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Statement of the American Psychological Society in support of NIH peer review and funding for research in health and sexuality

The American Psychological Society strongly supports the scientific peer review system of the National Institutes of Health and we encourage Congress and the public to reject efforts to undermine that system by attacking selected grants.

Recent attacks on NIH for supporting research in health and behavior are motivated by objections to particular behaviors or to the populations being studied. These attacks are intended to stop funding of research relating to such things as reproductive functioning, sexually transmitted diseases, substance abuse, and other public health problems.

The research in question has enormous implications for understanding and preventing a range of health problems, including HIV and AIDS; problems of physical, mental and social development in children; violence; addiction; teen pregnancy; and numerous other conditions that stem from behavioral threats to health.

These problems are not limited to particular segments of our society; the health and economic consequences of these behaviors affect individuals, families and communities of all ethnic backgrounds, professions, and income levels. Our best and only hope for combating these issues is a robust health research agenda based on scientific priorities and methods.

NIH's system for evaluating research proposals ensures that the best science is brought to bear on our nation's most pressing public health problems. In the interest of public health, our Nation's leaders must take whatever steps are necessary to protect the scientific peer review system from the chilling effects of ideological influences.

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