Using evidence-based interventions to improve maternal and child health

A pediatrician by training, Dr. Bhutta has spent his career finding solutions for women’s and children’s health challenges, particularly in low- and middle-income countries and underserved communities. His work has helped transmit knowledge to women in small communities and has gathered data that have influenced international health policies.

HIS GOAL

Better health for women and children in Pakistan and beyond

PROBLEMS

- Lack of information/data/focus on maternal and child health social, economic, and geographical disparities
- Areas of conflict and humanitarian emergencies
- High infant and child mortality
- Child and maternal undernutrition

SOLUTIONS

- Established a research program in maternal and child health and nutrition at Aga Khan University.
- Promoted investing in women’s health and education in lower-income countries.
- Informed WHO policies, the Global Every Newborn Action Plan, and global funding priorities.
- Developed evidence-informed guidance that has reduced stillbirths by 20%.
- Organized and trained community health educators in Pakistan to inform women about health practices including nutrition, immunizations, and perinatal care.
- With the government of Pakistan, his team has organized 14 large-scale cluster randomized trials over 15 years.
- Led efforts to generate and synthesize information on evidence-based interventions for child survival and health, leading to changes in global policy.

What drives me is to see people improve their lives and livelihoods and to see that that can change. I think the role of community health workers in low- and middle-income countries is a model for learning for high-income countries as well: a reverse osmosis of innovation that was done at one end to reach the most marginalized. These are universal approaches that can be applied everywhere.”

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Generating and using health evidence to build healthier communities.