



OFFICE OF BEHAVIORAL  
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

## National Institutes of Health

### NIH Social Work Research Initiative

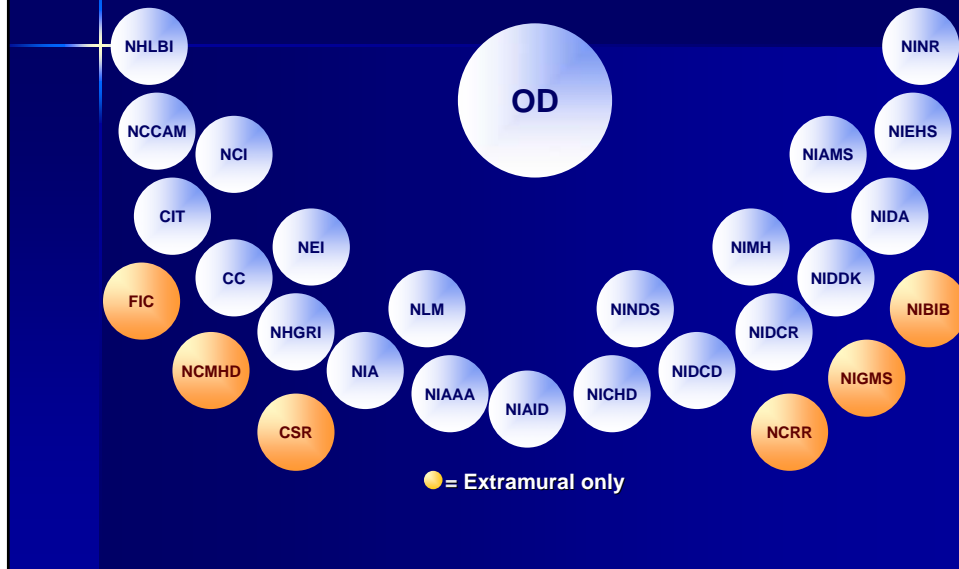
G. Stephane Philogene, Ph.D.  
Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research

2008 Summer Institute on Health Services Research: Cross Systems  
Research to Improve Health Outcomes  
Bethesda, MD  
July 27, 2008

## Overview

- What is NIH?
- What is OBSSR?
- OBSSR's Strategic Prospectus
- NIH Plan for Social Work Research

## NIH Consists of 27 Institutes and Centers

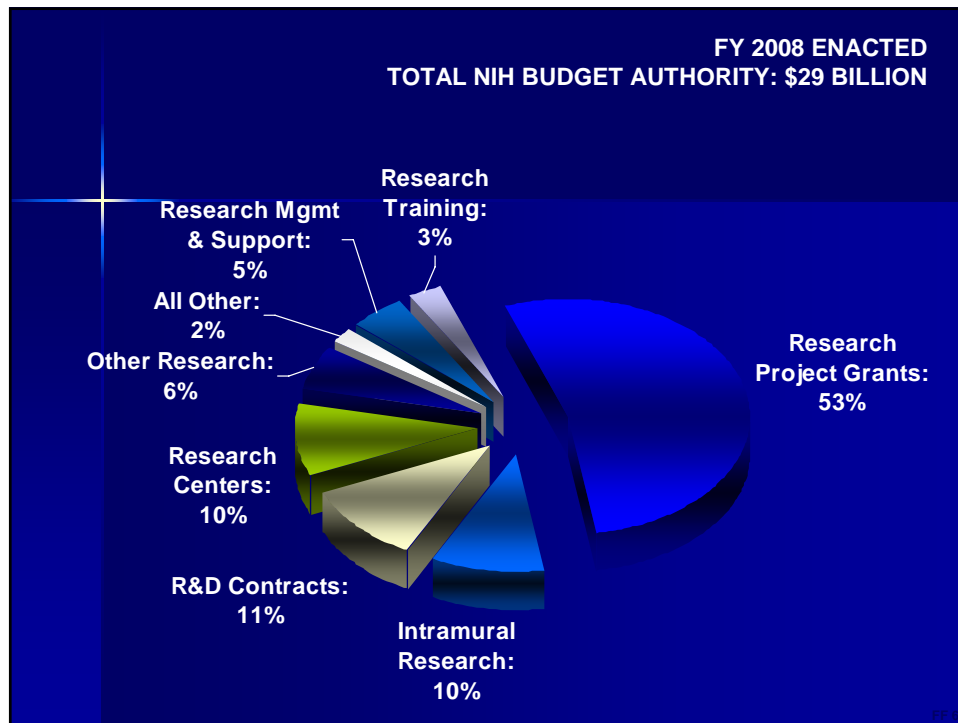


## NIH's Mission is...

"...science in pursuit of fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to extend healthy life and reduce the burdens of illness and disability."

