

Barford, A. Dorling, D., Davey Smith, G. and Shaw, M. (2006) Letter: The cause for quiet celebration, *BMJ*, 332, 1095-1096. doi: 10.1136/bmj.332.7549.1095-c (Published 4 May 2006)

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## Letter

# The cause for quiet celebration

1. **Anna Barford**, research fellow,
2. **Danny Dorling**, professor of human geography,
3. **George Davey Smith**, professor of clinical epidemiology,,
4. **Mary Shaw**, reader in medical sociology

Editor, perhaps we can help put Robert Jacoby and the dozen other men who found our editorial distressing out of at least a little of their misery<sup>1</sup>? The reason for the quiet celebration we suggest is that it has generally only been in extremely poor countries that women have died earlier than men in recent decades. By 2006 almost nowhere in the world appears so absolutely poor (at least in this sense) that this continues to be the case.

We perhaps should have been clearer in what we wrote - but then no woman appears to have misunderstood the cause for quiet celebration, at least none that have responded to the editorial. Whether the United States has a “federally funded Office of Women's Health” (which appears to exercise Mr Jacoby) is immaterial as to whether slightly fewer women in the poorest countries in the world now die than used to, often while delivering their (and their partner's) baby.

Yours fraternally,

Danny Dorling, Anna Barford, Mary Shaw, and George Davey Smith

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<sup>1</sup> Sexist "Celebration", Robert A. Jacoby, Editor, *The Pop Reporter* <http://www.bmj.com/content/332/7545/808/reply>