

David Sackett Fellowship 2022

November 2022



Figure 1: David Sackett Fellows after their presentations at the EBMLive Conference 2022, from the left: Stephen Bradley (2019 Doug Altman Scholar), Georgia Richards (CEBM), Krish Bilimoria, Trevor Treharne, Gabriel Costa, Umer Siddique, Sathya Karunanathan, Uday Yadav, Kaitlyn Hair, Yan Lou & Peter Gill (CEBM).

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1. Summary of report

We are delighted to report on the success of the inaugural David Sackett Fellowship, building on the success of the 2019 Doug Altman Scholarship, with generous funding and support from the McCall MacBain Foundation (MMF). We used the funding for nine forward-thinking future leaders in Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM) to attend the 2022 EBMLive Conference in Oxford.

The nine Fellows brought provocative, bold, and constructive contributions on the theme of making research relevant, replicable, and accessible to end-users. From a highly competitive field, we selected the scholars because of their forward-thinking solutions to address the issue of making research evidence relevant, replicable, and accessible to end-users, as set out in the EBM manifesto, building on the legacy of David Sackett.

After an unanticipated delay in hosting EBMLive in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the return to an in-person meeting in Oxford, where David Sackett first founded the Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine, re-invigorated the EBM movement with their ideas, enthusiasm, and perspectives.

This report highlights the contributions of the awardees, their outputs and the work of the CEBM that supports early-mid career researchers and builds capacity in EBM globally.



Carl Heneghan
Professor of Evidence-Based Medicine,
University of Oxford

"It was one of the most fantastic scientific gatherings that I ever attended in my professional career. I got the opportunity to learn and debate around evidence-based practices, implementation science approaches and policy and advocacy. Thanks to the McCall MacBain Foundation for such great support, without which it was nearly impossible for me to share my work with esteemed scientists of the field."

David Sackett Fellow, 2022

2. Founding of the inaugural David Sackett Fellowship

David L Sackett is widely described as the ‘*father of evidence-based medicine*’. He was a transformative figure in 20th-century health research and education. One of his many notable achievements was the founding of the University of Oxford Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine (CEBM) in 1994. After leaving Oxford in 1999, David retired from clinical practice to dedicate his time to research, writing and teaching the next generation alongside his wife Barbara Sackett, but he left a lasting legacy of mentorship and inspired many leaders in EBM.

To honour the memory of David Sackett and the important role he played in EBM, and to support and mentor future generations of health researchers, we developed the inaugural David Sackett Fellowship. Prior to launching the Fellowship, we received permission from David’s widow, Barbara Sackett, who was supportive and encouraging of the idea (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Dr Peter Gill, Mrs Barbara Sackett, and Dr Braden O’Neil during a visit to the Sacketts home to discuss the Fellowship with Mrs Sackett and receive her blessing to honour David Sackett.

While the Fellowship was initially established to provide early career researchers with an opportunity to attend the 2020 EBMLive conference in Toronto, Canada, the COVID-19 pandemic led to the cancellation of the 2020 conference and deferral to EBMLive 2022 in Oxford.

“Being an Indigenous researcher, I never thought that I would get the opportunity to share research findings at Oxford ever in my life, but it happened just because of support from the McCall MacBain Foundation-funded David L. Sackett fellowship.”

David Sackett Fellow, 2022

3. The David Sackett Fellows

3.1 The Applications

To be awarded a David Sackett Fellowship, individuals were asked to submit a provocative, bold and constructive abstract that aimed to make research evidence relevant, replicable and accessible to end-users, as outlined in the EBM Manifesto (1). Submissions could either describe a problem or describe novel research findings. We reached out to universities and medical schools across the world as well as international and national networks such as the Cochrane Collaboration, Students 4 Best Evidence and the National Institute of Health Research.

To be accepted, applicants must have been early career researchers or patients. As a David Sackett Fellow, awardees received full delegate registration to attend EBMLive in Oxford, travel and accommodation expenses, a commonly reported barrier to conference attendance. Most importantly, Fellows were provided with an opportunity to meet like-minded early-career researchers, present their ideas and solicit feedback, attend sessions dedicated to supporting the development of early-career researchers and form life-long networks across the EBM community.

