

National Advisory Environmental Health Sciences Council

NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL) Report

June 2022

The NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL) [OCPL](#) is the first source of news and information about the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS). The communications team provides a broad range of services to support the institute's ground-breaking biomedical research, and to share its discoveries with members of Congress, local governments, public health officials, the media, and communities throughout the world. Christine Flowers directs OCPL.

This report reflects OCPL highlights [since the February 2022](#) Council Report.

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- Environmental Health Information, Online and Print
- Social Media
- Promotional Materials

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I. Events

Launch of NIH Climate Change and Health Initiative and communications materials in February 2022.

- Established dedicated space on NIH website for [NIH Climate and Health Initiative](#). Continue to update pages with new information.
- Developed [fact sheet](#) on Strategic Framework.
- As part of the NIH Climate Change and Health Seminar Series:
 - **NIEHS** hosted a webinar on May 13, 2022, featuring Aaron Bernstein, M.D., from Boston Children's Hospital, Harvard Medical School, and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.
 - **NIEHS co-hosted with NICHD** a webinar on April 8, 2022, featuring Craig Newgard, M.D., Oregon Health & Science University.



- **NHLBI co-hosted with NHLBI** a webinar on February 22, 2022, featuring Jonathan Samet, M.D., and Tami Bond, Ph.D., both from the University of Colorado School of Public Health.
- **NIEHS co-hosted with NIMHD**, a webinar on February 9, 2022, featuring Robert Bullard, Ph.D., from Texas Southern University.

Women's Health Awareness Day conference held virtually, Saturday, April 9.

- The 8th annual NIEHS [Women's Health Awareness conference](#) drew more than 1,100 registrants from around the country, addressing topics ranging from reproductive health to housing insecurity.
- OCPL helped create a web-based dashboard to support 25 live zoom sessions, all with online resources and materials.
- OCPL helped produce [5 new "Strive to Thrive" videos](#) offering health tips and an extensive [program book](#) with speakers bios, sponsorship profiles, and health information.



NIEHS director's participation in community forum in Ohio in May.

- As part of the NIEHS outreach program, on May 10, Rick Woychik, NIEHS/NTP director, met with community members to discuss environmental health issues in the area and visited the University of Cincinnati Center for Environmental Genetics.
- The university developed a [press release](#), hosted a media availability, and worked with local reporters to develop [stories](#).



II. Public Information and Outreach

The online [Environmental Factor](#) is produced monthly by NIEHS OCPL.



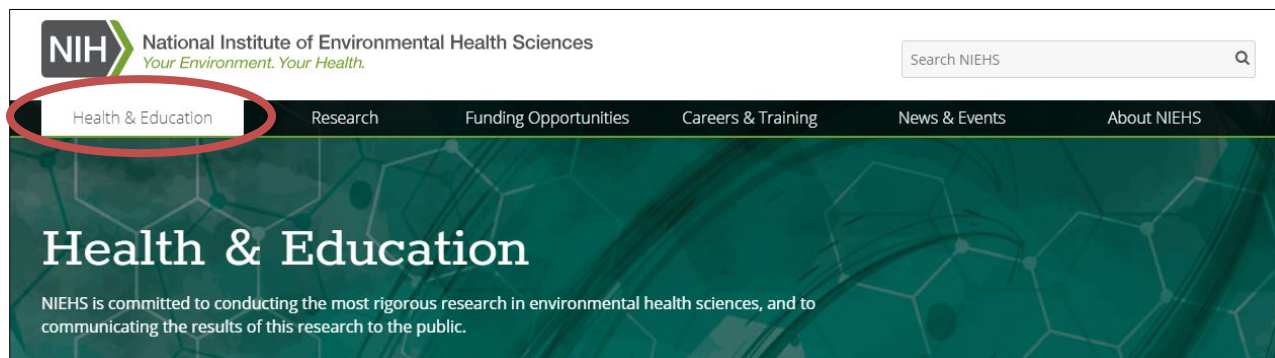
Each month, the Environmental Factor includes a column from Rick Woychik, called the "NIEHS Director's Corner."

- In May, Vivian Cheung from the University of Michigan joined the [NIEHS Director's Corner](#) to talk about **sequencing RNA**.
- In April, the [NIEHS Director's Corner](#) focused on the **All of Us Research Program** with guest Geoffrey Ginsburg.
- In March, Sharon Beard of DERT chatted with the director in the [NIEHS Director's Corner](#) about **worker safety and environmental justice**.



