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## Editorial – Dec 2024

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## **Editorial December 2024- A Unified Effort for Midwifery**

Welcome to the final issue of the Journal of Asian Midwives (JAM) for 2024. This issue reflects on a remarkable year and highlights an important event that unfolded in late 2024.

### **The Midwives Alliance of Asia (MAA) <sup>i</sup>**

In mid-September 2024, the Midwives Alliance of Asia (MAA) <sup>i,ii</sup> held its inaugural three-day strategic directions meeting in Islamabad. This event, supported by funding from the New Venture Fund (NVF) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), was organized in collaboration with the Aga Khan University School of Nursing and Midwifery (AKU-SONAM). The meeting brought together midwifery leaders from ten countries—Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, UAE, Indonesia, Iran, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Yemen—to foster South-to-South collaboration and advance midwifery across Asia.

This initiative aimed to advance midwifery across the region through enhanced collaboration among midwifery leaders. The alliance initiated the development of strategic directions outlining the areas for communication and collaboration, advocacy, and research capacity. Together, these priorities set the stage for sustainable growth in midwifery education, leadership, and research, marking the first step in a unified Midwifery effort to improve sexual, reproductive, maternal, and newborn, child and adolescent health (SRMNCAH).

By bringing together experts who understand the specific challenges of the region, this collaboration ensures that its initiatives are well-tailored to address the needs of midwifery practitioners. Dr. Rafat Jan highlighted the importance of this cooperation, saying, *“Every participant shared valuable ideas that will help guide future collaboration across the region.”*

The workshop meeting set a solid foundation for future collaboration between countries in Asia, with participants committed to advancing midwifery practices through focused strategies and coordinated efforts. The event culminated in the adoption of the **“Declaration of MAA”** <sup>i</sup> which embodies a powerful mission: to revolutionize midwifery education, practice, and collaboration. By addressing the region’s most pressing challenges and leveraging its opportunities, the alliance aims to create a lasting impact on SRMNCAH.

### **Ethical guidance and midwifery and maternity research <sup>iii</sup>**

The 24th FERCAP International Conference, held in November 2024 in Kathmandu, Nepal, focused on “Maximizing Benefits through Responsible Conduct of Research.” FERCAP, the Forum for Ethical Review Committees in the Asian and Western Pacific Region, emphasized that research as a social activity should improve health and quality of life for both targeted and general populations. Ethical conduct in research remains paramount, as highlighted by the presentation of the new World Health Organization (WHO) <sup>iii</sup> guidance for best practices in clinical trials.

One notable message from the conference was the need for shorter and more comprehensible consent forms to make them user-friendly without sacrificing clarity. The other interesting development is that of so-called “decentralized clinical trials”. Decentralized or point-of-care trials can increase the diversity of clinical trial enrolment by increasing its accessibility, for example where elements of the trial are delivered at home and/or data are collected electronically by trial participants instead of researchers. These are exciting new developments in thinking about research ethics.

## JAM Advancement

We are delighted to announce that JAM is transitioning to an Online Journal System (OJS) to streamline the submission, editorial, review, and publication processes. This transition, planned for full activation in January 2025, marks a significant milestone for JAM after being manually managed since its inception in 2015.

Additionally, JAM has achieved its DOI registration through Crossref, with the current issue, “Vol 11 Issue 2,” featuring DOIs for the first time. This advancement represents a major step forward for the journal’s accessibility and professional standing. We are deeply grateful to our reviewers and editorial board members for their unwavering support and contributions over the years. This transition promises a smoother and more efficient process.

## Closing Remarks

The final issue of JAM for 2024 features 14 thought-provoking articles showcasing work from countries including Pakistan, Japan, Indonesia, and Canada. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our readers, authors, reviewers, and the library staff at Aga Khan University for their continuous support. Your contributions have been integral to JAM’s growth and success.

As we look forward to 2025, we remain committed to our mission of advancing midwifery knowledge and practice across Asia and beyond. Thank you for being part of our journey.

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