# National Institutes of Health Overview

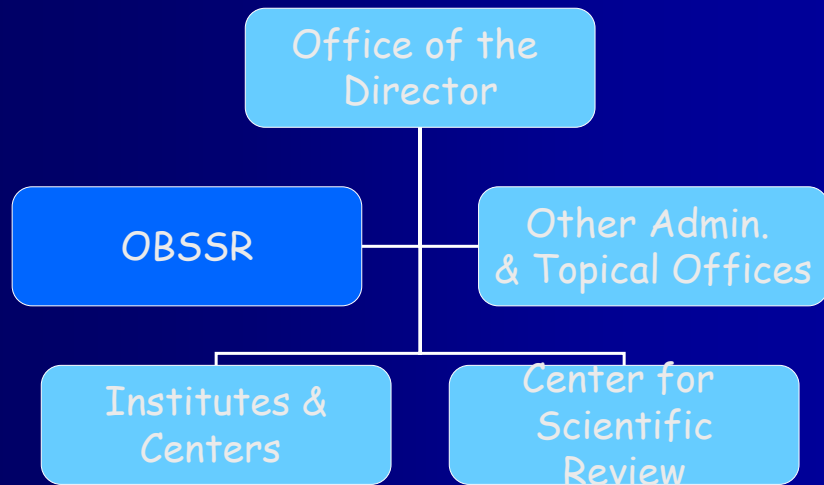
- \$29 billion in FY2008
- ≈80% goes to grants and contracts supporting extramural research



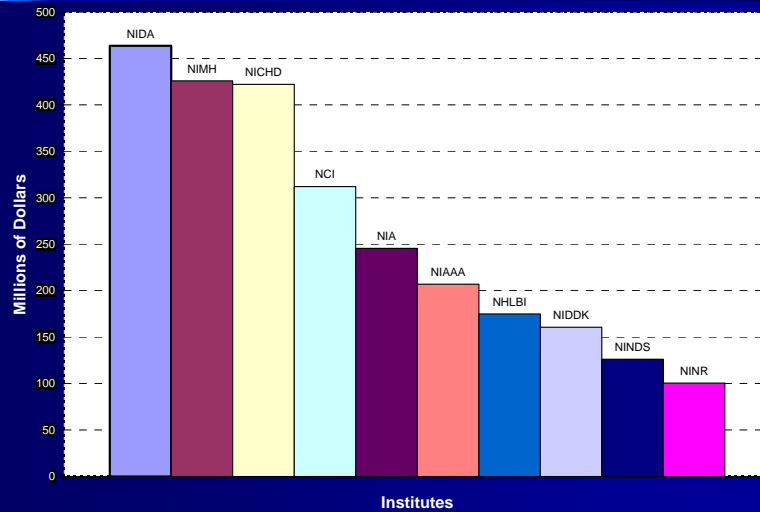
# What's an OBSSR



# National Institutes of Health



## NIH Funding for Behavioral & Social Sciences FY 2007 – Total \$3.06 billion



## OBSSR Mission

- Increase scope of and support for Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (BSSR)
- Inform NIH leadership and community about BSSR
- Represent NIH to BSSR community
- Disseminate BSSR information to NIH and the public

2006 Strategic Prospectus

## **OBSSR's Vision** *(Strategic Prospectus)*

The vision of OBSSR is to mobilize the biomedical, behavioral, and social science research communities as partners to solve the most pressing health challenges faced by our society.

### *Programmatic Directions to Achieve the Vision:*

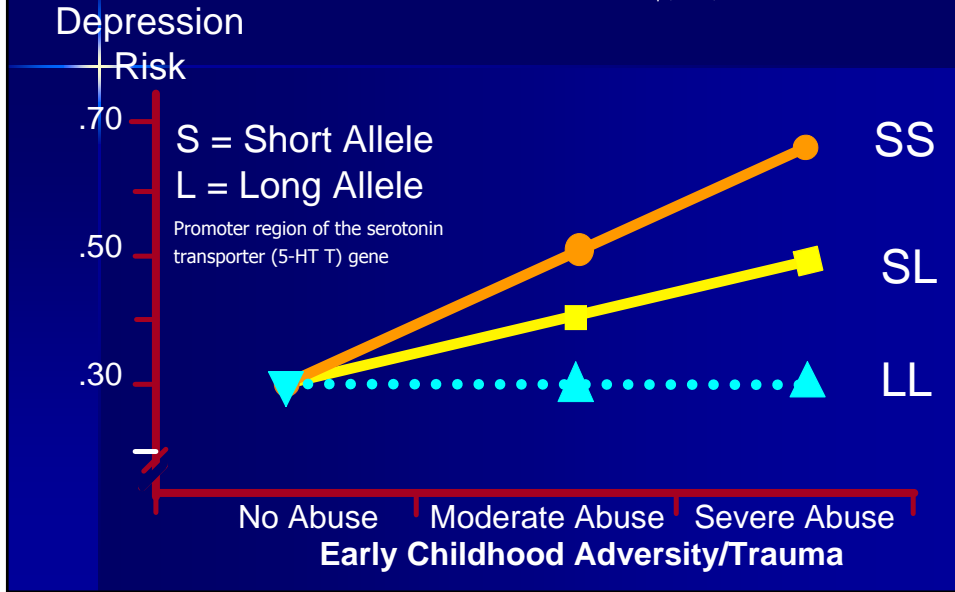
- “Next generation” basic science
- Interdisciplinary research
- Systems-thinking approaches to health
- Problem-Based research

