In this month’s *Bulletin*

This month’s cover illustrates health information, one of the six building blocks of health systems (see box below). It shows a man who is asking a family questions as part of a health survey in India.

In an editorial, Ties Boerma et al. (2) calls for more research on measuring the performance of health systems. A second editorial, by Marion Birch (3), discusses the roles of key players in initiatives aimed at reducing health inequities.

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**Norway**

**Treaty bans cluster munitions**

Sarah Cumberland (8–9) reports on the treaty that was signed in Oslo by 94 countries banning the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of these weapons.

**France**

**First a discovery, now a dream for a cure**

In an interview, Nobel Prize winner Dr Françoise Barré-Sinoussi (10–11) talks about her research that led to the discovery of the human immunodeficiency virus.

**Israel**

**Do lifestyle interventions work?**

Nizal Sarrafzadegan et al. (39–50) show that lifestyle interventions can significantly improve the diet and levels of physical activity of a community in a developing country.

**Bangladesh**

**Assessing neonatal illness**

Gary L. Darmstadt et al. (12–19) show that community health workers on routine household visits were able to identify neonates with severe illness needing referral-level care.

**Mali**

**Reducing maternal mortality**

Pierre Fournier et al. (30–38) show that a national referral system for improving access to emergency obstetric care has a significant effect on reducing maternal deaths.

**Thailand**

**Building research capacity**

Siriwan Pitayarangsarit & Viroj Tangcharoensathien (72–74) describe how Thailand has strengthened and sustained its research capacity over the past decade.

**Islamic Republic of Iran**

**Do lifestyle interventions work?**

Islamic Republic of Iran (39–50) show that lifestyle interventions can significantly improve the diet and levels of physical activity of a community in a developing country.

**India**

**Are two coders better than one?**

Rohina Joshi et al. (51–57) find that duplicate coding of verbal autopsy results has little advantage over a single-coder system for mortality surveillance or for identifying population patterns of death.

**Democratic Republic of the Congo**

**Quantifying the crisis**

Fiona Fleck (6–7) reports on WHO’s efforts to collect and analyse health information in the rapidly changing conflict as the basis for humanitarian support.

**Israel**

**Health effects of immigration**

Jordis Jennifer Ort et al. (20–29) find that immigrants to Israel from the former Soviet Union soon began to show noncommunicable disease mortality rates resembling those of their host country, although some country-of-origin effects persisted.

**Finland crisis**

Jane Parry & Gary Humphreys (4–5) report on how the global financial crisis could have profound implications for the health spending plans of national governments.

**Safe abortion from mid-level providers**

Marge Berer (58–63) recommends that qualified mid-level health-care providers perform first-trimester abortions.

**In recognition of WHO’s drive to revitalize primary health care**, each month’s cover of the *Bulletin* this year will feature a photo illustrating one of the six building blocks of health systems:

- Service delivery
- Health workforce
- Health information systems
- Medical products and technologies
- Financing systems
- Leadership and governance.