

Shaping the Future of SRHR: Emerging Trends and Research Directions

Dr Moazzam Ali MD, PhD, MPH

Department of Reproductive Health and Research



The Scope of Sexual and Reproductive Health Challenges

❑ **Maternal and Infant Mortality:**

- In 2022, an estimated 152,000 women died from pregnancy-related causes
- Approximately 2.4 million babies died during the first 28 days of life in 2022
- Around 2.1 million babies were stillborn in 2022, with 98% of stillbirths occurring in low-income and middle-income countries

❑ **Child Marriages:** 39 000 every day.

- Globally, about 32 million adolescent girls are living in countries with high child marriage rates
- Nearly 1 million girls under 15 give birth each year, mostly in low- and middle-income countries

❑ **Unmet Contraception Needs:** As of 2024, 164 million women of reproductive age still lack access to contraception

❑ **Induced Abortions:** Recent estimates indicate that approximately 73 million induced abortions occur each year worldwide

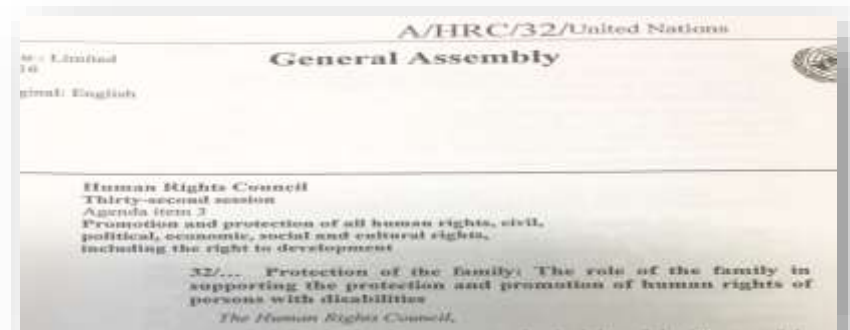
❑ **Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs):** Each year, there are an estimated 376 million new infections with one of four STIs: chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, and trichomoniasis

❑ **Intimate Partner Violence:** Approximately 1 in 3 women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence

