

**The Health News Updates (1<sup>st</sup> March, 2016)**  
**From the desk of Reproductive Health Observatory**  
<http://www.rhobservatory.net/>

| National   | International  |
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| <b>Reproductive and Maternal &amp; Child Health</b>  |  |
| <p><b>India's Newborns And Their Mothers Need This</b><br/>           Despite significant improvements in maternal and child health over the last decade or so, which is evident in the reductions in their mortality in the country, an estimated 47,000 mothers and 7.3 lakhs neonates continue to die every year due to causes related to pregnancy, childbirth and during the post-partum period. The major medical causes of the maternal deaths are hemorrhage (38%), sepsis (11%), abortion (8%), hypertensive disorders (5%), obstructed labour (5%) and 'other' causes including anaemia (34%), according to SRS 2011-03. A large proportion of newborn deaths are still due to preventable causes<br/> <a href="http://everylifecounts.ndtv.com/indias-newborns-and-their-mothers-need-this-1316">http://everylifecounts.ndtv.com/indias-newborns-and-their-mothers-need-this-1316</a></p>             | <p><b>Vaginal ring may provide women protection against HIV</b><br/>           "The ASPIRE (a study to prevent infection with a ring for extended use) study is the first to demonstrate that a sustained drug delivery product that slowly releases an antiretroviral drug over time can offer partial protection from HIV," said one of the lead researchers Thesla Palanee-Phillips from Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute in Johannesburg, South Africa.<br/> <a href="http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health-news/Vaginal-ring-may-provide-women-protection-against-HIV/articleshow/51104200.cms">http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health-news/Vaginal-ring-may-provide-women-protection-against-HIV/articleshow/51104200.cms</a></p> |
| <p><b>Private hospitals and their bias for urban women</b><br/>           A study done by Centre for Women's Development Studies has revealed that with healthcare services becoming highly privatised and commercialised in India, private hospitals are focusing only on those areas that attract urban educated women who have the capacity to spend money.<br/> <a href="http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/private-hospitals-and-their-bias-for-urban-women/1/603687.html">http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/private-hospitals-and-their-bias-for-urban-women/1/603687.html</a></p>  | <p><b>Women Around the World: This Week</b><br/> <i>Welcome to "Women Around the World: This Week," a series that highlights noteworthy news related to women and U.S. foreign policy. This week's post, covering February 19 to February 26, was compiled by Anne Connell, Dara Jackson-Garrett, and Alexandra Eterno.</i><br/> <a href="http://blogs.cfr.org/women-around-the-world/2016/02/26/women-around-the-world-this-week-24/">http://blogs.cfr.org/women-around-the-world/2016/02/26/women-around-the-world-this-week-24/</a></p>   |
| <p><b>India has eliminated maternal, neonatal tetanus: Prez</b><br/>           India has successfully eliminated maternal and neonatal tetanus "well before" the global targeted timeline, President Pranab Mukherjee said today, underlining that the largest number of children in the country to be fully immunised ever in a single year was in 2015.<br/>           Noting that infrastructure needed for effective implementation of Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) is being "strengthened", he said two lakh 'anganwadi' buildings were being constructed in more than 2,500 backward blocks in the country.<br/> <a href="http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/india-has-eliminated-maternal-neonatal-tetanus-prez-116022300583_1.html">http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/india-has-eliminated-maternal-neonatal-tetanus-prez-116022300583_1.html</a></p> | <p><b>Head of UN Women: Expand 'Reproductive Rights' in Zika-Affected Countries 'Not Only Because of Zika' But It's the 'Right Thing to Do'</b><br/>           U.N. Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of U.N. Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka told CNSNews.com Tuesday that "reproductive rights" of women in countries affected by the Zika virus must be advanced "not only because of Zika but also, because it's the right thing to do."<br/> <a href="http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/laurett-a-brown/head-un-women-expand-reproductive-rights-zika-affected-countries-not">http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/laurett-a-brown/head-un-women-expand-reproductive-rights-zika-affected-countries-not</a></p>  |

