



ESICM LIVES 2013: Critical Care Research Thinking Big



Critical care researchers need to think big, and think global, said John Marshall (Canada), in his keynote lecture at ESICM 2013.

Breakthroughs in the past were the result of quirky individuals who did a lot with very little. What of the future of research, now that low hanging fruit has been identified?

Marshall noted that we are in an era of increasing complexity of scientific questions, powerful new scientific tools, enhanced capacity for data analysis and rapid global communication via the Internet.

Researchers involved with the Hadron Collider number more than 10,000 from more than 100 countries. Similar large collaborations are taking place in basic science.

Science itself is changing with open data access, new models of collaboration and credit and new sources of funding.

The classical model of ICU-based clinical research has been small investigator-led studies, typically observational, and larger, industry-sponsored clinical trials for drug or device registration.

Critical care is also benefiting from large trial groups across the world, with access to new tools for data accumulation and analysis. Papers from these groups are among the most cited in critical care. The Canadian Critical Care Trials Group, founded in 1989 has been followed by many others: ANZICS, ARDSnet, the German Sepsis Network, the Scandinavian Critical Care Trials Group and more, providing a core knowledge based for critical care.

Marshall concluded, "It's time to embrace the precepts of large science in critical care and move it to the next level."

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