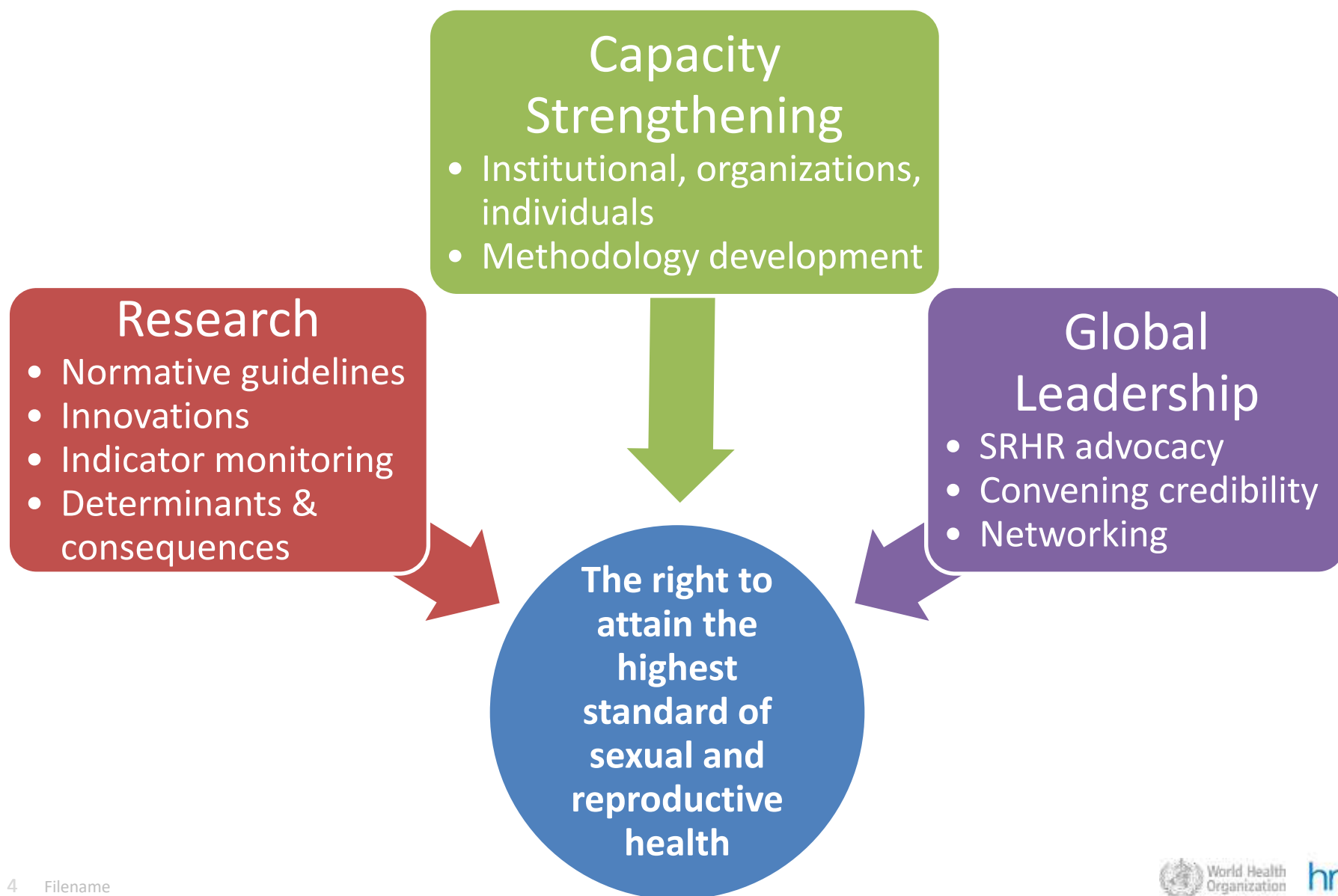


Several challenges to ensuring and protecting SRH rights remain

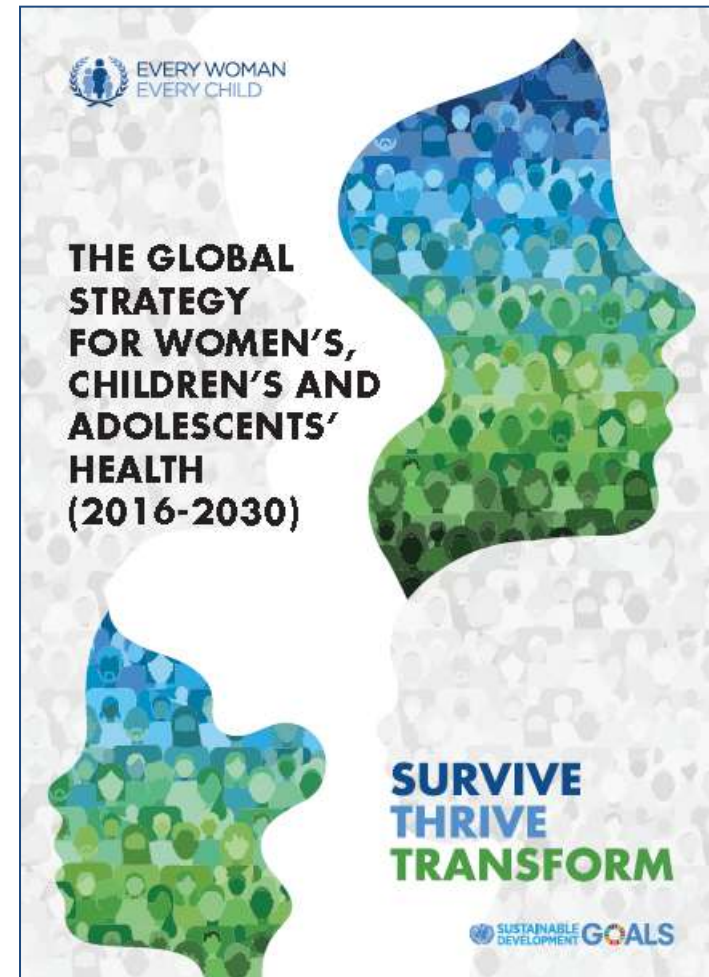
- Addressing sexuality, sexual health, safe abortion, and gender relations continues to be politically challenging, with recent policy trends in various countries either advancing or restricting these rights
- Integrating SRHR in humanitarian responses remains essential but complex, with ongoing efforts to develop clear modalities and frameworks to ensure effective implementation



WHO's core functions



Aligning with the SDGs and Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health





EVERY WOMAN
EVERY CHILD

What is new?