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| <p><b>Social work professor recognized internationally for research</b></p> <p>Social work professor Vijayan Pillai has been named a Fellow of United Kingdom’s Royal Society for Public Health.</p> <p>The society, an independent, multi-disciplinary charity dedicated to the improvement of public health and well-being, recognized Pillai for his research in women’s rights and reproductive health in developing countries.</p> <p><a href="http://www.theshorhorn.com/news/social-work-professor-recognized-internationally-for-research/article_7174f932-dbd0-11e5-833a-7bbfd15a6c1e.html">http://www.theshorhorn.com/news/social-work-professor-recognized-internationally-for-research/article_7174f932-dbd0-11e5-833a-7bbfd15a6c1e.html</a></p>   | <p><b>"Professional Midwife led Maternal and Newborn Health Care in Bangladesh"</b></p> <p>The joint Daily Star-UNFPA roundtable entitled “Professional Midwife led Maternal and Newborn Health Care in Bangladesh” was held on the 28th of January in Dhaka. The roundtable highlighted the importance of professional midwives leading reproductive health care for women. Women having access to a midwife before, during and after pregnancy and delivery has shown to reduce maternal and newborn deaths significantly.</p> <p><a href="http://www.thedailystar.net/supplements/unfp-a-supplement/professional-midwife-led-maternal-and-newborn-health-care-bangladesh">http://www.thedailystar.net/supplements/unfp-a-supplement/professional-midwife-led-maternal-and-newborn-health-care-bangladesh</a></p> |
| <p><b>Economic Survey 2016: Increase spending on maternal and child healthcare</b></p> <p>The government expenditure saw an uptick in healthcare spending both as a share of GDP and in real terms during the first eight months of the current fiscal through March 31, according the Economic Survey released on Friday. Real expenditure on health between April and November grew 9%, the survey said. The survey called in for more spending on maternal and child healthcare if India needs to grow at a faster pace.</p> <p><a href="http://www.financialexpress.com/article/economy/economic-survey-2016-increase-spending-on-maternal-and-child-healthcare/216690/">http://www.financialexpress.com/article/economy/economic-survey-2016-increase-spending-on-maternal-and-child-healthcare/216690/</a></p> | <p><b>Ethiopia: Improving Maternal Health - Innovative Approach to Address Rights of Women</b></p> <p>It is quite acceding for countries that ensuring healthy lives and promoting the well-being for all at all ages are essential to sustainable development. To this end, leaders need to exert utmost efforts to fully eradicate a wide range of diseases and address many different persistent and emerging health issues.</p> <p><a href="http://allafrica.com/stories/201602190951.htm">http://allafrica.com/stories/201602190951.htm</a> !</p>  |
| <p><b>Birth companions’ to help mothers-to-be</b></p> <p>NEW DELHI: The health ministry has allowed 'birth companions' during delivery in public health facilities, a move aimed at reducing maternal and infant mortality. This would mean female relatives with experience of the process of labour and husband of the pregnant woman can be present during delivery. The step is part of lowcost interventions initiated by the government to meet the sustainable development goals and is expected to help expectant mothers by easing the delivery process.</p> <p><a href="http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Birth-companions-to-help-mothers-to-be/articleshow/51147091.cms">http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Birth-companions-to-help-mothers-to-be/articleshow/51147091.cms</a></p>         | <p><b>Option B+ to prevent maternal transmission of HIV shows rise in women initiating therapy</b></p> <p>The first findings from a study in the Kingdom of Swaziland on a new approach to reduce mother to child transmission of HIV were presented at the annual Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI 2016) in Boston.</p> <p><a href="http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2016-02/cums-obt022316.php">http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2016-02/cums-obt022316.php</a></p>  |
| <p><b>Family Planning<br/>International &amp; India News</b></p>   |   |
| <p><b>Increase health spending, women empowerment for family planning success</b></p> <p>The recently-concluded fourth International Conference on Family Planning (ICFP 2016) in Bali symbolised the importance being given to family planning, specifically to the approach of ‘global commitments and local actions’. The host country, Indonesia, quadrupled its family planning budget from \$65.9 million in 2006 to \$263.7 million in 2014. This represents 5% of its GDP — and this has</p>   |   |

important lessons for India.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/increase-health-spending-women-empowerment-for-family-planning-success/story-3lm12N5fU8g7DhjF3DluaP.html>

