

## SQUANDERING GOVERNMENT FUNDS

### Sex, Animals and Financial Waste

In 1961, the U.S. report entitled *Action for Mental Health* opened the door to unlimited mental health research and funding without accountability for results. But even prior to the report's release, the National Institute of Mental Health began awarding what has amounted to over \$10 billion (€7.87 billion) in government grants to psychiatric research, with outcomes intended to benefit not only the U.S. but also other countries with which NIMH has close relationships.<sup>1</sup>

And the actual outcomes and benefits of this research? *TIME* reported, "...there are no cures for mental illness—only lifelong management—and treatment is highly unpredictable"!

Over a recent five-year period, funding to the NIMH doubled from \$661 million to more than \$1.3 billion (€521 million to €1 billion).<sup>2</sup> Yet psychiatrists and their pharmaceutical company-funded advocacy groups claim government funded research is not equitable to that spent on physical illnesses such as cervical cancer, multiple sclerosis and heart disease. Based on their estimates, the annual funding should be 15 times greater—nearly \$20 billion (€15.7 billion). While they claim that NIMH rejects too many proposed studies for "serious mental illness," a review of 30 of those proposals shows that one-third, at a cost of \$2.2 million (€1.7 million), were to study psychotropic drug use, while only one, costing \$97,000 (€76,400), was to study a natural alternative to physically damaging drugs or destructive brain intervention procedures.<sup>3</sup>

Here's how NIMH spent \$15 million (€12 million) of its government funding:

- A 21-year study was given \$1.5 million (€1.2 million) to examine the behavior of Norway rat-pups, including their nursing behavior, responses to a variety of odors, changes in their salt appetite and an analysis of their urine in relation to maternal licking of the pups.<sup>4</sup> \$331,690 (€261,317) was awarded the twelfth year of a research project to study the seasonal breeding in mice.<sup>5</sup>
- NIMH supports a wide variety of research projects on birds. Pigeons are a favorite, with 18 different pigeon awards given in 2002 alone. This included a \$208,931 (€164,603) study of "the processes by which pigeons learn matching to sample." [The memory processes of pigeons.] Another \$73,893 (€58,215) was awarded to study how pigeons and rats make choices.<sup>6</sup>

- On other birds, \$32,250 (€25,408) was spent studying the thought process of great bowerbirds and \$19,540 (€15,394) to ascertain whether quails can learn to imitate behavior.<sup>7</sup> There was the 30-year \$3.1 million (€2.5 million) study of the “vocal learning” of birds; an 11-year, \$1.4 million (€1.1 million) study to examine the “brain basis of vocal communication” in songbirds and a five-year study of budgerigars that cost taxpayers \$321,097 (€252,972)<sup>8</sup>
- Insect studies include a \$213,304 (€168,049) five-year examination of “crickets and flies,” and \$350,000 (€275,743) awarded to study courtship behavior among fruit flies.<sup>9</sup> Then there’s NIMH’s ongoing sleep study to “estimate the prevalence of excessive daytime sleepiness in the general population.” Taxpayers dollars were spent as follows: \$35,267 (€27,785) for a study on the characteristics of sleep in locusts, \$115,523 (€91,013) to study the sleep patterns of dogs and \$328,023 (€258,428) to do the same in rats.<sup>10</sup>
- A \$771,805 (€608,056) 15-year project studied whiptail lizards to determine how the temperature of the incubating egg becomes a biological signal to channel sexual development.<sup>11</sup>
- Electric fish were studied for 21 years at a cost of \$1.6 million (€1.3 million).<sup>12</sup> Another 15-year study of the communication skills of electric fish in South America and Africa cost taxpayers \$1.4 million (€1.1 million).<sup>13</sup>

After decades of studying insects, mammals and fish in an attempt to understand human behavior the NIMH is an unmitigated failure in achieving the *prevention, diagnosis* and *treatment* of “mental disorders” —its stated mission.

Psychiatrist David Kaiser writes, “It has occurred to me with forcible irony that psychiatry has quite literally lost its mind...the field has gone far down the road into a kind of delusion, whose main tenets consist of a particularly pernicious [evil] biologic determinism and a pseudo-scientific understanding of human nature and mental illness.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Erica Goode, "Tireless, Outspoken and Atypical, Mental Health Chief Rocks the Boat," *The New York Times*, 15 June 1999; [www.scitechresources.gov](http://www.scitechresources.gov).

<sup>2</sup>"FEDERAL FAILURE IN PSYCHIATRIC RESEARCH: Continuing NIMH Negligence in Funding Sufficient Research on Serious Mental Illnesses (Nov. 19, 2003)," Treatment Advocacy Center Report, 19 Nov. 2003.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>Project number MH28355: "Ontogeny of the Sensory Control of Behavior" (changed to "Ontogeny of the Control and Organization of Behavior" in 1979).

<sup>5</sup>*Op. cit.*, Treatment Advocacy Center Report.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup>Project number MH14651: "Comparative Study of Vocal Learning"; Project number MH40900: "Sensory/Motor Representation of a Learned Skill"; Project number MH00982: "Biological Foundations of Vocal Learning."

<sup>9</sup>*Op. cit.*, Treatment Advocacy Center Report.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup>Project number MH00135: "Psychobiological Studies of Reproductive Behavior."

<sup>12</sup>Project number MH26149: "Information Processing in Laminated Neuronal Networks."

<sup>13</sup>Project number MH37972: "Neuroethology of Electric Communication."

<sup>14</sup>David Kaiser, M.D., "Commentary: Against Biologic Psychiatry," *Psychiatric Times*, Dec.1996, <http://www.mhsource.com/edu/psytimes/p961242.html>.