

The Clinical Researcher and the Media

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## News Through Social Media

## What Makes News in Science and Medicine?

Big impact

Novelty

The unexpected

Celebrity

Published science

Why Reporters Want You:  
A Game of “Quotes and Experts”

Reliance on interviews

Deadline pressure

Quotes bring stories to life

Expert sources carry credibility

Hints of controversy

## Why You Should Talk to Reporters

Improves accuracy

Creates favorable climate

Stewardship of public resources

Brings context to stories

## What the Public Doesn't Know about Science

Research yields new knowledge and raises new questions

Legitimate controversies exist

Research questions take a long time to investigate

Health messages can change, based on new knowledge

Studies of large groups do not necessarily relate to an individual

## When a Reporter Contacts You

The best response for you to give when a reporter contacts you directly is:

“Sure, I can talk with you right now. What would you like to talk about?”

“I’d be happy to talk with you, but I am not allowed.”

“I’d be happy to talk with you. Would you coordinate this with my Communications Office? Here’s who you should call.”

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Seek Advice

Before speaking with a reporter, seek advice from your supervisor and your IC Communications Office

Previous experience with this reporter

NIH position on issue

Appropriateness of your participation

## Terms of the Journalistic Trade

**On the Record:** A reporter can quote you directly, using your name and title.

**Not for Attribution and On Background:** A reporter can use the information you give, including direct quotes, but you are not to be named. You may be identified as an NIH scientist, or a knowledgeable NIH source.

**Off the Record:** A reporter cannot use your information in a story as coming from you; however, the reporter can use it in other ways such as getting another source to respond to your comment.

On the Record

Despite the various ground rules, when talking to a reporter it is always best to be:

On the Record

Not for Attribution and On Background

Off the Record

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Off the Record

Interview the Reporter

Name and phone number?

Newspaper? TV show? Radio?

Deadline?

Story line?

What does the reporter want from you?

Special Considerations for Scientists

Embargoes

Freedom of Information Act

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

FOIA provides individuals with a right to access to records in the possession of the federal government

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

All the items below that may be made available under FOIA:

Minutes of NIH Institution Review Boards

Your computer files

Document drafts

Your e-mail messages

Approved research protocols



Science in the News

Precision Medicine

Zika

Cancer Moonshot

Opioids

Translational Research

Progress/New Findings

Summary

Why

Media interest in medical research

Obligation to the public

Adds credibility

How

Plain language

On the record

Ask for help