Facts about . . .

Behavioral Research Program

NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE

March 2004

Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences (DCCPS)
http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/

Office of Cancer Survivorship (OCS)

Applied Research Program (ARP)
Health Services and Economics Branch (HSEB)
Outcomes Research Branch (ORB)
Risk Factor Monitoring and Methods Branch (RFMMB)

Behavioral Research Program (BRP)
Applied Cancer Screening Research Branch (ACSRB)
Basic Biobehavioral Research Branch (BBRB)
Health Communication and Informatics Research Branch (HCIRB)
Health Promotion Research Branch (HPRB)
Tobacco Control Research Branch (TCRB)

Epidemiology and Genetics Research Program (EGRP)
Analytic Epidemiology Research Branch (AERB)
Clinical and Genetic Epidemiology Research Branch (CGERB)

Surveillance Research Program (SRP)
Cancer Statistics Branch (CSB)
Statistical Research and Applications Branch (SRAB)

OVERVIEW

The National Cancer Institute's Behavioral Research Program supports a wide range of social and behavioral science research, including research on tobacco use, diet, sun exposure, physical activity, cancer screening, decision making, measurement, health communication, risk perception, genetic testing, coping, and psychoneuroimmunology. The breadth of disciplines supported includes psychology, sociology, communication, anthropology, health education, nursing, neuroscience, cognitive science, preventive medicine, social work, health services, health policy, and public health. Psychosocial oncology research is also supported by NCI's Office of Cancer Survivorship.

The types of research we support include pilot and exploratory studies, qualitative research, secondary data analyses, descriptive studies, small and large-scale intervention studies, and studies focused on the development and testing of health behavior theories and methods. We are especially interested in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research that examines sociocultural factors in health behavior and cancer-related health disparities. Health communication technology development is supported through our Small Business Innovation Research and Technology Transfer programs.

The continued support of the Behavioral Research Program reflects NCI's commitment to social and behavioral science research. In recent years, we have recruited an outstanding team of behavioral scientists who represent the diverse range of backgrounds, disciplines, and expertise needed to lead the world's largest funder of cancer control behavioral research. In addition, we have expanded our collaborations with other NIH institutes, federal agencies, and non-government organizations. Our goal is to accelerate progress in social and behavioral science research to understand cancer risk behaviors and reduce the burden of disease in all sectors of society.

GENERAL GRANTS INFORMATION

The best place to start for information about our programs, activities, resources, collaborations, and research grants is our division Web site, http://www.cancercontrol.cancer.gov. There you will find links to the Behavioral Research Program and each of our five branches. We encourage you to discuss your grant proposal ideas with a program director prior to submitting an application.

Currently funded grants are listed on each branch website. Another NCI Web site, The Cancer Research Portfolio (http://researchportfolio.cancer.gov), provides a comprehensive, easy to use source of information about all current NCI-supported research grants, organized by disease type.

How do I find out about new NIH grant announcements and funding opportunities? Researchers can obtain grant announcements by e-mail. Each week, NIH transmits via listserv the Table of Contents (TOC) for that week's issue of the *NIH Guide to Grants and Contracts* that includes the Web address (URL) for each article. To subscribe to the NIH listserve go to: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/listserv.htm

National Institutes of Health
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

How do I find information on grant review committees relevant to the social and behavioral sciences?
Information on the Behavioral and Social Sciences study sections is available at:
http://www.csr.nih.gov/review/irgdesc.htm

We suggest that grant applicants, unless they are responding to an RFA, include a cover letter that identifies the name of the review committee that they feel is most appropriate. This is not necessary for small grants (R03s), which are reviewed by a special NCI committee.

What if I'm only interested in Social and Behavioral funding opportunities?
The NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR) provides an e-mail service to announce NIH funding opportunities in the behavioral and social sciences. Once or twice a month, OBSSR distributes a list of and hyperlinks to recent funding announcements (Program Announcements, Requests for Applications, Notices) based on the announcements published in the NIH Guide to Grants and Contracts.
To receive these monthly announcements, please join the listserv by sending an e-mail message to:

- listserv@list.nih.gov
- The message should read SUBscribe BSSR-Guide-L [your full name]. The message is case sensitive, so capitalize as indicated. Do not include the brackets.
- The subject line should be blank.

