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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Save Federal Funding for Serious Mental Health Research

Support the Neugebauer NIH Amendment

This week Congressman Randy Neugebauer will offer an amendment to the FY 2006 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill that will prohibit NIH's National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) from funding two specific grants it has approved. The amendment will not effect NIMH overall funding, but will specifically say that no funds may be spent on these two grants:

Happiness is getting an NIMH Research Grant to Study Happiness

In 2005 NIMH awarded \$345,161 (5th year of funding) to study "Perceived Regard and Relationship Resilience" (5R01MH060105-05). This study examines how "the activation of felt security affects newlyweds' capacity to engage in behavioral regulation strategies critical for marital satisfaction."

According to a 2003 study, "A Federal Failure in Psychiatric Research: Continuing NIMH Negligence in Funding Sufficient Research on Serious Mental Illnesses", only 1 out of every 17 NIMH 2002 research awards is reasonably likely to improve the treatment and quality of life for individuals presently affected by a serious mental illness.

If all of the NIMH funds being spent on research on happiness had instead been spent developing better treatment for depression, there would be a lot more happy people than just the NIMH grantees.

The NIMH and Birds

NIMH supports a wide variety of research projects on birds. Pigeons are a favorite, with 10 different pigeon awards given in 2005.


For nearly 15 years, more than \$1.5 million has been awarded to study "Perceptual Bases of Visual Concepts" (5R01MH047313-14). This study examines how pigeons can classify lifelike visual stimuli into natural and artificial categories. Pigeons are trained to categorize line drawings and computer renderings of natural and artificial stimuli. According to NIMH this study should shed light on conceptualization and could yield important clues for how cognitive and computer scientists might more successfully design intelligent systems that are capable of visual pattern recognition.

Some bird research has generated interesting research results. However, it is difficult to imagine what useful information could be derived that would have any value for understanding mental illnesses.



NIMH Funding Facts

- NIMH has continually failed to give a high priority to research on serious mental illnesses.

 In 1992, in response to a congressional mandate, the National Advisory Mental Health Council defined "severe mental disorders" as including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder (manic-depressive illness), autism, and severe forms of depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and panic disorder.

- NIMH Budget: FY97 Appropriation: \$661 million, FY04 Appropriation: \$1.3 Billion, FY05 Appropriation \$1.411 Billion, FY06 Appropriation Request: \$1.417 Billion.

Examples of Rejected NIMH Research Proposals

First identified in "A Federal Failure in Psychiatric Research: Continuing NIMH Negligence in Funding Sufficient Research on Serious Mental Illnesses (Nov. 19, 2003)"

Treatment Trial for Schizophrenia \$150,000 requested

Proposed to do a multicenter trial to compare two antipsychotics, olanzapine and risperidone, at higher doses for patients with severe, refractory schizophrenia, the most difficult patients to treat.

alternative to electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) in individuals with severe major depression and to assess the relative cognitive side effects for both types of treatment.

Treatment of Bipolar Depression \$146,000 requested

Proposed to carry out a treatment trial using methylphenidate to treat bipolar depression, a form of bipolar disorder that has proven very resistant to treatment.

Bipolar Disorder and Conduct Disorder in Children

\$441,000 requested

Proposed to screen 200 children with bipolar disorder with and without conduct disorder and 100 normal controls to ascertain whether children who have both disorders, who are known to be difficult treatment cases, have special clinical or genetic features that can be used to predict treatment.

Treatment of Major Depression \$400,000 requested

Proposed to study repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS) as an