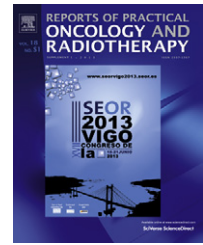


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PLENARY SESSION “Reconciling professional work and academic development: Realistic opportunities”

How to fund my research?



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Regardless of the area, the research needs of major sources of funding which must be adequate not only in quantity but also need to have continuity in time. The current economic situation makes difficult to obtain financing and it is putting at risk the continuity of many research projects, especially in the countries most affected by the economic crisis (among them, Spain). Not only has decreased the number of sources of funding but also the amount of the budget. Besides all this, and in order to maximize and monetize the money for research, more requirements for founding are requested in terms of relevance, feasibility and benefits to society of the studies (terms always subjective and complex to properly assess). This is the scenario in which the investigation is moving today, and in this scenario we must try to find funding for ongoing research projects.

Classically, it has been two main sources of funding: public and private.

- Public sources of founding

Without a doubt, the deepest cut to research has been made in the sources of public funding. In our country, it has been different places to find money to investigate.

The different Autonomous Communities have agencies responsible for managing research. Annually, there are calls for funding research which, while not substantial, can be an important financial support for small to medium projects. In addition, other regional institutions may also be sources of funding, although these small institutions have been suffered the hardest hit with the current economic crisis, passing from modest budgets to 0 in a few years.

At the state level, there are two key agencies for research funding in Spain: Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad

(MINECO) and Instituto de Salud Carlos III (ISCIII). Calls are annual and lead to significant amounts of money. However, the competition is very high and requirements are becoming more demanding, which together with the cuts in the budget make it difficult to obtain such financing. However, these are the most prestigious funding sources nationwide and we must choose them as the main source.

There are more sources of public funding. For European countries, the FP7 Program is an important place to apply for big projects. However, it is not the only European funding (more info at: <http://opeuva.funge.uva.es/convocatorias>).

- Private sources of founding

Different foundations have different calls for research funding. The budget is modest, the research fields are limited to the scope of each foundation, and call dates vary, but provide an important source of funding, as they have been less affected by the cuts of money. Some of the most interesting in the health sector are: Asociación Española Contra el Cáncer, Fundación Mutua Madrileña, Fundación Mapfre or Fundación La Caixa.

In the private sector, it should not be overlooked the role of the pharmaceutical industry. In that sense, different business houses can be an important place where to get money to fund our research, and sometimes they give significant amounts of money if they consider interesting the projects that we propose.

In summary, research requires money, and money is tight at present. There are different funding sources, some more difficult than others. We must knock the larger number of doors to ensure that at least one opens.