- **Equity**

Focus on reaching the most vulnerable and leaving no one behind

- **Universality**

For all countries, with an explicit focus on humanitarian settings

- **Adolescents**

The “SDG generation” –
a 10 year old in 2016
will be 24 in 2030

- **Life-course approach**

Health and well-being interconnected at every age,
and across generations

- **Multisector approach**

Joint progress across core sectors e.g. nutrition, education, WASH



Contributing to SDG indicators related to SRHR




SDG 3.1.1	Guidance on increasing access to contraception and improving maternal health services to reduce maternal deaths and improve well-being
SDG 3.1.2	Guidance on strategies to increase access to SBA and quality of SBA services
SDG 3.2	Research to improve quality of perinatal care and development of normative guidance
SDG 3.3	Implementation research to support implementation of the global STI strategy and to strengthen SRHR-HIV linkages
SDG 3.7.1	Implementation research to support scaling up of effective interventions to satisfy demand for contraception
SDG 3.7.2	Implementation research to support reduction of unintended pregnancy among adolescents





SDG 5.2	Implementation research to support the global plan of action to strengthen health systems response to violence against women, girls and children
SDG 5.3.1	Research and technical support to parliamentarians to determine how to legislate effectively against CEFM
SDG 5.3.2	Research to improve medical care and management of girls & women with FGM in accordance with WHO guidance
SDG 5.6	Technical support to enable states to safeguard rights to universal access to SRH services

