

## Actualités du Pharo 2022 – Session 3

### Access to care in the context of the Covid-19 epidemic: the case of Senegal

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**Introduction:** The SARS CoV2 epidemic, declared a global emergency by the WHO, has spread rapidly around the world with very high mortality putting a strain on global health systems. The lessons learned from previous epidemics such as yellow fever, Ebola, and cholera have served the African continent well in demonstrating significant resilience to the Covid pandemic19 .

The measures taken (containment, restriction of movement), the fear and stigma generated by Covid19 have had a considerable impact on the effectiveness of the health care system in Senegal.

**Methodology:** We collected information from official reports from the Ministry of Health (MSAS) and international organisations, surveys from the National Agency for Statistics and Demography (ANSD), and publications on the provision of care in Senegal from the start of the epidemic in Senegal (March 2020) to the present day.

We studied the management of chronic or infectious diseases, mother-child health, paraclinical diagnosis, and the availability of medical products and devices necessary for quality health care.

**Results:** The measures taken to limit the spread of the virus have had important repercussions on the follow-up of patients in specialised structures and in rural areas. Thus, among other things, the following were observed: (i) a decrease in attendance at reproductive health and paediatric facilities; (ii) upheavals in the monitoring of chronic or infectious diseases; (iii) rescheduling of surgical interventions; (iv) a decrease in the activity of paraclinical diagnostic services; (v) shortages of certain essential pharmaceutical products.

Faced with this situation, important measures have been taken: (i) the reinforcement of hospitals in terms of logistics; (ii) the deployment of field hospitals; (iii) a multi-month supply of ARVs for patients living with HIV; (iv) a ban on self-medication with pharmaceutical products deemed effective against Covid19.

**Conclusion:** Africa, despite its limited resources, has shown a strong capacity for resilience in the face of the Covid19 pandemic. Senegal has been able to achieve convincing results thanks to various strategies and remarkable innovations. This must be sustained in order to strengthen the resilience of the health system in the event of future health crises.