

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to present to you the fourth issue of the Rwanda Public Health Bulletin (RPHB) second volume.

Although there is an increasing global trend in COVID-19 numbers, this issue comes in a period when a few of COVID-19 vaccines is approved and being administered worldwide. While countries are racing to secure the purchase of enough vaccines, countries are still encouraged to continue and reinforce all protective measures. However, the current rapid spread of SARS-CoV-2 new variants has put the world on alert and triggered new restriction measures. The upsurge of COVID-19 cases and deaths that Rwanda is facing since November 2020 raise a concern about the current capacity of containing the spread of COVID-19. Three global variants of interest D614G, N501Y and E484K mutations which occur in the spike (S) protein identified in the UK, in South Africa, and Brazil respectively, have called to attention to improve the laboratory diagnostic capacity in place. These mutations in the SARS-CoV-2 spike (S) protein raise a concern about the potential impact on viral infectivity and immune escape.

To reinforce our knowledge on COVID-19, the content in this issue will provide you with information on the global trend of COVID-19 vaccine, challenges of new emerging SARS-CoV-2 variants, the body immune response against COVID-19 in Africa. Although the national health system is currently challenged by the pandemic crisis, the Rwanda Public Health Bulletin did not want to oversee the need of scientific content on other health topics; hence in this issue, will also have topics on the the utilization of modern contraceptives in refugee camps and antibiotics prescription practices in health centers, as the primary care level of the Rwandan health system.

I hope you will enjoy reading RPHB Vol. 2 Issue 4. We are expecting that you consider sharing your scientific content on RPHB content in return.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L. Mutesa'.

Prof. Leon Mutesa, MD, PhD
Editor-in-Chief