

From the Editor-in-Chief

This issue of *World Health & Population* has four original papers that should be of interest to our readers – two reviews using secondary data and two articles based on research-specific survey data collection. The papers have all been published online by *WHP* during the last quarter and are selected here as representative of recent outstanding contributions to the journal.

The first paper in this issue is by Sophie Eckert and Stefan Kohler, presenting a systematic review of urbanization and health in developing countries. This is an incredibly important topic, being addressed widely, and in particular in this journal through a series of past submissions on the impact on health of rural–urban migration in China¹. Eckert and Kohler analyzed data from 11 sentinel studies over the last 10 years and saw numerous counterbalancing effects on health from the rural–urban exodus; for example, among children, a lower risk of undernutrition but a higher risk of overweight. Further, risk factors for chronic disease were generally more prevalent in urban than in rural areas. Given that future population growth in developing countries will take place in predominately urban settings, and the particular challenges of chronic diseases, it is important that planners address the necessary policy shift from the traditional developing country focus on acute diseases to the area of increasingly prevalent chronic diseases.

“Sustainability of Cancer Registration in the Kilimanjaro Region of Tanzania” by Leah Zullig et al. is a qualitative assessment of an initiative from the Duke Global Health Institute and the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre (KCMC). Disease registries are critical for long-term understanding of disease process and the development and dissemination of best practices and clinical guidelines. Registries for chronic diseases in low- and middle-income countries are a relatively new and promising development, but they pose significant challenges not only in establishing but also in institutionalizing (“sustaining”) them over the long haul. Zullig and colleagues conducted qualitative semi-structured interviews with clinicians and administrators at KCMC to assess the implementation of cancer registries in the context of an organizational change model. They identify a series of steps that need to be considered in maintaining any change effort of this magnitude.

In our third paper, George Pierrakos et al. perform a comparative analysis of demographic trends and policy implications in member countries of the European Union (EU). Through regression analysis of OECD and EU data, the authors identify critical factors impacting population policies. The EU is being demographically transformed by critical factors of (1) increasing life expectancy, (2) immigration, and (3) total fertility rates well below replacement levels. Population policy needs to address these issues from a holistic stance, while the potential demographic impact of other, seemingly unrelated policies, also needs to be evaluated.

Awareness and use of advanced therapy for malaria in two areas of Nigeria is the subject of the final paper in this issue. Adeniyi Adeneye, Ayodele Jegede and colleagues conducted in-person surveys of over 500 pregnant women and mothers of small children to assess their knowledge and use of the current recommended treatment for malaria in sub-Saharan Africa, artemisinin-based combination therapy (ACT). Interestingly, it is the affected population, not healthcare providers, that make the decision regarding choice of malaria treatment in most sub-Saharan countries, so the perception and priorities of the “end consumer” are critically important. ACT is clearly the treatment of choice for malaria in these settings (resistance or lack of efficacy rule out the others); however, awareness and cost are barriers. The Roll Back Malaria partnership is striving to overcome these barriers through education and improving drug availability and affordability.

In conclusion, we hope that you find the papers in this issue interesting and worthwhile, and that you will also consult others recently released online at www.worldhealthandpopulation.com. WHP is committed to a mission of providing a forum for researchers and policy makers worldwide to publish and disseminate health- and population-related research, and to encourage applied research and policy analysis from diverse global and resource-constrained settings. The editors and publishers of WHP look forward to continued enthusiastic submission of manuscripts for consideration, peer review and publication. Please feel free to contact us with comments or suggestions you might have on the papers, or about the journal and our mission.

This is my last “From the Editor” column for WHP, as I am stepping down after eight and a half years as Editor-in-Chief. My successor is Dr. Judith Shamian, RN, PhD and President of the International Council of Nurses. Dr. Shamian will bring new prestige, ideas and leadership to raise WHP to the next level, and I very much look forward to watching the progress. I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank my long-term colleagues and co-editors, Amir Khaliq, Mike Landry and Lutchmie Narine, as well as the chair of the WHP Editorial Advisory Board, Peggy Leatt, and all the members of the WHP EAB. At Longwoods, Ania Bogacka, my expert and patient Managing Editor, provided critical guidance and support. Recognition should also go to the Longwoods Editorial Director, Dianne Foster Kent, and the Publisher, Anton Hart. This journal would not happen without the competent and dedicated involvement of all these (and many more!) individuals. Thank you.

As my final comment, I would like to acknowledge the founder of the predecessor journal to WHP, Dr. Sagar C. Jain, Professor Emeritus at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Jain initiated the *Journal of Health and Population in Developing Countries* in 1998. *World Health & Population* followed in 2005 and would not exist today, and certainly would not have thrived, without his foundational work. Dr. Jain has been my professor, mentor and a great supporter throughout my career, and I am very appreciative. Thank you Dr. Jain.

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1. See, for example, Li, X., B. Stanton, X. Fang and D. Lin. 2006. “Social Stigma and Mental Health among Rural-to-Urban Migrants in China: A Conceptual Framework and Future Research Needs.” *World Health & Population* 8(3): 14–31. Retrieved February 1, 2014. <<http://www.longwoods.com/content/18282>>.