



The Clinical Researcher and the Media

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Principles and Practice of Clinical Research
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News Through Social Media



A Few NIH Handles

- NIH (@NIH)
- NIHforHealth (@NIHforHealth)
- NIH Clinical Center (@NIHClinicalCtr)
- NIH NIDCD (@NIDCD)
- NIH Library (@nihlib)
- NIHEmployeeServices (@NIHEmplSrvcs)
- NIH Human Resources (@NIHforJobs)
- NIH Funding (@NIHFunding)



A few NIH blogs

NIH DIRECTOR'S BLOG
Inside NIA: A Blog for Researchers
Open Mike
Helping connect you with the NIH perspective, and helping connect us with yours

NINDS blogs

Bringing Science Policy Into Focus

What Makes News in Science and Medicine?

sci-genes.com

Scientists Discover New Genes Related to Glaucoma



Newsweek

ZIKA BITES
HOW A SMALL TEAM OF SCIENTISTS
FOUGHT TO STOP THE DEADLY VIRUS

- 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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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

The Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552, As Amended By Public Law No. 110-478, 121 Stat. 2524, and Public Law No. 111-83, § 564, 123 Stat. 2142, 2184

Below is the full text of the Freedom of Information Act as it has been amended through all amendments to the statute made by the "Openness/Transparency Effort" and the National Government Act of 2007 and the "FOIA FERA Act of 2008." All newly enacted provisions are in *italics>*.

§ 552. Public information, agency rules, opinions, orders, records, and proceedings

(a) Each agency shall make available to the public information as follows:

(1) Each agency shall separately state and categorize publicly in the Federal Register for the purposes of this title:

(A) descriptions of the central and field organization and the established offices in which the activities and the work of a substantial portion of the agency are conducted, and the methods whereby the public may obtain information made available in response to other decisions;

(B) statements of the general courses and methods by which in substance are conducted and determined, including the times and requirements of all formal and informal procedures available;

(C) rules of procedure. Descriptions of those available on the place at which hearings are held, and instructions as to the scope and contents of all requests, reports, or communications;

(D) substantive rules of general applicability submitted or published by law, and statements of general policy or interpretation of general applicability formulated and adopted by the agency; and

(E) each amendment, revision, or repeal of the foregoing.

Except to the extent that a system has acted and each title of the same, should, a system may not be required to repeat the contents, or be otherwise published, in a manner required by this title. Except to the extent that a system of general applicability is deemed published in the Federal Register, when so reported by reference therein with the approval of the Director of the Federal Register.

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*

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Science in the News



- Precision Medicine
- Zika
- Cancer Moonshot
- Opioids
- Translational Research
- Progress/New Findings

Summary

The New York Times
Science



The Washington Post

Health & Science

- **Why**
 - Media interest in medical research
 - Obligation to the public
 - Adds credibility
- **How**
 - Plain language
 - On the record
 - Ask for help
