 2020, [the Prime Minister announced an investment of up to \\$173 million through the Strategic Innovation Fund \(SIF\) in Quebec City-based Medicago to support Canada's response to COVID-19 and future preparedness](#). The project, valued at a total of \$428 million, will advance Medicago's virus-like particle vaccine, developed on the company's unique plant-based production platform, through clinical trials. In addition, the project will establish a large-scale vaccine and antibody production facility to increase Canada's domestic biomanufacturing capacity. The government has signed an agreement with Medicago to secure up to 76 million doses of their COVID-19 vaccine candidate, enough to vaccinate 38 million people. This is the first domestically developed vaccine candidate the Government of Canada has secured.
- On 23 October 2020, the [Chief Public Health Officer](#) noted that the number of people experiencing severe illness continue to increase. Over the past 7 days, there were on average over 1,000 individuals with COVID-19 being treated in Canadian hospitals, including over 200 in critical care and an average of 23 deaths were reported each day. The impacts extend across society, not only by affecting those who become ill, but also by impacting the health, social and economic systems that affect overall wellbeing. It also means that minimizing the pandemic's impact, both currently and in the future, depends on all actions now.
- On 23 October 2020, [an outbreak of COVID-19 at a Calgary jail more than doubles in one day](#) since announced and has reached 55 cases. According to Alberta Health Services spokesperson, the outbreak includes 50 inmates and five staff members. Isolation and monitoring of the positive cases is underway as per public health direction. The inmate population at the Calgary Correctional Centre has a capacity of 427.
- [Researchers have identified the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in a Canadian dog](#). The dog belongs to a Niagara Region household where four out of six members tested positive for the coronavirus. The family's canine

companion had no symptoms and a low viral load, suggesting that dogs remain at relatively low risk of becoming gravely ill or passing on COVID to others.

- [Seven flights passing through Alberta over a three-day span in October have had confirmed cases of COVID-19.](#) Four of those flights left Calgary towards other major Canadian cities. Two were international flights coming into YYC Calgary International Airport, one from Cancun and another from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. The seventh flight with a COVID-19 case in that three-day span landed in Edmonton, from Vancouver on 19 October. Passengers on these flights are advised to self-monitor for symptoms.
- [A special report posted by a media source indicates that Canada has consistently remained one or two steps behind in the measures taken to address the novel coronavirus.](#) According to the report, Federal health authorities failed early on to draw the right conclusions about how the virus spreads, despite multiple pieces of evidence in plain view. Authorities delayed implementing policies, such as mandating the wearing of non-medical face masks. The delay meant Canada's response has been middle of the pack in terms of success. Canada has been substantially better than the U.S. at reducing the caseload on hospitals and minimizing deaths per capita. However, the country's record pales against that of New Zealand, Australia, South Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan and much of Scandinavia. Many of those countries had something else in common that proved critical in dealing with the pandemic: government leaders who were either trusted or feared, and public health experts who convinced them they had to move swiftly to restrict movement across their borders and lock down large parts of their economies. In sharp contrast, Canada is struggling with vast gaps in its knowledge of how the virus is spreading through the community. The report provides actions taken by the Government in the past months.

#### **United States - Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) - Communication Resources (Official and Media)**

- [There are signs that Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\) is concerned over the notion of issuing emergency use authorizations to allow for the widespread early deployment of COVID-19 vaccines.](#) Instead, it appears FDA may be exploring the idea of using expanded access (a more limiting program that is typically used for investigational drugs) in the early days of COVID vaccine rollouts. Whereas previously FDA's concern was to protect against the possibility that unproven vaccines would be pushed out prematurely, now the fear is that early authorization of vaccine could dispose of a one-time chance to determine how well the various vaccines work and which work best in whom. During a meeting with members of the Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee, the Director of the FDA's Office of Vaccines Research and Review discussed a series of questions FDA staff posed and it appeared they have shared the concerns of the Agency's staff, who were asking for their guidance. According to the discussions, using expanded access rather than emergency use authorizations would be a more cumbersome process and create some challenges. People who were to be vaccinated would have to sign informed consent forms; safety data from vaccinees also would have to be gathered. According to an expert, without complete and full randomized trial data, authorities would lack the evidence base needed to monitor and adapt vaccination strategies as needed over the many years these vaccines will be in use.
- On 23 October 2020, [AstraZeneca Inc. announced that regulators are letting it resume testing of its COVID-19 vaccine candidate in the U.S.](#) Studies have already resumed in other countries, and the British drug maker stated the Food and Drug Administration gave the company the go-ahead to resume U.S. testing. AstraZeneca's study in the U.S. involves 30,000 people, with some getting the vaccine and others a placebo.