This announcement is also posted at:
http://obssr.od.nih.gov/publications/bssr-guide/

Where can I find general information about the NCI grants application, review, and funding process?
Information can be found at: http://www.cancer.gov/research_funding/grants/
Included in this Web site is the online version of "Everything You Wanted to Know About the NCI Grants Process But Were Afraid to Ask," published by the NCI Grants Administration Branch, as well as answers to frequently asked questions about the NIH grants process and tips for new grant applications.

Examples of currently funded initiatives

- Centers for Population Health and Health Disparities
  http://www.cancercontrol.cancer.gov/populationhealthcenters/
- Transdiscipliary Tobacco Use Research Centers
  http://www.partnerstturc.com
- Centers of Excellence in Cancer Communications Research
  http://www.cancercontrol.cancer.gov/eocc/ceccrs_index.html
- Multimedia Technology Health Communication Grants
  http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/hcirb/sbir/

MAJOR INITIATIVES

Each year NCI systematically identifies priority areas in which focused efforts and increased resources could help reduce the burden of cancer. For 2005, there are several key areas which focus on the behavioral sciences.

Tobacco and Tobacco-Related Cancers

Objectives include: 1) lead and conduct a vigorous research and public health effort consistent with the enormous burden of tobacco-related disease; 2) support and develop innovative, integrated studies and interventions to understand, prevent, and treat tobacco use and addiction; and 3) apply cutting-edge research to prevent and treat tobacco use and tobacco-related cancers and to inform public health policy.
http://plan.cancer.gov

Optimizing Energy Balance

Objectives include: 1) discover how body weight, physical activity, and diet, along with genetic and environmental factors, interact over a lifetime to influence the cancer process; 2) monitor trends in and determinants of diet, weight, and physical activity and their cancer-related consequences across diverse populations by expanding nationwide research and health surveillance infrastructure; 3) develop improved measurement of body mass and composition, physical activity and fitness, and diet and bioactive food components through self-report measures and advances in technology for objective reference measures; and 4) improve cancer-related health outcomes, especially in high-risk populations, by accelerating research on energy balance-related behaviors and developing interventions. http://plan.cancer.gov

Cancer-Related Health Disparities

Objectives include: 1) expand research on the magnitude and causes of health disparities in cancer; 2) develop effective interventions to reduce cancer health disparities; and 3) facilitate implementation of new policy, community, and clinical interventions, and evaluate their impact on health disparities. http://plan.cancer.gov

Cancer Communications

Objectives include: 1) increase knowledge about cancer information needs, beliefs, decision making processes, and behaviors, and the relationships between these factors among different publics, including general populations, the underserved, patients and their caregivers, high-risk groups, and health providers; 2) develop and evaluate communication resources and interventions for use in reducing the cancer burden, including overcoming barriers to access and completion of cancer treatment, particularly among underserved populations; and 3) engage with partners and the media to deliver evidence-based cancer interventions in clinical and public health programs.
http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/eocc/

Cancer Survivorship

Objectives include: 1) expand research efforts to understand the biological, physical, psychological, and social mechanisms, and their interactions, that affect a cancer patient's response to disease, treatment, and recovery; 2) expand the development and use of tools to assess the health-related quality of life and quality of care of posttreatment cancer survivors and their family members, as well as NCI's capacity to track outcomes for these populations; 3) accelerate intervention research in order to reduce cancer-related chronic or late morbidity and mortality; and 4) ensure the delivery to relevant audiences of new information, interventions, and best practices, in collaboration with other Federal and health- or cancer-related professional and nonprofit organizations. http://plan.cancer.gov

Theories Project

The goal of the Theories Project is to identify and carry out activities that will help develop improved theories of health behavior. Its focus is on actions that individuals can take to prevent cancer and speed its early detection. The literature on health behavior is large, but progress in understanding health behaviors and in learning how to encourage such actions is not always apparent. Among the activities that may be considered are training in theory development and testing for health behavior researchers who lack such training; recruiting scientists with strong theory orientations to cancer behavior research; development of state-of-the-art summaries of theory-relevant topics when these are lacking; and better communication of opportunities for theory-focused research among current types of NCI grants. More information is available at:
http://dccps.nci.nih.gov/brp/health_theory_index.html

