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Web Tool Tracks Locations of Vital Drugs' Biggest Impact

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FILE - Anwar, 4, gets treated for tuberculosis at the Kashi Vidyapeeth block hospital near Varanasi, India, Feb. 1, 2014.

Jessica Berman
December 15, 2015 2:51 PM

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U.S. researchers have come up with a strategy they hope will motivate pharmaceutical companies, who spend billions yearly to develop medications for a host of illnesses, to direct their drugs where they will have the greatest impact.

It is called the [Global Health Impact Index](#), and it is a simple way to track the places in the world where vital drugs can have the biggest impact. It was created by researchers at Binghamton University in New York and will soon be launched by the World Health Organization.

The Web index, described in the journal *PLOS One*, is designed to identify companies that are doing the most to improve global health and those that are doing the least.

Binghamton philosophy professor Nicole Hassoun, who helped create the Web tool, said that in the evaluation of each drug, "we look at three things: the need for the drug, how effective it is and how many people who need the drug can access it."

Hassoun said about one-third of deaths globally are linked to poverty-related diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS, "so if we can incentivize greater access [for] essential medicines, that could make a really big difference for people who are suffering around the world."

The index identifies three companies — Sanofi, Novartis and Pfizer — whose drugs are having the biggest impact on the three diseases.

The website also tracks donations and companies that provide drugs at

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