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InterLACE: International collaboration for a Life course Approach to reproductive health and Chronic disease Events

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Summary: Reproductive health is understood as integral to women's overall health. Epidemiological evidence over the last decade has suggested that aspects of reproductive health act as sentinels for chronic disease in later life for example women with earlier age of menopause have higher risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) events. Yet it is also increasingly recognised that further research is needed to move beyond associations so as to provide insights into causal pathways and findings that translate into a stronger evidence base to support health policy, including the optimal targeting and timing of preventive health strategies.

This presentation will discuss a newly funded global research programme titled; The International collaboration for a Life course Approach to reproductive health and Chronic disease Events (InterLACE) which has recently been established as a research programme that will combine data from ten existing longitudinal studies on women's health.

InterLACE provides a unique opportunity to conduct world-leading research in collaboration with key national and international investigators on women's health studies from six nations. We will undertake cross-cohort research by combining data at the individual level from more than 150,000 participants from ten existing longitudinal studies to investigate the role of reproductive health across life on subsequent CVD events and Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus. While this poses cross-cohort and cross-cultural research challenges, InterLACE has the capability to address research questions and generate robust evidence that is not possible from any single cohort study.

The key objectives of the InterLACE research programme are to:

- quantify the markers for reproductive health, such as parity and age at menopause, in different cohort studies;
- identify trajectories for reproductive health, formed by the relationships between markers, that best characterise women's lifetime reproductive health;
- determine the extent that markers and trajectories of lifetime reproductive health predict future chronic disease and provide insights for causal pathways, initially with CVD and T2DM;
- translate findings to support women's health policy for preventive health strategies to reduce the risk of subsequent chronic disease.