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David Sackett Young Investigator Award

In 2015, the Journal of Clinical of Epidemiology has initiated the annual David Sackett Young Investigator Award. This award is in the spirit of the late David L. Sackett, who over many decades and in numerous ways has continuously inspired and educated generations of young investigators in the fields of clinical epidemiology and evidence-based medicine.

This award is to recognize outstanding papers by young researchers that exemplify the values of creativity and scientific excellence.

To be eligible for the David Sackett Young Investigator Award 2019, the young investigator had to be the first author of the nominated article and younger than 35 at the time of submission.

In 2019, from the many nominations received, the editorial team and its advisers have selected ***Ignacio Atal***, who was the first author of the article 'A mapping of 115,000 randomized trials revealed a mismatch between research effort and health needs in non-high-income regions' [1]. In an original and thorough way, the research reported in this article meticulously underpinned the divergence between the health needs and research efforts in low and middle income regions. His approach and results are not only important for researchers but relevant to inform policy makers.

Ignacio Atal summarizes the awarded work as follows:

> By knowing what clinical research is undertaken worldwide, where it is conducted, and which diseases are studied, we could have a better understanding on how the knowledge concerning health interventions is created.

In this work, we evaluated within 7 regions the local alignment between the effort of research and the burden for 27 groups of diseases. We mapped 117,180 randomized controlled trials (RCTs) registered at the WHO International Clinical Trials Platform. We showed that in high-income countries, the distribution of the number of RCTs conducted across diseases was aligned with burden of diseases. In all other regions, we identified local research gaps relatively to the burden. For Sub-Saharan Africa, highly prevalent diseases as HIV and malaria were receiving high research effort, but other major causes of burden remain neglected by research effort, in particular common infectious diseases and neonatal disorders.

Our large-scale mapping shed light on major gaps in the effort of health research as compared to health needs. This mapping may inform policy makers on knowledge gaps and on how to reallocate resources to address health needs, in particular in low-resource settings.

Reference

[1] Atal I, Trinquart L, Ravaud P, Porcher R. A mapping of 115,000 randomized trials revealed a mismatch between research effort and health needs in non-high-income regions. J Clin Epidemiol 2018;98:123−32.

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