

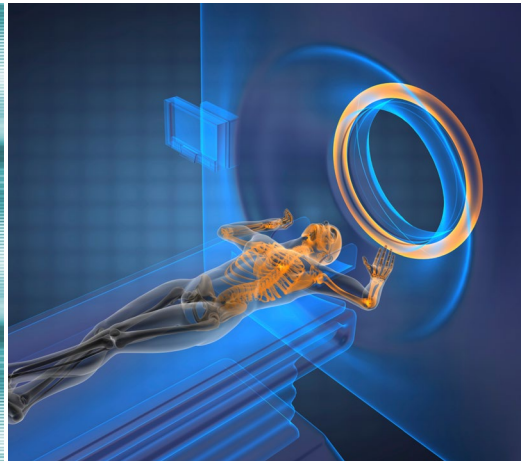
Science of Behavior Change

Uncovering Mechanisms of Behavior Change for Better Health Outcomes

Unhealthy behaviors—such as smoking, drug and alcohol abuse, overeating, and a sedentary lifestyle—contribute to negative health outcomes and common diseases. This type of behavior accounts for approximately 40 percent of the risk associated with preventable premature deaths in the United States. Unfortunately, it is extremely difficult to initiate and maintain healthy behavior changes over an extended period of time.

The Common Fund's Science of Behavior Change (SOBC) program aims to improve our understanding of behavior change across a broad range of health-related behaviors. The program supports research that integrates basic and translational science and cuts across many disciplines—including, but not limited to, cognitive and affective neuroscience, neuroeconomics, behavioral genetics, and behavioral economics. The SOBC program seeks to implement a mechanisms-focused approach to behavior change research and to develop the tools required to implement such an approach. One particular health behavior—adherence to medical regimens—provides a particularly compelling test of this approach. Non-adherence to medical regimens is a significant health problem that is an exemplar for the general behavioral intervention goal of initiating and maintaining behavior change.





Phase 1 of the SOBC program sought to improve our understanding of basic mechanisms of human behavior change across a broad array of health-related behaviors and to use this knowledge to develop more effective behavioral interventions. Research funded during Phase 1 led to the identification of three broad classes of intervention targets that are highly relevant to understanding the mechanisms of behavior change: self-regulation, stress reactivity and stress resilience, and interpersonal and social processes.

Phase 2 of the SOBC program, beginning in FY2015, intends to undertake the following:

- › Explore behavioral intervention targets that play a putative role in behavior change, have clear potential to be measured, and have a plausible intervention strategy.
- › Support activities to inform a mechanistic approach to intervention research on adherence to medical regimens.
- › Disseminate advances that are made as a result of the SOBC program to the NIH community and the behavior change research field.

Funding opportunities for Phase 2 will be available in FY2015. To learn more about these opportunities and the SOBC program, visit

<http://commonfund.nih.gov/behaviorchange/index>

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