Be sure to [subscribe](#) to the newsletter if you haven't already.

Online Environmental [Health & Education](#) Information



OCPL maintains more than [60 health topic webpages](#), which are organized into four categories:

- Conditions & Diseases
- Environmental Agents
- Environmental Health Science Basics
- Population Research

Under [Brochures & Fact Sheets](#), you will find more than 60 publications, all downloadable. You may also order print copies through our [online order form](#). In March, April, and May, these fact sheets were created or updated:

- [Lung Health and Your Environment](#).
- [Disaster Research and Response Program](#)
- [Superfund Research Program](#)
- [The Microbiome, the Environment, and Your Health](#)
- [Worker Training Program](#)

NIEHS Social Media Accounts

OCPL posts social media content daily to promote people, events, and research. We especially like to promote research conducted by our grantees. Remember to mention NIEHS in your news releases and tag us in your social media.

NIEHS OCPL regularly posts content through these platforms:

- [Facebook](#) targets a general audience.
- [Twitter](#) @NIEHS - targets both a lay audience and science community.
- [LinkedIn](#) targets people working in the environmental health field.
- [YouTube](#) targets both a lay audience and science community.

Social Media Growth

NIEHS social media followership continues to steadily increase. From January 2022 through May 2022, the NIEHS:

- Twitter feed increased from 21,892 to 22,323 followers.
- Facebook page increased from 33,000 to 33,032 followers.
- LinkedIn page increased from 6,662 to 7,188 followers.

Social Media Examples



NIEHS Retweeted

NIEHS PEPH @NIEHS_PEPH · May 18

Podcast: Learn how the @NIEHS Women's Health Awareness Program brings understudied, underrepresented, & underreported groups of women together to take control of their health #U3Women @NIH_ORWH @NCCU



niehs.nih.gov

NIEHS Program Empowers Women, Improves Health - Partnerships fo...
In this episode, we'll hear from Joan P. Packerham, Ph.D., who directs the Women's Health Awareness program at NIEHS. She discusses ho...

NIEHS @NIEHS · May 13

"Transforming Communities by Enhancing Women's Health" was the theme of the eighth annual NIEHS Women's Health Awareness conference held April 9. go.usa.gov/xus2Z
In this month's edition of Director's Corner, University of Michigan




ALT NIEHS

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NIEHS @NIEHS · May 13

NIEHS National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

May 9 at 2:09 PM ·

Throughout 50 years of publishing cutting-edge research and news, our official journal — [Environmental Health Perspectives](#) — has evolved to keep up with the times.

Read more at [#EHP50](https://go.usa.gov/xuGjg)

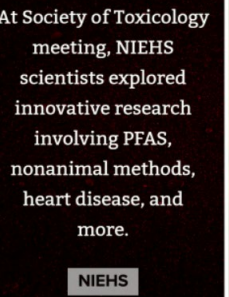


NIEHS National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

April 11 ·

"The [Society of Toxicology \(SOT\)](#)'s annual meeting is an opportunity for us to highlight the great work of NIEHS and the National Toxicology Program." — Dori Germolec, Ph.D., Group Leader, NTP Systems Toxicology Branch

Read more at [#2022SOT](https://go.usa.gov/xurdu)




NIEHS

In May, NIEHS hosted a Twitter Chat about asthma and children's health.



Asthma Twitter Chat and NIEHS Account Analytics

NOTE: Impressions = the number of times a post or hashtag loaded onto a user's news feed. This does not mean that the user actually saw the content, only that they had the chance to.

Twitter Chat Analytics

Total impressions for #NIEHSAsthmaChat: 3.22 million

Total tweets using the hashtag: 150

Number of times the hashtag was used on chat day (May 12): 112

Chat Participation

Total participants: 35

Most active participants:

- Children's Environmental Health Network (42 tweets)
- NHLBI (29 tweets)

Other noteworthy participants:

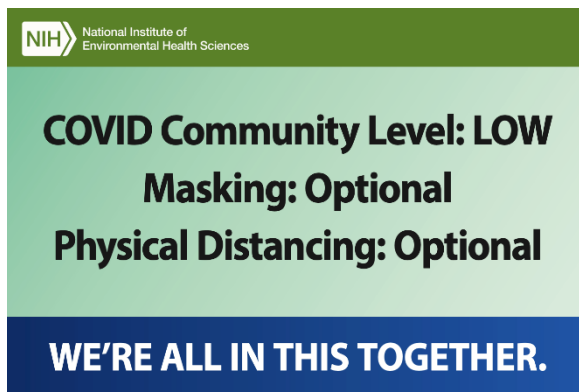
- NLM
- MedlinePlus
- CDC Asthma Program
- Breathe Better Network
- USC Environmental Health
- UC San Francisco Health

OCPL also create graphics and materials to promote programs and events:

Rebranding DEIA materials.



