

Top Funded Institutions Report Most Misconduct Activity

The top 75 NIH-funded institutions accounted for about two-thirds of the misconduct activity reported by institutions on their Annual Reports on Possible Research Misconduct covering the six-year period, 1991-96; the remaining activity was reported by institutions as far down the funding ladder as the 1,277th rung.

The amount of misconduct activity reported by institutions appears related to the amount of funding received by the institutions. The top 75 NIH-funded institutions conducted 71% of the inquiries and 63% of the investigations, produced 66% of the misconduct findings, and received 70% of the funds. See Table 1.

Table 1: Percent of Inquiries, Investigations, Misconduct Findings, and Funding by Funding Rank as Reported in Annual Reports on Possible Research Misconduct, 1991-96.

Funding Ranks*	Inquiries n=425	Investigations n=235	Misconduct Findings n=50	1996 Funding (\$8.39 Billion)
1-25	40	37	32	39
26-50	16	14	20	19
51-75	15	12	14	12
76-100	7	8	8	6
101-125	7	5	0	5
126-150	3	1	4	3
151-1599	12	23	22	16
Total	100	100	100	100

*Based on FY 1996 NIH extramural research awards to 1,599 institutions.

The next 75 ranked institutions reported considerably less misconduct activity, but also receive considerably less funding. Institutions ranked from 76-150 conducted 17% of the inquiries and 14% of the investigations; produced 12% of the misconduct findings, and received 14% of the funding. The remaining 1,449 institutions accounted for 12% of the inquiries, 23% of the investigations, 22% of the misconduct findings, and 16% of the funds.

Misconduct activity reported in the Annual Report should fall within the PHS definition of scientific misconduct and involve research supported by the PHS. This analysis is limited to cases that were started in 1991 through 1996 and completed by the end of 1996.

Sixty-six of the top 75 funded institutions (88%) have conducted inquiries; 52 or 69% have conducted investigations, and 25 or 33% have found misconduct. Thirty-eight or 51% of the next 75 institutions have conducted inquiries; 18 or 24% have conducted investigations; and 6 or 8% have found misconduct. Sixty-two or 4% of the remaining 1,449 institutions have conducted inquiries; 40 or 2.7% have conducted investigations, and .7% have found misconduct. See Table 2.

Table 2: Number of Institutions within Funding Ranks by Inquiries, Investigations, and Misconduct Findings as Reported in Annual Reports on Possible Research Misconduct, 1991-96.

Funding Ranks*	No. Conducted Inquiries	No. Conducted Investigations	No. Finding Misconduct
1-25	24	23	10
26-50	24	15	8
51-75	18	14	7
76-100	16	8	4
101-125	13	7	0
126-150	9	3	2
150-1599	62	40	10
Total	166**	110	41

*Based on FY 1996 NIH extramural research awards to 1,599 institutions.

**This total is lower than the 174 institutions cited in the March article because misconduct activity that occurred in different components of the same institution were counted as one institution for ranking purposes. In addition, three institutions that reported allegations did not report an inquiry or investigation.