

RELEASE

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Dr. Doron Samuell Receives American Academy of Actuaries Research Award for Work on Life Underwriting Challenge of Self-Reported Smoking Status

WASHINGTON—On July 19, 2024, American Academy of Actuaries President Lisa Slotznick presented the Academy’s 2nd annual Award for Research to Dr. Doron Samuell of Sydney, Australia, at the Actuarial Research Conference in Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Samuell received the award, which recognizes work by an early-career scholar contributing significantly to an actuarial perspective on a public policy issue of interest to U.S. actuaries and public policymakers, for co-authoring the research paper, “Counteracting dishonesty strategies: A field experiment in life insurance underwriting.” The award includes a \$7,500 monetary prize.

The paper, co-authored by Samuell and three others, was published in the *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making* in April 2023, and reported on an experiment on strategies to counteract dishonest self-reporting of smoking status by life insurance applicants. It found that certain messaging by life insurance company agents after applicants’ initial interview responses made a meaningful difference to achieving more honest self-reporting.

“The paper is an excellent example of the value behavioral economics or behavioral finance research can bring to addressing challenges within the insurance industry,” said Steve Jackson, Ph.D., the Academy’s Director of Research. “The review panel noted the experiment both has immediate, practical implications and could encourage new research and innovation by others.”

(MORE)

07-22-24 – DR. DORON SAMUELL RECEIVES 2024 ACADEMY RESEARCH AWARD

The Academy's Award for Research has a different theme each year. For 2024, the theme was insights from behavioral economics/behavioral finance for insurance, retirement, and risk management.

Samuell is managing director of the consulting firm, Behaviour, which provides consulting to companies seeking guidance based on behavioral economics principles. He built a successful career as a psychiatrist, serving as medical director for several life insurance companies, then returned to obtain his Ph.D. from the University of Sydney Business School in 2023, developing his skills as a behavioral economist.

Samuell and two others who had submitted work for the research award participated in an Academy-sponsored panel on behavioral economics at the Actuarial Research Conference on July 19, where they presented their respective research.

Learn more about the award and the Academy's public policy research program at [actuary.org](https://www.actuary.org).

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The American Academy of Actuaries is a 20,000-member professional association whose mission is to serve the public and the U.S. actuarial profession. For more than 50 years, the Academy has assisted public policymakers on all levels by providing leadership, objective expertise, and actuarial advice on risk and financial security issues. The Academy also sets qualification, practice, and professionalism standards for actuaries in the United States.