

NEWS RELEASE

University at Buffalo Statement on Criticism of Federally Funded Substance Abuse Research

Release Date: December 9, 2009

The work of Lorraine Collins, PhD, is focused on important peer-reviewed research addressing significant social problems affecting urban and minority populations. Alcohol and drug use among young people leads to a range of very costly social problems that affect us all, such as violence, crime and addiction. Dr. Collins is one of the top researchers in the addiction field in the U.S. Her work, published in the leading research journals, is helping society gain a better understanding of addiction and alcoholism.

Contact

John DellaConrada
dellacon@buffalo.edu
716-645-4601

Federally funded research like that performed by Dr. Collins has led to many breakthrough discoveries and advancements that have improved the health and quality of life for human kind, and should not be judged superficially.

Background Info:

Peer-reviewed biomedical research is critical to the nation's vital interests. Over the past 60 years, National Institutes of Health (NIH) research has grown to be the envy of the world, based upon a carefully constructed system of scientific review of merit and opportunity.

The results of biomedical research have been remarkable. The results of peer-reviewed NIH research have been astounding in terms of the public good.

-- Smallpox has been eradicated.

-- Miracle drugs have been developed in the fight against disease.

-- Life saving surgical interventions previously thought to be impossible are now commonplace.

Before, during, and after clinical interventions, we must know all we can about basic mental processes. Basic psychological research has provided critical information about the sensory processes of vision, taste, hearing, and pain perception.

Understanding human behavior -- when all is going well and when there are problems -- requires a larger understanding of the biological context within which human beings exist. We learn about modes of adaptation to change, including the evolution and development of all types of learning. These in turn provide important connections between such things as stress and disease and psychological interventions.

Breakthroughs in specific areas of mental health depend on the dynamic collaboration between a broad range of scientists such as biologists, chemists, molecular biologists, pharmacologists, behavioral scientists, as well as health care providers.

The present system of review is strong. This process includes careful review by scientists themselves to ascertain the merit and significance of the research in scientific terms. It also provides for a second review by independent panels composed of both scientists and members of the public to set priorities in the national interests.

Congress has a responsibility to assert its oversight on behalf of the integrity of the oversight process itself. While Congress plays an essential role in ensuring appropriate

accountability for the nation's research, it also has a responsibility to ensure the integrity of the oversight process itself. This process should never be compromised by the intrusion of measures designed to undermine the peer-review process and hence public confidence in the soundness of this research.