

HRP • RHR news

A periodic newsletter for partners



In this issue:

– **Breaking news** –
HRP/RHR family planning guidance document wins a first prize in British Medical Association awards

– **New HRP/RHR Coordinators and Lead Specialists take up their appointments effective 1st September 2011**

– **Regional consultation for the development of a “Regional agenda for accelerating the implementation of universal access to sexual and reproductive health in the African Region”**

– **Analysis and dissemination of research findings on expanding access to safe medical abortion care workshop**

– **Repositioning family planning – capacity-building workshops**

– **New publications**

– **New translations**

– **Contact us**

– Breaking news –

HRP/RHR family planning guidance document wins a first prize in British Medical Association awards

14 September 2011. The WHO *Medical eligibility criteria for contraceptive use* (4th edition) or “MEC”, a global family planning resource published by HRP/RHR, was awarded the first prize from among the highly recommended nominees in the Obstetrics and Gynaecology category in the 2011 British Medical Association Book Awards. The awards were announced at a ceremony last night at BMA House in London.

The MEC is one of the cornerstones of WHO's Family Planning evidence-based guidelines and gives recommendations on which contraceptive methods can be advised for use by clients, given a particular medical condition. As one of the more widely used publications of HRP/RHR, it has been translated into over 15 languages and versions. It aims to provide guidance to national family planning/reproductive health programmes in the preparation of guidelines for service delivery of contraceptives. The present edition has nearly 1800 recommendations on 17 family planning methods. A version of this publication has also been produced as a wheel, a handy tool for easy and quick determination of contraceptive use eligibility. The demand for this wheel, including requests for its translations into United Nations official languages and other national languages, has been overwhelming. It certainly addresses an important need. Commending this most recent award, Dr Flavia Bustreo, Assistant Director-General Family, Women and Children's Health, commented: “Congratulations again to HRP/RHR colleagues for distinguishing yourselves and WHO in the field of obstetrics and gynaecology, a most critical area of sexual and reproductive health.”

The British Medical Association established its annual BMA Medical book competition in 1996. The competition aims to encourage and reward excellence in medical publishing. Appraisals are conducted by experts in the field who examine the entries on qualities that include accuracy of subject matter, whether the book fills a gap in the market, and the overall quality of presentation.

“We thank all our partners and the global network of experts we work with. Your support and such recognition are key in spurring on our productive capacity and our drive to meet the needs of the individuals and communities we serve.”

*Dr Mike Mbizvo
Director, Department of Reproductive Health and Research*

>> The *Medical eligibility criteria for contraceptive use* can be downloaded here:
http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/family_planning/9789241563888/en/index.html

A Spanish translation of the fourth edition is now available online, and a French translation will be in the next month [see below for further details].

The *MEC Wheel* (2008 update), including an interactive Flash version, can be downloaded here.
http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/family_planning/9789241547710/en/index.html



New HRP/RHR Coordinators and Lead Specialists take up their appointments effective 1st September 2011

Following the approval by the WHO Director-General on the new RHR organigram, the following appointments were confirmed:

Coordinator, Research, Evidence and Norms, Dr Mario Meriardi. Dr Meriardi graduated from Parma University, Italy, where he also completed a residency in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. He subsequently obtained a Master in Public Health and a PhD in International Health and Human Nutrition from the Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University. In 2001 he joined RHR and in 2007 he was appointed Coordinator of the Team on Improving Maternal and Perinatal Health.



Coordinator, Research Capacity, Policy and Programme Strengthening, Dr Lale Say who has specialist training in reproductive health from Edinburgh University and a medical degree from University of Istanbul has worked in HRP/RHR/HRP since 2002. She led the monitoring and evaluation activities in RHR and managed the work on universal access to reproductive health. She represents the Department and WHO in various global forums in relation to the Millennium Development Goal 5 targets, including the interagency and expert group (IAEG) on MDGs and UN Population Commission. Before joining WHO, Dr Say worked with the Ministry of Health and at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of University of Istanbul Medical School in Turkey.

Lead Specialist, Improving Maternal and Perinatal Health, A. Metin Gülmezoglu, who is an obstetrician and gynaecologist and has coordinated the WHO *Reproductive Health Library* (RHL) since 1997, has conducted systematic reviews, evidence-based guidelines and multicentre randomized trials and large surveys in maternal and perinatal health within HRP/RHR. Dr Gülmezoglu obtained a PhD at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa after completing his specialist training in Turkey. He is on the editorial boards of Cochrane Pregnancy and Childbirth and Fertility Regulation review groups.

Lead Specialist, Promoting Family Planning, Dr Mario Festin. Before joining HRP/RHR in 2009, Dr Festin was Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Clinical Epidemiology at the University of the Philippines, Manila. He was formerly the Executive Director of the National Institutes of Health in the Philippines and Vice-Chancellor for Research at the University of the Philippines, Manila, Philippines. He has Master's degrees in Clinical Epidemiology from the University of Pennsylvania and in Health Professions Education at the University of the Philippines. He practised obstetrics and gynaecology at the Philippine General Hospital and other hospitals in Manila, Philippines.

