

Evaluation of the Scientific and Public Health Impact of NIEHS Supported Research

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NIEHS supported research covers a broad array of environmental health topics and forms a continuum from basic to applied translational research. A large segment of this research results in publications in peer-reviewed journals. The Program Analysis Branch has developed a tracking system that can now be used to systematically analyze the content, number, types, and scientific fields of journal articles produced by our portfolio of grants. This tracking system is being used to measure the scientific impact of the work supported by NIEHS. In addition, as part of a communication effort, each month PAB searches scientific literature databases and selects four of the 100-125 monthly NIEHS-supported publications to highlight in a feature called *DETR Papers of the Month*. These publications are encapsulated into lay summaries describing the overall importance of this work and the potential public health impact. Over time NIEHS-supported publications lead to key advances in medicine, regulatory decision-making, and improved public health. Dr. Kenneth Olden, Director NIEHS, asked the Program Analysis Branch (PAB) to develop a series of short, one to two page descriptions of the impact NIEHS-sponsored research has had on public health. These *Stories of Public Health Impact* provide a historical perspective of NIEHS research and highlight how advances in basic research can lead to improved health care, new standards for environmental exposure, and a reduction in disease. PAB developed an example of such a write-up (Dramatic Decline in Lead Poisoning) and asked the Program Administrators in DETR for ideas of additional topics. Stories were developed by program staff and submitted to PAB. Drafts were edited a number of times and have all been reviewed by the investigator(s) whose work is being highlighted. Nine stories ranging from aflatoxin and liver cancer to particulate matter and cardiovascular disease have been completed; several more topics are under development.