

MATERNAL, CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH



Equity through better health



Burnet Institute
Medical Research. Practical Action.

A FOUNDATION FOR HEALTH EQUITY

Globally, the health of women, children and adolescents is known as the ‘unfinished agenda’ of the United Nations’ Millenium Development Goals.

WE HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO END PREVENTABLE DEATHS AMONG WOMEN, CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS. THIS WILL ENABLE FAMILIES TO NOT ONLY SURVIVE BUT ALSO TO THRIVE AND TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES FOR A BETTER, SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.

Burnet Institute’s Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health (MCAH) Program is generating new knowledge about key contributors to poor health outcomes for women, children and young people. We are developing and testing new tools, technologies and strategies to overcome these challenges, including using mathematical modelling to ensure that limited resources are allocated appropriately.

THE PROGRAM AIMS TO:

- Contribute to improving sexual and reproductive health, with a particular focus on adolescents.
- Contribute to reducing maternal and newborn mortality, and prevention of other adverse pregnancy outcomes.
- Address preventable causes of morbidity and mortality in children, and optimise growth and development.
- Work towards the advancement of gender equality, and prevention of gender-based violence.
- Ensure ongoing delivery of quality health services for women, children and young people in crisis situations.
- Support increasing the capacity of health professionals, researchers, policy makers and the general community in maternal, child and adolescent health, through education and training in Australia and globally.

Significant gains in the health of women, children and adolescents could be made through improved access to quality health information and services, including:

-  Modern contraception
-  Midwifery care
-  Effective newborn care
-  Vaccinations
-  Management of childhood illnesses
-  Nutritional support
-  Comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education



Maternal and Newborn Health

IMPROVING AVAILABILITY AND UPTAKE OF LIFE-SAVING CARE DURING PREGNANCY, LABOUR AND BIRTH, POSTPARTUM AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

When educated, regulated and supported, midwives can reduce maternal, newborn and stillbirth deaths considerably.

OUR STRATEGIES

We are developing, testing and implementing novel diagnostics, evidence-based tools and interventions to:

- Improve access to, and quality of, pregnancy, labour and birth, and postpartum care in all settings.
- Support the education of midwives and other care, especially in emergency maternity care.
- Prevent new infections and malaria-related morbidity and mortality among pregnant women.
- Increase uptake of antenatal testing and treatment of sexually transmitted infections during pregnancy.
- Reduce HIV-related maternal and infant mortality.
- Prevent and address neonatal sepsis.
- Address anaemia and other micronutrient deficiencies.
- Address miscarriage, stillbirth, prematurity and low birth weight.
- Address how midwives can best be educated and regulated to improve maternal and newborn outcomes.

Improving the health of mothers and babies depends on having the latest evidence in the hands of health workers globally.



Child Health

ADDRESSING LOW BIRTH WEIGHT AND STUNTING

Stunting is the impaired growth and development that children experience from poor nutrition, repeated infection, and inadequate psychosocial stimulation.

OUR STRATEGIES

We are developing, testing and implementing evidence-based tools, interventions and strategies to:

- Reduce undernutrition of children under five, including stunting.
- Reduce the burden of malaria among children under five by preventing new infections and reducing morbidity and mortality.
- Increase immunisation coverage to reduce the burden of vaccine-preventable diseases among children under five.
- Improve postnatal and newborn care.

The problem of stunting – poor growth and development – affects almost half of Papua New Guinea’s children. Finding out why is a key research initiative of our flagship project, Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies, in East New Britain.



Adolescent Health

ADDRESSING THE UNMET HEALTH NEEDS OF ADOLESCENTS GLOBALLY, WITH A FOCUS ON SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH NEEDS AND RIGHTS

Young people are central to ensuring health equity for all, but they experience a large and preventable burden of poor health. Despite sexual and reproductive health and rights being a traditional focus of adolescent programming, there remains much to be done. There is also a need to address issues of emerging importance – particularly poor mental health, non-communicable disease and injury.

OUR STRATEGIES

We are developing, testing and implementing evidence-based tools and interventions to:

- Better understand the health needs of adolescents – and how to address these in challenging settings.
- Improve the quality of data for young people, through developing novel methods for data collection and sampling to assess key areas of need.
- Define better indicators and data – at a global and country level – to inform responsive policy and programming, and ensure accountability.
- Strengthen primary health care for adolescents by making health services more accessible and building the capabilities and competencies of health care providers.
- Reduce the prevalence of sexually transmitted infections and their health impact.
- Improve the nutrition of adolescent girls.



Gender Equality

ADVANCEMENT OF GENDER EQUALITY AND ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender inequality is a key driver of poor health outcomes for women, children and adolescents.

OUR STRATEGIES

We are developing, testing and implementing evidence-based tools, interventions and strategies to:

- Increase the positive involvement of men and male partners in reproductive, maternal and child health.
- Be an active contributor to gender equity policy and practice, locally and nationally through the SAGE and Athena SWAN Initiatives.
- Understand gender-based violence and development of evidence-based interventions to reduce violence.
- Address gender and other inequities across the Asia-Pacific region to support policy development.

Gender equity is not a women's issue, it is everyone's issue and essential for a better world.

ABOUT BURNET INSTITUTE

We are an Australian, unaligned, independent, not-for-profit organisation. Our mission is to achieve better health for vulnerable communities in Australia and internationally by accelerating the translation of research, discovery and evidence into sustainable health solutions.



Make a difference by donating or consider a gift in your Will. Contact us today.



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We have offices or representatives in Australia, Papua New Guinea and Myanmar, and also contribute to activities in other Asian, Pacific and African countries.