

Global Health Newsletter

February 2024

Staten Island University Hospital

Madi Lindauer, MD MPH

Americas

Adaptive Driving Beam Headlights

Adaptive driving beam (ADB) headlights technology, initially introduced by major German automakers over a decade ago, is now widely available in Europe, Canada and Asia but has yet to make its way to the United States. ADB headlights technology shape the light emitted from headlights instead of scattering it across the road. Some ADB headlights operate like digital projectors, utilizing millions of LED pixels to project specific light patterns onto the road. This innovative approach shields oncoming vehicles from intense light beams by adjusting the light around them. The remainder of the road is illuminated by a bright light, with only a small area of dimmer light surrounding other vehicles. This also helps other cars see a possible deer, or pedestrian or bicyclist by the side of the road.



In the United States, the closest available technology is automatic high beams found in some new cars. These high beams automatically switch off when an oncoming vehicle is detected. However, this solution relies on low beam headlights with limited range, potentially compromising safety.

In 2022, the National Highway traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in the United States approved the use of ADB headlights. Despite this approval, automakers report that the unique regulatory landscape in the US poses challenges for implementing this technology. While ADB-enabled headlights are present in some US luxury cars, they lack the necessary software to function as intended. NHTSA regulations mandate faster responses from ADB headlights compared to those in the EU and Canada. This new required switch time is much faster than a human could switch off an ordinary high beam. As a result, completely new headlamps for the US market will be required.

A study conducted by the American Automobile Association (AAA) revealed that 64 percent of Americans do not consistently use their high beams, resulting in reduced visibility and compromised reaction time on road. High beams enhance forward illumination by 28 percent. ADB headlights, always use high beams and automatically adjust when an oncoming vehicle is detected, preventing glare that might impede the vision of other drivers. This results in an 86 percent improvement in consistent illumination. Embracing ABD technology could potentially reduce wildlife-related crashes by 18,000 annually, leading to savings of \$500 million and an estimated six percent reduction in pedestrian accidents.

Further Reading

<https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/15/cars/headlights-tech-adaptable-high-beams-cars/index.html>

<https://rhoadeslegal.com/2022/02/08/smart-headlights-prevent-car-accidents/#:~:text=The%20AAA%20study%20predicted%20that,be%20reduced%20by%20six%20percent>

Middle East/Northern Africa

Abu Dhabi Creates Women and Children's Hospital

Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has announced plans to build a new medical city dedicated to women and children's health. It will include a Centre of Excellence for pediatric care, a hospital for women and newborns, a mental health center as well as a rehabilitation facility.

Scheduled to open in 2027, the new women and newborn's facility will contain 205 beds, including 90 for children and 15 maternity wards. Over 130 doctors and 460 nursing and midwifery specialists will be hired.

The medical city will be part of the PureHealth Group, a healthcare provider that operates throughout the UAE. The Centre of Excellence for Pediatric care will be located in the already established Sheikh Khalifa Medical City and will have a 250 bed capacity with 29 specialties. 10 beds will be dedicated to mental health services and 100 beds for long term pediatric care.

Further reading

<https://soularabia.net/abu-dhabis-to-build-a-medical-city-for-women-and-children/>



Asia/Pacific

Australia Fights Against Strongyloidiasis

Australia has secured a \$5 million Synergy grant from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) to help control and eliminate strongyloidiasis, focusing on the development of new diagnostic tests. Addressing the existing gap in screening, testing and public awareness, the initiative aims to help control the disease.

The project will pilot an elimination program at two sites, incorporating a multifaceted approach that includes treatment, enhanced hygiene and sanitation practices, community engagement, education and surveillance.

Australian First Nations communities have one of the highest rates of strongyloidiasis in the world with an estimated prevalence of 60 percent in Aboriginal communities in northern Australia. Strongyloidiasis, caused by the parasitic roundworm *Strongyloides stercoralis*, is transmitted through direct contact with contaminated soil, affecting the lungs and gut. While symptoms vary, the infection can lead to issues such as failure to thrive in children, bacterial meningitis, pneumonia, and can be fatal in immunocompromised individuals. The gold standard treatment is Ivermectin.

Further reading

<https://www.medicalrepublic.com.au/push-to-eradicate-endemic-strongyloidiasis/104579>

<https://www.who.int/teams/control-of-neglected-tropical-diseases/soil-transmitted-helminthiasis/strongyloidiasis#:~:text=Strongyloidiasis%20is%20a%20chronic%20parasitic,in%20countries%20with%20temperate%20climates.>



Sub-Saharan Africa

Mali's Digital Pharmaceutical Registry

Mali, a landlocked country in West Africa with a population of almost 22 million people, faces significant challenges in the timely import and distribution of medical supplies with a process averaging 18 months. To address this, Mali's health ministry and national pharmaceutical association are collaborating with the United Nations Conference on Trade and development (UNCTAD) to create a comprehensive online pharmaceutical registry.



<https://unctad.org/news/magic-malis-digital-pharmaceutical-registry>

The primary goal of this initiative is to streamline and expedite the marketing authorization process, ensuring the safety and quality of medications. The registry also aims to enhance traceability and transparency, resource optimization and counteracting counterfeiting. By strengthening supply chains, it hopes to tackle accessibility issues and mitigate fraud.

Prompted by the urgency of pandemic preparedness due to COVID-19, this investment is expected to improve access to essential medicines by reducing the time required for importing and distributing vital medicines from 18 to three months while providing the government with better oversight.