## **“Next Generation” Basic Science**

OBSSR will support and facilitate the next generation of basic behavioral and social science research informed by breakthroughs in complementary areas such as genetics, informatics, and multilevel analyses.

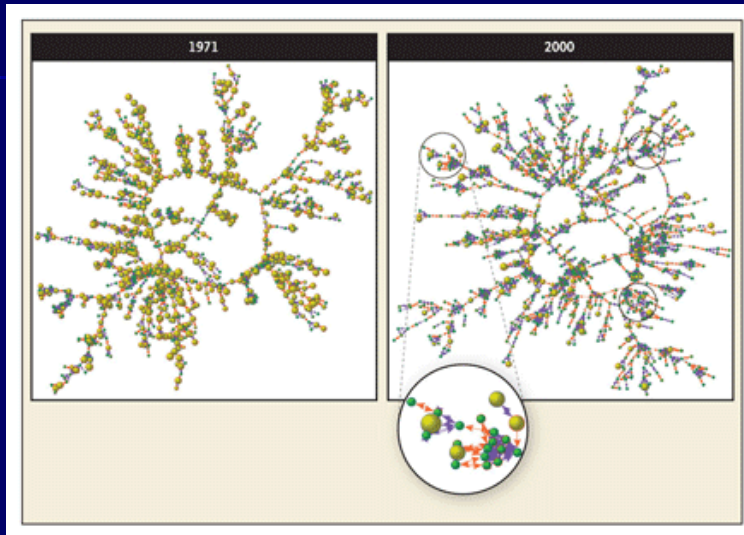
Next Generation Basic Research:  
Gene-Environment Interactions

Caspi, et al., 2003. *Science* 301: 386-389



Next Generation Basic Research:  
Social Networks, Social Change

- Smoking behavior spreads through social networks
- Groups quit smoking together



Christakis and Fowler, 2008. *NEJM* 358: 2249-2258

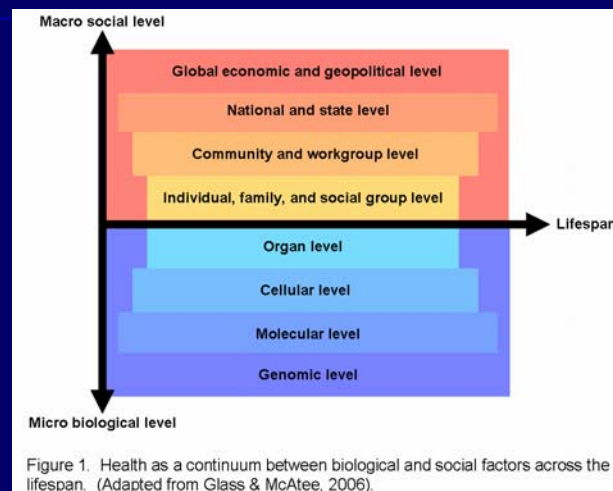
# Interdisciplinary Research

OBSSR will facilitate collaborative research across the full range of disciplines and stakeholders necessary to fully elucidate the complex determinants of health and health systems challenges...

... such collaborations will yield new conceptual frameworks, methods, measures, and technologies that will speed the improvement of population health.