Adjudication of the submissions was completed by the Future Leaders Committee, which included representatives from The BMJ, the CEBM at the University of Oxford, and early career researchers, who each completed diversity training. The selection of scholars was based on a combination of the quality of submissions, gender and a representation of major continents.

We received a total of 57 entries from 20 different countries, with an overall gender split of 51% female. We launched the David Sackett Fellowship and showcased the awardees in an editorial published in *BMJ Evidence Based Medicine*, "[Developing future leaders in evidence-based medicine: the inaugural David Sackett Fellowship](#)", in the lead up to the conference (2).

Editorial

Developing future leaders in evidence-based medicine: the inaugural David Sackett Fellowship

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[10.1136/bmjebm-2022-111996](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjebm-2022-111996)

David L Sackett, widely described as the 'father' of evidence-based medicine, has been a leading figure in many areas of health research, including but not limited to clinical epidemiology, medical statistics, and the development of evidence-based medicine.

3.2 David Sackett Fellows 2022

The nine David Sackett Fellows came from diverse backgrounds and presented on various topics at EBMLive (Figure 3). All scholars had their abstract submissions published in [BMJ Evidence-Based Medicine](#) journal (3). The profiles of scholars are also available on the EBMLive website, here: <https://ebmlive.org/2022-david-sackett-fellows/>

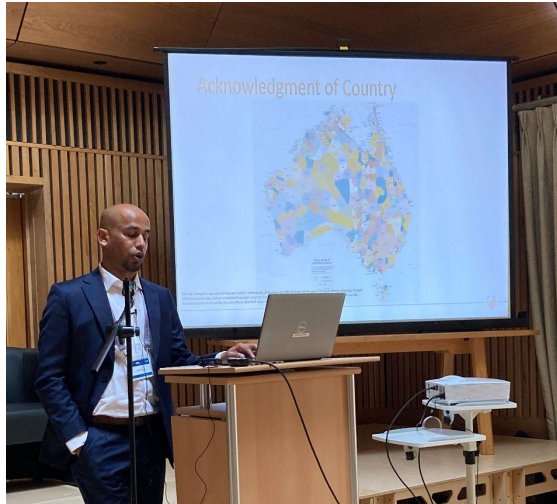


Figure 3: The David Sackett Fellows after their presentations at EBMLive. From the left: Krish Bilimoria, Trevor Treharne, Gabriel Costa, Umer Siddique, Sathya Karunanathan, Uday Yadav, Kaitlyn Hair, Yan Lou, after their presentations at the EBMLive Conference. The Ninth Fellow, Edward Li, was unable to attend in person, but provided a recording of his presentation.

"This fellowship contributed a lot to my professional career- (i) provided the opportunity to present my research work to experts at the Oxford podium and (ii) helped to establish collaboration with researchers working in my research arena, (iii) Got the updated learning on various research methodologies and reporting guidelines that I will be utilising in developing research papers and grant application and (iv) Fellowship showcase helped me to secure an academic position straight after my PhD."

David Sackett Fellow, 2022

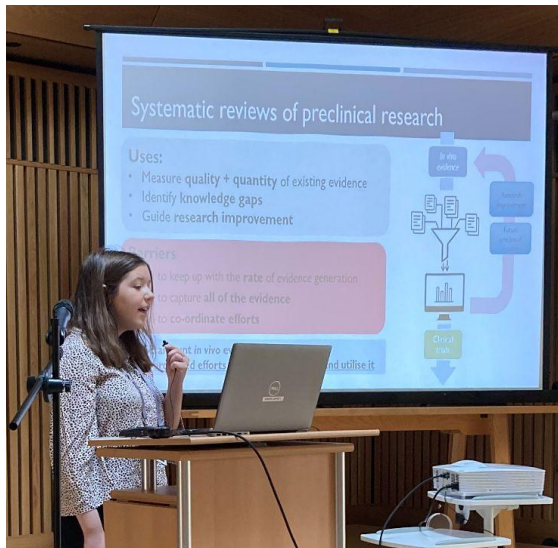
Uday Yadav (Nepal & Australia)



