

The Cochrane-REWARD prize for reducing waste in research

2021



1 Background

The Lancet series on adding value and reducing waste in research has documented that much research is wasted because its outcomes cannot be used [1]. The waste occurs during 5 stages of research production: question selection, study design, research conduct, publication, and reporting [2,3]. For each of design, publication, and reporting there is a "loss" of around 50%, which implies a total waste of at least 85%. This translates into an estimated global loss of around \$170 billion per year. (For more information see: <http://rewardalliance.net/documents/articles/>). The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has seen research published at an unprecedented scale, and it is likely that many of the existing research waste issues have been amplified [5].

Much of this waste appears to be avoidable or remediable, but there is little recognition of the need to develop and implement the needed remedies. The Cochrane-REWARD prize highlights both underused "remedies" and the need to invest in research to identify problems and solutions to them.

1.1 Aim

The annual Cochrane-REWARD prize gathers, assesses and then publicizes good local or pilot initiatives that have the most potential to reduce waste in research if scaled up globally. Two prizes are awarded (1st and 2nd), but other shortlisted candidates will also be highlighted, and the results publicized on various websites and via social media.

1.2 Eligibility criteria

Any person or organization that has tested and implemented strategies to reduce waste in one of the five stages of research production in the area of health, in which we define health in a broad way to include the range of behavioural, biological, socio-economic and environmental factors that influence the health status of individuals or populations.

For the 2021 prize, submissions related to reducing research waste in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic are particularly encouraged.

1.3 Assessment criteria

All nominations will be assessed using the following criteria:

1. The nominee has addressed at least one of the 5 stages of research waste (questions, design, conduct, publication, reporting) in the area of health;
2. The nominee has pilot or more definitive data showing the initiative can lower waste;
3. The initiative can be scaled up globally;
4. The estimated potential reduction in research waste that the initiative might achieve.

1.4 The prize committee

The Prize Committee comprises members representing Cochrane, REWARD, *The Lancet*, as well as judges not linked to these organisations and initiatives. Criteria for selecting the judges is a proven record of engagement in reducing research waste. Members of the Committee for 2021 are:

- **Philippe Ravaud** (co-chair) is Director of Cochrane France, co-chair of the Cochrane Scientific Committee, and author in various Cochrane Review Groups. He co-authored an [article](#) on the possible effects of the Lancet series in 2014, and co-organised the first [REWARD conference](#) with the EQUATOR Network in Edinburgh in 2015.
- **Paul Glasziou** (co-chair) is professor at the Centre for Research in Evidence-Based Practice (CREBP) at the Bond University in Australia. He is also author in various Cochrane Review Groups.

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He is the lead author on one of *The Lancet* articles on reducing research waste and is the current chair of the REWARD Alliance executive.

- **David Moher** is a Senior Scientist, Centre for Journalology, Ottawa Hospital Research Institute, Ottawa, Canada. His work focuses on the development of new interventions to maximize the value of research. These approaches need to be tested; successful ones implemented and monitored for change over time.
- **Sabine Kleinert** is Senior Executive Editor at *The Lancet*. She is the Editor who was responsible for the original 5-part Series in *The Lancet* on *Research: increasing value, reducing waste* and the editorial lead on *The Lancet* REWARD campaign. *The Lancet* has implemented internal changes in line with some of the recommendations and has taken the messages and recommendations of REWARD to specialist research communities via its Specialty journals.
- **Joan Marsh** is Deputy Editor of *The Lancet* Psychiatry and a former President of the European Association of Science Editors. She is engaged in raising awareness among authors and editors about research integrity and improving the publication process but believes that change should really begin with research planning and protocols.
- **Merel Ritskes-Hoitinga** (www.ritskes-hoitinga.eu) is Professor in Evidence-Based Laboratory Animal Science at the Department for Health Evidence at the Radboud University Medical Center, Nijmegen, The Netherlands. She founded SYRCLE (SYstematic Review Center for laboratory animal Experimentation www.syracle.nl) in 2012. SYRCLE is dedicated to education, coaching and research in the field of systematic reviews of preclinical studies. The aim is to improve quality and translation of preclinical studies for human healthcare. SYRCLE was awarded the joint second Cochrane-REWARD prize in 2017. One of the important factors for awarding the prize was the foundation of a worldwide SYRCLE ambassador network, now encompassing 30 ambassadors in 14 countries, to further promote this field.
- **Matthew Westmore** is the Chief Executive of the NHS Health Research Authority, one of a number of organisations that work together in the UK to regulate different aspects of health and social care research. He was previously Director at the Wessex Institute at the University of Southampton and has held roles with the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) including as an executive director of the Evaluation Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre (NETSCC). He was also Interim Director of INVOLVE and as a member of the HRA's Research Transparency Strategy Group, supported the development of the organisation's Make it Public strategy for research transparency. While at NIHR, Matt led a cross-NIHR programme of work aimed at maximising the impact of research, reducing waste and Adding Value in Research (AViR), which was awarded the first Cochrane-REWARD prize in 2017. Matt is also a co-convenor of an international forum of funders who are interested in sharing best practice.
- **Emma Thompson** is the Advocacy and Partnership Officer at Cochrane and will facilitate the work of the prize committee.

All nominations will be sent to the panel members for individual scoring, using the four assessment criteria, after which the panel will meet virtually to decide on the two prizes to be awarded for the year.

1.5 Funding for the prize

Cochrane has funded the prize since 2017, resulting in a 1st prize of £1,500 and 2nd prize of £1,000.

1.6 Nominations

Please send nominations to [Emma Thompson](#) by **11 October 2021** for the 2021 prize, using the submission form (see page 5) as guideline.

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The winners of the 2021 prize will be announced in a virtual prize ceremony session which will be organized towards the end of the year.

Nominations should address the four assessment criteria and provide documented evidence why the nominee should be considered for the prize.

1.7 References

1. Chalmers I, Glasziou P. Avoidable waste in the production and reporting of research evidence. *Lancet*. 2009 Jul 4;374(9683):86-9.
2. Macleod MR, Michie S, Roberts I, et al. Biomedical research: increasing value, reducing waste. *Lancet*. 2014 Jan 11;383(9912):101-4.
3. Glasziou P, Altman DG, Bossuyt P, et al. Reducing waste from incomplete or unusable reports of biomedical research. *Lancet*. 2014 Jan 18;383(9913):267-76.
4. Glasziou, P and Chalmers, I. Research waste is still a scandal—an essay by Paul Glasziou and Iain Chalmers. *BMJ*. 2018 Nov 12;363:k4645
5. Glasziou P, Sanders S and Hoffmann T. Waste in covid-19 research *BMJ*. 2020 May 12;369:m1847.

Submission form

Contact details of the nominee:

Name:

Address:

Organization:

Email:

Phone:

Nominated by (to be completed if this submission form is not completed by the nominee):

Name:

Address:

Organization:

Email:

Phone:

Have you advised the nominee of this nomination: yes/no

Please address the following questions in your submission/nomination:

1. Describe the initiative and how it has addressed research waste in at least one of the 5 stages of research (questions, design, conduct, publication, reporting) in the area of health (500 words max).
2. Describe any (pilot) data showing how the initiative has lowered research waste (500 words max).
3. Describe how the initiative might potentially be scaled up (250 words max).
4. Provide a justified estimate of the potential reduction in research waste that the initiative might achieve (250 words max).

Attach testimonials, photographs, news clippings, letters of support and similar material to support the submission/ nomination.

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