Updating campus signage.



III. News Promotion and Coverage

News Releases from NIH-NIEHS and NIEHS-Funded Researchers

Date	Headline	URL
27-May-2022	Gene Linked to Severe Learning Disabilities Governs Cell Stress Response	https://today.duke.edu/2022/05/gene-linked-severe-learning-disabilities-governs-cell-stress-response
19-May-2022	Depression, loneliness associated with increased hospitalization risk after COVID-19, NIH-funded study suggests	https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/depression-loneliness-associated-increased-hospitalization-risk-after-covid-19-nih-funded-study-suggests
18-May-2022	New findings enable monitoring for harmful toxin in freshwater environments	https://news.ucsc.edu/2022/05/guanitoxin.html
3-May-2022	NIH Statement on World Asthma Day 2022: Toward Improved Asthma Care	https://www.niehs.nih.gov/news/newsroom/releases/2022/May%2022
25-April-2022	Study Suggests Black, Hispanic Women With Low Vitamin D More Likely to Develop Breast Cancer	https://newsroom.wiley.com/press-releases/press-release-details/2022/Study-Suggests-Black-Hispanic-women-with-low-vitamin-D-more-likely-to-develop-breast-cancer/default.aspx
18-April-2022	Environment and Health Experts Gather for Wyatt Symposium April 22	http://uknow.uky.edu/research/environment-and-health-experts-gather-for-wyatt-symposium-april-22
13-April-2022	Historically Redlined Neighborhoods Burdened by Excess Oil and Gas Wells	https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/public-health-now/news/historically-redlined-neighborhoods-burdened-excess-oil-and-gas-wells
March 25, 2022	Amygdala overgrowth that occurs in autism spectrum disorder may begin during infancy	https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/amygdala-overgrowth-in-autism-spectrum-disorder-may-begin-during-infancy
March 21, 2022	CHOP and Penn Medicine to Lead Philadelphia Regional Center for Children's Environmental Health	https://www.chop.edu/news/chop-and-penn-medicine-lead-philadelphia-regional-center-childrens-environmental-health
March 8, 2022	Hurricanes and Other Tropical Cyclones Linked to Rise in U.S. Deaths from Several Major Causes	https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/public-health-now/news/hurricanes-and-other-tropical-cyclones-linked-rise-us-deaths-several-major-causes
Feb. 25, 2022	NC State's Jane Hoppin Wins Holshouser Award	https://news.ncsu.edu/2022/02/nc-states-jane-hoppin-wins-holshouser-award

Feb. 16, 2022	NIH awards \$4 million grant to improve health in diverse communities	https://news.emory.edu/stories/2022/02/son-nih-award/story.html
Feb. 14, 2022	UMASS AMHERST Researcher Wins \$3 Million ‘Outstanding New Environmental Scientist’ Award: NIEHS grant will support research on complex interplay of risk factors for autism	https://www.umass.edu/news/article/umass-amherst-researcher-wins-outstanding-new-environmental-scientist-award

NIEHS in the News

NIEHS and NTP are often mentioned in a mix of top tier, trade, syndicated, and international news outlets. Examples follow from February 2022 – May 2022.