Dr Uday Yadav is an early career Implementation scientist and his research interests include non-communicable diseases, global health, Indigenous health, primary health care, and evidence-based policy. Dr Yadav has implemented various public health programs and conducted research in Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, and Australia. Currently, he holds a Research Fellow position at National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing Research, The Australian National University, Australia. Dr Yadav aims to address global health issues through the implementation of people-centered co-designed solutions and policy and advocacy with a special

focus on unserved populations. At EBMLive, Dr Yadav presented [*“Using Co-design Process to Develop an Integrated Self-management Intervention Program for COPD patients in Nepal.”*](#) (6)

Kaitlyn Hair (Scotland, UK)



Dr Kaitlyn Hair is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Edinburgh working with the CAMARADES group. During her PhD, she developed automated evidence-synthesis pipelines for preclinical research and led collaborative systematic review and meta-analyses projects in animal models of Alzheimer's disease. Her research interests are in improving the translational value of preclinical dementia research, and in developing, validating, and implementing automation technologies to accelerate meta-research. At EBMLive, Dr Hair presented [*“‘Living’ evidence frameworks for in vivo animal research: towards translational evidence-based medicine.”*](#)

(7)

Krish Bilimoria (Canada)



Dr Krish Bilimoria is a first-year medical resident in Internal Medicine at McGill University. He completed his Bachelor of Health Sciences (Global Health) at McMaster University and his medical degree at the University of Toronto. He also previously completed research across genetic epidemiology, global health impact investment, and global health ethics. His current academic interests are in diagnostic reasoning and his future clinical interests span General Internal Medicine & Critical Care. At EBMLive, Dr Bilimoria presented [*“Meeting the Needs of a Diverse Readership: Towards*](#)

[*Interactive Manuscripts.*”](#) (8)

Gabriel Costa (Brazil)



Gabriel Costa is an early-stage PhD student in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. His interest in research goes back to when he was 16/17 years old when he started reading scientific articles and is now a meta-scientist who is honoured to attend this conference in honour of David L. Sackett at Oxford. (Prior to this, he had never left Latin America.) Gabriel has an interest in clinical epidemiology, pre-clinical research and how to reduce research waste and improve methodological rigor. He is a member of the Brazilian Reproducibility Initiative and recently updated the replicability of highly cited clinical research (his MSc thesis – poster at the conference). Without his coauthors, it would not be possible for him to attend the conference. Mr Costa presented [*“Outcome Reporting Bias in the Non-Pharmacological Literature – Diminishing Research Gaps*](#)

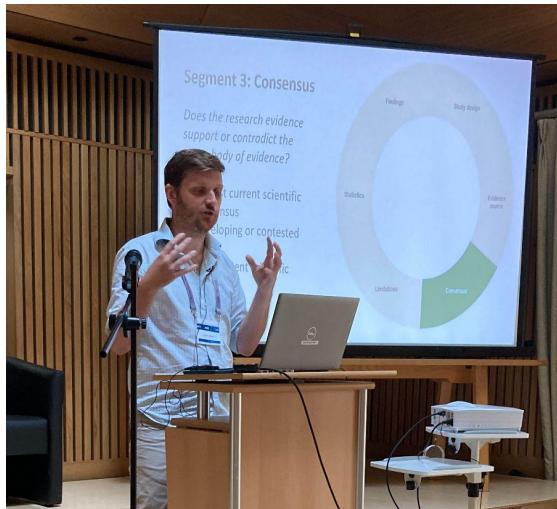
[*and Improving Emerging Health Literature.*”](#) (9)

Sathya Karunanathan (Canada)



Sathya Karunanathan holds a PhD in epidemiology from McGill University. She is an Assistant Professor in the Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences at the University of Ottawa. Her research focuses on frailty and physical function in older persons, and the role of technology in improving access to healthcare. She is also actively involved in projects on systematic review methodology, meta-research, and healthcare knowledge translation. Her recent work includes the development of guidance for when to replicate systematic reviews. At EBMLive, Dr Karunanathan presented “[*When should systematic reviews be replicated and when is it wasteful: a checklist and framework.*](#)” (10)

Trevor Treharne (Oxford, UK)