The system will allow pharmaceutical importers, producers and distributors to register themselves online. Simultaneously, medical authorities will gain the capability to monitor the entry, production and distribution of pharmaceuticals, enabling them to identify unauthorized and unused products.

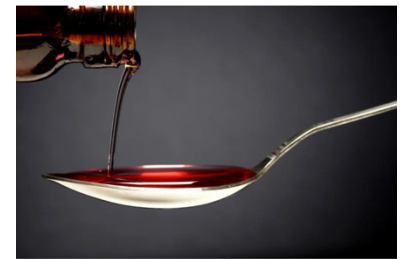
Further reading

<https://unctad.org/news/magic-malis-digital-pharmaceutical-registry>

Europe

UK Bans Over the Counter Codeine Cough Syrups

In response to escalating concerns about misuse and abuse, cough syrups containing codeine linctus will no longer be sold over the counter in pharmacies. The decision comes amidst a rising trend of drug abuse and dependency on codeine-based medications with these cough syrups frequently utilized as a key ingredient in the creation of the recreational concoction known as 'Purple drank.'



To address the opioid crisis and curb the growing abuse, prescriptions from physicians will now be mandatory for the purchase of cough syrups containing codeine.

Data compiled by the Office for National Statistics revealed a doubling of codeine-related deaths, rising from 88 in 2011 to 200 in 2021. The UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) further disclosed that there were 250 serious and fatal adverse reactions associated with codeine-containing medicines in 2022 and 2023.

Expressing concern, the MHRA warns against purchasing codeine linctus from unregistered websites, emphasizing the potential dangers associated with such transactions. The agency urges the public from purchasing codeine-containing products outside the regulated healthcare system to ensure their safety.

Further reading

<https://www.bbc.com/news/health-68349636>

Upcoming Lectures/Conferences

Project on Nuclear Issues (PONI) Virtual Winter Conference

Date: February 26

"Nuclear Lessons Learned From the Ukraine Conflict," with presentations related to nuclear rhetoric and brinksmanship, escalation management, and changes in the perceived value of nuclear weapons.

<https://www.csis.org/events/poni-2024-virtual-winter-conference>

The youth of today, on international humanitarian law tomorrow...

How do young people today understand and feel about international humanitarian law (IHL) and the policies in place when it comes to armed conflict? It is no surprise that our youth are increasingly affected by war, in a world where situations are becoming more complex. We bear witness to active youth participation in a way we have never seen before – leading and joining protests, documenting and sharing stories on social media, volunteering for various organizations, taking up difficult conversations with decision-makers, and, of course, living through an armed conflict. In this episode of [Humanity in War](#), podcast host Elizabeth Rushing sits down with three incredible young humanitarians- Julie Lefolle, Silvia Gelvez, and Kay von Mérey – who share their perspectives on IHL and humanitarian action, their understanding of the work ahead, and ultimately the hope to carry us forward as we begin a new year.

https://soundcloud.com/user-134233261/the-youth-of-today-on-international-humanitarian-law-tomorrow?utm_source=clipboard&utm_campaign=wtshare&utm_medium=widget&utm_content=https%253A%252F%252Fsoundcloud.com%252Fuser-134233261%252Fthe-youth-of-today-on-international-humanitarian-law-tomorrow

WATCH - Refugees Welcome: Tales of Hope in Portugal

Join us on a voyage through Portugal, where we will listen to three distinct refugee stories and delve into the various ways they have acclimated to their new lives in the country.

https://youtu.be/kjrDZvf92kQ?si=_rAXpBLMFTUEwiwN

VIDEO: Global Launch Webinar: Fit for purpose? Global Coordination Mechanisms of Large-Scale Epidemic Responses in Humanitarian Settings

This webinar launched READY's new report: Fit for purpose? Global Coordination Mechanisms of Large-Scale Epidemic Responses in Humanitarian Settings. The paper, developed in collaboration with Johns Hopkins Center for Humanitarian Health, examines global structures and processes on epidemic coordination mechanisms and provides clear recommendations for improving large-scale epidemic response coordination in humanitarian emergencies.

<https://www.ready-initiative.org/global-launch-webinar-fit-for-purpose-global-coordination-mechanisms-of-large-scale-epidemic-responses-in-humanitarian-settings/>

World Health Organization: Neglected Tropical Diseases Course Series

Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) are mainly prevalent in tropical areas, where they affect impoverished, underserved communities. They cause devastating health, social and economic consequences. WHO estimates that more than 1.6 billion people require treatment for at least one NTD every year.

The OpenWHO NTD channel offers learning resources to support implementation of prevention, control, elimination or eradication activities against 21 conditions or groups of conditions, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the overarching, cross-cutting and disease-specific targets included in the NTD road map 2021-2030. In pursuit of the goal of achieving health for all, the channel also includes courses on non-NTDs, notably skin-NTDs, given their importance for differential diagnosis and related case management.

Website: <https://openwho.org/channels/ntd>

Kalidou Koulibaly: Senegal footballer signs up to defend the most vulnerable in armed conflicts

Abidjan/Geneva (ICRC) – Captaining his country at the Africa Cup of Nations, the Senegalese international Kalidou Koulibaly has joined forces with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to produce a short film that seeks to raise awareness among the general public and weapon bearers of the rules of international humanitarian law.

<https://www.icrc.org/en/document/kalidou-koulibaly-senegal-footballer-signs-defend-most-vulnerable-in-armed-conflicts>