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Dear Friends,

I am delighted to introduce this issue of *Medicamundi*, devoted to women's health. "Women's health is no longer an isolated phenomenon divorced from mainstream medicine and regarded as a political or feminist issue" [1]. The most obvious differences relate to biology and physiology. Women's healthcare addresses far more than reproductive health: it includes disease or conditions that occur only in women such as cervical cancer, conditions that occur more frequently in women, like breast cancer, and conditions that are biologically different, such as heart disease.

Women use health services more frequently than men, and become more familiar with their care providers early in life through routine check-ups, pap smears and obstetrical visits. As a woman ages, her healthcare needs change, and can be segmented through early reproductive, midlife and mature adulthood. As the midlife segment or baby boomer population increases globally, specific diseases and patient conditions such as breast cancer, gynecological conditions and heart disease create a need for innovative solutions and services.

How can Philips play an important role in women's health? We start with the needs of the patient and the care provider, understanding their experience through each stage of the care continuum from prevention, screening, and diagnosis to treatment, surveillance and management. Through a customer-guided approach, we design solutions to meet specific needs. We develop go-to-market models aligned around the customer, providing comprehensive solutions to improve care.

Today, breast cancer is defined by cancer type, and detection is dependent on a variety of factors, including breast density. A comprehensive approach using multiple modalities is now the norm. New guidelines for screening, diagnosis and management can include mammography, ultrasound, MRI, PET/CT and informatics. Women are requesting more accurate, less invasive diagnostics, shorter time between diagnosis and therapy, and more targeted, less radical treatments. New horizons in staging, grading and prognosis will also drive more personalized treatment regimes.

Heart disease is the greatest cause of death in women worldwide; more than 3.4 million women die from heart disease every year. We continue to work closely with leading clinicians and patients to understand heart disease in women and provide solutions to improve early detection.

Growth of gynecological procedures is rising. Women expect to have a healthy lifestyle beyond mid-life and no longer accept pelvic conditions and diseases as part of normal aging. Gynecology is an area where we see opportunity for growth in image-guided diagnostics and therapy.

It is my hope that this Women's Health issue of *Medicamundi* will give readers a clear understanding of the Philips care cycle strategy, and demonstrate our commitment to delivering leading-edge solutions for women's healthcare needs.

[1] Pinn VW, Begg L, Rudick JE, et al. *Agenda for Research on Women's Health for the 21st Century*. Office of Research on Women's Health (2006).

Pat Venters

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For information on publishing articles in **MEDICAMUNDI**, please see the inside back cover.

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