



gapps

an initiative of Seattle Children's

GLOBAL ALLIANCE TO PREVENT
PREMATURITY AND STILLBIRTH

Every year around the world, more than 1 million babies die because they were born too early.

More than 3 million stillbirths occur each year.

Preterm Birth and Stillbirth: The Challenge

Globally, preterm birth is the leading cause of all newborn deaths. An estimated 13 million babies are born before 37 weeks of gestation each year. These babies have increased risks for infections, respiratory complications, cerebral palsy, and vision, hearing, and developmental problems.

In addition, a staggering 3.2 million stillbirths occur each year worldwide. These losses are not considered in most health policies or goals, although a third may be preventable. Most stillbirths occur in low- and middle-income countries, and nearly half are linked to maternal deaths.

One in eight U.S. babies is born before 37 weeks of gestation. Disparities persist. Rates among blacks are nearly twice as high as whites or Asians, and in Washington state, Native American prematurity rates rank highest. An even larger disparity exists between costs and research; preterm birth is the 7th leading U.S. health care expenditure (\$26B), yet perinatal health research ranks 63rd in NIH funding.

We urgently need better data and tools, and more champions and resources. The causes, solutions, and burdens of preterm birth and stillbirth remain unknown or untold.

About GAPPS

Seattle Children's launched the Global Alliance to Prevent Prematurity and Stillbirth (GAPPS) to address these challenges. Our mission is to lead a collaborative, global effort to increase awareness and accelerate innovative research and interventions that will improve maternal, newborn and child health outcomes.



Save the Children/Michael Bisceglie

What We Are Doing to Improve Maternal & Newborn Health



OUR FOCUS

- Promote development and ensure rapid deployment of low-cost, proven interventions for preterm births and stillbirths
- Facilitate discovery science to close the research gaps and identify diagnostics and interventions
- Build in-country research capacity to support local development and implementation of low-cost, proven interventions to solve region-specific problems
- Increase the visibility of preterm birth and stillbirth and their impacts on the global burden of disease
- Unite the global maternal, newborn and child health community to promote effective health policies, ensure efficient use of resources, and provide adequate funding

Global Report on Preterm Birth & Stillbirth

Our team of investigators wrote a comprehensive assessment of what is known, what needs to be known, and what can be done to manage and improve maternal, fetal and newborn health in low-resource settings. Ethical and social justice issues are also addressed. (Spring 2010)

Call to Action to Improve Pregnancy Outcomes by 2015

We recently co-convoked an international conference with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, March of Dimes, PATH, Save the Children, UNICEF and WHO. Our team presented key findings from our global report to inform a novel, four-day working meeting of 185 interdisciplinary experts from around the world.

Together we developed a call to action to reduce preterm birth and stillbirth. It includes 200 short- and long-term milestones that correspond with 12 thematic goals and distinct evaluation metrics.

The GAPPS Repository

Researchers worldwide have a critical need for diverse high-quality prenatal and postnatal information. GAPPS is building a significant global collection of prospective data and specimens from pregnant women and newborns. This collection will provide a needed resource for international researchers aiming to understand and prevent preterm birth and stillbirth. This information will also be accessible to researchers studying related maternal, fetal, and newborn health issues.

The GAPPS Repository centralizes data management, standardizes collection processes, and provides these data and samples to answer a variety of research questions. Other collections are typically designed to answer a specific research question, and are not accessible or standardized.

The GAPPS Repository is also becoming a model for enhancing research capacities and building infrastructure globally. GAPPS launched the repository with sites in Washington state. Over time, repository data and specimens will be collected at global sites.

Research

Intergrowth 21st: Fetal and Newborn Growth Research

We are partnering with the University of Washington Medical Center to participate in a study with the University of Oxford. Intergrowth 21st is a study to establish new international standards for describing healthy fetal growth and newborn nutritional status. Information from ultrasounds and height measurements of the mother's womb will be used to understand risks and improve newborn health. This study is monitoring about 5,000 pregnancies at 10 sites worldwide.

Related MNCH Research

Dr. Rubens and other members of the GAPPS team are also conducting research in maternal and neonatal infections.

The GAPPS International Team of Investigators

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