



Research Fund

# Advancing Women's Health

Research Outcomes from 8 AXA  
Postdoctoral Scientists



# Outcomes of AXA's Women Health Summary



**Women have specific health needs that are often overlooked by medicine and health services.** Firmly convinced of the key role that research plays in improving women's access to healthcare throughout their lives – from infancy to old age – the AXA Research Fund committed **€1M in 2019** to a dedicated Women's Health Fellowship. Following a demanding selection, the Fund has granted support to **8 outstanding scientific research projects** dedicated to improve women's health. Now that they are all completed, **let's discover their outcomes.**

# **I. Improving Maternal Health**

# Reducing pregnancy-related low back pain

*Dr. Nina GOOSSENS, University of Hasselt (BE)*

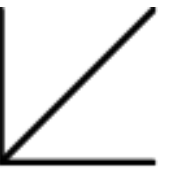


The results from the project have advanced our knowledge on the predictors of **pregnancy-related lumbopelvic pain** during pregnancy and after childbirth. Dr. Nina Goossens's work has helped:

- **Change** current **unhelpful biomedical beliefs** and **increase awareness** of the condition,
- Her findings are a stepping stone toward **improving screening procedures and prevention and treatment strategies**, which could help prevent lumbopelvic pain from becoming chronic and recurring.

# Reducing maternal mortality by diagnosing undetected bleeding disorders

*Dr. Michelle Lavin, Irish Centre for Vascular Biology*



The results from Dr. Lavin's postpartum hemorrhage prevention study will be used to:

- Develop “**bleeding scores**” that can **help predict** which women are at **risk of postpartum hemorrhage**. This is an important step towards improving maternal outcomes.
- If these scores prove useful, this tool will be implemented for all pregnant women in the future.



# Timely access to emergency obstetric care in Sub-Saharan Africa

*Dr. Aduragbemi Banké-Thomas, London School of Economics (UK)*

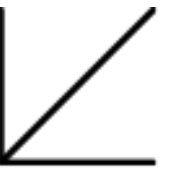


- The research identified **disadvantaged areas** in Lagos, Nigeria where **pregnant women face difficulties** accessing **Emergency Obstetric Care (EmOC)**.
- The Lagos State Government has used the research to propose a **cost-effective location** for a **new public hospital** and address the issue.
- The project has also led to a **collaboration with Google** to develop an **application for EmOC geographical accessibility** in African cities.

# **II. Domestic Violence and Abuse Against Women**

# Giving friends and relatives the keys to help

*Dr. Alison Gregory, Bristol University (UK)*

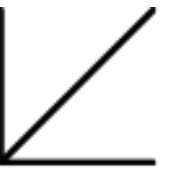


With her AXA postdoctoral fellowship on domestic violence, Dr Gregory has developed:

- **An online resource** that includes **information about what domestic violence and abuse is, who it can happen to, how dangerous it can be, and what the common impacts are.**
- It also includes **practical advice** about what people might notice in situations of domestic violence and abuse, **how to sensitively ask questions, and how to listen and respond well** – including the all-important “what to say” and “what not to say.”



# III. Women's Health



# A new strategy to treat osteoporosis

*Dr. Alessia Perino &  
Dr. Laura Velasquez, EPFL (CH)*

The research carried out by Dr. Perino (right), initiated by Dr. Laura Velasquez (left) has underpinned:



- A link between **bone and hematopoiesis** (the process in which blood cells are continuously formed and renewed).
- A **potential target (TGR5)** that could **improve** this process.
- Dr. Perino's work could pave the way for the **development of new innovative treatments** for patients with osteoporosis.

# Setting children on a healthy diet trajectory from an early age

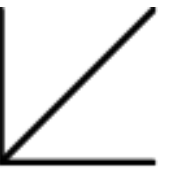
*Dr. Megan Jarman, Aston University (UK)*



- Dr. Jarman conducted a mapping workshop with stakeholders to identify **key drivers of diet** for a new model called **FeedQuest**, which is focused on families with young children.
- FeedQuest is being developed as **a tool for data collection in clinical settings** and is being tested with the NHS for dietitians working with families who have limited access to food variety.

# Healthier culinary practices among overweight and obese Ghanaian women

*Dr. Hibbah Osei-Kwasi, University of Sheffield (UK)*

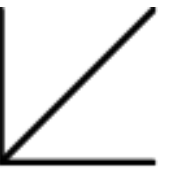


The evidence garnered from this project **will help:**

- **Reduce obesity and related health problems among women of African origin in the UK** and beyond thanks to context-specific and culturally appropriate interventions, for example, **a community-based intervention to improve lifestyle behaviors.**

# A portable device against cervical cancer

*Dr. Serap Aksu, Koç University (Turkey)*



- The device is the **first complete handheld cervical cancer screening system**.
- Thanks to its portability and simplicity, it can easily be **transported and employed in remote regions** in the world where healthcare is lacking.
- Dr. Aksu is planning to **miniaturize it further** and test the system with real patient samples.
- The use of this device will help **close the gender-based health gap** in hard-to-reach geographical areas.



# Research Fund

[www.axa-research.org](http://www.axa-research.org)

---