#### **Family planning: A cost effective-development tool**

After a series of budget cuts faced by the health sector last year, which affected resource availability on the family planning front as well, it has become all the more imperative that this time sufficient provision is made. If not, the cost of inaction in family planning would be compounded for the country. This will translate into not just loss of health and life, but of education opportunities, livelihoods, earnings and the overall well-being of our people.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/family-planning-a-cost-effective-development-tool/story-eO1x2aDKkHPFPqkG5g8RPJ.html>

#### **India to Change Its Decades-Old Reliance on Female Sterilization**

This is what family planning in India often looks like: Women in their 20s, mostly farmers' wives, gather at dawn on the stairs of a district hospital. Hours later, a surgeon arrives. His time is short. He asks the women to sit in a row on the floor of the operating room and then, in operations lasting a few minutes apiece, uses a laparoscope to sever their fallopian tubes, ensuring they will never again bear a child.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/21/world/asia/india-to-change-its-decades-old-reliance-on-female-sterilization.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/21/world/asia/india-to-change-its-decades-old-reliance-on-female-sterilization.html?_r=0)

### **Abortion**

#### **National**

##### **HC allows abortion of alleged rape survivor's pregnancy**

Gujarat high court permitted the termination of a 24-week pregnancy of an 18-year-old alleged rape survivor from Junagadh district, on the grounds that "her mental status will adversely be affected, if the pregnancy continues".

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/HC-allows-abortion-of-alleged-rape-survivors-pregnancy/articleshow/51102186.cms>

#### **International**

##### **UN Secretary General Pushes Abortion in New UN Document Promoting "Humanitarian Goals"**

In big and small ways, United Nations officials have been trying to push the legalization of abortion world-wide for decades. Though pro-life nations and groups have succeeded in resisted the pressure, UN leaders have not given up their pro-death agenda. In the latest attempt, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon included abortion in his plan to address the global humanitarian crisis, according to the Center for Family and Human Rights, or C-Fam.

<http://www.lifenews.com/2016/02/19/un-secretary-general-pushes-abortion-in-new-un-document-promoting-humanitarian-goals/>

##### **Conflicting laws making abortion difficult**

As the Health Ministry plans to widen the abortion service net by changing the existing law, another piece of legislation to curb female foeticide may come in the way due to the inherent conflict between the two statutes that seem to work at cross purpose.

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/530556/conflicting-laws-making-abortion-difficult.html>

##### **Women's Rights in the Republic of Ireland: The Politics of Abortion and the Irish National Election**

Abortion is one of the defining issues of the 2016 national Irish election, yet a vast majority of candidates have declined to give their views on the controversial subject. 331 of the 392 candidates have not declared a position, 33 candidates have stated support for keeping the 8th Amendment, and another 28 candidates have stated that they want to repeal the 8th.

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/womens-rights-in-the-republic-of-ireland-the-politics-of-abortion-and-the-irish-national-election/5509770>