Date	Headline	Outlet	URL
23-May-2022	The Reproducibility Crisis in Clinical Trial Research	Medical Ethics Advisor	https://www.reliasmedia.com/products/325-medical-ethics-advisor David Resnik of OD quoted
20-May-2022	NIEHS director visits to discuss environmental health concerns	Mirage	https://www.miragenews.com/niehs-director-visits-to-discuss-environmental-785726/ NIEHS Director Woychik quoted
19-May-2022	Puberty Starts Earlier Than It Used To. No One Knows Why.	New York Times	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/19/science/early-puberty-medical-reason.html Nathalie Shaw of DIR quoted
4-May-2022	Many children’s products labeled as eco-friendly contain toxic ‘forever chemicals,’ study finds	The Hill	https://thehill.com/policy/equilibrium-sustainability/3476161-many-childrens-products-labeled-as-eco-friendly-contain-toxic-forever-chemicals-study-finds/
26-April-2022	Low Vitamin D Tied to Breast Cancer Risk in Hispanic Women	Medscape	https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/972664 Katie O'Brien of DIR quoted
25-April-2022	Vitamin D Level, Race/Ethnicity Tied to Breast Cancer Risk	Drugs.com	https://www.drugs.com/news/vitamin-d-level-race-ethnicity-tied-breast-cancer-risk-104978.html Katie O'Brien of DIR quoted

14-April-2022	Exposure assessment for Deepwater Horizon oil spill: Health outcomes	Science Daily	https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2022/04/220414125026.htm Dale Sandler of DIR quoted
6-April-2022	Abnormal Growth of the Amygdala in Infants Tied to Autism	Medscape	https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/971694?src=
30-March-2022	Can Dying Your Hair Raise Your Risk for Breast Cancer? Experts Explain	Good Housekeeping	https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/a39079285/hair-dye-and-breast-cancer-risk/ Alexandra White of DIR quoted
23-March-2022	These countries have the most polluted air in the world, new report says	USA Today	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2022/03/22/who-air-quality-standards/7125202001/ Sri Nadadur of DERT quoted
08-Mar-2022	New Carcinogens Added to Toxicology List	Medscape	https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/969885?src=
08-Mar-2022	Seasonal Allergies: Symptoms, Causes And Treatment	Forbes	https://www.forbes.com/health/body/seasonal-allergies-symptoms-and-treatment/
4-Feb-2022	Fact check: No evidence COVID-19 vaccines cause neurodegenerative diseases in young people	USA Today	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2022/02/04/fact-check-covid-19-vaccines-neurodegenerative-diseases-not-linked/9253041002/

NIEHS in the News - Select excerpts from news articles

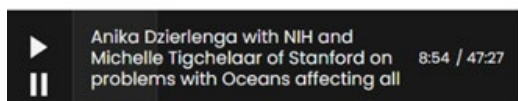
- In May, [Mirage](#) highlighted NIEHS Director's visit to Ohio.



- In May, the monthly publication, [NIH News in Health](#), focused on NIEHS work related to lead, mold, and radon.



- In March, Anika Dzierlenga of DERT appeared on the [Healthy Living Healthy Planet Radio](#) show (Episode 115) discussing research from the NIEHS/NSF oceans and human health portfolio.



Episode 115 – The Problem With our Oceans

- In March, the [NIH Record](#) ran a story about an NIEHS meeting on gene-environment interactions.

NIH RECORD

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Ethical Issues Emerge in Gene-Environment Interactions Research

BY JENNIFER HARKER

Dr. Dave Kaufman manages ELSI research grants.

PHOTO: NHGRI

Ethical, legal and social implications (ELSI) of researching how the environment interacts with human genetics were the subject of a virtual workshop cosponsored recently by NIEHS and NHGRI.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss ELSI issues that will require greater attention as gene-environment interactions research expands, noted Dr. Dave Kaufman, a program director in NHGRI's Division of Genomics and Society. He and Dr. Kimberly McAllister, a health scientist administrator in NIEHS's Genes, Environment and Health Branch, organized and moderated the event.

ELSI topics discussed included collection, analysis and sharing of environmental and genomic research data; unique concerns of vulnerable populations disproportionately affected by environmental exposures; and potential legal and privacy issues that arise when individuals' identities are linked to genomic and exposure data.

- In March, the [NIH Record](#) published an article about the involvement of NIEHS in the NIH Climate Change and Health (CCH) Initiative.

NIH RECORD

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March 4, 2022

Vol. LXXIV, No. 5

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Climate Change Spurs Big New Plan for Health Research

Yoga, Heart-Healthy Cooking Demos Highlight Heart Month

NIH Updates Policy Manual on Harassment, Discrimination

Climate Change Spurs Big New Plan for Health Research

BY JENNIFER HARKER

Dr. Claudia Thompson

PHOTO: STEVE MCCAW/NIEHS

Building on its decades of work to advance scientific knowledge about how climate change affects human health, NIEHS is leading a new federal collaboration to significantly scale up research and action in this critical area.

