Research to achieve a reduction in the global rate of preterm birth needs attention
Preface to the special issue by the preterm Birth International Collaborative (PREBIC)
Menon, Ramkumar; Williams, Scott M.; Lamont, Ronald F.

Published in:
Placenta

DOI:
10.1016/j.placenta.2019.01.008

Publication date:
2019

Document version:
Accepted manuscript

Document license:
CC BY-NC-ND

Citation for published version (APA):

Go to publication entry in University of Southern Denmark's Research Portal

Terms of use
This work is brought to you by the University of Southern Denmark.
Unless otherwise specified it has been shared according to the terms for self-archiving.
If no other license is stated, these terms apply:

• You may download this work for personal use only.
• You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
• You may freely distribute the URL identifying this open access version

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details and we will investigate your claim.
Please direct all enquiries to puresupport@bib.sdu.dk

Download date: 15. Sep. 2023
Research to achieve a reduction in the global rate of preterm birth needs attention: Preface to the special issue by the preterm Birth International Collaborative (PREBIC)

Ramkumar Menon, Scott M. Williams, Ronald F. Lamont

PII: S0143-4004(18)31207-4
DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.placenta.2019.01.008
Reference: YPLAC 3922

To appear in: Placenta

Received Date: 19 December 2018
Accepted Date: 6 January 2019

Please cite this article as: Menon R, Williams SM, Lamont RF, Research to achieve a reduction in the global rate of preterm birth needs attention: Preface to the special issue by the preterm Birth International Collaborative (PREBIC), Placenta (2019), doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.placenta.2019.01.008.

This is a PDF file of an unedited manuscript that has been accepted for publication. As a service to our customers we are providing this early version of the manuscript. The manuscript will undergo copyediting, typesetting, and review of the resulting proof before it is published in its final form. Please note that during the production process errors may be discovered which could affect the content, and all legal disclaimers that apply to the journal pertain.
Research to Achieve a Reduction in the Global Rate of Preterm Birth Needs Attention:

Preface to the Special Issue by the Preterm Birth International Collaborative (PREBIC)

Ramkumar Menon, PhD,¹ Scott M Williams, PhD,² Ronald F Lamont, BSc MB ChB DM FRCOG³

1 Dept of Obstetrics and Gynecology, The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, TX, USA
2. Department of Population and Quantitative Health Sciences, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH, USA
3. Dept of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark.

*Corresponding author:

Ramkumar Menon, PhD
Associate Professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology,
11.138 Medical Research Building, The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, Galveston, TX 77555-0111
Email: ram.menon@utmb.edu
Telephone: 409-772-7596
EDITORIAL
Preterm birth (PTB) (birth before 37 completed weeks of gestation) is the major cause of neonatal mortality and morbidity worldwide, accounting for over 13 million births annually. Though the final end common pathway may be the same, the etiology of PTB is multifactorial. Currently, screening methods to identify pregnancies at high risk of PTB, or interventions to prevent or delay delivery of women in spontaneous preterm labor have not reduced the rate of PTB. In addition, heterogeneity in causative pathophysiologic pathways, biomolecular markers, and clinical presentations, present numerous challenges to our understanding of the etiology of PTB. Inter alia, these gaps need to be identified and resolved, prior to designing better strategies for screening and intervention. In light of these needs, 40 research scientists and clinicians gathered in Denmark in 2004, including the first and last authors of this Commentary and initiated an effort to address various clinical and basic science issues related to PTB. In 2005, this gathering of scientists and clinicians became PREBIC (the PREterm Birth International Collaborative). PREBIC is currently a not-for-profit research and education organization based in the United States with members from around the globe (www.prebicglobal.org). The current collection of papers in this Special Issue is a result of a recent meeting of PREBIC held in Foshan, China in the spring of 2018.

PREBIC’s first gathering raised three critical questions about idiopathic PTB: i) what do we know; ii) what do we want to know, and iii) how will we know it? PREBIC’s global mission and operational strategies were formulated around these questions. To achieve these objectives, PREBIC has generated basic and clinical translational research agendas, and built multidisciplinary research teams around the world. So far, these agendas have been set, and goals achieved, through workshops of international experts actively involved in basic and translational research. Additional educational activities of PREBIC promote research into PTB and have been held at major International Congresses in Reproductive and Perinatal Medicine.