Trevor's DPhil studies are focused on medicine in the media. He looks at how the media reports on health and medicine issues, including researching the tools and guidance that health journalists require when reporting on these issues. Previously, Trevor was a journalist for 14 years, including working as Deputy Head of News at Yahoo and the Sunday Times Fast Track. He has completed an MA in Bioethics from the University of Sydney and an MSc in Evidence-Based Health Care at the University of Oxford. Mr Treharne presented “[*The ‘Traffic Light Wheel’: a general reader visualisation tool to evaluate the quality of media news items on research evidence in EBM.*](#)” (11)

Edward Li (Canada)

Edward Li is currently completing his nursing training at the University of New Brunswick and completed his Bachelor of Health Sciences at McMaster University, Canada. He has seen the applicability of research evidence to practice as a Project Associate for a local health administrative body, and as a co-director of Canadian health education media regarding stem cell donation. He looks forward to building on a foundation of research training to champion evidence-based, patient-centred clinical practice. Mr Li presented his idea on [“Does End-User-Engaged Peer Review Improve the Relevance, Replicability, and Accessibility of Research](#)

[Evidence?”](#) (12)

“Such awards are really important to highlight the achievements of early career researchers. When applying for grant funding or future research positions, having this fellowship will positively reflect this and give me an advantage.”

David Sackett Fellow, 2022

4. Impact of the Fellowship

4.1 The Conference

The David Sackett Fellows attended the EBMLive Conference in Oxford on 17-20 July 2022. We organised a range of events targeted to early-mid career researchers, including

- Pre-conference session called “*Evidence-based thinking*”, with two excellent speakers, Associate Prof Andrea Tricco (Canada) and Dr Stephen Bradley (UK), who spoke informally about mentorship and career development (Figure 4)
- Leadership session facilitated by Dr Kamal Mahtani
- Dedicated session for the David Sackett Fellowships presentations, where Fellows had an opportunity to share their submissions with the conference attendees, with final remarks from the 2019 Doug Altman Scholar Stephen Bradley
- Social event that took Fellows punting and for dinner with conference attendees to build networks and mingle informally



Figure 4: David Sackett Fellows at the pre-conference event on Sunday, 17 July, where scholars heard from 2019 Doug Altman Scholar, Dr Stephen Bradley and Associate Professor Andrea Tricco.

“It felt exciting to be welcomed into the EBM community at EBMLive, especially coming from a preclinical background. Personally, feeling as though my work has been recognised in some way has also helped to ease the imposter syndrome I feel at times.”

David Sackett Fellow, 2022

4.2 The Outputs

We continue to engage with the Fellows and support their development post-EBMLive. In addition to the conference abstracts (3) and editorial (2) published in *BMJ Evidence Based Medicine*, the journal has commissioned David Sackett Fellows to author topic-specific articles relating to their research presented at EBMLive. This was possible because of our unique partnership with *The BMJ* and *BMJ Evidence Based Medicine*, where editors attended EBMLive, met with David Sackett Fellows, and encouraged their submissions. The commissioned articles include

- An EBM Learning article on “Incorporating health research evidence in Wikipedia: lessons and challenges” by Fellow Dr Umer Siddique
- An article in the Catalogue of Bias series on “Novelty bias” by Fellow Dr Yan Lou
- An Analysis article for the Open Science series on replication, the added value vs research waste aspects in systematic reviews by Fellow Dr Sathya Karunanathan
- An EBM opinion and debate article for the Open Science series on reproducible and interactive manuscripts co-written by Fellow Dr Krish Bilimoria and 2019 Doug Altman Scholar Dr Matt Parkes

5. Ongoing impact of 2019 Doug Altman Scholarships

In the second year of my PhD, I benefitted from a Doug Altman Scholarship to attend EBMLive, and was honoured to be awarded the Doug Altman Award, based on a proposal to focus on three implementable measures to improve the quality of research. As well as the encouragement and extremely valuable feedback received on my proposal, attendance at EBMLive put me in touch with an international network of like-minded academics passionate about improving research, outside of my primary focus of cancer diagnosis. These collaborations have resulted in several outputs, including

1. A highly cited review on the issues in medical research and how they might be addressed, published in the [Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine](#) (13)
2. An [editorial for the British Medical Journal](#) (BMJ) calling for further actions to improve research transparency, in addition to planned automatic registration of clinical trials (14)



Figure 5: Dr Stephen Bradley presenting at EBMLive 2022 on his achievements since the 2019 Doug Altman Award.