#### **[WHO - Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 - 23 October 2020 \(Official\)](#)**

WHO's Director-General indicated that it is a critical juncture in this pandemic, particularly in the northern hemisphere. The next few months are going to be very tough and some countries are on a dangerous track. WHO urges leaders to take immediate action, to prevent further unnecessary deaths, essential health services from collapsing and schools shutting again. Oxygen is one of the most essential medicines for saving patients with COVID-19, and many other conditions. WHO is committed to working in solidarity with all governments, partners and the private sector to scale up sustainable oxygen supply. The oxygen project, reflects WHO's commitment to end-to-end solutions and innovation to do what's done better, cheaper and reach more people.

#### **IHR Announcement - Additional health measures in relation to the COVID-19 outbreak**

As of 23 October 2020, there has been no new State Party that reported on additional health measures that significantly interfere with international traffic since the last announcement published on 16 October 2020. A total of 194 out of 196 States Parties reported to date with Mexico and Nicaragua not reporting any measure. Moreover, 22 countries provided updates to their previously implemented measures. The distribution by WHO Regions is as follows: AFR: 0 (0 updates), AMR: 0 (0 updates), EMR: 0 (1 update), EUR: 0 (21 updates), SRO: 0 (0 updates), WPR: 0 (0 updates).

#### **International - Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Outbreak and Outcomes (Official and Media)**

- [On 23 October 2020, ECDC posted its Rapid Risk Assessment: Increased transmission of COVID-19 in the EU/EEA and the UK update.](#) The [report](#) indicates that across the European Union/European Economic Area (EU/EEA) and the United Kingdom (UK) there has been a considerable further increase in COVID-19 infections and the current situation represents a major threat to public health. In most countries, notification rates have

increased in certain regions, with extremely high levels in some areas. As the epidemiological situation has worsened across the region, the impact in terms of pressure on healthcare services and mortality has become increasingly evident. The current epidemiological situation in most countries is a serious concern as it poses an increasing risk of transmission, requiring immediate, targeted public health action. The report shows that in countries where the epidemiological situation is of serious concern, there is a high risk to the general population, and for vulnerable individuals the COVID-19 epidemiological situation represents a very high risk.

- [The World Health Organization \(WHO\) declared on 22 October that the risk of COVID-19 spreading on flights appears very low](#); however, it could not be ruled out, despite studies showing only a small number of cases. In a statement, WHO indicated that the fact that transmission is not widely documented in the published literature does not mean it would not happen. The characterisation of the risk echoes the findings of a U.S. Defense Department study that the week of 16 October described the probability of catching the disease on airliners as very low.
- The [state-run Israel Institute for Biological Research has announced that researchers will begin human testing of its coronavirus vaccine on an initial group of 80 people would begin 01 November](#). The testing is to expand to a second phase of 960 people in December, with a third and final phase of 30,000 people next April or May depending on the results of the earlier phases.
- [Medics and high-risk patients are likely to receive Oxford's Covid-19 vaccine before the end of the year, the professor leading the project stated](#). The expert indicated that emergency approval would allow those most in need to receive the jab while the final trials are still under way. Full authorisation would then follow and the rest of the population could receive the vaccine from early 2021.
- [The Netherlands began transferring COVID-19 patients to Germany on 23 October 2020, as hospitals come under increasing strain from a second wave of coronavirus infections](#). The Flevo Hospital in the central Dutch town of Almere indicated it would transfer two of its intensive care patients by helicopter to a hospital in Muenster, around 65 km (40 miles) east of the Dutch-German border. The transfers were the first during the second wave that began in the Netherlands early in September. The Dutch Hospital Association expects the transfer of four more patients to Germany over the weekend. The number of patients hospitalized with the coronavirus in the Netherlands has doubled in the past two weeks, while almost half of all intensive care beds in the country are now being used for COVID-19 patients.

