

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.

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.

Israel

Health effects of immigration

Jördis Jennifer Ott 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.

Islamic Republic of Iran

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.

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.

Bangladesh

Assessing neonatal illness

Gary I. 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.

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.

Australia

Call for broader criteria for measles elimination

Anita E Heywood et al. (64–71) demonstrate that Australia has eliminated endemic measles transmission, even if it doesn't meet the current surveillance targets proposed by the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific.

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.

Financial 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.