

## The year 2015 and child health

Although this journal is dedicated to the wide-ranging field of mother and child health, the present issue composed entirely of articles relating to child health alone underscores the importance of this subject in today's medical and socio-epidemiological context. In fact, the growing concern for the life and well-being of the child has been constant (although still not ideal), given the need to meet the Millennium Goals set by the United Nations in the year 2000. These goals are contained in the "Millennium Declaration"<sup>1,2</sup> signed by 191 member-states committed to meeting "Eight Development Objectives for the Millennium" by 2015.

At least four of the eight objectives are of fundamental importance for children and their social and medical well-being:

- Eradicating hunger and extreme poverty;
- Achieving universal basic education;
- Reducing infant mortality;
- Improving maternal health.

The year 2015 is thus critical for attempting to identify the extent to which these goals are being achieved. We know that much progress has been made, though much still needs to be done.

However, it should be noted that, even when achieved, these goals will not provide a definitive solution to the problems. The very definitions of the goals indicate their limitations through the use of terms such as 'reduce' or 'improve'.

So the knowledge of child growth during the intrauterine development is an important clinical and biological concern because could provide the necessary health attention for a further good life-quality.

Studies that provide support for the achievement of the Millennium Goals are extremely welcome. This is the case of the extensive investigation of child growth and development titled "INTERGROWTH – 21st", which was a large-scale research program involving various studies published in September 2014 in journals belonging to the Lancet group.<sup>3,4</sup> These studies aimed to monitor the growth of children from the fetal stage up to birth and present new curves, which have been improving on the already classic anthropometric growth curves of the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) (1977), the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2000) and the World Health Organization (WHO) (2006-2007). This was a multicentric, international research enrolling a multiethnic population with 20,486 newborn children from eight countries (Brazil, China, Italy, India, Kenya, Oman, United Kingdom and United States)<sup>3,4</sup> and these will help to improve understanding of adequate child growth.

Other initiatives, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Grand Challenges,<sup>5</sup> supported in Brazil by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), are notable examples of this quest to prioritize children's health and quality of life, with a special emphasis on studies of the so-called first 1000 days from the beginning of gestation to the end of the second year of life. Needless to say - given the current state of knowledge - the improvement of child health is one of the most important investments for the development of society and this enjoys the support of the state.

Hence our interest in publishing the present issue of our journal on this topic. Nutrition, the cognitive neurodevelopment of preterm children, preterm care, childbirth in the Public Health system, and the influence of exposure to organochlorines on development are some of the issues addressed by the studies published here and this bears witness to an interest in investigating the factors capable of helping or harming children and providing useful information to ensure they enjoy a healthier life.

These articles are also important for the Brazilian Journal of Mother and Child Health aim of disseminating research in this field. Our journal covers various fields – women's health, maternal health, biological, medical and social issues. No one of these is more important than any of the others, but the specific attention given to

children in this first issue of 2015 - a landmark year in child health - gives us hope for the future and will we imagine especially interest our readers.

## References

1. Lopes A, Cassab F, Basaglia A, Sampaio L, Muller F, Colameo AJ. Amamentação, alimentação infantil ótima e sua relação com os objetivos de desenvolvimento do milênio. [acesso em 4 mar 2015]. Disponível em: <http://www.redeblh.fiocruz.br/media/amaeodm.pdf>
2. Faria C. Metas do Milênio. [acesso em 4 mar 2015]. Disponível em: <HTTP://infoescola.com/geografia/metas-do-milenio>.
3. Villar J, Ismail LC, Victora CG, Ohuma EO, Bertino E, Altman DG, Lambert A, Papageorghiou AT, Carvalho M, Jaffer YA, Gravett MG, Purwar M, Frederick IO, Noble AJ, Barros FC, Chumlea C, Bhutta ZA, Kennedy SH, International Fetal and Newborn Growth Consortium for the 21st century (INTERGROWTH-21st). International standards for newborn weight, length and head circumference by gestational age and sex: the newborn cross-sectional study of the INTERGROWTH-21st project. *Lancet*. 2014; 384: 857-68.
4. Papageorghiou AT, Ohuma EO, Altman DG, Todros T, Ismail LC, Lambert A, Jaffer YA, Bertino E, Gravett MG, Purwar M, Noble JA, Pang R, Victora CG, Barros FC, Carvalho M, Salomon LJ, Bhutta ZA, Kennedy S, Villar J, International Fetal and Newborn Growth Consortium for the 21st century (INTERGROWTH-21st). International standards for fetal growth based on serial ultrasound measurements: the fetal growth longitudinal study of the INTERGROWTH-21st project. *Lancet*. 2014; 384: 869-79.
5. Grand challenges Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. <http://www.gatesfoundation.org>.

José Eulálio Cabral Filho <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Executive Editor of the Revista Brasileira de Saúde Materno Infantil.