



Weekly News Roundup – 24 Feb 2017

The week began with news of the death of the woman referred to as “[Jane Roe](#)” in the landmark Roe v. Wade Supreme Court abortion rights case. Her transformation from a staunch abortion-rights advocate to becoming a critic was seized upon as emblematic of the current debate in the US.

The international implications of the new US administration’s policies continue to reverberate, with additional support and pledges for increased Family Planning funding coming from the [Netherlands](#), [UK](#), [Norway](#), [Denmark](#), [Finland](#) and [others](#), while Global Citizen has launched an [email campaign](#) encouraging the public to get more involved in the “She Decides” movement.

Debates about abortion rights and sex education made the news in [Angola](#) and [Burkina Faso](#).

An interesting and counter-intuitive [study](#) from the University of Michigan concludes that, “Contrary to prevailing thought, first-time mothers who receive more educational advantages at an early age are more likely to have their first birth result from an unintended pregnancy.” The author, a PhD student in the School of Public Health, calls for a “deeper look into the drivers of intention,” beyond simple access to education and supplies.

The Lancet Global Health and Jhpiego have launched a year-long [Global Maternal and Neonatal Sepsis Initiative](#), with the important goal of developing solutions to reduce maternal and newborn deaths related to sepsis, contributing to SDG 5.

For those working on stigma issues and counseling, the [American Philosophical Society](#) has a few interesting insights.

On the FP technology front, several apps which claim to be as effective as traditional contraceptives are being marketed and tested. [Natural Cycles](#), which comes from Sweden, was approved by German certification organization TÜV SÜD, and claims that “using the app is as effective as a method of birth control as being on the pill.” Georgetown University Medical Center’s Institute for Reproductive Health has launched a year-long study of another app called [Dot](#) (Dynamic Optimal Timing) to “compare its efficacy to other contraceptive methods, and to give rigorous attention to how women are using the app.” A study of the effectiveness of computerized family planning aid [Smart Choices](#) concluded that... more research is necessary. Vodafone is “[mobilizing maternal health](#)” in Tanzania. Four [Rwandan youth innovators](#) each received \$10,000 for their entrepreneurial ideas to target reproductive health issues. And a new website, [Gynopedia](#), seeks to become the “go-to sources for women’s health information,” with Wikipedia-style pages for cities around the world that give information on social norms, contraceptive and STI testing availability, and translations of key terms.

The world still needs traditional input into advancing women's health, as evidenced by [Ghanaian queens](#), [Swazi chiefs](#) and a former [Ugandan FGM practitioner](#) all working for change in their countries.

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General

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