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Smith PG, Morrow RH, Ross DA, editors. *Field Trials of Health Interventions: A Toolbox*. 3rd edition. Oxford (UK): OUP Oxford; 2015 Jun 1.

Foreword to the third edition

The organizations that we represent have a long-standing commitment to the development of capacity to conduct high-quality field research to evaluate the impact of interventions against diseases prevalent in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). The idea of producing a book detailing the methods used to conduct intervention trials of health interventions in LMICs was conceived in the 1980s when one of us (T. G.) was the TDR Director. Since it was first published, the '*Toolbox*' has been very widely used, both by those undertaking intervention trials and epidemiological research in LMICs and in teaching courses. Since the 1980s, significant progress has been made in developing interventions that have reduced the burden of many diseases in impoverished communities, and much of this progress has been through the rigorous evaluation of interventions in randomized controlled trials before their adoption into public health use. Notable examples have been the evaluation and deployment of insecticide-impregnated bed-nets for malaria control and the development, testing, and introduction into public health programmes of vaccines against diseases which are major killers of infants and children, such as diarrhoeal diseases and respiratory infections.

The standards to which **field trials of health interventions** have been conducted have undoubtedly improved markedly over the last three decades, and dissemination and use of the *Toolbox* has contributed to this. In parallel, over this period, there has been a substantial increase in oversight and regulatory requirements related to clinical and field trials, and it was timely therefore for the authors of the *Toolbox* to produce a revised version, taking account not only of these regulatory changes, but also of the revolution in data collecting, processing, and computing methods.

Although the *Toolbox* is aimed at those conducting health intervention trials in LMICs, it is likely to be valuable for anyone undertaking field research or surveys in those countries, as many of the issues that arise in trials also arise in other kinds of investigation. We are confident that the *Toolbox* will continue to make an important contribution to building up epidemiological capacity in LMICs.

We congratulate the authors on their labours. We believe that this new edition of the *Toolbox* is likely to enhance the quality and quantity of field research that is being conducted on the health conditions afflicting those in LMICs, and this can only speed the control of these diseases that cause so much suffering to so much of mankind.

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