Strategic directions for WHO: Transitions to align with trends

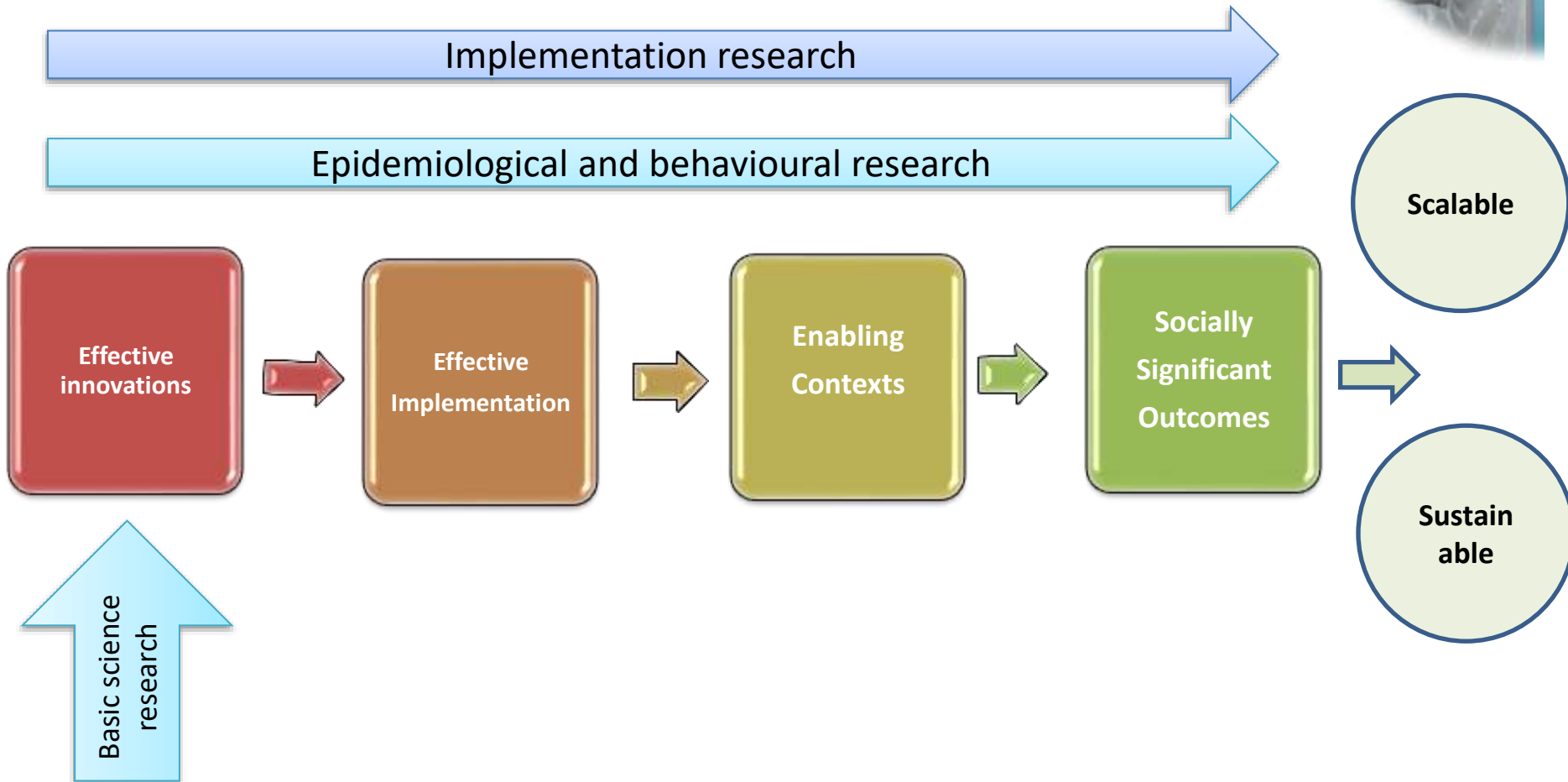


- Global  National **LEVEL**
 - Application of norms & standards, best practices
 - Implementation research for institutionalization
 - Capacity-building for production and use of evidence

- Medical  Systems **INTERVENTION**
 - Building blocks, especially financing (UHC)
 - Integration, wherever appropriate
 - Total Market Approaches

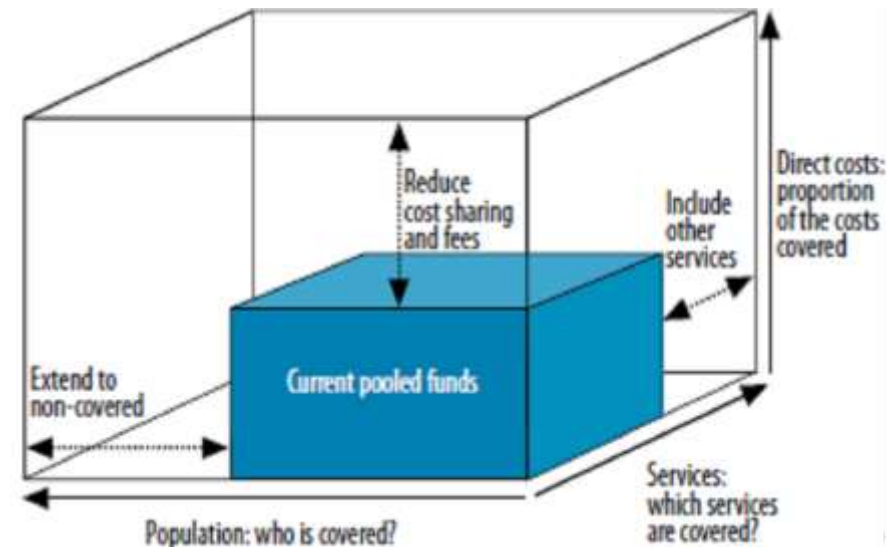
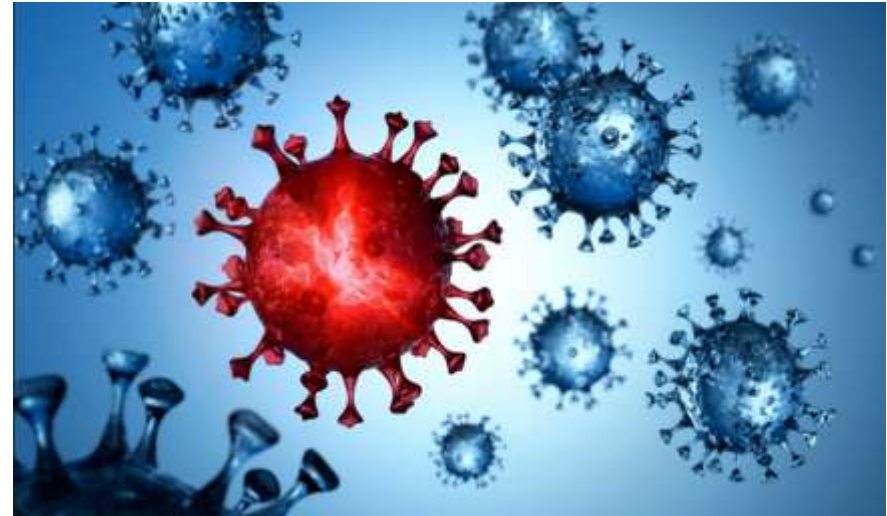
- Protection  Well-being **OUTCOMES**
 - Mortality, morbidities and rights
 - Personal / couple desires