Lead Specialist, Preventing Unsafe Abortion, Dr Bela Ganatra has an MD and a specialization in paediatrics from India and specialist training in health behaviour from Harvard and in reproductive health from the Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins. She served in various advisory groups to the Special Programme before she joined HRP in 2010. She has several decades of experience in research in reproductive health issues including preventing unsafe abortion.

Lead Specialist, Controlling Sexually Transmitted and Reproductive Tract Infections, Dr Francis Ndowa is an MD with specializations in dermatology and genitourinary medicine. In 1996 he joined UNAIDS as the STI and Reproductive Health Advisor, and subsequently moved in 2000 with the STI unit from UNAIDS into the WHO Department of HIV/AIDS where he was primarily responsible for STI work within the Prevention Team of the Department. In 2002 STI-related activities were incorporated into RHR.

Lead Specialist, Gender, Reproductive Rights, Sexual Health and Adolescence, Dr Claudia Garcia-Moreno, has led WHO's work on gender and women's health, gender, women and HIV/AIDS, as well as on violence against women, and coordinated the WHO Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women. She has been involved in several initiatives on violence, including as Chair of the Sexual Violence Research Initiative for 5 years, and on the Violence Against Women Panel for the International Federation of Gynecologists and Obstetricians (FIGO). She is on the editorial board of *Reproductive Health Matters*.

Lead Specialist, Biostatistics and Data Management, Dr Eduardo Bergel, has more than 20 years of experience in the design, conduction and analysis of clinical trials and epidemiological studies in reproductive health. He has a Master in medical statistics from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in the United Kingdom, and received a PhD in epidemiology from the Universidade Federal de Pelotas, in Brazil.

Programme Manager, Mr Craig Lissner has a BA in Economics from Connecticut College, and an MBA from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. He joined the United Nations System in 1981, and has served at WHO, the World Bank and WHO.

HRP/RHR and AFRO collaborate in a regional consultation for the development of a “Regional agenda for accelerating the implementation of universal access to sexual and reproductive health in the African Region”

12–15 July 2011, Nairobi, Kenya. This consultation, organized by the WHO Regional Office for Africa in collaboration with HRP/RHR, and financially supported by David and Lucille Packard Foundation was attended by 67 participants representing ministries of health, regional economics communities, African training institutions, professional associations, foundations and nongovernmental organizations, and bilateral and multilateral institutions including UN agencies.



The meeting was preceded by an expert group meeting in Brazzaville in February 2011 after which a zero draft of the Agenda was prepared. This was followed by the virtual discussion forum in June–July 2011, in which about 500 people from over 60 countries participated, providing inputs to the zero draft.

There was enthusiasm and strong interest in the Agenda as expressed by the Nairobi consultation participants. Their recommendations included:

- Champions to be identified at all levels to sensitize leaders, to increase political will.
- Maternal mortality and near-miss registries to be set-up and institutionalizing notification of maternal deaths.
- For sexual and reproductive health: Systematic resource flow tracking, setting up health accounts, community-level insurance schemes.
- Scaling-up basic medical obstetric care and emergency obstetric care, access to safe abortion (where permitted by law), and quality family planning services.
- Setting up motivational approaches especially at peripheral level and community level to reduce attrition of health workforce.

It was recognized that the cross-cutting approaches to be used include:

- leveraging through good coordination;
- Using ICT, especially mobile technologies;
- focusing on adolescents and youth, empowering women and involving men.

The recommendations formulated by the Nairobi consultation are in line with those of the Commission of Accountability and Information of the UN Strategy on Women's and Children's Health.

Analysis and dissemination of research findings on expanding access to safe medical abortion care workshop

25–29 July, Bangkok, Thailand. As part of the social science and operations research initiative of the Special Programme on expanding access to safe medical abortion care, 10 studies were supported and recently completed in developing countries. Ten investigators of these studies from seven developing countries participated in a workshop which was jointly organized with the WHO Collaborating Centre Institute for Population and Social Research (IPSR), Mahidol University.



During the workshop, papers and research briefs with key findings of high policy and programmatic relevance were presented and discussed and plans for dissemination and utilization of research evidence were presented and finalized. In addition to the presentations on the findings from studies, key research topics on the analysis of data, developing and publishing research papers and dissemination and translating research into action were covered. Technical assistance was provided for the revisions of papers and research briefs. The set of revised papers will be published in a Supplement of the *International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics*.

Universal access to sexual and reproductive health: removing barriers for people with disabilities

18–19 July 2011, Hua Hin, Thailand. Special session of the Annual Joint headquarters, regional office and country office meeting on maternal/newborn and reproductive health. During this annual meeting for South East Asia Regional Office focal points, an entire morning was dedicated to a session on universal access to sexual and reproductive health for people with disabilities. The session was jointly lead by Dr Tom Shakespeare (WHO/Disability and Rehabilitation Team – DAR) and Ms Suzanne Reier (HRP/RHR).

