



PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON GLOBAL HEALTH & ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS

June 30, 2016

Volume 2, Issue 26

Asia's Thirst for Baby Formula Milk Raises Health Concerns

An unquenchable thirst for infant and baby formula, especially in China and Southeast Asia, is raising concerns about the health of millions of mothers and their babies. The findings, published in Public Health Nutrition, showed that growth in formula sales was most rapid in China, Indonesia and Vietnam, where millions of mothers are entering the workforce as the countries industrialize.

[Read More on Asian Scientist](#)



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Human Rights Values, Freedoms Under Attack Globally

Human rights values and freedoms are under attack throughout the world, according to U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein. Zeid said hate is becoming mainstream, walls are being erected and barriers of suspicion are rising as clampdowns on public freedoms grow. Zeid said the denial of human rights can lead to war; whereas respect for human rights will maintain the peace.

[Read More on Voice of America News](#)





Nearly 81 Million Children Between Three And Four are not Meeting Basic Developmental Benchmarks

Nearly 81 million children between three and four were not meeting basic developmental benchmarks with the highest numbers of affected children coming from sub-Saharan Africa, including Chad, Sierra Leone and Central African Republic, they said in a report. Children were assessed on their ability to follow simple directions, work independently and other behaviors. McCoy said mental development was essential in predicting a child's transition into adulthood, setting the foundation for school readiness, mental and physical wellbeing, as well as economic earnings later in life.

[Read More on Thomson Reuters Foundation](#)

Innovative Prevention Options for Women Offer New Hope to End HIV and Aids

Young women are at high risk in sub-Saharan Africa, where twice as many young women live with HIV as young men. One major reason is the lack of prevention options that women can use on their own to stay HIV free. Many women are unable to negotiate condom use with their partners, and for women who are married or want children, abstinence may not be a viable option. One new HIV prevention option moving forward is microbicides — products, including vaginal rings, films and tablets that prevent sexual transmission of the virus.

[Read More on Devex](#)



Urgent Action Needed to Tackle Snakebites in Africa

African governments must work harder to prevent and treat the one million snakebites that occur on the continent every year to prevent needless deaths and suffering, a conference has heard. Snakebites cause about half a million cases of life-threatening venom poisoning on the continent, with few resources available to treat victims. In Nigeria, for example, there were 2,000 deaths and 2,360 amputations from snakebites in 2010 while Burkina Faso reports mortality rates of up to 75 for every 100,000 people a year.

[Read More on Sci Dev Net](#)



CO₂ Turned into Stone in Iceland in Climate Change Breakthrough

Carbon dioxide has been pumped underground and turned rapidly into stone, demonstrating a radical new way to tackle climate change. The new research pumped CO₂ into the volcanic rock under Iceland and sped up a natural process where the basalts react with the gas to form carbonate minerals, which make up limestone. The researchers used tracer chemicals to show that over 95% of CO₂ was turned into stone within two years, “amazingly fast” according to Matter. The Iceland project has now begun scaling up to bury 10,000 tones of CO₂ a year, plus the hydrogen sulfide which also turns into minerals. The Columbia University group are investigating another rock type, found in Oman, which may be able to turn CO₂ into rock better than basalt.

[Read More on The Guardian](#)

India and US Team to Give Boost to Solar Startups

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is serious about fighting climate change, and about collaborating with the U.S. to do it, he made clear during an address to the U.S. Congress on Wednesday. The Indian government will split the costs with U.S. foundations to help small Indian solar startups get off the ground, especially in rural villages that are not on the country's electrical grid. These subsidies and loan guarantees should help the young companies expand to the point where they can attract far greater international investment, as much as \$1.4 billion the two governments estimate.

[Read More on Grist](#)



Drought Dries up Money on Honey

A drought worsened by the El Nino phenomenon – which has now eased – led to a write-off of crops in many parts of Zimbabwe and across the Southern Africa region where more than 28 million people will need food aid this year. But even beekeeping has not been immune to the latest severe drought and many farmers who have depended on honey to make ends meet are reporting major losses this year. Farmers have been affected by the drought and beekeeping was not spared, as seen by the low amount of honey they realized this year compared to last year in Lupane, a dry area,” said Clifford Maunze, a beekeeping trainer and Project Officer with Environment Africa under the Forestry Forces Programme supported by the FAO.

[Read More on Inter Press Service News Agency](#)



Unlocking The Potential of Digital Health

In the past five years, we have witnessed remarkable advancements in technological innovations — including mobile phones, tablets, remote patient monitoring devices, and sensors — that drive so-called “digital health” around the world. Increasingly, these innovations are also equipped with GPS and metrics that generate promising evidence of their cost-saving and, more importantly, life-saving capabilities. If we look at the Ebola virus, the virus demonstrated that with enough urgency, technology could be used to identify and track every single Ebola case from Texas to Liberia and Sierra Leone, and ensure no new cases.

