

# Vision and Goals as the New Editor-in-Chief of *Global Pediatric Health*

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## Abstract

As the newly appointed Editor-in-Chief (EIC) of *Global Pediatric Health* (GPH), it is both an honor and a privilege to lead this prestigious journal, building upon the strong foundation established by my predecessor, Dr. Aishat Akere. Under her leadership and that of her predecessors, GPH has grown into a globally recognized platform for clinical studies, case studies, public health research, and health services delivery practices focused on the pediatric population. Dr. Akere's tenure was marked by significant achievements, including the expansion of the Editorial Board, which strengthened the journal's editorial team and expanded its global reach. My appointment comes at a time when the landscape of academic publishing is rapidly evolving, particularly with the rise in the number of online journals. Despite these changes, GPH continues to stand out, receiving over 230 submissions and more than 350 000 downloads in the year 2023 alone. These numbers reflect not only the journal's relevance but also the trust that researchers and clinicians worldwide place in GPH as a reliable source of high-quality pediatric health research. As I step into this role, my vision is to further elevate the journal's standing and impact by focusing on several key goals that align with the needs of our authors, the global community, and the field of pediatric health at large.

## Keywords

public health, pediatric health, global health, global pediatric health, newborn screening, precision medicine, social determinants of health (SDOH), genomics, maternal and child health, genome sequencing, artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), conflicts and warfare, post-COVID, life course perspective, systems thinking, healthcare

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## Goals for My Tenure

### *Enhancing the Author Experience*

One of my primary goals as Editor-in-Chief is to improve the submission and review process for authors. I recognize that the experience of submitting research to a journal can significantly influence an author's perception of and relationship with that publication. By streamlining the submission process, enhancing transparency in peer review, and ensuring timely feedback, I aim to create a more positive experience for our contributors. This, in turn, will encourage more high-quality submissions and foster long-term relationships with our authors.

### *Strengthening Global Community Connections*

GPH serves a diverse, global community of pediatric health professionals, researchers, and policymakers. To strengthen our connection with this community, I plan to invite authors to lead special issues on pressing global

health topics. This initiative will not only spotlight key issues but also engage thought leaders from various regions and disciplines, fostering a more inclusive and representative dialogue within the journal. Additionally, I intend to enhance the dissemination and marketing of key papers, ensuring that groundbreaking research reaches the widest possible audience.

### *Promoting Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Collaboration*

The complexities of pediatric health require a collaborative approach that crosses disciplinary boundaries. As such, I will advocate for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary

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collective efforts in the advancement of pediatric health research, practice, clinical care, advocacy, and policy. By encouraging submissions that reflect diverse perspectives and methodologies, GPH can become a hub for innovative solutions that address the multifaceted challenges in pediatric health.

### ***Focusing on Social Determinants of Health and Systems Thinking***

Understanding the social determinants of health (SDOH) and structural factors (such as societal and political infrastructure) is crucial in addressing pediatric health disparities. Because there is no uniform, universal health system across globe, it is vital to identify factors that influence different regional SDOH and how interventions could be designed to address the five primary SDOH: (1) economic stability, (2) education access and quality, (3) health care access and quality, (4) neighborhood and built environment, and (5) social and community context.<sup>1</sup> Thus, we need to examine the individual factors (such as genetics, SDOH, environment, societal, and political infrastructure) and how these factors interact in a holistic way that can impact the health and wellbeing of children—known as “systems thinking.”<sup>2</sup> During my tenure, GPH will increase its focus on these areas, incorporating systems thinking into the examination of health outcomes. This approach will enable us to explore the broader context in which health and illness occur, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence pediatric health across different populations.

### ***Expanding Research on Physical and Mental Health Using a Life Course Perspective***

Recognizing the importance of early life experiences on long-term health outcomes, GPH will expand its focus on research that examines the physical and mental health of children from a life course perspective. This will include exploring how maternal health and epigenetics impact critical periods of human development especially during perinatal period and first 3 years of life.<sup>3</sup> Research has shown that the lack or insufficient prenatal education, mental health support and access to maternal health services can impact the health of the unborn child, which could have long-lasting effect into childhood and youth. By welcoming research that considers these factors, GPH will contribute to a deeper understanding of how early interventions and policies can improve pediatric health outcomes.