Framework of Evolution of SRHR Research: Discovery to Delivery



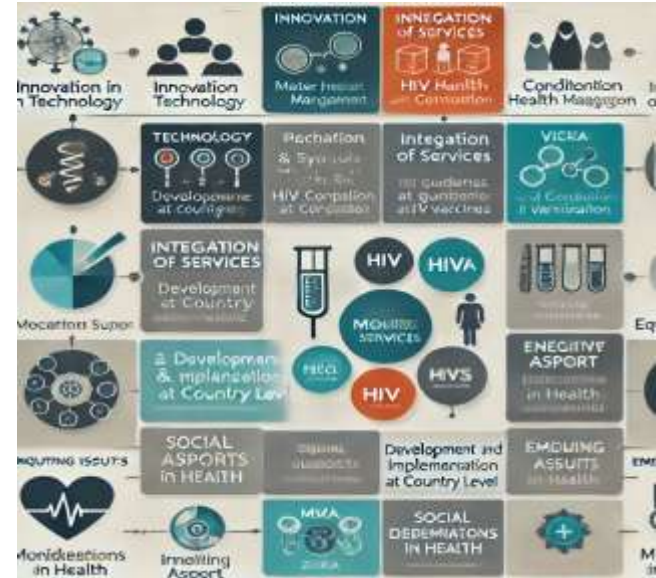
Strategic Alignment: Refining Focus for Greater Impact

- ❑ **UHC** as a platform for an integrated approach for delivering SRH services; health security and greater consideration of socio- economic interactions needed
- ❑ **Intersectoral action:** stronger integration with the economic, social and environmental determinants needed
- ❑ **Equity:** critical, and for all countries; need for focus on sub-national data and actions
- ❑ **Gender Equality and Human Rights:** need for stronger and deeper integration of gender equality and human rights
- ❑ **Financing shifts** to greater domestic financing; least developed and fragile countries continue to need ODA assistance
- ❑ **Monitoring and accountability framework** requirements enormous; increased role for HRP



