

**RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION ON NEGLECTED DISEASES:
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

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The World Health Organization and the non-governmental organization Doctors Without Borders classify diseases into three categories: *Type I or global diseases* (incident in both rich and poor countries, with large numbers of vulnerable population in each); *Type II or neglected diseases* (incident in both rich and poor countries, but with a substantial proportion of the cases in the poor countries); *Type III or most neglected diseases* (overwhelmingly or exclusively incident in the developing countries). Incentives for R&D exist in the rich country markets for global diseases but are insufficient or almost absent for neglected diseases which affect poor populations in developing countries. Three types of “failures” are responsible for this situation: (a) *Science failure* – there is still not sufficient knowledge to develop the needed health intervention e.g. a vaccines against parasitic diseases; (b) *Market failure* – lack of investment in R&D or of resources to buy expensive drugs; (c) *Public health failure* – different factors e.g. corruption, war, etc, prevent the access of populations to cheap or readily available interventions. The challenges scientists face to do research, development and innovation in neglected/most neglected diseases are immense and discouraging. However there are also real golden opportunities for researchers in biomedical and social sciences. New resources, new organizations, new mechanisms and new strategies at national, regional and global levels are bringing new energy and perspectives to this field and should be explored by scientists from both developed and developing countries.