

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Over Half a Million Women Die From Pregnancy & Childbirth Each Year in Asia and Africa



“Each year, more than half a million women die from pregnancy and childbirth. Most of these deaths occur in Asia and Africa and most are entirely preventable”, according to Professor David Grimes, one of the international keynote speakers presenting a lecture on the challenges of global reproductive health at the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) 2009 Annual Scientific Meeting. The meeting is held in conjunction with the XXIst Asian and Oceanic Congress of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (AOCOG 2009) in Auckland, New Zealand, at the Sky City Convention Centre from today, Thursday 26 March until Monday 30 March 2009.

“In a typical developing nation, the lifetime risk of maternal death is one in 263; 30 per cent of women use modern contraception; 63 per cent of births are attended by trained personnel and the adult female literacy rate is 61 per cent”, said Professor Grimes today.

“The leading causes of pregnancy-related deaths are post-partum hemorrhage, sepsis, pre-eclampsia/eclampsia, obstructed labor and unsafe abortion. For every death, ‘near misses’ are five to 100 times more common and many women are left disabled for life. Simple measures such as emergency transportation to a district hospital can be life-saving”, said Professor Grimes.

In his lecture, Professor Grimes will discuss the remedies for pregnancy-related morbidity and mortality, which include equitable distribution of assets, decent living conditions and nutrition, education, access to family planning methods and safe birth environments.

Professor David Grimes is one of a small number of U.S. physicians Board certified in both obstetrics and gynaecology and in preventive medicine. He has had a dual career in clinical obstetrics and gynaecology and in preventive medicine for the past three decades.

Over 900 health professionals from around the world are expected to attend the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) 2009 Annual Scientific Meeting.

Attracting obstetricians, gynaecologists, medical trainees, GP-obstetricians, midwives and other health professionals from across Australia, New Zealand, London, America, Switzerland and Thailand, the meeting will showcase over four days of presentations from overseas and interstate presenters, who provide current thinking on all the main areas of obstetrics and gynaecology.

**For further information, media arrangements or to obtain an available abstract, contact:**

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A copy of the meeting program: [www.aocogranzcoq2009.co.nz/](http://www.aocogranzcoq2009.co.nz/)

