

## From the Editor-in-Chief

**T**his issue of *World Health & Population* presents three original papers plus a paper reprinted from *BMC Public Health* that we feel will be of interest to *WHP* readers. The original papers have all been published online by *WHP* during the last quarter and are selected here as representative of recent outstanding contributions to the journal.

The first two papers relate to alcohol and healthcare issues in China. In “The Association of Metabolic Syndrome with Alcohol Consumption among Urban Chinese,” authors Mark Strand and colleagues provide early reporting of a larger study on alcohol use and the rise of chronic disease in China. Metabolic syndrome is defined as a collection of risk factors that are related to a number of chronic diseases; the authors show rather conclusively the association of these factors with alcohol use, although in a cross-sectional study it is not possible to demonstrate causality. The increase of chronic disease in China and other countries where chronic disease was previously rare is a serious worldwide problem. Given that alcohol use is insinuated in so many of these conditions, governmental and other authorities need to promote awareness and develop effective prevention strategies. This is particularly important for China, which has almost negligible regulation and control related to alcohol.

The second paper with a focus on China in this issue includes authors from Wayne State University who have been regular contributors to *WHP*. “Pro-Alcohol-Use Social Environment and Alcohol Use among Female Sex Workers in China: Beyond the Effects of Serving Alcohol” by Chen Zhang, Xiaoming Li and colleagues strives to answer two questions: (1) what is the prevalence of alcohol use among female sex workers (FSWs) in China? and (2) do aspects of the social environment independently contribute to FSW alcohol problems, beyond just the easily defined alcohol-serving practices of the venues where FSWs work? The research, also part of a much larger study, points conclusively toward the need to “get beyond” just regulation of alcohol in workplaces to address more fundamental social environmental factors such as institutional and peer norms, as well as risk perceptions.

The second two papers in this issue relate to HIV prevention in school-age populations, although in vastly different settings and from different perspectives. The first paper, “Preparing for National Implementation of an Evidence-based, Effective HIV Prevention Program among Bahamian Sixth-Grade Students,” by Valerie Knowles et al., reports pilot results from implementation of a nationwide school-based HIV education and intervention program. The goal of the researchers was to determine (1) the “fidelity” of implementation, that is, how close the final rolled-out program was to the initial design, (2) evidence that the program would be associated with ongoing effectiveness, and (3) barriers to wider implementation and strategies to overcome them. The paper is well grounded in implementation theory and science and should be of wide interest to policy and program managers.

The final paper is the open access reprint referred to earlier, entitled “HIV Prevalence among High School Learners – Opportunities for School-based HIV Testing Programmes and Sexual Reproductive Services” by Ayesha Kharsany, Mukelisiwe Mlotshwa et al. Their paper reports on a very well designed study to determine the HIV prevalence among school-attending children in grades 8 through 12 in the KwaZulu-Natal midlands, South Africa. The authors point out that most HIV detection and prevention activities for youth occur as part of antenatal care, thus excluding males and, largely, all non-pregnant females. The authors’ reported prevalence rate among school-aged children, and the potential for significant school-based testing and prevention programs supported by existing South African policy, indicate the importance of school-based HIV testing and subsequent prevention and treatment services, even for these younger populations.

In conclusion, we hope that you find the papers in this issue interesting and worthwhile, and that you will also consult others recently released online at [www.worldhealthandpopulation.com](http://www.worldhealthandpopulation.com). *WHP* remains committed to its mission to provide a forum for researchers and policy makers worldwide to publish and disseminate health- and population-related research, and to encourage applied research and policy analysis from diverse global and resource-constrained settings. *WHP* is indexed on MEDLINE and is accessible through PubMed.

We look forward to continued enthusiastic submission of manuscripts for consideration, peer review and publication. Finally, the editors and publishers of *WHP* are always interested in any comments or suggestions you might have on the papers or about the journal and our mission. Please feel free to write or e-mail us.

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