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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **UBC, CFRI and BC Children's researchers to lead \$2.8-million project to reduce deadly infection in Bangladeshi mothers, children**

(Vancouver – December 1, 2011) – Researchers from the University of British Columbia, Child & Family Research Institute (CFRI) and BC Children's Hospital (BCCH) have won a \$2.8-million grant from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to improve the survival rate of Bangladeshi mothers, newborns and young children through the prevention of sepsis, a life-threatening form of infection in which the bloodstream is overwhelmed by bacteria.

The **Interrupting Pathways to Maternal, Newborn and Early Childhood Sepsis Initiative** will be led by Dr. Charles Larson, a clinical professor in pediatrics in the Faculty of Medicine and associate member of the School of Population and Public Health (SPPH) at UBC, a senior associate clinician scientist at CFRI and Director of the Centre for International Child Health (CICH) at BCCH, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority.

In partnership with the Bangladesh Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the International Centre for Diarrheal Disease Research, Bangladesh and researchers from UBC, Simon Fraser and McGill universities, the initiative will focus on enabling early detection of sepsis among mothers, newborns and young children in developing countries, an issue that has been largely neglected and misunderstood.

Sepsis, often preceded by illnesses such as pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria and HIV, can worsen infections and lead to death. An estimated 50 to 70 per cent of the eight million deaths of children under age five in Bangladesh can be attributed in part to sepsis.

"The majority of children who survive sepsis suffer from compromised immune systems, and are often subject to repeat infections following discharge from medical care," says Dr. Larson, who is also part of UBC's Neglected Global Diseases Initiative (NGDI). "It is estimated that as many children die from complications after they leave the clinic or hospital as from sepsis itself during their stay."

The project will train more than 60 midwives and birth attendants, 45 nurses and doctors, and several hundred primary health care providers to detect and treat sepsis. Plans include public awareness campaigns, a public health policy analysis, and the establishment of demonstration sites in Bangladesh sub-districts where integrated detection and treatment programs will be implemented and evaluated. The project is expected to benefit more than 53,000 mothers, newborns and children under the age of five in the country.

Led by Dr. Larson, the interdisciplinary team includes Dr. Niranjana Kissoon (CICH, UBC Department of Pediatrics, CFRI and BCCH), Dr. Mark Ansermino (CICH, UBC Department of Anesthesia, CFRI and BCCH), Kishor Wasan (NGDI, UBC Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences), Guy Dumont (UBC Faculty of Applied Science and CFRI), Cathy Ellis (UBC Department of Family Practice and Division of Midwifery), Rosemin Kassam (SPPH) and Alex Berland (SPPH).

**UBC Faculty of Medicine** provides innovative programs in the health and life sciences, teaching students at the undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate levels. Its faculty members received \$295 million in research funds, 54 percent of UBC's total research revenues, in 2010-11. For more information, visit [www.med.ubc.ca](http://www.med.ubc.ca).

**The School of Population and Public Health (SPPH)** became UBC's newest school in 2008, housed within the Faculty of Medicine. The school's main teaching focus is graduate education in areas ranging from public health to health policy. The school's research and teaching examines local, national and global health challenges and spans seven themes. For more information, visit [www.spph.ubc.ca](http://www.spph.ubc.ca).

**The Neglected Global Diseases Initiative at UBC (NGDI-UBC)** brings together the technical expertise and perspectives of a variety of disciplines at UBC – including bench science, pharmaceutical and health research, business, social policy, and law – to develop interventions for neglected global diseases and ensure their delivery to those in need. For more information, visit [www.ndgi.ubc.ca](http://www.ndgi.ubc.ca).

**CFRI** conducts discovery, clinical and applied research to benefit the health of children and families. It is the largest institute of its kind in Western Canada. CFRI works in close partnership with UBC; BC Children's Hospital and Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children, BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre, agencies of PHSA; and BC Children's Hospital Foundation. CFRI has additional important relationships with British Columbia's (B.C.'s) five regional health authorities and with B.C. academic institutions Simon Fraser University, the University of Victoria, the University of Northern British Columbia, and the British Columbia Institute of Technology. For more information, visit [www.cfri.ca](http://www.cfri.ca).

**BC Children's Hospital**, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, provides expert care for the province's most seriously ill or injured children, including newborns and adolescents. BC Children's is an academic health centre affiliated with the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, and the Child & Family Research Institute. For more information, please visit [www.bcchildrens.ca](http://www.bcchildrens.ca).

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