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| <p><b>Legal abortions on rise in Chennai, nearly 60,000 since 2011, reveals</b></p> <p>The number of medically terminated pregnancies (MTP) in the city has increased from 10,293 in 2011 to 13,374 in 2015, revealed an RTI filed by OnlineRTI.com. As many as 59,991 pregnancies were legally terminated in the city since 2011.</p> <p><a href="http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health-news/Legal-abortion-on-rise-in-Chennai-nearly-60000-since-2011-reveals/articleshow/51087369.cms">http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health-news/Legal-abortion-on-rise-in-Chennai-nearly-60000-since-2011-reveals/articleshow/51087369.cms</a></p>                     | <p><b>In Response To Zika, Brazil Moves To Restrict Abortion Even More</b></p> <p>Despite urgent demands from global leaders to loosen abortion penalties in Latin American in light of the Zika virus — a mosquito-borne disease that can cause serious birth defects if pregnant women are infected — Brazil lawmakers are moving in the opposite direction.</p> <p><a href="http://thinkprogress.org/health/2016/02/23/3752371/brazil-tightens-abortion-laws-zika/">http://thinkprogress.org/health/2016/02/23/3752371/brazil-tightens-abortion-laws-zika/</a></p>   |
| <b>Other Health Related News</b>  |   |
| <p><b>The rationale of India's drug policy</b></p> <p>The Supreme Court's description last year of India's drug pricing policy—irrational and unreasonable—is unfortunately accurate from several angles. There have been two contradictory developments over the past few days: there is now a possibility that stents (a small mesh tube used to treat narrow or weak arteries) will become a component of the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM).</p> <p><a href="http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/7Htu5u7jHr2SaSDEHkbqHO/The-rationale-of-Indias-drug-policy.html">http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/7Htu5u7jHr2SaSDEHkbqHO/The-rationale-of-Indias-drug-policy.html</a></p>                                  | <p><b>The Right to Health is a Human Right</b></p> <p>According to a study by the Toronto Initiative for Economic and Social Rights, more than 90% of 195 constitutions around the world guarantee at least one economic and social right. Nearly 68% of those constitutions contain a provision addressing health. The question of whether health is even a right is hardly contested. In the United States, however, the question still prevails.</p> <p><a href="http://www.faiobserver.com/region/north_america/the-right-to-health-is-a-human-right-43495/">http://www.faiobserver.com/region/north_america/the-right-to-health-is-a-human-right-43495/</a></p>  |
| <p><b>Healthcare: Kashmir reels under burden of lifestyle diseases</b></p> <p>Despite the spike in reported incidence of diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases in Kashmir, there is very little response from health authorities for prevention and control of this epidemic.</p> <p><a href="http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/life-style/healthcare-kashmir-reels-under-burden-of-lifestyle-diseases/210141.html">http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/life-style/healthcare-kashmir-reels-under-burden-of-lifestyle-diseases/210141.html</a></p>   | <p><b>The bigger problems behind Brazil's recent disease outbreaks</b></p> <p>As researchers in Brazil and around the world rush figure out more about the link between Zika and the birth defect microcephaly, many Rio residents say the answer to the health crisis lies not in a laboratory, but in the mud.</p> <p><a href="http://www.pri.org/stories/2016-02-26/bigger-problems-behind-brazils-recent-disease-outbreaks">http://www.pri.org/stories/2016-02-26/bigger-problems-behind-brazils-recent-disease-outbreaks</a></p>   |
| <p><b>Budget 2016: Healthcare cannot wait, Mr Jaitley; healthy India can hasten wealthy India</b></p> <p>The Indian Health care industry is growing at a rapid pace (CAGR of 17 per cent) and is expected to become a US \$280 billion industry by 2020. Even so, nearly one million Indians die every year due to inadequate healthcare facilities and close to 700 million people have no access to specialist care.</p> <p><a href="http://www.firstpost.com/business/budget-2016-healthcare-cannot-wait-mr-jaitley-healthy-india-can-hasten-wealthy-india-2644650.html">http://www.firstpost.com/business/budget-2016-healthcare-cannot-wait-mr-jaitley-healthy-india-can-hasten-wealthy-india-2644650.html</a></p> | <p><b>PPP in public health suffers setback</b></p> <p>Not all is well with public-private partnership in the health sector, if a recent decision of the department is a prognosis. The Health Department has decided to do away with the Arogya Bandhu scheme under which it had partnered with non-governmental organisations, charitable trusts and private medical colleges to run 52 of its primary health centres (PHCs) with financial assistance from the government. It has decided to take the PHCs back into its fold.</p> <p><a href="http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/ppp-in-public-health-suffers-setback/article8253276.ece">http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/ppp-in-public-health-suffers-setback/article8253276.ece</a></p> |

**Delhi nurses join in mass casual leave call**

Delhi nurses participated in the All India Government Nurses' Federation mass casual leave call as part of their ongoing protest against the 7th Pay Commission report.