#### **Studies Related to Coronavirus disease (COVID -19) Outbreak (Media)**

- [In the Eurosurveillance study](#), researchers looked at four separate passenger groups, analyzing travel itineraries and their interactions with each other, including how close they sat together on the plane. Genome sequencing indicated a single source of COVID-19 spread the disease among the passengers, who came from elsewhere in Europe and two other, unspecified, continents. Despite implementing safety precautions, one summer flight into Ireland led to a 59-person outbreak in six of the country's eight health regions. Tests eventually confirmed that 13 (26.5%) of the original 49 passengers were positive for SARS-CoV-2, with the other 46 infected via contact with infected passengers. To prevent future outbreaks linked to flights, the researchers recommend accessing flight manifests quickly, tracking not only flight information but transit information, and ensuring current contact information, as 11 passengers could not be reached.
- [Researchers at Simon Fraser University suggest regular and rapid testing would be a better way to prevent more outbreaks of COVID-19 at schools in British Columbia](#). The study points out that early evidence suggested schools were low risk and children were unlikely to be very infectious. The researchers, whose findings have yet to be certified by peer review, suggest two other approaches to prevention: reducing community transmission and taking step to address the environment and how it plays a role in transmission could also help. The researchers stress the expected benefit of preventing large transmission clusters will naturally depend on the state of COVID-19 transmission in the community, with larger clusters likely to be amplified and spread onwards where community transmission is ongoing.
- A study suggests that [children, who test positive for COVID-19, but show none of the outward symptoms, may have lower viral levels than the infected and symptomatic children may](#). Alternatively, experts noted that the findings could be the result of the children being tested later in their disease, when their viral loads had fallen. The research team studied the viral loads of 817 children who tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 after attending hospitals in the US and Canada. Investigators found that virus levels were typically higher in asymptomatic children who were likely to have only been recently infected. However, their data also suggested that, in those children who underwent regular testing, median viral loads were still lower in asymptomatic cases. Further tests would be needed to determine if asymptomatic children do have lower virus levels overall, or whether such falls as their case develops. Such findings could impact the understanding of transmission risks among younger members of the population, especially in such settings as schools.
- [Biotech firm Moderna declared on 22 October that it had successfully recruited ethnic minorities, older people and those with underlying health issues for its COVID-19 vaccines trial](#), after it pushed to enrol groups most vulnerable to the virus. Moderna has now signed up all 30,000 participants for the phase-3 trial, and more than 25,000 of them had already received a second dose of the vaccine, four weeks after the first. Moderna stated it

was working to develop a vaccine for everyone, including communities that have historically been under-represented in clinical research and are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. The U.S. government indicated that would distribute the first doses immediately after authorization free of charge.

