

NIH to Speed Public Release of Research Publications - Articles Accessible Online

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced a new policy earlier this year designed to accelerate the public's access to published articles resulting from NIH-funded research. The policy—the first of its kind for NIH—calls on scientists to release to the public manuscripts from research supported by NIH as soon as possible, and within 12 months of final publication.

These peer-reviewed, NIH-funded research publications will be available in a Web-based archive to be managed by the National Library of Medicine (NLM), a component of NIH. The online archive will increase the public's access to health-related publications.

The NIH policy will achieve several important goals, including:

Creating a stable archive of peer-reviewed research publications resulting from NIH-funded studies to ensure the permanent preservation of these vital research findings;

Securing a searchable compendium of these research publications that NIH and its awardees can use to manage more efficiently and to understand better their research portfolios, monitor scientific productivity, and, ultimately, help set research priorities; and

Making published results of NIH-funded research more readily accessible to the public, health care providers, educators, and scientists.

The policy requests that NIH-funded scientists submit an electronic version of the author's final manuscript, upon acceptance for publication, resulting

from research supported in whole or in part by NIH. The author's final manuscript is defined as the final version accepted for journal publication, and includes all modifications from the publishing peer review process.

The policy gives authors the flexibility to designate a specific time frame for public release—ranging from immediate public access after final publication to a 12-month delay—when they submit their manuscripts to NIH. Authors are strongly encouraged to exercise their right to specify that their articles will be publicly available through PubMed Central (PMC) as soon as possible.

PMC (<http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov>), a part of the NIH's National Library of Medicine (NLM), is the agency's digital repository of full-text, peer-reviewed biomedical, behavioral, and clinical research journals. It is a publicly accessible, stable, permanent, and searchable electronic archive.

As part of on-going efforts to implement this new policy, NIH plans to establish a Public Access Advisory Working Group, as a subgroup of the NLM's Board of Regents. The Working Group will include representatives of the patient advocacy, scientific, library, and publishing communities, and will provide advice on implementation issues and assess progress in meeting the new policy's stated goals.

Additional information on the new policy and related documents, including a "Questions and Answers" fact sheet, can be found at: <http://www.nih.gov/about/publicaccess/index.htm>.