



Emory Global Health Connection

Building Bridges for Better Health

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EGHI's CHAMPS Network Works to Save Children's Lives

Losing a child is a parent's worst nightmare. In some parts of the developing world, this nightmare is all too common. Approximately one in every ten children born in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia will not celebrate their fifth birthday. This number increases to one in every six children in some areas. That is a striking contrast to the US, where that mortality rate is one in every 160 children. This statistic illustrates the glaring health disparities between high- and low-income countries. This inequity paved the way for the Emory Global Health Institute to establish the Child Health and Mortality Prevention Surveillance (CHAMPS) Network.



Dr. Robert F. Breiman, Principal Investigator and Executive Director of the CHAMPS

Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2015, the CHAMPS Network's partners include the International Association of National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI), the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Task Force for Global Health's Public Health Informatics Institute (PHII), Deloitte LLC, the University of Barcelona, and other international partners and global leaders in research and

surveillance at the seven CHAMPS field sites. The Gates Foundation invested almost \$77 million in CHAMPS for the first three years of the network, which is projected to continue its work for the next 20 years.

The CHAMPS Network's niche in the global health community is unique. It will document specific causes of childhood mortality in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia through post-mortem studies in order to target key causes for childhood deaths for effective interventions and strategies. Data will be accessible to anyone interested in implementing childhood health intervention programs. The network is committed to determining exactly what is killing these children rather than simply sending over resources.

EGHI's Director, Dr. Robert Breiman, serves as CHAMPS's Principal Investigator and Executive Director. Dr. Breiman joined EGHI in 2013, and works on a number of research grants and other EGHI projects in addition to

CHAMPS. Prior to joining Emory, Dr. Breiman was the Director of the Kenya office of the US CDC. He also served as Director of the Health Systems and Infectious Diseases Division and Head, Programme on Infectious Diseases and Vaccine Sciences at the International Center for Diarrheal Research in Dhaka, Bangladesh. During his career, Dr. Breiman has become an expert in designing epidemiological surveillance studies in urban and rural international locations. Dr Jeffrey Koplan, the Founding Principal Investigator of CHAMPS, continues to contribute to the program through his engagement of stakeholders to help ensure effective application of the study's evidence toward preventing childhood mortality.

The CHAMPS Network strives to “turn data into action” by working closely with national public health institutes, ministries of health, and sub-national policy makers. The team wants to create a strong foundation for change in these communities. “Building knowledge to save lives is one of the priorities that embodies CHAMPS,” Dr. Breiman says. The data collected will be rapidly and globally available so that it can be used in numerous avenues, “to learn, to answer previously unanswered questions, and to come up with innovative strategies and solutions,” according to Breiman. Anyone in the field of public health, including epidemiologists, behavioral scientists, and health policy makers, can utilize their strengths to apply the information CHAMPS provides to make a positive impact.

Dr. Breiman highlights the importance of collaborations with other public health organizations when it comes to achieving the goal of reducing childhood mortality rates. “These days, you cannot solve global health problems alone,” states Dr. Breiman. He values working with diverse organizations, which provides opportunities for bringing in different skills and

perspectives to accomplish a common goal. “Collaboration is the difference between doing good things, and doing great things,” Dr. Breiman says. CHAMPS continues to take advantage of the cutting-edge research and expertise of public health leaders, particularly within the Atlanta area, in order to exponentially reduce childhood mortality rates in the communities it is serving.

Currently, the CHAMPS Network has seven study sites, which include South Africa, Mozambique, Mali, Kenya, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, and Sierra Leone. The CHAMPS Program Office, located at EGHI's office on the Emory campus, works closely with each site to carry out this project. It includes a large number of staff fully seconded to EGHI and CHAMPS from CDC, the Task Force for Global Health, and Deloitte, and a number of staff with part-time assignments based at CDC headquarters.

Dr. Breiman remembers working on other global health efforts, explaining that “the value of the work completed is tangible and it's a great feeling of satisfaction, especially after an intervention. The work CHAMPS does goes beyond the laboratory and the computer. It touches the lives of individuals daily and has the potential to be a game-changer for saving lives.”

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