- [A team at Bristol University has used recently developed techniques to validate that the vaccine accurately follows the genetic instructions programmed into it by the Oxford team.](#) The AstraZeneca Oxford COVID-19 vaccine (ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 and known as AZD1222) now undergoing Phase III clinical trials, has already undergone rigorous testing to ensure the highest standards of quality and safety. Now a team at Bristol University has used recently developed techniques to further validate that the vaccine accurately follows the genetic instructions programmed into it. The findings, led by scientists at the University of Bristol and published on the pre-print server *ResearchSquare*, represent the most in-depth analysis of any of the COVID-19 vaccine candidates.
- [A new study shows that fewer New Yorkers are dying from the coronavirus than health experts had anticipated.](#) After New York became the epicenter for the pandemic in early March, experts had expected that the infection would remain as deadly in the following months; instead, a new investigation showed that by mid-August the death rate in those hospitalized with coronavirus-related illness had dropped from 27 percentage points to about 3 percentage points. Led by researchers at NYU Grossman School of Medicine, the study showed that a younger, healthier group of people were getting infected and were arriving at the hospital with less-severe symptoms than those infected in the spring. However, the researchers' analysis showed that these factors accounted for only part of the improvement in survival. The remaining, investigators suspect, resulted from health care providers' growing experience with the coronavirus. The new study, to be published online soon in the *Journal of Hospital Medicine*, is the most detailed analysis to date of coronavirus death rates over time. By accounting for age, obesity, and other key factors, the researchers were able to eliminate some explanations from the analysis.
- A letter published in [The Lancet](#) shows that SARS-CoV-2 risk misclassification could explain poor COVID-19 management. According to the researcher, one of the most striking facts about the COVID-19 pandemic is the notable difference in approach, attitude, control measures, case incidence, and mortality rates between eastern and western hemispheres. The author notes that differences in approach and mortality could be explained, at least partially, if not totally, by the misclassification of the infectious agent risk. Comparison of measures implemented between several countries are discussed. The researcher states that if Europe and other countries in the western hemisphere want to achieve an epidemiological trend similar to Asian countries, then SARS-CoV-2 should be considered an agent of maximum risk in all technical approaches, clinical settings, and social levels.

## Domestic Events of Interest

### [Ontario - 85% of Ont. nursing homes break the law repeatedly with almost no consequences, data analysis shows](#) (Media)

A data analysis of the most serious breaches of Ontario's long-term care home safety legislation reveals that six in seven care homes are repeat offenders, and there are virtually no consequences for homes that break that law repeatedly. Marketplace isolated 21 violation codes for some of the most serious or dangerous offences, including abuse, inadequate infection control, unsafe medication storage, inadequate hydration, and poor skin and wound care, among others. The analysis found that of the 632 homes in the Ontario database, 538 — or 85 per cent — were repeat offenders. The Ontario Ministry of Long-Term Care's inspection report from September 2019 that detailed Kostadinka's abuse revealed a lack of staff training on abuse policies. Yet, four months later, another report revealed 9.2 per cent of actively working staff had still not completed the mandatory training. Six months later, another incident of staff-to-resident abuse was documented in yet another report. There have also been incidents of financial abuse and resident-on-resident abuse. Most homes have not faced any punishment for failure to comply with the law. Only two Ontario homes have been shut down in the last decade for repeatedly failing to meet safety standards. Other sanctions available to the ministry appear to be ineffective in preventing future repeat offences. In October, the federal government promised to work with the provinces and territories to set out a national standard of care for long-term care, and would amend the Criminal Code in order to explicitly penalize those who neglect seniors under their care.

### [Ontario - Ottawa Paramedic Service has reached 'level zero' 400 times in 2020](#) (Media)

There have been 400 times this year that the Ottawa Paramedic Service hasn't had a single ambulance and paramedic transport crew available, according to statistics provided by the city. Ottawa Paramedic Service has reached 'level zero' 400 times in 2020. The paramedic service calls it level zero when there are no paramedic crews available to respond to 911 calls. On 15 October, Ottawa council's community and protective services committee heard from CEOs of The Ottawa Hospital, Montfort Hospital and Queensway Carleton Hospital that the high-demand for beds inside their facilities have led to long wait times for staff to accept patients from paramedics. In 2019, Ottawa paramedics responded to life-threatening emergencies within eight minutes, 75.1 per cent of the time. The council-approved standard is for the eight-



minute responses to happen 75 per cent of the time for those critical calls. Plans are in the works to increase beds and offload staff in emergency departments.

## International Events of Interest

### [United States - Outbreak of Listeria Infections Linked to Deli Meats](#) (Official)

CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA-FSIS) are investigating a multistate outbreak of *Listeria monocytogenes* infections. As of 22 October 2020, a total of 10 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Listeria monocytogenes* have been reported from three states. All 10 ill people were hospitalized. One death has been reported from Florida. [Epidemiologic evidence](#) shows that deli meat is a likely source of this outbreak. Of the nine people interviewed, all reported eating Italian-style deli meats, such as salami, mortadella, and prosciutto. The individuals reported purchasing prepackaged deli meats and meats sliced at deli counters at various locations.

