



FROM

The Lasker Foundation

New York, NY

www.laskerfoundation.org

CONTACT

Rubenstein Communications, Inc.

Eric M. Gewirtz

+1-212-843-8290

egewirtz@rubenstein.com

LASKER FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 2024 ESSAY CONTEST, EXPLORING UNSOLVED QUESTIONS IN BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

Winning essays to be published by *The Journal of Clinical Investigation*

(New York, July 15, 2024) The Lasker Foundation today announced the five winners of its 11th annual, Lasker Essay Contest. The winning submissions were selected from essays penned by biomedical graduate students and health profession trainees. This year we asked trainees to identify a specific unmet need in biomedical knowledge or a scientific question that is insufficiently addressed in biomedical research today.

As part of a continuing partnership with *The Journal of Clinical Investigation (JCI)*, the winning essays will be published in tandem by *JCI* and Lasker, providing expanded visibility for the winners within the broad, international biomedical research community. This year, the Foundation received 167 submissions from 19 countries. Each of the five winners will receive a \$5,000 stipend to offset educational expenses, and is invited to the annual Lasker Foundation luncheon in September.

The 2024 Lasker Foundation Essay Contest Winners:

- **Kevin S. Blake / Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis**, “Missing Microbiomes: Global Underrepresentation Restricts Who Research Benefits” – calls for diversification of populations surveyed in microbiome research.
- **Catherine M. Bridges / Medical University of South Carolina; Lexington Medical Center, West Columbia**, “Illuminating Maternal Sepsis: A Call for Improved Recognition and Prevention” – argues for increased research on maternal sepsis, the third-leading direct cause of maternal mortality.
- **Andrea M. Maxwell / University of Minnesota Medical School**, “What Happens to the Brain During Pregnancy?” – advocates for more neuroscience research about brain function during pregnancy.
- **Subashan Vadibeler / University of Leeds; University of Oxford, United Kingdom**, “The (Unresolved) Antibody Paradox” – calls for deepened understanding of antibody-dependent

enhancement, as antibody-based therapies become more prevalent treatments against existing and emerging infections.

- **Sarah Voss / Johns Hopkins School of Medicine**, “The Enemy of My Enemy Is My Friend” – imagines a future in which bacteriophages are used as therapeutics against antibiotic-resistant infections.

“The ability to clearly and effectively communicate a vision for the future of biomedical research is a critical leadership skill for scientists, and something we seek to develop through this Essay Contest,” said Claire Pomeroy, MD, MBA, President and of Lasker Foundation. “This year’s five winning essayists displayed a keen curiosity and ability to persuasively communicate and argue for under-investigated areas in biomedical research that are urgently relevant to patients – from preventing maternal infection during pregnancy to finding innovative therapies for antibiotic-resistant infections. These voices reflect a vital energy among early career researchers that will drive science forward.”

The 2024 contest was open to medical school students, interns, residents, and fellows; doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows in biomedical sciences; and graduate students in public health or other health professions programs from around the world.

The winning essays are available on the Lasker Foundation [website](#) and within *JCI*'s [July 15 issue](#).

About the Lasker Foundation – Established in 1942 by Albert and Mary Lasker, The Lasker Foundation seeks to increase support for biomedical research by celebrating the power of biomedical science to save and improve human lives. Through its internationally renowned Lasker Awards, educational initiatives, and public advocacy, the Foundation recognizes the most important achievements in science and public service, supports and encourages the scientific leaders of tomorrow, and raises awareness of the ever-present need for research funding. The Foundation is committed to inspiring robust and sustained support for biomedical research, fueled by Mary Lasker’s call to action: “If you think research is expensive, try disease!” More information at laskerfoundation.org.

About the Lasker Essay Contest -- The Lasker Essay Contest engages early career scientists and clinicians globally in a discussion about big questions in biology and medicine and the role of biomedical research in our society today. The contest aims to build skills in communicating important medical and scientific issues to broad audiences. The topic is announced in February, and winners are announced in July. Each year, the contest is open to medical school students, interns, residents, and fellows; doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows in biomedical sciences; and graduate students training in health professions programs e.g., public health, dental, pharmacy, etc. who are currently doing research. Applicants must be currently participating in an educational program in any country. Winners receive up to \$5,000, to be used towards the winner’s educational expenses.

About *JCI* -- *The Journal of Clinical Investigation (JCI)* is a premier journal that publishes peer-reviewed research in basic and clinical biomedical science that advances our understanding of disease and the practice of medicine. The *JCI* is led by Editor in Chief Elizabeth McNally, MD, PhD, and a distinguished academic editorial board of active investigators who evaluate submissions from around the world for exceptional scientific rigor and importance to the field. Published since 1924, the *JCI* is among the longest established research journals, and all articles are freely available to the research community and the public. The *JCI* is published by the American Society for Clinical Investigation, a nonprofit society for physician-scientists founded in 1908. More information at <https://www.jci.org>.

###