The World Health Organization recognized the values of PREBIC’s vision and provided a platform for discussions from 2006 – 2014. Through these meetings and other activities, PREBIC has been instrumental in identifying two major issues challenging PTB research: i) the proper definition of PTB and ii) defining the global rate of PTB. PREBIC is active in bringing these issues to the forefront through its various forums resulting in an awareness that definition is a key consideration when conducting PTB research and designing clinical interventions. The lack of awareness of the global burden of PTB generated a Report published by WHO in its Bulletin and subsequently led to the “Born Too Soon” report of 2011 released by the United Nations. This report provided data on individual geographic rates, and called for action to be implemented by all nations to reduce the impact of PTB. PREBIC has also published several Systematic Reviews to reveal knowledge gaps in various areas of PTB. Identification of knowledge gaps has facilitated development of the research agenda and has resulted in establishing multi-disciplinary research teams across worldwide. Research partnerships and networks have blossomed through PREBIC workshops and educational seminars leading to Grants funding support, and a number of publications. The PREBIC systematic reviews on biomarkers predictive of PTB have helped to reshape PTB biomarker discovery research landscape. PREBIC working groups have systematically reviewed four decades of literature to identify biomarkers that might be useful in predicting high-risk pregnancies. These reports did not identify any useful predictive markers. However, they identified several research areas that require additional attention and made recommendations for future research. These included highlighting the need to establish biobanks in countries where PTB rates are

2
high, providing guidelines for minimal and optimal data sets needed along with sample collections, and
providing guidelines and methods for appropriate sample collection and storage that together have
substantially helped the field in establishing biobanks around the world and advance PTB biomarker
discovery research. Many biobanking and other studies proposed by PREBIC investigators are currently
funded by major funding and philanthropic agencies that are expected to advance biomarker research.
Accordingly, PREBIC workshops and educational activities have not only identified key areas of research
needs, but have successfully campaigned to promote specific areas of research in the field.

The PREBIC community of scientists have decided to enhance PREBIC’s mission by establishing
PREBIC branches on every continent and organize more workshops and other educational activities. All
branches will initiate their activities in 2019 and each branch will engage additional researchers from
their region to launch research and educational activities with the intent of addressing specific local and
regional needs. Although these workshops and scientific meetings have been highly successful and
effective in building research collaborative networks, the number of PTB researchers is still limited. As a
result, the PREBIC 2017 annual workshop held in Galveston, Texas, USA suggested starting a PTB Journal
to address this issue. It was argued that a journal dedicated to PTB is needed, since mainstream
obstetrics journals are limited in their capacity to publish issues exclusive to PTB. Practical and financial
reasons have hindered development of a Journal by PREBIC dedicated to PTB. However, efforts are in
place to make this Journal a reality. In the meantime, the PREBIC annual workshop held at Foshan in
China (April 2018) decided to partner with Trophoblast Research to publish annual Workshop Reports
and Reviews based on key presentations as a part of promoting PREBIC’S PTB agenda. Dr. Gendie Lash,
Editor of Trophoblast Research, generously agreed to dedicate a special issue of the journal for PREBIC
Annual Workshop activities. With this partnership, we will publish at least one Special Issue per annum
of reviews on PTB related research until a permanent home for a PREBIC PTB Journal is found. This
Special Issue represents the inauguration of the PREBIC publication era and contain articles on various
topics related to PTB that will include, but are not limited to, epidemiologic risk factors, mechanistic,
functional and biomarker studies, and clinical interventions. In addition, the founding President of
PREBIC, Dr. Calvin J Hobel et al have provided an article documenting PREBIC’s development and history.
Articles included in this issue are based on selected presentations at PREBIC annual workshop at Foshan,
China and peer reviewed by experts. Articles do not necessarily reflect workshop proceedings.

We hope that researchers around the globe will have an opportunity to review PREBIC’s
activities and PREBIC community’s scientific contributions in its efforts to reduce PTB. We also
encourage more researchers to join PREBIC’s mission and join our efforts to reduce the global
healthcare burden on society induced by spontaneous PTB.
References


December 19, 2018

Gendie Lasjh, PhD
Editor in Chief
Trophoblast Research

Dear Gendie,

We will not be having any highlights for this editorial that we are submitting for special issue of PREBIC.

Warm regards,
Ram