### [United States - San Joaquin County Sees Its 1st Human Case Of St. Louis Encephalitis Virus Since 1973](#) (Media)

On 22 October 2020, public health officials announced that a Stockton resident had a confirmed case of SLEV. That person becomes the first human case of SLEV in San Joaquin County since 1973. The person's current condition was not stated, but according to health officials, they were recovering at home. In August, county public health officials detected SLEV in mosquitoes collected near Lodi. It was the first time since 1973 that officials had detected the virus in the county. In addition, Stanislaus County also recently found some mosquitos with SLEV, but no human cases have been confirmed in that area.

### [Peru - In hard-hit Peru, worry mounts over both COVID-19 and dengue](#) (Media)

As Peru grapples with one of the world's worst SARS-CoV-2 outbreaks, dengue virus is starting to raise alarm. Health officials have reported over 35,000 cases in 2020, concentrated largely in the Amazon. The rise comes amid an overall dip in the number of new daily coronavirus infections, though authorities worry a second wave could strike as dengue cases rise. In the city of Pucallpa, for instance, doctors affirm they are already encountering patients with both illnesses. According to the Pan American Health Organization, there has been an overall decrease in a dengue cases during the pandemic, with a little more than 2 million recorded so far in 2020, including 845 deaths. Nearly 1.4 million of those cases have been in Brazil. It is unclear whether the reduction is related to COVID-19, though a spokeswoman indicated that public health measures aimed at preventing the new virus may have played a role. Nonetheless, in the Peruvian Amazon a mounting number of dengue patients are filling hospital beds that months before were overwhelmed by COVID-19 patients.

### [South Korea \(Update\) - South Korea presses on with flu vaccination programme amid concerns about deaths](#) (Media)

The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA) declared on 23 October 2020 that it would not halt a wide flu vaccination programme aimed at heading off complications from the coronavirus, after reviewing more than two dozen cases of deaths that have raised public concern. A review had shown no direct link between the vaccination and 26 deaths that were investigated. KDCA plans to meet on 24 October to review additional analysis. The death toll among people, who have been vaccinated, reached 36, sparking calls from doctors and politicians for a halt to the programme. Of those who have died, 10 people received products from SK Bioscience, five each from Boryung and GC Pharma, four from Sanofi and one from Korea Vaccine. There were no details about the latest 11 cases. So far, 8.3 million people had been inoculated since the programme began on 13 October, with about 350 cases of adverse reactions reported.

### [Europe - Dengue in Europe: 18 locally acquired cases reported this year](#) (Media)

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) reports that 18 autochthonous, or locally acquired dengue fever cases have been reported on the continent in two countries—Italy and France. In Italy, 10 locally acquired cases have been reported in the Veneto region since the summer. Officials state the probable origin of the primary travel-related case is West Sumatra, Indonesia. ECDC states dengue is not endemic in the EU/EEA and the vast majority of the cases are travelers infected outside of the EU/EEA. When the environmental conditions are favorable, in areas where *Ae. albopictus* is established, viremic travel-related cases may generate a local transmission of the virus.

### **IHR Announcement - Poliomyelitis (Circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus and Wild Poliovirus) – Global update**

Between 1 January and 21 October 2020, there have been several countries affected by poliomyelitis including circulating vaccine-derived poliomyelitis type 1 and 2 (cVDPV1 and cVDPV2) and wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) globally. This announcement, posted on 23 October 2020, is a weekly update on the status of cVDPV and WPV1 in these affected countries. Between 15 and 21 October 2020, there have been three WPV1 in Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) cases and two WPV1 positive environmental samples reported in Afghanistan and Pakistan. During the same period, there have been 82 cVDPV2 in AFP cases and 4 cVDPV2 positive environmental samples reported in Afghanistan, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia.

