

Declines in funding hamper kidney research and other areas of medical study

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Medical research funding from public and private sources is at an all-time low. A new *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology (JASN)* article discusses the effects of such funding constraints, with a focus on the plight of kidney research.

"The scientific research investment gap continues to widen, jeopardizing potential new insights into diseases and, more importantly, new cures," said co-author Roy Zent, MD, PhD (Vanderbilt Medical Center). He and his colleagues noted that although the National Institutes of Health's annual budget doubled from \$13.7 to \$26.9 billion per year between 1998 and 2003, it has failed to keep pace with inflation since 2003. Also, the percentage of funding for the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases and kidney-related research has continued to decrease while the percentage of funds to other institutes has experienced a steady increase. "With 20 million Americans affected by [kidney disease](#), we can't afford to delay clinical advances for our patients," said Dr. Zent.

The authors stressed that health professional groups, patient organizations, government, industry, and others focused on improving kidney health must step up and support clinical and basic researchers. The American Society of Nephrology has developed a Career Development Grants Program to support investigators, and it has partnered with the FDA, through the Kidney Health Initiative, to create an opportunity for multidisciplinary specialties to advance kidney treatment, address patient safety, and develop therapies in a collaborative

environment.

However, additional efforts are needed to make ongoing strides in kidney research and other areas of study. "Medical research and innovation are a critical component of the United States' economic competitiveness within the global economy, and they directly feed the vitality of the country's health care system. This is why we are raising awareness of the key role research plays in improving the lives of patients with [kidney](#) disease, and why are calling for broad support for [medical research](#) in the United States," said Dr. Zent.

More information: The article, entitled "The Kidney Research Predicament," will appear online at jasn.asnjournals.org/ on March 20, 2014.

Provided by American Society of Nephrology

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