RESPONDING TO WORRYING  global maternal and child mortality statistics, the UN’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 and 5 began at the start of the century and focused on child and mother health. However, despite this international effort, the UN’s recent review of MDGs 4 and 5 concluded that efforts to reduce child mortality and improve maternal health in developing countries have fallen short of their targets; in 2013 alone, almost 300,000 women died globally from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.

Improving maternal health and reducing child mortality are considered fundamental to human development. Scientists across the globe, like those featured in this issue of International Innovation, are dedicated to safeguarding mothers and children and delivering this future. They are working to prevent mother-to-child disease transmission, develop cost-effective technological solutions for low-income regions, address links between reproductive and mental health, and understand preterm birth risk.

Opening the publication, Professor Dr Marleen Temmerman of the World Health Organization’s Department of Reproductive Health and Research highlights critical advances in research and innovation relating to sexual and reproductive health, as well as the long-term integration of maternal and child health into policy beyond the MDG agenda. CEO of charity Women and Children First (UK), Ros Davies, also provides an in-depth discussion on the vulnerability of mothers and infants in some of the world’s poorest communities, evaluating mechanisms for effective interventions. Later, an interview with Dr Carissa F Etienne from the Pan American Health Organization illuminates the greatest health challenges faced in the Americas, how the organisation is addressing inequity in healthcare, and their goal to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV in the region.

Stepping away from the special focus on maternity, fertility and child health, the issue also highlights cutting-edge R&D towards life-changing therapeutics. United by a common goal to tackle the emerging epidemic of chronic and noncommunicable diseases, featured scientists are pursuing a range of health and medical topics.

We are working hard to build a dynamic community, bringing together a diverse range of researchers, funders, policy makers and commercial partners to showcase the very best from across the research spectrum. As ever, do not hesitate to contact us with any feedback or proposals for our next edition. Finally, if you are not already receiving our newsletter, register for free at: www.internationalinnovation.com/join-us/registration

For now... enjoy the issue!

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