

## 2009 Apgar Award: Jack Sinclair

Dr. John (Jack) C. Sinclair, now Professor Emeritus of Pediatrics at McMaster University, received his MD degree from the University of Manitoba. He completed his pediatric residency and neonatology fellowship at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University where he was taught by Virginia Apgar and mentored by William Silverman, the 1979 Apgar Award recipient. He rose from Assistant Professor to Professor of Pediatrics in only four years and subsequently moved from Columbia to McMaster as Professor of Pediatrics and of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics. A recipient of the Canadian Pediatric Society Award and of the American Academy of Pediatrics Neonatal Education Award, Jack is known internationally for his landmark work in three different areas:



Jack Sinclair

1. Neonatal thermoregulation, oxygen consumption, and caloric balance. This research, which was largely conducted early in his career, provided fundamental knowledge that has been widely incorporated into everyday practice in neonatal ICUs around the globe. This work by itself might justify the Apgar Award.

2. Advancing the methods to synthesize, interpret, and apply findings in the medical literature. Jack pioneered the performance of systematic reviews and meta-analyses to evaluate perinatal therapies and promoted use of the number needed to treat (NNT)-the number of patients who require treatment to prevent one from having an adverse outcome-as a clinical metric to communicate the value of a therapy. Jack also developed quantitative methods to integrate the benefits, hazards, and costs of treatment in deciding the highest NNT (the threshold number needed to treat) that would justify use of a medical intervention. This approach allows the values of the individual patient to be integrated with the best evidence about treatment effects in deciding whether or not it should be administered.

3. Promoting evidence-based clinical practice. Jack was a leader in promoting evidence-based medicine decades before the term was ever coined. He is known throughout the world for his career long contributions in teaching physicians to critically assess the evidence base for the therapies that they prescribe. His textbook, *Effective Care of the Newborn Infant* (1992), was the first in neonatology to be based on formal systematic reviews of major therapies. He played a central role in developing the Cochrane Collaboration to provide systematic reviews of therapies in all areas of medicine that would be readily

available via the internet to physicians in any locale. Until recently he was the Editor of the Neonatal Review Group and is a major reason that Cochrane reviews are widely recognized as the first and best place to find a synthesis of the evidence concerning neonatal treatment methods.

In describing Jack's contributions, John Kattwinkel, recipient of the 2008 Apgar Award, wrote that Jack is a "true and consistent giant in neonatology" who has "probably saved as many lives by leading us away from what we might have done as he has in confirming the appropriateness of what we currently do. Jeffrey Maisels, 2007 Apgar Award recipient, noted that "Jack Sinclair stands alone in the influence he has had on how we obtain, analyze, and implement the data necessary to practice evidence-based neonatal care." Ed Bell noted that "Jack has taught neonatologists around the world how to critically evaluate the evidence for the efficacy and safety of the therapies they prescribe ...He has clearly done more than any other individual to advance the quality and rigor of clinical research in neonatology. He has had an enormous impact on the survival and health of newborn infants, both now and in the future."

We congratulate him and recognize his achievements in neonatal-perinatal medicine by bestowing on him the Apgar Award for 2009.

*Jon Tyson, MD, MPH*

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