BACKGROUND

- The Georgia Clinical and Translational Science Alliance (Georgia CTSA) aims to accelerate clinical and translational education, research, and community engagement to impact health in Georgia and beyond.
- The Pilot Translational and Clinical Studies Program is a catalyst within the Georgia CTSA that invests in new clinical and translational research paradigms to encourage faculty, especially early career investigators, to develop cutting-edge science.
- The program has been in existence since 2007 but the breadth and diversity of outcomes from this investment has not been studied.
- There were nearly 200 pilot projects funded by the Georgia CTSA from 2007-2014, 10 of which were sampled for the current study.

METHODS

- Used a case study approach and structured evaluation framework, the payback framework, to document the outcomes of 10 pilot projects.
- The case study approach included document review (e.g., investigator CVs, project reports), investigator interviews, and bibliometric analyses of publications associated with the pilot projects.
- The Payback Framework included the following domains for outcome assessment: 1) knowledge production, 2) research targeting, capacity building, 3) informing policy and product development, 4) health benefits, and 5) broader economic benefits.
- Pilot Projects (i.e., cases) were selected based on several factors including timeframe, amount of funding, type of researcher, multi-institutional collaboration, and T level. There were 183 pilot projects in our sampling frame.

RESULTS

Pilot Project Award Characteristics | Number of Sample Investigators (N=10) | Overall (N=183)
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Year of Pilot Project Award
2007-2009 | 3 | 56
2010-2012 | 2 | 55
2013-2014 | 5 | 60
Amount of Pilot Project Award
$25,000 | 2 | 11
$30,000 | 5 | 73
$50,000 | 1 | 28
$70,000 | 1 | 7
$100,000+ | 1 | 21
Type of Pilot Project Researcher
Assistant Professor | 4 | 94
Associate Professor | 4 | 53
Professor | 1 | 36
Instructor | 1 | 6
Multi-Institutional Project (Yes) | 5 | 60
Pilot Project Research T-level
T1-Basic Science | 7 | 130
T2-Clinical Research | 0 | 35
T3-Translation to Practice | 3 | 14
T4-Translation to Community | 0 | 4

CONCLUSIONS

- This study informs our understanding of the outcomes resulting from Georgia CTSA-supported pilot project research, and the value pilot projects provide to clinical and translational science and the broader community.
- Future analyses will be completed to assess relationships between the characteristics of the pilot project awards and their effectiveness.
- This study aids in characterizing the returns resulting from this research funding and identifies its strengths and weaknesses. Additional qualitative data analyses will be completed to assess investigator feedback on strengths and areas of improvement.
- This study also demonstrates the effectiveness of using a case study approach and payback framework to evaluate pilot project outcomes.