Presentations and discussions began with a focus on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the recently launched as well as the increased risks and needs of persons with disabilities in terms of sexual and reproductive health. The session continued with a focus on the current barriers to inclusion of people with disabilities in SRH programmes worldwide as well as suggestions for overcoming barriers. In particular, a review of the programmatic guidance in the HRP/RHR and UNFPA joint publication, in addition to examples of good practices in several lower- and middle-income countries. Group work focused on immediate and long-term actions that countries could consider. Several countries showed keen interest in launching the *World Report on Disability* and also beginning to work on concrete plans for universal access to sexual and reproductive health for persons with disabilities. The DAR team and HRP/RHR will follow-up with these countries.

>> Downloads:

Promoting sexual and reproductive health for persons with disabilities:

<http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/general/9789241598682/en/>

World Report on Disability http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report/en/

Repositioning family planning – capacity-building workshops

25 July to 4 August 2011, Harare, Zimbabwe. Two USAID-funded workshops were held by the WHO Regional Office for Africa, in partnership with UNFPA to build national capacity to advocate effectively for renewed emphasis on family planning (FP) and to increase the visibility, availability, utilization and quality of FP services. Participants included reproductive health programme managers, and health promoters: the first workshop focused on Southern African countries, and the second on Eastern African countries.

The workshops were structured around the WHO and USAID toolkit *Repositioning family planning. Guidelines for advocacy action*. Workshop sessions, which were co-facilitated by HRP/RHR, included development of advocacy messages, situation analysis, identifying target audiences or stakeholders, and examined various communications channels, including using the media for advocacy. Participants were also introduced to HRP/RHR family planning guidance documents and tools.



Through group work, each country represented was able to develop a draft advocacy strategy for obtaining a specific advocacy objective. Objectives identified included increasing teaching hours in the midwifery curriculum for family planning, especially for long-acting methods; increased allocation of resources to avoid stockouts of family planning commodities and to improve FP services; and implementation of adolescent-specific sexual and reproductive health policies to ensure youth access to FP services.

At the end of the workshop, participants were encouraged to finalize their advocacy strategies and to share these with UNFPA and WHO, and to mobilize resources to implement the strategies as planned .

>> The toolkit, *Repositioning family planning. Guidelines or advocacy action*, can be downloaded here: http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/family_planning/fp_advocacy_tool/en/

New publications

Evaluating the quality of care for severe pregnancy complications: the WHO near-miss approach for maternal health

This guide is intended for health-care workers, programme managers and policy-makers who are responsible for the quality of maternal health care within a health-care facility or of the entire health system. It presents a standard approach for monitoring the implementation of critical interventions in maternal health care and proposes a systematic process for assessing the quality of care.



>> Download publication: <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/monitoring/9789241502221/en/index.html>

New translations

Criterios médicos de elegibilidad para el uso de anticonceptivos, Cuarta edición

[Medical eligibility criteria for contraceptive use, Fourth edition]



Este documento representa un paso importante en el proceso para mejorar el acceso a una atención de calidad en la planificación familiar, al revisar los criterios médicos de elegibilidad para seleccionar los métodos anticonceptivos. El documento proporciona recomendaciones sobre criterios médicos de elegibilidad apropiados basados en la información clínica y epidemiológica más reciente, y está destinado a responsables de la formulación de políticas, directores de programas de planificación familiar y la comunidad científica. Su objetivo es ofrecer orientación para los programas nacionales de planificación familiar/salud reproductiva en la preparación de guías para la prestación de servicios de anticonceptivos. El contenido de este documento no debe ser considerado o utilizado como la guía propiamente dicha, sino como una referencia.

>> Download publication:

http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/family_planning/9789241563888/es/index.html

Nueve pasos para formular una estrategia de ampliación a escala

[Nine steps for developing a scaling-up strategy]

Esta guía está dirigida principalmente a facilitar la planificación sistemática para la ampliación a escala. Está concebida para gestores de programas, investigadores y organizaciones de apoyo técnico que pretendan ampliar a escala innovaciones en servicios de salud que han probado ser exitosas en proyectos piloto u otros estudios de campo.

>> Download publication: http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/strategic_approach/9789241500319/es/index.html



Contact us and subscriptions

With *HRP/RHR News* we aim to strengthen communication with our partners, and, together continue to advocate for improving sexual and reproductive health and the work of HRP. We invite you to send us any observations or suggestions that you may have in support of this objective. In this regard, we welcome suggestions from members of our advisory bodies, our donors and potential donors. Please note that all HRP's work described herein depends on earmarked or specified voluntary funding to HRP as a cosponsored special programme, and also the support we receive from you to PDRH, the programme development in reproductive health component of RHR.

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