### ***Providing a Platform for Emerging Issues***

The field of pediatric health is constantly evolving, with new challenges emerging in areas such as the aftermath

of post-COVID, the effects of conflict and warfare, and social media influences on contributing to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) which are potentially traumatic experiences during childhood and youth, and how these experiences are associated with higher risk for chronic diseases, substance use disorders, and mental health conditions.<sup>4</sup> By sharing the experiences globally, we can learn new ways to redesign new interventions, programs, and policies to prevent ACEs. Also, the advancement of precision medicine using genome sequencing to improve the screening, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases, and the use of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AI/ML) to streamline clinical decision making could have both benefits and unknown challenges in healthcare (such as workforce development and capacity building to support such innovation).<sup>5</sup> GPH will serve as a platform for the discussion of these and other emerging issues, offering a space for innovative research and thought leadership on the pediatric mind, body, and soul.

### ***Increasing Impact and Visibility***

Finally, one of my overarching goals is to increase the impact factor of GPH (currently 1.4) by boosting its visibility among researchers and clinicians. To achieve this, I will implement a strategic effort to improve the dissemination and application of the work featured in GPH. This will involve not only enhancing our digital presence but also fostering partnerships with key organizations and stakeholders in the field of pediatric health. I also propose to create a structured mentored peer-review program to support the professional development of early career professionals, junior faculty and post-doctoral fellows to gain an understanding of the scientific publishing process from experienced, seasonal faculty members as mentor. This will further advance our scholarship and rigor for high-quality methodologies, sound research study design, and significant findings in GPH.

### ***My Foundation in Newborn Screening, Public Health, and Management***

My background in newborn screening, public health, and management provides a strong foundation for my role as Editor-in-Chief. With a PhD in Epidemiology and Public Health from Yale University and a wealth of experience in both academic and practical settings, I bring a deep understanding of the complexities of pediatric health research and its applications. My research had contributed to the development of a screening test to detect T-cell receptor excision circles (TRECs) in newborns, in

which the absence of TRECs is indicative of severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID).<sup>6</sup> With screening, babies with SCID are identified early and can be saved by bone marrow treatment and live a healthy life. As of 2024, all the states in the U.S. are screening over 3.6 million babies every year for SCID, and several countries abroad have implemented the newborn screening test for SCID. One of my recent publications on the topic of newborn screening titled “*Simple Test, Complex System: Multi-faceted Views of Newborn Screening Science, Technology, and Policy*,” published in GPH provides an overview of the newborn screening program in the US and the complexity of the balancing the benefits and cost of expanding newborn screening.<sup>7</sup> My work in newborn screening has given me insight into the importance of early detection and intervention, which aligns with GPH’s mission to improve health outcomes for children worldwide.

In addition, my experience in public health has equipped me with the skills to address broad, population-level health challenges, while my management expertise ensures that I can effectively lead the editorial team and drive the journal’s strategic vision. I am committed to fostering a collaborative, inclusive environment where innovative research can thrive and where the voices of pediatric health professionals around the world are heard and valued.

## Conclusion

As I embark on this new chapter as Editor-in-Chief of *Global Pediatric Health*, I am excited about the opportunities ahead. The goals I have outlined reflect my commitment to advancing the field of pediatric health through rigorous research, interdisciplinary collaboration, and a focus on the social determinants of health. I am grateful for the support of the GPH editorial team, Sage Publishing, and the global pediatric health community. Together, I believe we can make GPH the “go-to” journal for those dedicated to improving the health and well-being of children worldwide.

## Author’s Note

Kee Chan is also affiliated with ValueMinded, LLC, Milwaukee, WI, USA.

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