


## The Clinical Researcher and the Media

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Associate Director for Communications, NIH  
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**

Blending Science, Policy, and Hope

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## What Makes News in Science and Medicine?



- Big impact
- Novelty
- The unexpected
- Celebrity
- Published science



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## 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

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## Why You Should Talk to Reporters

- Improves accuracy
- Creates favorable climate
- Stewardship of public resources
- Brings context to stories



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## 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

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## 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



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### 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.

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### 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?



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## Special Considerations for Scientists

- Embargoes
- Freedom of Information Act



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## Summary

The New York Times  
**Science**



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

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