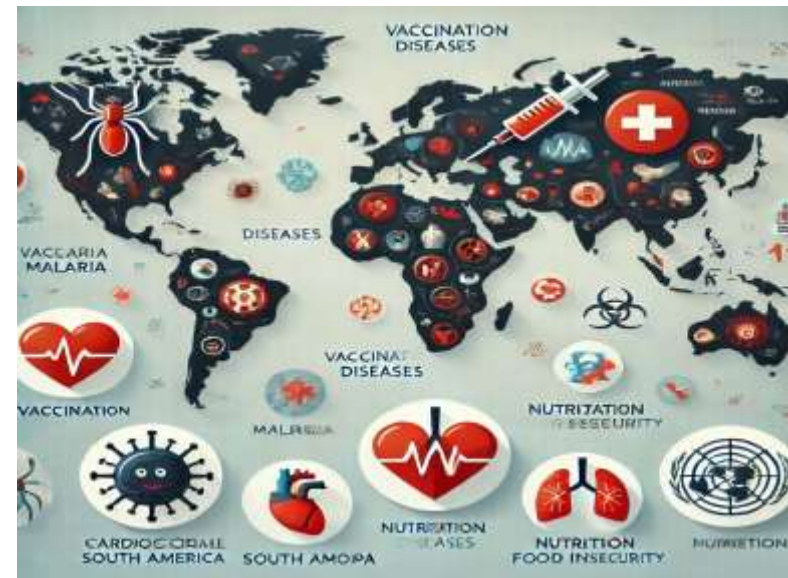
Key areas of research in SRH

- ❑ **Technological Innovation:** (POCT, maternal health management, HPV vaccines)
- ❑ **Service Integration:** Integration of services (HIV and syphilis, HIV and contraception, immunization)
- ❑ **Research for Guideline Development:** Research to support development and implementation of guidelines at country level
- ❑ **Innovative Financing:** (vouchers, conditional cash transfer)
- ❑ **Capacity building:** (multipurpose workers, staff retention)
- ❑ **Addressing Social Determinants of Health:** Equity aspect (adolescent health issues)
- ❑ **Monitoring and Accountability:** (MMR, STI estimates)
- ❑ **Emerging Health Issues:** (Zika, Ebola, covid)



Ten key global health issues

- 1) **Infectious Diseases** (e.g., COVID-19, Zika, Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS) Ongoing pandemic threats and emerging diseases, along with challenges related to antimicrobial resistance (AMR).
- 2) **Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)** Conditions like heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and chronic respiratory diseases are leading causes of death, often linked to lifestyle factors such as diet, lack of exercise, and tobacco use.
- 3) **Mental Health Disorders** Mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and suicide rates are on the rise globally.
- 4) **Health Inequality** Disparities in healthcare access, especially among marginalized groups (e.g., women, rural populations, minorities).
- 5) **Environmental Health** (e.g., Air Pollution, Climate Change) Pollution, climate change, and natural disasters significantly affect public health, contributing to respiratory diseases, heat-related illnesses, and the spread of vector-borne diseases.




Ten key global health issues

- 6) **Global Health Security** Strengthening global preparedness for pandemics and disease outbreaks, ensuring rapid response mechanisms are critical to safeguarding public health.
- 7) **Aging Population** With longer life expectancies, many countries are facing an aging population, which increases the demand for elderly care, management of age-related diseases, and healthcare resources.
- 8) **Malnutrition and Food Insecurity** Both undernutrition (e.g., stunting and wasting) and overnutrition (e.g., obesity) are significant health challenges, along with issues like food insecurity and lack of access to nutritious food in vulnerable populations.
- 9) **Access to Healthcare** Many low- and middle-income countries still lack sufficient healthcare infrastructure, medical professionals, and affordable healthcare services, preventing millions from receiving necessary care.
- 10) **Emerging and Re-emerging Diseases (e.g., Zoonotic Diseases)** Diseases that jump from animals to humans, such as Ebola, Zika, and COVID-19, continue to pose a risk, especially in areas with high human-animal interaction, and climate change is exacerbating the spread of these diseases.

thebmj covid-19 Research Education News & Views Campaigns Jobs

Medical milestones

ABED RAHIM KHATIB/ DEMOTIX/ PA



In 2007 The BMJ asked readers to nominate the most important medical milestones since the forerunner of The BMJ was first published in 1840. A panel of editors whittled 70 suggestions down to 15 and then asked readers to vote. This was the shortlist:

- The discovery of antibiotics
- Imaging
- Tissue culture
- Anaesthesia
- Chlorpromazine
- Sanitation
- Germ theory
- Evidence based medicine
- Vaccines
- Contraceptive pill
- Computer technology
- Oral rehydration therapy
- Monoclonal antibody technology
- Discovery of smoking risks
- Discovery of the structure of DNA

hrp