Hi, I’m Sheldon Chen from the Greater Good. In this interview project, I’m looking into the maternal health in China.

Being a heated topic in the realm of global health, experts across the globe have attempted to lower the maternal mortality rate. Thanks to the development of modern medical technology and services, maternal mortality rate has gone down dramatically in countries with sufficient access to them.

China is a great example that has achieved great success fighting against maternal mortality rate in the past decades. According to the World Health Organization’s data, maternal mortality rate in China has gone all the way down from 97 deaths out of 100,000 in 1990 to 27 deaths out of 100,000 in 2015. Some recent reports also point out that China has reached maternal health rate set in the Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations.

In women’s health, one of Skolnik’s Chapters, Skolnik attributes the risk factor of pregnant women’s health to the general nutritional status of women, the educational, income level of women, and finally the access to skilled health providers, emergency services when laboring.

In the case of China, we certainly have experienced dramatic social-economics development in the past decades, people certainly would have better access to medical resources of all kinds. However, maternal health surely is not just determined by social-economics status. What are the causes of the causes? How has the policies implemented in China affected people’s way of treating maternal health? What would the future challenges of maternal health in China? As a 19-year-old Chinese male, I don’t have any knowledge.

Thus, I turned to the expert in the field of maternal health, professor Qian Long, to answer my doubt.

Professor Qian Long is an Assistant Professor in Global health research center at Duke Kunshan university. Her research interests are in maternal and child health. Prior to joining Duke Kunshan university, she worked as a technical officer working in the Department of Reproductive Health and Research, World Health Organization based in Geneva for two years. She has abundant research experience in maternal health in China.

From this interview, I learned that the advancement in maternal health in China is a result of joint efforts, ranging from access to emergency services, nutritional improvement brought by social-economics development, to the rise of women’s status and their chances of receiving education. China’s success also mirrored the suggestions in improving maternal health made in the Skolnik’s Chapter mentioned above. From a personal level, for the first time I realized some small and irrelevant policies could trigger butterfly effects and affect the society in a great way.

One thing I’ve noticed from the interview is that different from one suggestion made in Skolnik’s chapter, which emphasizes the implementation of family planning program for maternal health, professor Qian Long mentions the one-child policy might have undermined maternal health in China by resulting in a great number of c-section that is more risky than natural birth. As it turns out, in making public health decisions, officials need to analyze based on specific situations

That’s all for my interview project. Thank you for your time, bye bye!