[Read More on Devex](#)

Zika Virus: Risk of Spread from Olympics ‘Very Low’ says WHO

The World Health Organization (WHO) says there is a “very low risk” of Zika virus spreading globally as a result of holding the Olympics in Brazil. The WHO has already declared Zika a global public health emergency. It has advised pregnant women to avoid travelling to the Games, and visitors to take precautions to avoid mosquito bites. But despite the concern voiced by some scientists, the WHO said mosquito activity was relatively low in Brazil in August. Millions of travelers already visit Brazil every year, so not holding the Olympics there would not reduce the numbers significantly, the WHO added.

[Read More on BBC News](#)



SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS HEALTH: With Community-Driven Development, Indigenous Peoples Take Ownership of Their Future

Community-driven development, an approach to local development that empowers community groups with control over planning and investment decisions, is one way that the Bank is partnering with Indigenous Peoples in places as diverse as Vietnam, Nepal and Bolivia.

[Read More on The World Bank Blog](#)
[See Also](#)



QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“The principal cause of extinction is habitat loss. With a decrease of habitat, the sustainable number of species in it drops by (roughly) the fourth root of the habitable area.”

“The extinction rate our behavior is now imposing on the rest of life, and seems destined to continue, is...the equivalent of a Chicxulub-sized asteroid strike played out over several human generations,” Wilson writes in *Half-Earth*, referencing the asteroid that wiped out the dinosaurs – at least those that didn’t evolve into birds.”

Edward O. Wilson, renowned biologist, Professor Emeritus, Harvard University

[See his new book: *Half-Earth – Our Planet’s Fight for Life*](#)

EVENTSTABLE

DATE	CONFERENCE	LOCATION	REGISTER
Jul. 8-9	2016 Summer Global Nursing Symposium	Los Angeles USA	http://www.uofriverside.com/
Jul. 26-30	Building Trust: A Global Challenge in Health System Reform The Network: Towards Unity For Health (TUFH) 2016 Conference	Shenyang China	http://www.cvent.com/events/
Aug. 9-14	World Social Forum	Montreal Canada	https://fsm2016.org/en/sinformer/
Oct. 16-17	6th Global Forum on Health Promotion	Charlottetown Canada	http://parc.ophea.net/event/
Oct. 18-19	Health Promotion Ontario Annual Conference	Ottawa Canada	http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/docs/charter-chartre/pdf/charter.pdf
Nov. 14-18	4th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research	Vancouver Canada	http://www.csih.org/en/events/
Nov. 21-24	9th Global Conference on Health Promotion	Shanghai China	http://www.who.int/healthpromotion



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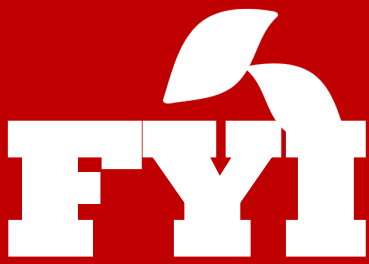


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IMPACT OF BABY-FRIENDLY HOSPITAL INITIATIVE ON BREASTFEEDING AND CHILD HEALTH OUTCOMES: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW



The Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) is a key component of the World Health Organization/United Nations Children's Fund Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding. The primary aim of this narrative systematic review was to examine the impact of BFHI implementation on breastfeeding and child health outcomes worldwide and in the United States.

Of the 58 reports included in the systematic review, nine of them were published based on three randomized controlled trials, 19 followed quasi-experimental designs, 11 were prospective and 19 were cross-sectional or retrospective. Studies were conducted in 19 different countries located in South America, North America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, South Asia, Eurasia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Adherence to the BFHI *Ten Steps* has a positive impact on short-term, medium-term and long-term breastfeeding (BF) outcomes.

There is a dose-response relationship between the number of BFHI steps women are exposed to and the likelihood of improved BF outcomes (early BF initiation, exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) at hospital discharge, any BF and EBF duration). Community support (step 10) appears to be essential for sustaining breastfeeding impacts of BFHI in the longer term.

[Read More on Wiley Online Library](#)



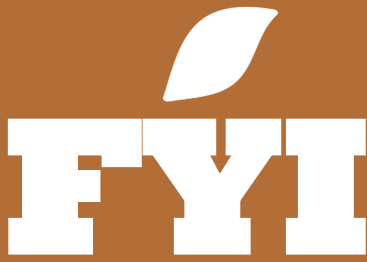
The world needs to produce at least 50% more food to feed 9 billion people by 2050. But climate change could cut crop yields by more than 25%. The land, biodiversity, oceans, forests, and other forms of natural capital are being depleted at unprecedented rates. Unless we change how we grow our food and manage our natural capital, food security—especially for the world’s poorest—will be at risk. Already, volatile food prices—and the price spikes that can result—are the new normal.