My PhD training benefited immensely from the insights I gained on robust and transparent methods at EBMLive and following the completion of my PhD I was extremely grateful to have the opportunity to attend EBMLive again in 2022, which proved remarkably informative for my current responsibilities as Clinical Lead for Cancer for Leeds Integrated Care Board and as a National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Academic Clinical Lecturer. At EBMLive 2022 I reported back on the advocacy I have co-ordinated on improving research practices since 2019. This advocacy has included:

1. A dedicated website for my EBMLive proposal, which is now called the '[Declaration to Improve Biomedical & Health Research](#)'
2. Obtaining more than '[100 signatories](#)' for the Declaration from people and organisations that support our mission, including the German network for EBM, the Oxford Brazil EBM Alliance and the charity HealthSense
3. Submitting evidence to the [UK Science & Technology Parliamentary Select Committee](#) on research reproducibility, which was subsequently published in [BMC Research Notes](#) (15)
4. Hosting an online 'hack-a-thon' in collaboration with US [Center for Open Science \(COS\)](#) where participants contacted journal editors to provide more information and request that the journal offers a research format, called Research Reports, to tackle publication bias (16). The outcomes and lessons from our experience was published as a Letter in the [British Journal of General Practice](#) (17)
5. Presenting at the Wellcome Reproducibility, Replicability and Trust in Science and REWARD | EQUATOR conferences
6. Publishing several [blogs and articles](#), including
 - a. An article in [The Conversation](#) on the issues in medical research (18)
 - b. An article in BMJ Opinion on the solutions in medical research (19)
 - c. An article in [Times Higher Education \(THE\)](#) on the impact of the pandemic (20)
 - d. A blog on Registered Reports for [TranspariMed](#) (21)
 - e. A blog on The Declaration for [HealthSense](#) (22)
 - f. A blog on trust and transparency for [OpenPharma](#) (23)
7. Meeting with leaders from UK Reproducibility Network, National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), and Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID) to promote uptake of measures to improve transparency and reduce bias in research

Looking forward, together with the steering group members of our campaign, we will concentrate on engagement with research funders to encourage them to leverage much wider adoption of practices such as registered reports. We also aim to work with academics, research institutions, journals and the health service to explore a transparent and accessible means for all researchers and doctors to declare potential conflicts of interest.

I am immensely grateful for the support received from the McCall MacBain foundation to attend and present at EBMLive and I am confident that the legacy of the foundation's investment in me and other researchers will continue to pay dividends over the coming years and decades.

Dr Stephen Bradley (November 2022)

6. Conclusions

The inaugural David Sackett Fellowship, built on the success of the 2019 Doug Altman Scholarships, which was made possible through donations from the MMF, was a resounding success. While initially planned for the EBMLive 2020 conference in Toronto, we funded nine forward-thinking future leaders of evidence-based medicine to attend the 2022 EBMLive Conference in Oxford. The scholars brought provocative, bold, and constructive contributions on the theme of making research relevant, replicable, and accessible to end users.

The David Sackett Fellows enriched EBMLive, bringing their ideas, enthusiasm, and the perspectives of early-mid career researchers to the conference. We hope to have the opportunity to continue David Sackett's legacy as the founder of EBM, and of CEBM, by expanding early career researcher opportunities in 2023 and beyond by building the **Global Consortium in EBM** to continue to develop future leaders in evidence-based medicine.



Dr Georgia Richards, EBM Medical Teaching & Development
Lead, CEBM, University of Oxford



Dr Peter J Gill, Assistant Professor, Department of Paediatrics,
University of Toronto



Dr Braden O'Neill, Department of Family and Community
Medicine, St Michael's Hospital, Canada.



Ruth Davis, Manager of CEBM, University of Oxford



Professor Carl Heneghan, Director of CEBM, University of Oxford

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