

# About the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

## What is NIMH?

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is the lead federal agency for research on mental disorders. NIMH is one of the 27 Institutes and Centers that make up the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the nation's medical research agency. NIH is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

## What is NIMH's mission?

The mission of NIMH is to transform the understanding and treatment of mental illnesses through basic and clinical research, paving the way for prevention, recovery, and cure.

## How does NIMH fulfill its mission?

NIMH aims to harness scientific knowledge and tools to achieve better understanding, treatment, and ultimately, prevention of these disabling conditions.

To fulfill its mission, NIMH:

- Supports and conducts research on mental illnesses and the underlying basic science of brain and behavior.
- Supports the training of scientists to carry out basic and clinical mental health research.
- Communicates with scientists, patients, providers, and the general public about the science of mental illnesses.

NIMH's Strategic Plan for Research includes four Strategic Objectives for the Institute:

- Define the mechanisms of complex behaviors.
- Chart mental illness trajectories to determine when, where, and how to intervene.
- Strive for prevention and cures.
- Strengthen the public health impact of NIMH-supported research.

## What are NIMH's major areas of research?

NIMH has four extramural research divisions that support research programs at hospitals and universities throughout the nation:

- The Division of Neuroscience and Basic Behavioral Science supports research programs in basic neuroscience, genetics, basic behavioral science, research training, resource and technology development, and drug discovery.
- The Division of Translational Research supports translational research on the etiology, pathophysiology, and trajectory of mental illnesses and develops effective interventions for children and adults.
- The Division of Services and Intervention Research supports research that evaluates the effectiveness of treatment and preventive mental health interventions and mental health services research.
- The Division of AIDS Research supports research on behavioral strategies to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS and research on the mental health effects of HIV/AIDS.

The Division of Extramural Activities supports these major areas of research by providing leadership and advice for extramural programs and policies; providing guidelines for grant applications; and reviewing applications for grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements.

The Division of Intramural Research Programs is the internal research division of NIMH. This division conducts research and trains researchers at the NIH campus in Bethesda, MD.

The NIMH Office of the Director comprises several offices that support Institute-wide research, policy, evaluation, and communication activities:

- The Office on AIDS directs and supports research on the biological and behavioral causes of HIV/AIDS infection and more effective mechanisms for the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of the disease.
- The Office of Autism Research Coordination coordinates and manages the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC) and related cross-agency autism spectrum disorder (ASD) activities, programs, and policies. The IACC is a federal advisory committee mandated by Congress to coordinate ASD-related activities across HHS.
- The Office of Genomics Research Coordination facilitates and promotes research to elucidate genomic risk factors that underlie mental disorders.
- The Office for Research on Disparities and Global Mental Health coordinates the Institute's efforts to reduce disparities in mental health and access to mental health care in the United States and around the world.
- The Office of Resource Management directs and coordinates the Institute's resource allocation and management improvement processes.
- The Office of Rural Mental Health Research directs research on the conditions unique to those living in rural areas, including research on the delivery of mental health services in these areas.
- The Office of Clinical Research coordinates and oversees NIMH-funded clinical research studies and provides strategic guidance and recommendations to NIMH leadership about initiatives in clinical research.
- The Office of Constituency Relations and Public Liaison oversees outreach activities, including gathering public input about NIMH activities; interacting with professional, scientific, and community-based organizations; and handling legislative and congressional issues. Within this office, the Outreach Partnership Program disseminates NIMH-funded science through partnerships with nonprofit organizations in every state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.
- The Office of Science Policy, Planning, and Communications plans and directs a comprehensive strategic agenda for national mental health policy, including science program planning and related policy evaluation, research training and coordination, and technology and information transfer.
- The Office of Technology Development and Coordination supports basic and applied research related to the development of scientific tools, technologies, and approaches related to brain and behavioral research, including software, hardware, and wetware (e.g., novel genetic methods or bioactive and molecular imaging agents).

### Where can I find more information about NIMH?

Visit the **NIMH website** at <http://www.nimh.nih.gov> or contact NIMH to find the latest on research findings, funding opportunities, and information materials, or to get more details on any of the items discussed in this fact sheet.

#### National Institute of Mental Health

Office of Science Policy, Planning and Communications  
Science Writing, Press, and Dissemination Branch  
6001 Executive Boulevard  
Room 6200, MSC 9663  
Bethesda, MD 20892-9663  
Phone: 301-443-4513 or Toll-free: 1-866-615-NIMH (6464)  
TTY: 301-443-8431 or TTY Toll-free: 1-866-415-8051  
Fax: 301-443-4279  
Email: [nimhinfo@nih.gov](mailto:nimhinfo@nih.gov)  
Website: [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