Nurses on strike also shaved their heads as mark of protest at Jantar Mantar, where they have been on a relay hunger strike for the past two week. This, while hospitals in the city, claimed they were "not extensively affected" by the strike.

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-newdelhi/delhi-nurses-join-in-mass-casual-leave-call/article8287538.ece>

**Health Innovation Lab to be set up in city**

With a view to promoting innovations in healthcare, an impact investment fund based out of Yale University — Equilateral Ventures — is planning to start a Health Innovation Lab in the city.

The lab would focus on enabling and accelerating digital health entrepreneurs, who transform health care delivery and bridge the health-wealth gap in India, Raj Gorla, founder of Equilateral Ventures and CEO of health data analytics firm, Contineo Health, told *The Hindu* .

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-andhrapradesh/health-innovation-lab-to-be-set-up-in-city/article8270513.ece>

**Latest Articles on Maternal and Reproductive Health****Diagnostic methods to determine microbiology of postpartum endometritis in South Asia: laboratory methods protocol used in the Postpartum Sepsis Study: a prospective cohort study**

The South Asian region has the second highest risk of maternal death in the world. To prevent maternal deaths due to sepsis and to decrease the maternal mortality ratio as per the World Health Organization Millenium Development Goals, a better understanding of the etiology of endometritis and related sepsis is required. We describe microbiological laboratory methods used in the maternal Postpartum Sepsis Study, which was conducted in Bangladesh and Pakistan, two populous countries in South Asia. <http://reproductive-health-journal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12978-016-0121-4>

**What the eye does not see: a critical interpretive synthesis of European Union policies addressing sexual violence in vulnerable migrants**

In Europe, refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants are more vulnerable to sexual victimisation than European citizens. They face more challenges when seeking care. This literature review examines how legal and policy frameworks at national, European and international levels condition the prevention of and response to sexual violence affecting these vulnerable migrant communities living in the European Union (EU). Applying the Critical Interpretive Synthesis method, we reviewed 187 legal and policy documents and 80 peer-reviewed articles on migrant sexual health for elements on sexual violence and further analysed the 37 legal and 12 peer-reviewed articles among them that specifically focused on sexual violence in vulnerable migrants in the EU-27 States.

<http://www.rhm-elsevier.com/article/S0968-8080%2815%2900079-8/abstract>

**CHARM, a gender equity and family planning intervention for men and couples in rural India: protocol for the cluster randomized controlled trial evaluatio**

Globally, 41 % of all pregnancies are unintended, increasing risk for unsafe abortion,

miscarriage and maternal and child morbidities and mortality. One in four pregnancies in India (3.3 million pregnancies, annually) are unintended; 2/3 of these occur in the context of no modern contraceptive use. In addition, no contraceptive use until desired number and sex composition of children is achieved remains a norm in India. Research shows that globally and in India, the youngest and most newly married wives are least likely to use contraception and most likely to report husband's exclusive family planning decision-making control, suggesting that male engagement and family planning support is important for this group. Thus, the Counseling Husbands to Achieve Reproductive Health and Marital Equity (CHARM) intervention was developed in recognition of the need for more male engagement family planning models that include gender equity counseling and focus on spacing contraception use in rural India.

<http://reproductive-health-journal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12978-016-0122-3>

**Does happiness itself directly affect mortality? The prospective UK Million Women Study**

Poor health can cause unhappiness and poor health increases mortality. Previous reports of reduced mortality associated with happiness could be due to the increased mortality of people who are unhappy because of their poor health. Also, unhappiness might be associated with lifestyle factors that can affect mortality. We aimed to establish whether, after allowing for the poor health and lifestyle of people who are unhappy, any robust evidence remains that happiness or related subjective measures of wellbeing directly reduce mortality.

<http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736%2815%2901087-9/fulltext>