

Planners and architects have been doing it for millennia. Going back to the Etruscans, sewage systems were planned below streets rather than buildings to avoid contaminating living areas. More recently, suburbs and garden cities were created to escape the polluted air and grim living conditions of industrial cities.

The architects at the event Horton attended seem to have forgotten the background and purpose of their profession. But I believe they represent a small proportion of built environment professionals. There is growing recognition of the need for architecture to address health that is based on solid evidence from public health and built environment disciplines.

The opinions expressed in this letter are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of BRE Global. I declare that I have no conflicts of interest.

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1 Horton R. Offline: An ignominious defeat. *Lancet* 2012; **380**: 94.

The Lancet: the real media and the true voice of doctors

My respect for *The Lancet* was further increased by the World Report by Haris Riaz and Soumyadeep Bhaumik (July 14, p 97)¹ pertaining to the conduct of police on striking doctors in Pakistan. The events of those 3 weeks were not only a physical, but a psychological trauma for the young doctors of Punjab. The young doctors faced multifaceted challenges, being harassed at one end by the government for their demands to review the service structure, while on the other hand they faced a biased electronic media.

The scenario depicted by the media caused the public to think negatively of the doctors and projected them not as messiahs but murderers. The

government not only threatened to remove the young doctors from their jobs, but also to cancel their licences and make them ineligible to sit in any international examination. Coupled to this fear was the fear of insecurity even at the doctors' residences after police raids on a doctors' hostel in Lahore resulted in arrests of numerous young doctors.

Social media had a massive role in communicating and spreading the message among the young doctors. Finally the issue came to the attention of the medical world after the news was published in *The Lancet*, as it did for the doctors' strike in India.²

I am a young doctor from Punjab, Pakistan, but neither a member of Young Doctor's Association nor any political organisation.

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- 1 Riaz H, Bhaumik S. Police target doctors over strike in Pakistan. *Lancet* 2012; **380**: 97.
- 2 Bhaumik S. India's attempt to reform medical councils sparks protest. *Lancet* 2012; **379**: 2414.

Family planning, health systems, and the health workforce

The Lancet's Family Planning Series is extremely timely and repositions an often forgotten but crucial issue. The Series addresses the reduction of population growth from the fundamentally important perspectives of sustainability, economics, human rights, policy, and health, and effectively highlights the multiple connections in today's global world. Core to making these links work is an effective health system and a competent workforce, without which the ability to ensure access to family planning is compromised. We trust all involved in this new momentum will consider the delivery mechanism—health systems and workforce—to be an

integral part of any family planning intervention.

A *Lancet* Series on a related, crucial, and often unrecognised service for population health is currently being developed. To be launched in the first half of 2013, *The Lancet's* Series on Midwifery will address the contribution of health-care workers with midwifery skills and competencies to reproductive, maternal, neonatal, and child health. Midwifery has been shown to have a potentially enormous effect on reducing maternal and infant mortality and morbidity and on improving maternal and child wellbeing in a wide range of settings, when delivered by an enabled workforce and effectively supported by a functioning health system.¹

The promotion and provision of family planning services is an important activity of the global midwifery workforce. Having these two important Series released within 12 months is another step on the road to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

We declare that we have no conflicts of interest.

*Jim Campbell, Luc de Bernis, Helga Fogstad, Caroline Homer, Holly Powell Kennedy, Mande Limbu, Zoe Matthews, Mary Renfrew, *Petra ten Hoope-Bender, on behalf of The Lancet Series on Midwifery Executive Group*

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- 1 Campbell OMR, Graham WJ, on behalf of *The Lancet* Maternal Survival Series steering group. Strategies for reducing maternal mortality: getting on with what works. *Lancet* 2006; **368**: 1284–99.



For *The Lancet's* Family Planning Series see <http://www.thelancet.com/series/family-planning>