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News from *The Journal of Pain*  
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## **Study Shows Major Pain Research Funding Decline at NIH**

GLENVIEW, IL, Dec. 11, 2008 – Federal funding for pain research is declining sharply, more than 9 percent a year since 2003, according to a new study published in *The Journal of Pain*. Pain research, as a result, now accounts for only 0.6 percent of all grants awarded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), despite the high prevalence of chronic pain in the U.S.

“This startling finding shows the government’s meager investment in pain research is seriously out of proportion with the widespread chronic pain incidence in our society, which is estimated at one in four Americans and accounts for more than 20 percent of all physician office visits,” said Charles E. Inturrisi, president of the American Pain Society and professor of pharmacology at Weill Cornell Medical College, New York. “And this disparity is not attributable to years of budget cuts at NIH because the *Journal of Pain* study clearly shows pain research has a higher percentage decline than the overall NIH budget. So the drop in agency funding has not affected all research areas equally.”

University of Utah researchers led by David H. Bradshaw, PhD of the university’s pain research center, analyzed data about NIH grant awards from 2003 through 2007 for pain and compared pain research funding with dollars allocated for nausea and dyspnea, a breathing disorder. A previous study authored by Bradshaw, also published in *The Journal of Pain* in 2005, found that less than one percent of all NIH funding in 2003 was for research having a primary emphasis on pain. The current study shows that five years later pain research is still a low priority at NIH.

Noting that overall budget pressures in Washington have led to an unprecedented recession in funding for biomedical research, the authors said: “With decreased funding for research and continuing needs for resources to support national security and military efforts, major natural disasters and uncertain economic status, competition for limited research funds will intensify. The ability to track funding patterns becomes increasingly important for policy making decisions.”

Inturrisi said APS has given financial support for the group's ongoing monitoring of NIH funding for pain research. "Our goal is to provide policy makers with an objective and verifiable classification tool for measuring grant awards and funding trends to help determine if NIH research dollars are being directed where the scientific and clinical need is most compelling," said Inturrisi. "Untreated and undertreated pain is the nation's most pervasive health problem and it's getting worse as the population ages. Pain research is the key for learning more about pain mechanisms and possible new treatments, but it is difficult to make significant progress if pain studies comprise just half of one percent of all NIH research grants," he added.

The study also reported that a review of all records for primary research for nausea and dyspnea, revealed that, unlike pain research funding trends, grants for those conditions increased steadily from 2003 to 2007. The authors concluded that even though there have been unprecedented funding cuts at NIH, "additional measures should be taken at NIH to improve the chances of funding for meritorious applications proposing research on pain."

#### **About the American Pain Society**

Based in Glenview, Ill., the American Pain Society (APS) is a multidisciplinary community that brings together a diverse group of scientists, clinicians and other professionals to increase the knowledge of pain and transform public policy and clinical practice to reduce pain-related suffering. APS was founded in 1978 with 510 charter members. From the outset, the group was conceived as a multidisciplinary organization. APS has enjoyed solid growth since its early days and today has approximately 3,200 members. The Board of Directors includes physicians, nurses, psychologists, basic scientists, pharmacists, policy analysts and others.

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