## Researches, Policies and Guidelines

### [WHO EURO - United Nations at 75: bringing humanity together for a better tomorrow](#) (Official)

Seventy-five years ago, countries came together and formed the United Nations, in the hope of saving future generations from the scourge of war. The United Nations is the only forum in the world where 193 countries can discuss issues affecting us all, find areas of agreement and solve problems together. In January 2020, the United Nations launched a global consultation to mark its 75th anniversary. Through surveys and dialogues, it asked people about their hopes and fears for the future, and by 21 September this year, over 1 million people had taken part. The top 3 findings are: Amidst the current crisis, the immediate priority of most respondents everywhere is improved access to basic services: health care, safe water and sanitation, and education. The next main priority is greater international solidarity and increased support to the places hardest hit by the pandemic. This includes tackling poverty and inequalities, and boosting employment. While health is the most pressing issue now, respondents were hopeful about this area improving and believe access to education and women's rights will improve.

### [WHO EURO- Statement – World Polio Day: walking the last mile together towards polio eradication](#) (Official)

Through united action, the incidence of wild polio cases has dropped by over 99%. The WHO European Region was declared polio-free in 2002. By 2017, there were only three countries left in the world reporting cases of wild poliovirus: Nigeria, Afghanistan and Pakistan. This means that five of the six WHO regions are now wild polio free, representing 90% of the world's population. Two of the three types of wild poliovirus have been eradicated; while Type 2 wild poliovirus was declared eradicated in September 2015, Type 3 was officially declared eradicated on World Polio Day 2019. The mission to eradicate polio represents one of the largest global public health efforts ever initiated, involving partners at all levels across all countries. These range from strengthening cold chain systems and the improvement of disease surveillance to capacity-building of country immunization programme teams, as well as communication and trust-building activities. The last remaining task is to hold the line where the virus has been eradicated and remove the last few strongholds where it continues to spread. The adversary has been reduced to just one type of the virus and just 0.1% of cases in two countries and one region of the world.

### [WHO - Steroids boost survival of preterm babies in low-resource settings, new study finds](#) (Official)

The results of a new clinical trial, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on 23 October 2020, show that dexamethasone—a glucocorticoid used to treat many conditions, including rheumatic problems and severe COVID-19—can boost survival of premature babies when given to pregnant women at risk of preterm birth in low-resource settings. The WHO ACTION-I trial resolves an ongoing controversy about the efficacy of antenatal steroids for improving preterm newborn survival in low-income countries. Dexamethasone and similar drugs have long shown to be effective in saving preterm babies lives in high-income countries, where high-quality newborn care is more accessible. This is the first time a clinical trial has proven that the drugs are also effective in low-income settings. The study notes, healthcare providers must have the means to select the women most likely to benefit from the drug and to correctly initiate the treatment at the right time – ideally 48 hours before giving birth to give enough time to complete steroid injections for maximal effect. Women who are in weeks 26-34 of their pregnancy are most likely to benefit from the steroid, so healthcare providers must also have access to ultrasound to accurately date their pregnancies. In addition, babies must receive sufficiently good-quality care when they are born.

### [Sierra Leone \(Study\) - Pattern of post-Ebola symptoms resembles rheumatologic disease](#) (Media)

An analysis of Ebola survivors in Sierra Leone has revealed that patients with post-Ebola syndrome experience clusters of symptoms that occur together, including some with a seemingly rheumatologic pattern of disease. According to the study, clusters including rheumatologic symptoms were correlated with one another ( $r = 0.63$ ) but not with other clusters ( $r < 0.35$ ). Additionally, ophthalmologic/auditory symptoms were moderately correlated with the nonrheumatologic clusters ( $r > 0.5$ ), whereas psychologic/neurologic, cardiac/gastrointestinal and constitutional clusters correlated with one another ( $r > 0.6$ ) in all cases. After mapping the symptom clusters, the researchers determined that each symptom cluster was separated from the rest, particularly the phenotypes with rheumatologic symptoms. The group of survivors with the seemingly rheumatologic pattern of disease complained of symptoms that included joint pain and decreased range of motion. This group overlapped with a group with gastroenterological symptoms, such as abdominal tenderness.

Best Regards | Sincères salutations  
The GPHIN Team / L'équipe du RMISP

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