

JDR studies examine the trends and impact of NIH research funding to dental schools

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Today, the International and American Associations for Dental Research (IADR/AADR) published three articles in the *Journal of Dental Research* that focus on the trends and impact of National Institutes of Health (NIH) research funding to dental schools and institutions.

A study titled "The NIH's Funding to US Dental Institutions from 2005 to 2014" by Chantelle Ferland, Morgan O'Hayre, Wendy Knosp, Jonathan Horsford, NIH, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR), Bethesda, Md., USA; and Christopher Fox, IADR/AADR, Alexandria, Va., USA, examines [research funding](#) from the NIH to dental institutions in the United States of America between 2005 and 2014 using publicly available data from the NIH Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tools (RePORT). Since research training and career development are also essential for the future of [dental research](#), the authors of this study examined NIH's investment in both extramural research projects and training at dental institutions. Over the 10-year span, 56 US dental institutions received approximately \$2.2 billion from more than 20 institutes, centers, and offices at the NIH. The NIDCR is the largest NIH supporter of dental institutions, having invested 70% of the NIH total, about \$1.5 billion. The NIDCR is also the primary supporter of research training and career development, as it has invested \$177 million, which represents 92% of the total NIH investment of \$192 million. The goal of this study was to provide data on NIH and NIDCR support for US dental institutions that could inform future decision making related to oral health research and dental professional training.

"Recent Trends in Oral Cavity Cancer Research Support in the United States" by Andrew Fribley, Peter Svider, Naweed S. Raza and Danielle Garshott, Wayne State University, Detroit, Mich., USA; Blake Warner, University of Pittsburgh, Pa., USA; and Keith Kirkwood, Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, USA, used a different approach to characterize [oral cavity](#) cancer [funding](#) from NIH, with a secondary aim of comparison to NIH support for research on other malignancies. This study found that overall funding for oral cavity cancer research decreased considerably after 2009. Funding administered through the NIDCR was 6.5-times greater than dollars awarded by the NIH National Cancer Institute (NCI) in 2000; over the time period evaluated, NIDCR support decreased in most years while NCI support increased and approached NIDCR funding levels. There has been increased volatility in funding support in recent years possibly due to budget cuts and sequestration. The NCI has played an increasingly important role in supporting oral cavity cancer research, concomitant with decreasing NIDCR support. This study's findings suggest that oral cavity cancer research is underfunded relative to other non-oral cavity malignancies, indicating a need to increase the focus on rectifying the gap.

A perspective piece titled "Impact of Funding by NIDCR for Research to Dental Schools" by Peter Polverini, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA, and Mark Lingen, University of Chicago, Ill., USA, highlights that we are at a tipping point in oral health sciences, dental education and dental practice, and that dental education must continue to search for a new direction in a health care environment that is uncertain and unpredictable.

"It's important for the community to understand that research remains a cornerstone for dentistry and advocating for increased funding for NIH/NIDCR remains a top priority for AADR," said AADR President Jack Ferracane. "Increased investments in dental, oral and craniofacial

research and other [oral health](#) programs benefit the health of the public. AADR will continue to communicate to Congress the importance of biomedical research for the health of the population."

Provided by International & American Associations for Dental Research

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