

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

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Rt. Dan Carden MP
Shadow Secretary of State for International Development
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr Carden

RE: An effective treatment for post-partum haemorrhage and the Sustainable Development Goals

The Woman trial was a large international clinical trial to assess the effects of an inexpensive generic drug called tranexamic acid on death from post-partum haemorrhage (PPH). The **UK Department of Health** and the **Wellcome Trust** funded the research with additional funding from the Gates Foundation. We enrolled 20,060 women with PPH from hospitals in 21 countries but mostly from sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia.

The results showed that a single injection of tranexamic acid substantially reduces death from bleeding and the need for surgery to control bleeding without side effects. If given soon after birth, tranexamic acid reduces death from bleeding by a third. These significant results have important implications for global health. PPH is the leading cause of maternal death and causes over 50,000 deaths each year. This treatment if widely implemented could slash this figure.

The WHO has endorsed the results and included tranexamic acid in PPH treatment guidelines but this is not enough to ensure that women benefit. Tranexamic acid, the only treatment proven to reduce death from PPH, is one of the most cost-effective ways to save a mother's life. Nevertheless, many health ministries around the world are not aware of the results and tranexamic acid is not available in many countries.

DFID could help to ensure that this treatment is available when needed but as yet there has been almost no policy response. Reducing maternal deaths is a Sustainable Development Goal and so we believe this new research and its implications for global health should be considered at a high-level meeting of the United Nations. We have written to the Secretary of State for International Development (also the Minister for Woman), to ask for her help but so far there has been little action. Reducing maternal death should not be a party political issue but if you could help us to put this item on the government's agenda it would help.

I would be delighted to meet if you would like to discuss this further. A few months ago we got a text from a Nigerian doctor who watched two women die from PPH on the same day. She knew about tranexamic acid but it was not available in her hospital.

Yours sincerely

Dr Ian Roberts
Professor of Public Health
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World Health Organization
Collaborating Centre for Research and Training
in Injury and Violence Prevention