Seven institutes and centers recently joined forces to establish the NIH Climate Change and Health (CCH) Initiative, which was discussed during a recent NIEHS webinar.

"Although NIEHS has been one of the lead ICs on climate change and health, it is clear that climate change greatly elevates threats to human health across a wide range of illnesses and injuries that are being studied throughout NIH," said Dr. Rick Woychik, director of NIEHS and the National Toxicology Program. "This is bigger than what NIEHS or any single IC can do."

Presidential Order Shapes Initiative

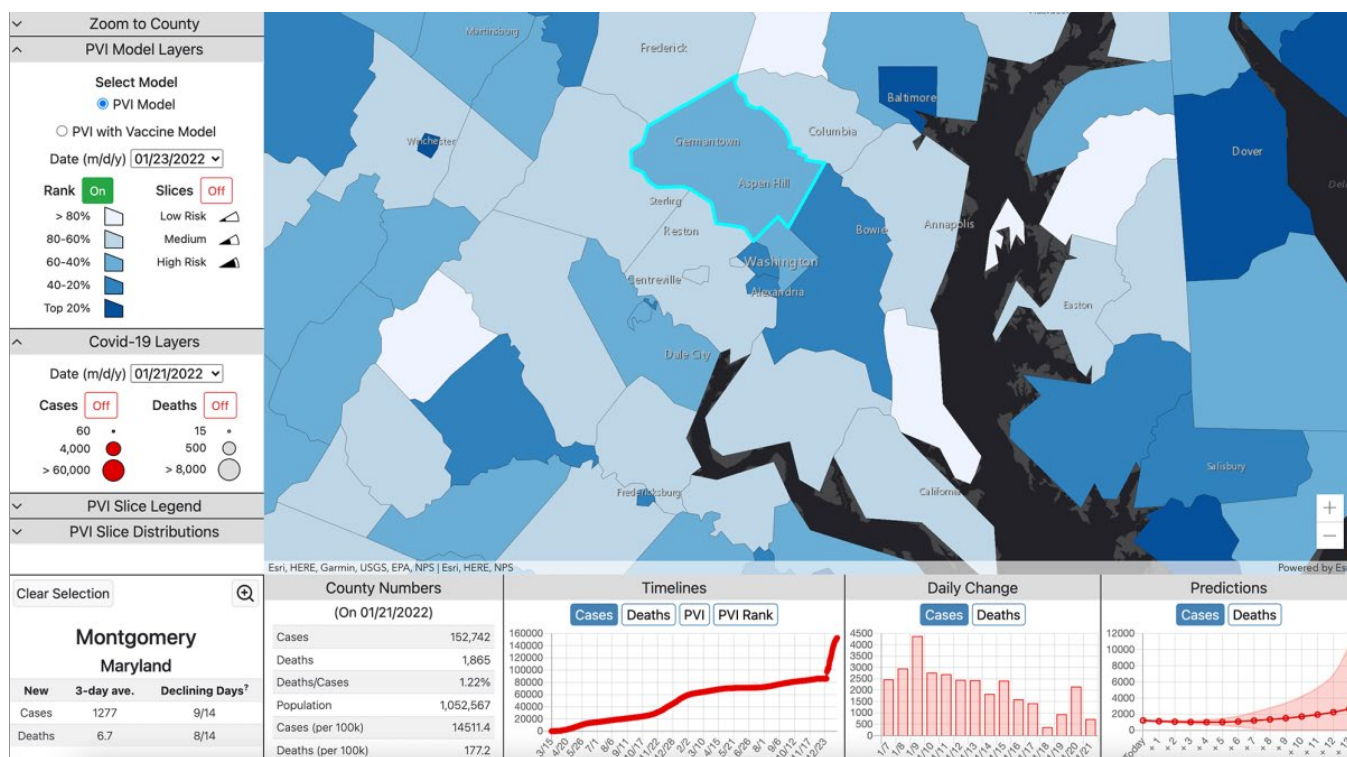
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- In February, the NIH Intramural Research Program (IRP) **I AM INTRAMURAL BLOG** featured research by Alison Motsinger-Reif in the article, "[IRP Pushes Forward in Fight Against Pandemic Virus,](#)" under the last subheading "Enhancing Efforts to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19."

