

From the Editor-in-Chief

I am delighted to pen my first editorial as Editor-in-Chief of *World Health & Population* (*WHP*). Global health and health policy have been central to my interests for decades. *WHP* is a great instrument to make sure that new knowledge is disseminated and exchanged among policy makers, decision makers, scientists and practitioners alike in the broad field of health.

Our health and that of our communities and nations depends on many factors. While the healthcare system makes a contribution, larger factors that determine our health are nested in many others. This issue introduces you to one of those topics – the situation of healthcare in conflict zones where there is armed conflict and civil unrest. “Protection of Health Workers, Patients and Facilities in Times of Violence” (see page 43) is the report from a conference held in Bellagio, Italy, in November 2013. We will dedicate a special issue to this important topic later in 2014.

Our current issue also presents articles from Lydia Kapriri et al., Michael Costello et al. and Catherine Holtz et al. that raise fundamental issues we grapple with across the globe at all levels of economic development: high-, middle- and low-income countries. They examine the ongoing tension between cultural norms and values; scientific evidence and associated practice and policy recommendations; and financial, funding and income levels and their impact on the decisions of individuals,

communities and policy makers. Far too often this complexity is either ignored or misunderstood by professionals, decision makers and funders. Evidence-based policies, which are grounded on available, and accurate, data – a challenge on its own as discussed in this issue by Pushpanjali Swain et al. – are essential but insufficient to guarantee uptake by various individuals, groups, communities and populations. All these factors have to be well thought through in order to work toward outcome-based systems where the health and well-being of our population is our goal. I greatly look forward to *WHP*'s publishing papers that examine these complex and inter-connected factors in my tenure as Editor-in-Chief.

As a final note in my first editorial, I'd like to acknowledge the enormous contribution of outgoing Editor-in-Chief John E. Paul. With your strong commitment and network of authors and editors, *WHP* has thrived over the last nine years. I'd also like to welcome Farah Farahati as an associate editor; we look forward to working with you and benefitting from your wide knowledge and experience.

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