

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).

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



NIMH fulfills its mission by:

- Supporting and conducting research on mental illnesses and the underlying basic science of the brain and behavior.
- Supporting the training of scientists to carry out basic and clinical mental health research.
- Communicating with scientists, patients, providers, and the public about the science of mental illnesses.



The NIMH Strategic Plan for Research outlines the research goals of the Institute:

- Define the brain mechanisms underlying complex behaviors.
- Examine mental illness trajectories across the lifespan.
- Strive for prevention and cures.
- Strengthen the public health impact of NIMH-supported research.

Research Funded by NIMH (Extramural Research)



Through its extramural program, NIMH annually supports more than 3,000 research grants and contracts at universities, academic health centers, and other research institutions across the country and around the world.

NIMH has four extramural research divisions that fund research programs:

- The **Division of Neuroscience and Basic Behavioral Science (DNBBS)** provides support for research on basic neuroscience, genetics, basic behavioral science, research training, resource development, and drug discovery. DNBBS-funded research provides the neurobiological foundations needed to diagnose, treat, and prevent mental illnesses.
- The **Division of Translational Research (DTR)** supports research and training programs that translate findings from basic science to discover the causes, mechanisms, and trajectories of mental illnesses. DTR-funded research paves the way for more effective approaches to prevent or treat mental illnesses in children and adults across the lifespan.
- The **Division of Services and Intervention Research (DSIR)** supports research that evaluates the effectiveness of psychosocial (psychotherapeutic and behavioral), pharmacological, biological, rehabilitative, and combined interventions to prevent or treat mental illnesses across the lifespan. DSIR-funded research is designed to have near-term impact on improving care for individuals with mental illnesses in diverse treatment settings.
- The **Division of AIDS Research (DAR)** supports studies to understand and alleviate the consequences of HIV on the central nervous system; to reduce the incidence of new HIV cases; to improve the health outcomes of those living with HIV; and to advance our understanding and management of the relationship between mental illnesses and HIV.

In addition, NIMH's **Division of Extramural Activities (DEA)** provides management and oversight of the development, implementation, and coordination of extramural programs, policies, and operations. The DEA conducts peer review meetings for special NIMH initiatives and programs, organizes meetings of the National Advisory Mental Health Council, and is responsible for award and oversight of NIMH grants and cooperative agreements.

Research Conducted at NIMH (Intramural Research)



The NIMH **Intramural Research Program (IRP)** plans and conducts basic, clinical, and translational research to advance the Institute's mission. The NIMH IRP supports approximately 600 scientists, the majority of whom work on the NIH campus in Bethesda, MD. NIMH intramural scientists range from molecular biologists working in laboratories to clinical researchers working with patients in the NIH Clinical Center, the world's largest hospital dedicated to clinical research.

Office of the NIMH Director



The **Office of the NIMH Director** includes several offices that support Institute-wide research, policy, evaluation, and communications activities.

- The **Office on AIDS (OA)** plans, directs, coordinates, and supports biomedical and behavioral science research designed to expand the integration of biological and behavioral interventions, decrease HIV incidence, and improve health outcomes for people living with HIV.
- The **Office of Autism Research Coordination (OARC)** manages the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee, a federal advisory committee charged with coordinating federal activities concerning autism spectrum disorder and providing advice to the HHS Secretary on issues related to autism.
- The **Office of Clinical Research (OCR)** coordinates Institute-wide oversight for NIMH-funded clinical research studies and provides guidance and recommendations to NIMH leadership about clinical research initiatives.
- The **Office for Disparities Research and Workforce Diversity (ODWD)** coordinates NIMH-funded research activities aimed at reducing mental health disparities, promoting equity within and outside the United States, and diversifying the mental health research workforce.
- The **Office of Genomics Research Coordination (OGRC)** coordinates NIMH-funded genomic research activities in both basic and translational areas to identify genetic influences of mental illnesses and facilitate the generation and broad dissemination of genomic resources.
- The **Office of Management (OM)** directs and coordinates the Institute's resource allocation and management improvement processes.
- The **Office of Rural Mental Health Research (ORMHR)** coordinates research activities related to the mental health of residents of rural and frontier regions and aligns NIMH activities with critical related activities across NIH and within HHS.
- The **Office of Science Policy, Planning, and Communications (OSPPC)** guides and disseminates NIMH priorities, policies, and scientific contributions through strategic planning, communications, and analyses.
- The **Office of Technology Development and Coordination (OTDC)** 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 (such as novel genetic methods or bioactive and molecular imaging agents).

Contact the 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: 1-866-615-6464
TTY: 301-443-8431 or
TTY Toll-free: 1-866-415-8051
Email: nimhinfo@nih.gov
www.nimh.nih.gov

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