Excerpt from NIH IRP Article:

Other IRP researchers are more concerned with helping public health officials determine where in the U.S. to send resources like COVID tests and implement other interventions. A team led by IRP senior investigator [Alison Motsinger-Reif, Ph.D.](#), has developed an online tool called the [COVID-19 Pandemic Vulnerability Index \(PVI\) Dashboard](#) that integrates data on 10 pandemic-related metrics in each county in the U.S., including the county's current infection and case rates, how much residents move around, the level of testing in the area, and the number of available hospital beds. These numbers are used to create an overall risk profile for each individual county, called a PVI scorecard, which is continuously updated as conditions change.

"My group has longstanding interests in machine learning for making predictions using big data," Dr. Motsinger-Reif says. "The data that is available related to COVID naturally lent itself to such an effort."

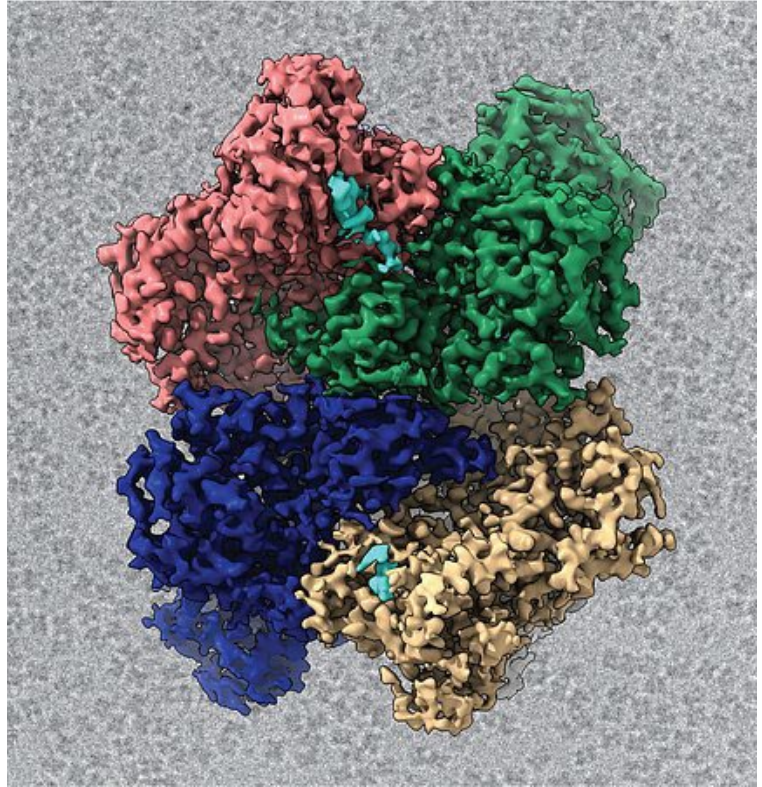


- In February, NIEHS intramural researcher Robin Stanley was featured in the **I AM INTRAMURAL BLOG**. The article is titled, "[IRP Scientists Continue Efforts to Quell](#)"

[Pandemic,"](#) and her section is under the subheading “Investigating the Novel Coronavirus’ Biology and Behavior.”

- **Excerpt from NIH IRP Article:**

Meanwhile, the lab of IRP senior investigator [Robin Stanley, Ph.D.](#), hopes that new treatment approaches may come from learning more about how SARS-CoV-2 processes its own genetic material. Unlike humans, whose genome is encoded in double-stranded DNA, the SARS-CoV-2 genome is made up of single-stranded RNA. Part of that RNA contains the instructions for manufacturing ‘non-structural proteins,’ or Nsps, which help synthesize and process the virus’ RNA. One particular NSP, called Nsp15, processes viral RNA in a way that prevents our cells from recognizing it as non-human and breaking it down. Consequently, if scientists could stop Nsp15 from doing its job, cells might be able to stop the novel coronavirus from replicating inside them.



In 2021, Dr. Stanley’s team published the first detailed structural images of Nsp15 using a technique called cryo-electron microscopy. In addition, the researchers revealed the structure of Nsp15 when it is bound to RNA molecules in various stages of processing. They hope to use this structural knowledge of Nsp15 to design synthetic compounds that inhibit it, which could help COVID-19 patients by reducing the virus’ ability to make copies of itself inside their bodies.

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