Health Cognitions

The Health Cognition Group is comprised of a set of investigators who are each interested in the judgment and decision-making processes that underlie the onset, maintenance, and cessation of health-relevant behaviors (with a particular emphasis on behaviors relevant to cancer). The research endeavors directed by members of this group reflect a commitment to the development of psychological theory and its application to health research. The activities of this group are designed to further the synthesis of basic research on how people process and utilize health information with the development and evaluation of theory-based interventions to promote healthy behavior. Although these efforts are directed primarily to behaviors relevant to cancer, they are motivated by the broader goal of developing theoretical frameworks that can be applied across a range of behavioral domains.
More information is available at:
http://www.cancercontrol.cancer.gov/hcg/

NCI BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Small Grants Program in Behavioral Research (R03)

http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-04-020.html

The Small Grants Program is designed to facilitate the growth of a nationwide cohort of scientists with research expertise in behavioral cancer control research. Small grants are short-term awards to provide support for pilot projects, development and testing of new methodologies, secondary data analysis, or innovative projects that provide a basis for more extended research. Investigators who have not previously been a principal investigator on an NCI grant in relevant fields and disciplines (e.g., medicine, public health, health promotion, health communications and informatics, epidemiology, anthropology, social work, nursing research, nutrition, and behavioral sciences) may apply for small grants to test ideas or conduct pilot studies. The project period may not exceed two years, and the budget (direct costs) must not exceed $100,000 over two years. A special review committee has been established for these grants.

Exploratory Grants for Behavioral Research in Cancer Control (R21)

http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-04-034.html

This exploratory grant opportunity supports pilot projects or feasibility studies involving creative, novel research that may produce innovative advances in behavioral, clinical, and culturally appropriate research approaches in cancer prevention and control. Studies may focus on: 1) assessment (instrumentation methods, measurement development); 2) intervention(feasibility of new and innovative approaches) appropriateness for use in populations disproportionately burdened with cancer, or other clinical, organizational, or community settings; 3) dissemination (applications, sustainability); 4) surveillance (issues of inclusion of minority populations, data base linkage studies to monitor progress toward cancer prevention and control); and 5) psychological influences on cancer and the biobehavioral mechanisms underlying cancer related behaviors.

The exploratory grant mechanism is designed to support the collection of pilot data. However, the applicant must develop a sound research plan with a strong theoretical or empirical component. These applications are reviewed by the regular NIH/CSR review committees. It is expected that these R21 grants will serve as a basis for planning future behavioral and cancer control intervention research project grant applications (R01).

Methodology and Measurement in the Behavioral and Social Sciences (R01)

http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-02-072.html

This grant opportunity addresses methodology and measurement in diverse populations, the study of sensitive behaviors, and the development of multidisciplinary and multimethod approaches to behavioral and social science research. Methodology and measurement include processes that underlie self reports, research design, data collection techniques, data analysis techniques, and ethical issues.

Social and Cultural Dimensions of Health (R01)

http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-02-043.html

The goal of this announcement is to: 1) elucidate basic social and cultural constructs and processes used in health research; 2) clarify social and cultural factors in the etiology and consequences of health and illness; 3) identify consequences of poor health for individuals and social groups; 4) link basic research to practice for improving prevention, treatment, health services, and dissemination; and 5) explore ethical issues in social and cultural research. The goal of this program announcement is to encourage further development of health-related social sciences research relevant to the missions of the NIH Institutes and Centers.

Colorectal Screening in Primary Care Practice (R21)

http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-04-036.html

This program announcement is intended to encourage applications for exploratory/developmental grants (R21) designed to improve the delivery and uptake as well as to evaluate the short-term outcomes of colorectal cancer screening in primary care practice.

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States. A growing body of evidence indicates that the number of individuals dying of colorectal cancer could be greatly reduced through appropriate screening. Although there is now general agreement that average-risk adults aged 50 and older should be screened for colorectal cancer, national survey data show less than half of eligible adults have ever been screened for this disease. Primary care practice is an important point of entry for colorectal cancer screening. The National Cancer Institute and the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality are interested in promoting research to enhance understanding of colorectal cancer screening delivery, utilization, and outcomes in primary care practice.

Cancer Education and Career Development Program (R25T)

http://cancertraining.nci.nih.gov/research/prevention/pr25t.html

This grant program is particularly applicable to cancer prevention and control, epidemology, nutrition, and the behavioral and population sciences. Awards provide support to institutions for up to 5 years for the principal investigator and Advisory Committee to coordinate and evaluate the program; for faculty to design and implement the program curriculum; and for the salaries of predoctoral and postdoctoral trainees and other program-related research costs. These programs should provide multidisciplinary and collaborative research training for pre- and post-doctoral researchers. They should also provide the trainees with the research and communication skills to conduct cancer research in a team research setting.

