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Awards from the International Conference on Rabies in the Americas

This year, the International Committee of Rabies in the Americas (RITA) organization will award the best works by Latin American researchers: the George Baer Award and the Ivanete Kotait Award.

Ivanete Kotait Latin American student / young researcher Award

The Ivanete Kotait Award is given to a Latin American student or young researcher for outstanding work in rabies research. It is named in honor of Dr. Ivanete Kotait, one of the first members representing Brazil on the International Steering Committee of the Rabies in the Americas (RITA) organization.

Dr. Ivanete Kotait was a prominent researcher who dedicated herself intensely to advances and improvements in rabies diagnosis, research, and control, always with great affection for developing regions. As a graduate of Veterinary Medicine, she began her professional career at the Biological Institute of São Paulo and, later, at the Pasteur Institute of São Paulo. During her tenure, she contributed to the improvement of the Institute's activities, which achieved recognition by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) as a Collaborating Center for Rabies, in addition to becoming a National Reference Laboratory for Rabies in Brazil. She was key in laying the foundations for agricultural and public health programs against rabies in Brazil, a commitment she maintained throughout her professional career.

Her multiple contributions focused on relevant training and technology transfer to Latin America. Throughout her professional life, she encouraged students and young researchers regarding the study and importance of rabies in the context of public health and the economy. Recognizing her impact, the RITA International Steering Committee established this annual award in her honor, intended for the best work carried out by a Latin American student or young researcher.

In 2026, the award winner will be recognized for his/her achievement and will have the opportunity to present his/her work at a special session of the RITA Conference.

George M. Baer Latin American Researcher Award

The George M. Baer Latin American Researcher Award recognizes outstanding work in the field of rabies by researchers from Latin American countries.

George M. Baer (1936-2009) was a renowned virologist, veterinarian, and public health scientist and a founding member of the Conference on Rabies in the Americas. Born in London and raised in New York, he received a degree in veterinary medicine from Cornell University in 1959 and a master's degree in public health from the University of Michigan in 1961. Baer served at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention throughout his career, with a special focus on psittacosis, brucellosis, and rabies. He worked at the



Southwest Rabies Research Laboratory and was a consultant to the Pan American Health Organization in Mexico, helping to establish national rabies programs.

As director of the CDC's Rabies Laboratory, he led the team that developed oral vaccination for wildlife and is recognized as the "Father of Oral Rabies Vaccination." Baer published over 100 scientific papers, including his landmark book "The Natural History of Rabies." After retiring, he founded a diagnostic laboratory in Mexico and remained active in the Conference on Rabies in the Americas.

The International Steering Committee named this award in honor of his contributions, highlighting his dedication to research and the advancement of public health in Latin America.

In 2026, the award winner will be recognized for his/her achievement and will have the opportunity to present his/her work at a special session of the RITA Conference.

Who can apply for the Ivanete Kotait Award?

A **professional or student in an undergraduate, graduate, or post-doctoral program** who receives formal supervision from the institution to which he/she belongs. The applicant must have less than 5 years of previous experience in rabies.

Who can apply for the George Baer Award?

A **professional or researcher with less than 10 years** of previous experience in the field of rabies.

Requirements for applying for the Ivanete Kotait and George M. Baer Awards:

Be a citizen and resident of a Latin American country.

Belong to a public or private (non-profit) institution in a Latin American country.

Be chosen by their research group as the first author and the one who contributed most substantially to the work.

Not have received the award previously.

Evaluation criteria:

The RITA International Steering Committee chooses the winners of the awards. The following elements are taken into consideration when selecting the winner:

- The innovative nature of the work described;
- The clear and logical description of the research; and
- The work's importance is for the researcher's country and the region.

The winner of the award receives:

Presentation of the chosen work in a special session of the conference.



Free registration for the event.

Transportation, food and accommodation for the event.

How to register:

Read all instructions carefully.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

The application package consists of three parts:

1. **A brief history of your interest in the field of rabies.**
2. **The extended research abstract** should include an introduction, objectives, experimental design, materials and methods, results (up to two tables and/or two graphs), discussion sections, and conclusions. The relevance of the results presented to public health in Latin America should be specified. Bibliographic references should be a maximum of 5. The text should not exceed 500 words, excluding authors and references.
3. **Curriculum vitae.**

The entire application must be submitted in English. The award winner **may deliver the** oral presentation in their preferred language: Spanish, Portuguese, or English but the corresponding slides should be in English.

The applicant must submit the application package by email.

Please save your completed application package as an MS Word file using the following naming template: "IK Award 2026 – LAST NAME, NAME" or "GB Award 2026 – LAST NAME, NAME", as applicable.

Please email your completed application package to ritaarizona2026@gmail.com using the subject line: "IK Award 2026 – LAST NAME, NAME" or "GB Award 2026 – LAST NAME, NAME", as applicable. Applications must be received by July 31, 2026 at 11:59 pm PDT to be considered for RITA 2026.

You will receive a confirmation of receipt of your application package, and the winner will be notified by August 15, 2026

If you have any questions about the application process, please get in touch with us at ritaarizona2026@gmail.com.