

Summary of Responses to Request for Information (RFI): Response to Proposed NIH Rehabilitation Research Plan Objectives

Notice Number: [NOT-HD-20-033](#)

Purpose of RFI: The purpose of the Request for Information (RFI) was to gather broad public input on the draft research objectives for the NIH Research Plan on Rehabilitation for 2021. It was issued by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research on behalf of the NIH Medical Rehabilitation Coordinating Committee.

Length of Comment Period: 60 days

Number of Responses: A total of 26 responses were received from individual researchers (n=20), professional organizations (n=4), group of professional organizations (n=1), and an academic department (n=1).

Review the full text of these responses at <https://nichd.ideascalegov.com/a/campaign-home/51>.

Disclaimer: This document summarizes the responses received to the afore mentioned RFI. It does not express the opinions of NICHD program staff.

Summary of Responses:

Overall, the comments were very positive and supportive of the draft research objectives and themes. No responses indicated that any objectives should be removed.

Theme A – Rehabilitation Across the Lifespan

Several responses recommended integrating health disparities into multiple areas of the plan, not limiting it to Theme A. They also recommended a greater emphasis on the social determinants of health with respect to people with disability. One respondent commented that many of the objectives were adult focused and could be adapted to be more inclusive of the rehabilitation goals of children.

Theme B – Community and Family

Responses recommended a greater emphasis on participation as the goal of rehabilitation and the need to incorporate participation in outcome measures and the design of clinical trials. Other responses requested more promotion of healthy lifestyles, the role of the environment on participation, and considering the whole person.

Theme C – Technology Use and Development

Responses recommended that technology innovation should be more prominent. Responses also reiterated the need for more low cost, user-centered solutions.

Theme D – Research Design and Methodology

Responses advocated for the inclusion of people with disabilities in all research studies, not just those focusing on rehabilitation. Responses also described the need for more longitudinal studies for the long-term impact of rehabilitation interventions, adaptive study designs to make the most of small sample sizes and the inclusion of diverse populations in clinical research.

Theme E – Translational Science

Responses emphasized the need for translation at all levels, including dissemination of research findings into clinical practice and access to care.

Theme F – Building Research Capacity and Infrastructure

Several responses requested greater emphasis on increasing the number of underrepresented minorities and people with disabilities in rehabilitation research.

New Topics

In addition to comments on the themes listed above, many responses recommended research objectives on COVID-19, including rehabilitation for survivors of COVID-19, the impact of the pandemic on trainees, and the role of telehealth in delivery of rehabilitation.

Conclusion:

The National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research and the NIH Medical Rehabilitation Coordinating Committee thank the respondents for their thoughtful comments. They were presented publicly at the December 7, 2020 National Advisory Board for Medical Rehabilitation Research and will be considered by the NIH in the final document.