CAREER AWARDS

NCI Transition Career Development Award (K22)

http://cancertraining.nci.nih.gov/research/prevention/k22.html

The K22 Award or Transition Career Development Award is for an individual candidate who has been educated as a clinician scientist (e.g., Clinical Psychologists and doctoral level oncology nurses) OR as a prevention control, behavior and population scientist (e.g., Ph.D.s, Dr.P.H.s, M.D.s) and is ready to pursue an independent research career. Candidates must have a minimum of two years of mentored postdoctoral cancer research experience OR less than two years in a suitable independent position with previous, continuous postdoctoral cancer research experience at the time of the application. The purpose of the award is to provide "protected time" for newly independent investigators to develop and receive support for their initial cancer research programs. Candidates must commit 75% of a full time professional effort to conducting research and research career development. The unique feature of this award is that individuals may apply without a sponsoring institution (e.g. faculty appointment) while they are still in a “mentored” position.

Cancer Prevention, Control and Population Sciences Career Development Award (K07)

http://cancertraining.nci.nih.gov/research/prevention/k07.html

Under the guidance of a sponsor or mentor, the K07 is designed to help the postdoctoral individual receive combined didactic and supervised research experiences to become a well-trained scientist in cancer prevention, control, behavioral, and population research. Candidates must commit to a 75% full-time professional effort conducting research and research career development. Domestic institutions may apply on behalf of the candidate for a K07 for up to 5 years of support. This program funds approximately 35% of the applications submitted each year. The K07 is not renewable.

Established Investigator Award in Cancer Prevention, Control, Behavioral, and Population Research (K05)

http://cancertraining.nci.nih.gov/research/prevention/k05.html

The K05 Award or Established Investigator Award in Cancer Prevention, Control, Behavioral, and Population Research is for individuals who have outstanding track records in research and need protected time to devote to their research and to act as mentors for new investigators. Candidates must be willing to spend up to 50% effort but no less than a 25% effort conducting research and mentoring. Recipients of this award are required to hold independent research support, either Federal or private, during the period of this award. Domestic institutions may apply on behalf of the candidate for a K05 for up to 5 years of support. K05 grants are renewable for one additional 5 year period.

Institutional Clinical Oncology Research Career Development Program (K12)

http://cancertraining.nci.nih.gov/research/clinical/k12.html

The purpose of this award is to increase the number of medical doctors (M.D.s, D.O.s) and doctorally degreed oncology nurses who are trained to: 1) communicate and collaborate with basic/behavioral research scientists in order to expedite the translation of basic behavioral research information into patient-oriented cancer research; 2) perform independent clinical oncology research to test a hypothesis for the improvement of medical care of cancer patients; and 3) design and test innovative clinical protocols. Candidates must have completed their clinical training and be able to spend 75% effort engaged in research and training.

Mentored Patient-Oriented Research For Underrepresented Minorities (K23)

http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-03-006.html

This award will support the development of independent research skills by minority clinicians who want to gain experience in advanced methods and experimental approaches needed to conduct patient-oriented research. The areas of research may include: 1) mechanisms of disease; 2) therapeutic interventions; 3) clinical trials; and 4) the development of new technologies. The award provides support for up to five years and is non-renewable.

TRAINING AND CAREER WEB SITES

Minority investigators and institutions, please visit:
http://minorityopportunities.nci.nih.gov/

Be sure to visit the following important NCI Web site that describes various training and career award mechanisms:
http://cancer.gov/cancertraining

For cancer prevention, control and behavioral scientists, please visit:
http://cancertraining.nci.nih.gov/research/prevention/prevention.html

NCI BEHAVIORAL & SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

FY	$ (in millions)
1996 (Actual)	$169.6
1997 (Actual)	$179.8
1998 (Actual)	$153.5
1999 (Actual)	$172.7
2000 (Actual)	$205.0
2001 (Estimate)	$226.0
2002 (Estimate)	$248.6

ESTIMATED GRANTS FUNDED BY BRP IN FY 2003

Branch	Grants	%
ACSRB	41	13
BBRB	29	9
HCIRB	63	20
HPRB	64	20
TCRB	120	38
Total	**317**	**100**

Behavioral Research Program

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