



SOCIETY FOR  
WOMEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH

**SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH  
STATEMENT ON NIH PEER REVIEW AND POLITICIZATION OF RESEARCH**

The Society for Women's Health Research, the only national nonprofit organization whose sole aim is to improve the health of women through research, would like to express its strong concern over recent efforts to politicize the peer review process at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and restrict federal funding for grants dealing with sexual health and HIV/AIDS, particularly impacting the health of women.

Political interference in scientific research sets a dangerous precedent. NIH has one of the finest scientific peer review systems in the world, which ensures that only the best research is funded. Despite the doubling of NIH's budget over the last five years, less than 30 percent of the estimated 120,000 grant applications NIH receives each year are funded. The research grants targeted for elimination address significant public health issues, including HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, substance abuse, aging, and sexual dysfunction. All of these important issues have a strong impact on the health of American women. In particular, the incidence of HIV/AIDS in women is increasing, and AIDS is now the leading killer of young African-American women.

It is inappropriate for Congress to dictate to NIH which individual grants are deserving of support by the agency. This and previous attempts to do so set a dangerous precedent. Tactics that attempt to force researchers to conform to any ideological agenda, without regard to the importance and scientific merit of the research, are unacceptable. Every effort must be made to ensure that the scientists at NIH and other federal agencies are allowed to pursue important research without the burden of undue government interference.

We urge Congress to respect the integrity of the NIH peer review process and not to allow issues of ideology and politics to halt or interfere with important scientific research.