



Cochrane South Africa turns 21 at third African Indaba

Ruth Stewart, the chairperson of the Africa Evidence Network and director of the Africa Centre for Evidence (ACE), chaired the opening session at the **Third African Cochrane Indaba (ACI)** in Cape Town, South Africa that was held from 25-26 March. Cochrane South Africa hosted this event, the main objective of which was to share knowledge, experiences, and skills for evidence-informed policy-making and knowledge translation in Africa. Cochrane South Africa celebrated its 21st birthday at the ACI, which was one of the highlights at the event. Promise Nduku of ACE facilitated a workshop that introduced evidence maps as a tool to support systematic reviews and policy-making.



Celebrating Cochrane South Africa's 21st birthday Charles Shey Wiysonge, director for the South African Cochrane Centre, and Mark Wilson, chief executive officer.

Photo credit: Cochrane South Africa

In a **recent blog** about incentivising civil servants to make informed decisions, Daniel Rogger and Ravi Somani articulate the importance of promoting civil servants' use of evidence in decision-making. The authors illustrate this importance with an example of when Ethiopian government officials received incentives to collect evidence prior to decision-making there was a significant decline in mistaken beliefs.

The South African **Minister** of Science and Technology, Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane, **endorsed** the new White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation. The Fourth Industrial Revolution is the main emphasis of this new white paper and it positions science, technology and innovation at the centre of South Africa's development agenda.

In their latest technical report, **Open Data Watch** conducted a **comprehensive study** that paid attention to 15 sub-Saharan African countries by concentrating on 104 gender-relevant indicators required to evaluate the position and well-being of girls and women. The objective is to provide an explicit view of how to address gender gaps.

A Kenyan teacher – Peter Tabichi – won the annual **Global Teacher Prize** worth USD \$1 million this past month for his excellent teaching work. The prize is conferred by the **Varkey Foundation**, which aims to provide good and quality education for every child. Tabichi intends to use the money to improve the school where he works and feed the underprivileged.

Evidence events

21-22 May: [SANBio Annual Event 2019](#), Pretoria, South Africa.

29 May-3 June: [2019 PEP Annual Conference 16th General Meeting](#), Cape Town, South Africa.

9-12 July: [The 2nd Africa Evidence to Action Conference](#), Accra, Ghana.

21-25 October: [7TH Biennial SAMEA Conference](#), Gauteng, South Africa.

Announcements

- **Call for papers** for the Global Development Conference: abstract deadline is 30 April.
- The AEN **annual member survey** is up and running and will be open until 8 May.
- Call for hosts of the **Global Evidence Summit 2021**: deadline is 31 May.
- **Stipends and bursaries** available for the 26th Cochrane Colloquium.

In this month's **blog** post, AEN member Enock Musungwini encourages all stakeholders to promote awareness in line with the 100 Days Awareness on Antimicrobial Resistance. View all blog posts **online** and use the Network to share your view – submit your AEN blog **here**.

McMaster Health Forum celebrates ten years of supporting evidence-informed decision-making

McMaster Health Forum is proud to have attained numerous achievements over the past decade and as part of their celebrations, they published a [report](#) which focusses on these accomplishments. In the past ten years, the Forum has not only grown but has also made a huge impact on citizens and stakeholders, with the help of its associates and sponsors. In terms of growth, the Forum is now placing more emphasis on citizen empowerment, social systems, and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Forum is cognisant of how it can give assistance to the increasing use of a 'rapid-learning system lens' in Canada and worldwide.



Celebrating good times – McMaster Health Forum's 10th anniversary Celebrating ten years of supporting evidence-informed decision-making.

Photo Credit: McMaster Health Forum

INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

In her latest [blog](#), programme specialist at the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) – Joanna Wild – reflects on the role of technology in capacity development and the best way to go about learning about design. INASP was driven to put in place an online course in 2011 to increase participation, reach out to more researchers, and improve gender balance.

The official journal of the Professional Society for Health Economics and Outcomes Research, *Value in Health*, publicised an article with [new research](#) which indicates Canadians believe decision-makers must give precedence to well-being, effectiveness, and strong evidence in drug coverage. It is very important for decision-makers to deliberate more on the 'certainty of evidence', the article reports.

With many countries struggling to meet United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the United Nations University has developed a [new online tool](#) to assist countries in their efforts to achieve SDG six (clean water and sanitation for all). It is important to have this tool to ensure that this goal is met since achieving this goal brings about economic development and health benefits. The SDG Policy Support System, which has six steps to it, was launched on World Water Day and is free to access.

Evidence from academia

[Coetzee et al:](#) 'Where there is no evidence: implementing family interventions from recommendations in the NICE guideline 11 on challenging behaviour in a South African health service for adults with intellectual disability'

[Glegg et al:](#) 'How the study of networks informs knowledge translation and implementation: a scoping review'

[Oliver et al:](#) 'The dark side of coproduction: do the costs outweigh the benefits for health research?'

[Tyler et al:](#) 'Evidence use in equity focused health impact assessment: a realist evaluation'

In his recent [blog](#) about evidence maps, Howard White argues that evidence in itself is no good and rather that evidence must be made available to users. Evidence maps, White argues, are a good way to overcome this: maps are produced from exhaustive systematic searches and systematic review principles with the intention of making evidence easily accessible to those who need to use it.