

The ISPOR Award for Excellence in Application of Pharmacoeconomics and Health Outcomes Research – Q & A with 2015 Recipient Joshua A. Roth, PhD, MHA

The ISPOR Awards Program is designed to foster and recognize excellence and outstanding technical achievement in pharmacoeconomics and outcomes research. In recognizing individuals who meet these criteria, we caught up with ISPOR Award for Excellence in Application of Pharmacoeconomics and Health Outcomes Research 2015 recipient Joshua A. Roth, PhD, MHA, Assistant Member, AHRQ Patient-Centered Outcomes Research K12 Scholar, Hutchinson Institute for Cancer Outcomes Research, Seattle, WA, USA, on how this ISPOR award reflects his achievements in his field.

Additional information:

To read Dr. Roth's award-winning paper, go to: http://www.ispor.org/awards/application_.asp

To learn more about this award, other ISPOR Scientific Awards, and details on how to submit nominations of qualified candidates for these awards, go to: http://www.ispor.org/awards/index_.asp.

The deadline to receive nominations for this award and other 2016 ISPOR Scientific Achievement Awards is **Monday, February 15, 2016.**

Value & Outcomes Spotlight: You were recently awarded the ISPOR Award for Excellence in Application of Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research. What do you think those who judged your qualifications found that merited recognition?



Joshua Roth: I think the principal merit of the paper "Economic Return from the Women's Health Initiative Estrogen plus Progestin Clinical Trial," is its high level of relevance to a timely policy issue. The paper was initially published in *Annals of Internal Medicine* as Congress debated the 2015 federal budget, and specifically, the level of federal funding for biomedical research. This

paper provided evidence of a large economic return from a very expensive federally funded clinical trial – reminding a range of stakeholders that: 1) trials can have substantial economic returns when they address important clinical questions that impact millions of Americans, and 2) it's important for research funding agencies to consider the value of clinical trials in addition to trial cost. Additionally, I (and presumably the ISPOR Research Excellence Award Committee) was impressed to see the paper's results garner interest from the National Institute of Health (NIH) Director, several members of Congress, and the popular media.

VOS: When you were notified you were receiving the award, with who did you first share the news? A mentor, close friend, spouse, etc.?

Roth: The first person I notified about the award was my wife, Meghann. We simultaneously spent many years in graduate school at the University of Washington (she completed an MBA in 2010), and that experience makes our subsequent professional success feel even more like collective achievements. Meghann is also very proud of this honor, and fortunately, I've also been the first person to hear about many of her recent professional achievements.

VOS: What inspired you to be active in your current areas of interest?

Roth: My recent research at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center is primarily focused on comparative effectiveness issues in low-dose CT lung cancer screening. It's an exciting area because lung cancer mortality outcomes are very poor compared to other common cancers due to late diagnosis, and the advent of screening has the potential to greatly improve outcomes by allowing early detection and potentially curative treatment. Furthermore, because screening only started being incorporated into routine medical practice this year, it's a timely and rapidly evolving area of research. Lastly, while lung cancer screening has tremendous potential for benefit, it also involves a number of potentially serious harms (e.g. radiation exposure, many false-positive results, and invasive follow-up procedures). This combination of factors – the potential to greatly impact cancer patient's lives, the ability to shape emerging medical policy, and important benefit-risk tradeoffs – inspires me to conduct research to measure and improve lung cancer screening outcomes.

VOS: Any advice for those starting out with an interest in these fields?

Roth: Find great mentors. Importantly, by 'great' I mean people with the time, interest, and expertise to help you to continue to learn and to make the transition from student/post-doc into an independent investigator. The expertise part is certainly critical, but I've learned that it's often time and interest that make the difference. I'm incredibly lucky to have a half-dozen mentors in Seattle that hit all three points perfectly (thanks to Scott Ramsey, Ruth Etzioni, Sean Sullivan, Dave Veenstra, Josh Carlson, and Garnet Anderson, among others). ■