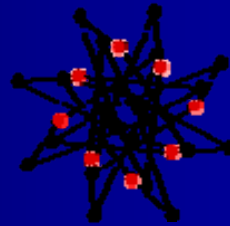
## Interdisciplinary Research

### Understanding Health "From Cells to Society"



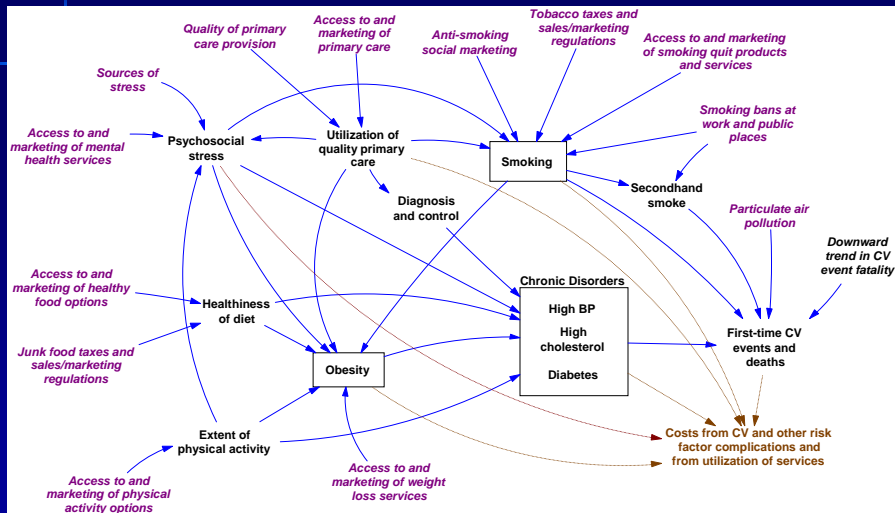
# Systems-thinking Approaches to Health

OBSSR will stimulate research that integrates multiple levels of analysis – from cells to behavior to society – required to understand the ways in which individual and contextual factors interact to determine health status.



International Network for Social Network Analysis  
[www.insna.org/INSNA/na\\_inf.html](http://www.insna.org/INSNA/na_inf.html)

## Systems Thinking: Cardiovascular Disease



Jack Homer, et al., by permission

## Rationale for Systems Science Methodologies

Computers have the computational power to do what humans cannot

- keep track of large numbers of variables
- including their synergistic, cumulative and compounding effects, and
- delayed effects/changes over time

## Systems Science Activities

- 2007 Symposia Series on Systems Science & Health
- Training Institute on systems science (Summer 2009)
- BSSR-Systems Science listserv - send email to [mabryp@od.nih.gov](mailto:mabryp@od.nih.gov)

## Problem-Based Research

OBSSR will work with its NIH partners to identify problems in population health where behavioral and social scientists, biomedical researchers, practitioners, and health services decision makers can work together to develop prevention, treatment, and policy interventions and to accelerate their translation and adoption.

➔ A focus on outcomes

## Problem-Based Research

- Health Disparities Research
- Adherence Research
- Science of Dissemination

## A New Vision

- Conduct interdisciplinary science
- Capitalize on new discoveries and new tools
  - Informatics
  - Computer technology
  - Genetics
- Build partnerships to solve problems whose scope overwhelms single research paradigms

Social Work Researchers can/should contribute

## NIH Plan for Social Work Research

- Senate Report 107-216  
*The Committee urges the NIH to develop a social work research plan that outlines research priorities, as well as a research agenda, across NIH Institutes and Centers to be reported to the Committee by April 1, 2003."*
- OBSSR's Role
  - Coordination
  - Trans-NIH Working Group

## NIH SWR Working Group

- Paul Cotton, PhD, NINR
- Jeffrey Evans, PhD, NICHD
- Eleanor Hanna, PhD, ORWH
- Denise Juliano-Bult, MSW, NIMH
- Peter Kaufman, PhD, NHLBI
- Wendy McLaughlin, MSW, NCI
- Margaret Murray, MSW, NIAAA
- Denise Pintello, PhD, NIDA
- G. Stephane Philogene, PhD, OBSSR (Chair)
- Sidney Stahl, PhD, NIA

## NIH Plan for Social Work Research

- Proposed New Activities
  - Social Work Research
  - Research Infrastructure/Training
  - Information Dissemination and Community Outreach

# NIH Plan for Social Work Research

## Social Work Research

- Publish a new PA: Research on Social Work Practice and Concepts in Health
- Expand outreach to encourage grant applications on studies of SW practice and concepts
- Competitive Supplement for SW Research

# NIH Plan for Social Work Research

## Research Infrastructure/Training

- Develop and Implement an NIH Summer Institute on Social Work Research
  - Qualitative, and Mixed Method
  - Behavioral and Social Intervention Research
  - Community-Based Participatory Research
  - Health Services Research

# NIH Plan for Social Work Research

## Information Dissemination and Community Outreach

- Outreach to Deans and Directors of Schools of SW
- Coordinated Outreach to Universities
- Trans-NIH Conference Showcasing SWR Results
- Explore the Possibility of a Conference on Advancing the SWR Agenda



OFFICE OF BEHAVIORAL  
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH



OBSSR on the Web

<http://obssr.od.nih.gov/content>

**OBSSR**

Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research  
National Institutes of Health