

NIMH Further Clarifies Exploratory/Developmental Grant (R21) Policy

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National Institute
of Mental Health

Psychological scientists wishing to apply for exploratory/developmental research grants from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) supported by the R21 mechanism should turn to new guidance from NIMH on how to proceed.

NIMH is participating in PA-18-344 [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\) Exploratory/Developmental Research Grant Program \(Parent R21 Clinical Trial Required\)](#), the parent funding opportunity announcement for R21 grants. However, NIMH has announced that it will only consider clinical trial applications proposing *mechanistic studies*—that is, studies designed to understand a biological or behavioral process, the pathophysiology of a disease, or the mechanism of action in an intervention (see [NOT-MH-18-004](#)).

NIMH has also published NIMH-specific R21 program announcements for receipt dates beginning February 16, 2018. [PA-18-350 NIMH Exploratory/Developmental Research Grant \(R21 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#) is one such announcement and accepts research that is not considered a clinical trial.

Psychological scientists should be aware that NIH's [new definition of clinical trials](#), and several associated new policies, have significant implications for the NIH funding process. APS recommends that those wishing to apply for NIH grants read the funding opportunity announcements and application instructions very closely to ensure that they are eligible to apply and understand any changes to the application process.

APS is monitoring these developments closely and will share any further information as it is released by NIH.