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Global funding trends in contraceptive R&D in 2023: gaps and progress

Abstract:

Enforcing the autonomy and reproductive rights of individuals globally relies on the accessibility of a wide variety of contraceptive methods in order to meet a diversity of preferences and social and physical needs. Contraceptive research and development is essential to bring forward new methods with fewer side-effects, innovative delivery and user-centric characteristics to cater to this diversity of needs. Characterizing global investment in contraceptive R&D helps assessing the dynamism of the field, understanding particular trends in terms of product categories (short or long-acting contraceptives, relying on hormones, multiple purpose technologies offering additional protection against STIs...) and highlighting promising developments and gaps. The G-FINDER survey collects global R&D funding data every year for several global health areas, including sexual and reproductive health. Through datamining and an extensive survey among funders and industry stakeholders running since 2007 (2018 for SRH), its results offer an overview of trends and gaps in sexual and reproductive health investment. In 2023, global funding for contraception decreased sharply compared to 2021, reaching a record-low level since the beginning of data collection. This decrease has implications regarding encouraging trends observed in the last SRH funding analysis, particularly when it comes to user-controlled, non-hormonal or male contraceptives. The characteristics of global contraceptive R&D investment in 2023 highlight the need for informed and strategic advocacy and policies to ensure sustained and targeted efforts to bring about the innovative contraceptive products essential to users' health and autonomy.

Keywords: Contraception, R&D, funding, investment, contraceptive innovation

Biography :

Cécile Ventola has a PhD in public health and is specialized in sexual and reproductive health. She has worked for several French national institutes, the WHO and a menstrual health start-up before joining Impact Global Health (previously Policy Cures Research) as a Senior Technical Officer for sexual and reproductive health in May 2023. She has conducted research on contraception, abortion, gender-affirming healthcare, sexual health and gender and health.