

## Report on Research Compliance Volume 16, Number 7. July 01, 2019 NIH Launches Working Group on Animal Research

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By Theresa Defino

To enhance reproducibility and rigor in research, NIH is creating a working group to advise the agency on possible changes to animal studies. NIH Director Francis Collins announced the launch of the working group at the June 13 meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Director (ACD). In other action at the meeting, the ACD also heard recommendations to bolster research against interference or influence by foreign entities ("NIH: Examples of Foreign Influence in Research Include Employment Agreement, Secrecy Pledge," RRC 16, no. 7).

Collins called the new working group an outgrowth of a "long-term focus" during the past five years and one "we believe is highly justified by the need for us to pay attention to whether the money that the tax payers are providing you're asking scientists to use for good purposes are used in a way that produces" reproducible data from studies that are "rigorously designed."

The working group also responds to a request in the 2016 21st Century Cures Act calling for NIH to convene such a panel to issue "recommendations for a formal policy" on rigor and reproducibility generally.

NIH reviewed the Cures Act requirement carefully and "looked at what we've already done, and we tried to identify areas where we made good progress and others where we think there is still work that needs to be done," deciding that animal studies are "where we think there are still needs for some deep thinking about this."

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