

# PLoS Medicine editors highlight mismatch between global burden of ill-health and published research

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Comprehensive work studying the burden of ill-health and death resulting from specific conditions, injuries, and risk factors—the Global Burden of Disease project—has shown that the burden of ill-health around the world is highly inequitable. In this week's *PLoS Medicine*, the editors review progress towards the journal's goal of reflecting and addressing this inequity. By prioritizing studies in areas that contribute most substantially to the global burden of ill-health and premature mortality, *PLoS Medicine*, as an open-access journal, can specifically ensure that this important research is disseminated and reused widely.

The editors highlight specific topics that the journal aims to prioritise in 2012, including respiratory conditions, stomach, colorectal, liver, and lung cancers, vision and hearing disorders, and injuries. Additionally, the editors seek to encourage research studies focussing on some relatively understudied [risk factors](#) for ill-health including unmet contraception needs, unsafe sex, childhood sexual abuse, and illicit drug use.

In explaining these priorities, the editors comment: "The lack of available research on some conditions will have multiple causes; it may reflect inequities in the distribution of research funding; the lack of a robust research infrastructure in many parts of the world; and, of course, the decisions of researchers as to whether and where to publish." They conclude with a call to the wider research community: "it is not enough to simply raise awareness among our readership by publishing on issues

that really matter in global health; it is now essential to leverage this awareness to bring about change in health care priorities globally."

**More information:** The PLoS Medicine Editors (2012) A New Year at PLoS Medicine: Maintaining a Focus on the World's Health Priorities and Identifying the Gaps. PLoS Med 9(1): e1001168.

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