When faced with high food prices, many poor families cope by pulling their children out of school and eating cheaper, less nutritious food. This can have severe life-long effects on the social, physical, and mental well-being of millions of young people. Malnutrition contributes to infant, child, and maternal illness; decreased learning capacity; lower productivity, and higher mortality.

One-third of all child deaths globally are attributed to under-nutrition. Investment in agriculture and rural development to boost food production and nutrition is a priority for the World Bank Group. The Bank Group works with partners to improve food security and build a food system that can feed everyone, everywhere, every day. Activities include encouraging climate-smart farming techniques and restoring degraded farmland, breeding more resilient and nutritious crops and improving storage and supply chains for reducing food losses.

[Read More on The World Bank](#)

[See Also](#)



HIGH AND DRY: CLIMATE CHANGE INCREASES WATER RISKS, HAMPERG GROWTH



Water scarcity, exacerbated by climate change, could cost some regions up to 6% of their GDP by 2050, spur migration, and spark conflict, according to a new World Bank report “High and Dry: Climate Change, Water and the Economy.”

The combined effects of growing populations, rising incomes, and expanding cities will see demand for water rising exponentially, while supply becomes more erratic and uncertain, the report finds, with these effects expected to be most pronounced in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. But with better policies in place, we can neutralize many of these effects and move toward a world of resilience in the face of a changing climate.

[Watch More on World Bank's YouTube Channel](#)



HIV'S SLOW RETRENCHMENT



The latest dispatch from the war on HIV, the “Global AIDS Update 2016”, just published by UNAIDS, the UN agency responsible for combating the virus, brings qualified good news. Last year, it estimates, there were 1.1m AIDS-related deaths, down from a peak of 2m in 2005 and a value of 1.2m in 2014.

By the end of 2015 some 17m people were taking anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs—2m more than the target number for that year, set by the UN in 2011. This accounts for the falling death rate. That hope was based on the idea, experimentally demonstrated at small scale among cohabiting couples, that taking ARVs makes an infected individual less likely to pass the virus on.

There is, though, no sign of such an acceleration in the downward trend of new infections. This year’s uptick aside, it has remained fairly steady since the turn of the century, despite the fraction of infected people on ARVs having risen from 3% in 2000 to 46% in 2015. The next target UN target is that by 2020, 90% of those infected should have been diagnosed and know their status, 90% of those so diagnosed should be on ARVs, and 90% of those on ARVs should have suppressed viral loads.

[Read More on The Economist](#)



WINNING THE FIGHT AGAINST NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES

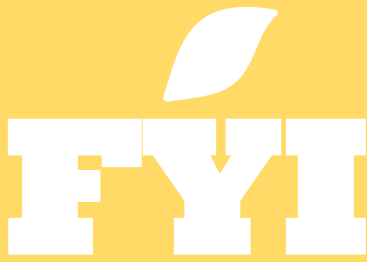


An average intestinal worm infection can mean that hundreds of worms are in a child's belly, robbing them of their ability to grow, learn and live to their full potential. Intestinal worms cause anemia, malnutrition and stunted growth. More than 1 billion people -primarily the poorest of the poor -are affected by these diseases globally. That's more than three times the entire population of the United States.

As a long-standing supporter of efforts to control and eliminate neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), I know that with continued investment, we can ensure no one, regardless of where they live, suffers from these diseases. We can prevent and treat NTDs for very little money.

This is in large part thanks to the biggest drug donation program in history, which backs NTD efforts and has pledged to meet demand through the end of the decade. In 2015 alone, pharmaceutical companies donated more than 1.5 billion treatments. NTDs affect some of the most remote communities and reaching these populations with the care they need is no easy feat. As new tools, new commitments and ongoing drug donations bring us closer to our goals, providing much-needed financial and political support to these efforts will be crucial.

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SHOULD I GET A MEDICAL DEGREE FOR A CAREER IN GLOBAL HEALTH?



Question: Dear Kate, Would you say it is a worthwhile investment to understanding health care and thus making a greater impact in global health? Or is there another route? Thank you!

Answer: While many medical doctors find meaningful careers in global health, unless your passion is to practice medicine, I would not advise pursuing an M.D. as the best route to building a career in health systems strengthening. I think a master's degree in public health or a related discipline would be your best option. There are MPH programs that offer concentrations in systems and administration and programs such as this masters of health administration at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University that focus specifically on health systems. These kinds of degrees will provide more practical training for a career in global health than a medical degree typically will.

In addition to pursuing further education, you should also look for opportunities to build hands-on experience. Jobs frequently require the aforementioned project management skills and employers will want to see experience working with local government, civil society organizations and familiarity with specific donors that fund these projects.

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ENJOY THE SUMMER BEAUTY

(A short distance SE of Parry Sound, Ontario, Canada – June 26, 2016)

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Planetary Health Weekly is an e-newsletter published in collaboration with the **Planetary Health Commission** at Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada
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