

Professor launches web tool to track impact of drugs worldwide

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Billions of dollars have been spent on developing drugs and supplying them around the world, but which companies' drugs are actually making an impact? The Global Health Impact Index, headed by Binghamton University Associate Professor Nicole Hassoun and highlighted in a new article published Friday in *PLOS ONE*, addresses this issue by ranking pharmaceutical companies based on their drugs' impact on global health.

The Global Health Impact Index considers how companies drugs measure up on the basis of their impact on the "big three" infectious diseases: malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. While previous indexes have measured the need for different drugs worldwide, the Global Health Impact Index is the first to measure the actual impact of these drugs.

"People have focused on measuring the need for different drugs...but we're looking at the impact that they're actually having," said Hassoun. "This is important for setting goals, evaluating performance—trying to have a bigger impact on [global health](#) and saving millions of lives."

The index looks at three things: the need for several important drugs for tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and malaria; the drugs' effectiveness; and the number of people who can access the drugs. Each [company](#)'s score is the sum of its drugs' impacts.

According to the index, the companies whose drugs having the most impact on the "big three" diseases are:

- Sanofi
- Novartis
- Pfizer

The following companies' drugs had the lowest [drug](#) impact scores on the index:

- Eli Lilly
- Kyorin Pharmaceutical Co.
- Bayer Healthcare

"We are looking at the outcomes of the drugs that the companies hold, so the actual impact on death and disability," said Hassoun. "We're looking at the amount of death and disability that the company's drugs are alleviating."

Hassoun hopes to motivate [pharmaceutical companies](#) to meet the health needs of impoverished people around the world through an initiative supported by Academics Stand Against Poverty (ASAP), an international professional association focused on helping poverty researchers and teachers enhance their positive impact on severe poverty.

According to Hassoun and ASAP, one third of all deaths globally, about 18 million per year, are linked to poverty, because people living in poverty cannot afford medicines and pharmaceutical companies do not have the financial incentive to develop treatments for diseases that primarily affect impoverished people.

By better understanding the impacts of companies' products on the burden of disease, said Hassoun, researchers can have a tool for measuring impact; governments, donors, etc. can better target their efforts; and companies can be incentivized to focus on [impact](#).

More information: Nicole Hassoun et al. The Global Health Impact Index: Promoting Global Health, *PLOS ONE* (2015). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0141374](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0141374)

Provided by Binghamton University

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