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ASSOCIATION

APA Supports the National Institutes of Health Peer Review Process

The American Psychological Association (APA) is concerned by reports that peer-reviewed research grants are being targeted because they focus on areas of sexual behavior that are offensive to some organizations. The National Institutes of Health (NIH), the broader scientific community and many in the public at-large recognize the important contributions this critical research has made in advancing our nation's public health. Attempts to stifle research based on ideology, rather than the quality of the science, is a serious threat to the integrity of our scientific enterprise.

Scientific research into the behaviors of at-risk populations, such as prostitutes and drug users, is crucial to the public health. Without studying those populations linked to the widespread transmission of diseases like HIV/AIDS, there is little hope that we will ever defeat this public health epidemic. The NIH has a history of supporting high quality biomedical and behavioral research that has greatly improved our ability to treat, and in some cases prevent, many public health problems, including depression, heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer's, and HIV/AIDS by relying on the peer review process to determine which grants to support.

The NIH peer review process is a rigorous system used by numerous funding agencies to ensure that only applications of the highest scientific merit receive federal support. Outside scientific experts from many of America's most respected universities, rather than NIH officials, evaluate the scientific relevance and validity of this research. This scientific process alone must be allowed to determine the value of all research.

APA is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. APA's membership includes 150,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants, and students. Through its divisions in 53 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 59 state, territorial, and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance psychology as a science, as a profession, and as a means of promoting health, education, and human welfare.

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