

THE INSTITUTE PROGRAM

The eye research and training programs at the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Blindness include research at the Bethesda laboratories, research grants to individual scientists in academic institutions throughout the country, and training grants to aid universities and other centers in educating more ophthalmologists and research scientists. In addition to individual research projects, the Institute is supporting eight multidisciplinary research programs in vision. Model Reporting Areas in 14 States provide epidemiological data. Information about the eye and its disorders is also being obtained from the Institute's collaborative and field projects, especially the Laboratory of Perinatal Physiology in Puerto Rico. These vision programs are currently operating at a level of \$15 million.

Program Planning

To assist the Institute in review and planning, and Advisory Council Subcommittee on Vision and Its Disorders was organized a little over a year ago under the chairmanship of a member of the Institute's National Advisory Council. This Council Subcommittee is engaged in a general assessment of the present status of knowledge in vision and visual disorders, a review of current research and training, and identification of problem areas and special needs.

The Subcommittee is providing information gathered from the scientific community upon which the Institute can base long-term planning of its research and training program in the fields of visual science, visual disorders, and blindness. During the past year, the Council consulted with over 250 of the Nation's leading scientists to advise the Institute regarding those areas of investigation now must appropriate for intensive study.

National Information Center

To hasten dissemination of scientific information and to aid in program analysis, the Institute established this year a National Information Center on Vision Research at the Harvard University Library. Objectives of the Center are to define, identify, store, retrieve, and disseminate the literature of vision, so that the information may be communicated more quickly and completely.

This university-based unit combines the resources of a research center and one of the largest medical libraries. Within the Center, some of the Nation's outstanding scientists review and critically analyze the worldwide literature and research reports, in order to increase current awareness of research among scientists, teachers, and clinicians in ophthalmology and related fields; supervise the preparation of abstracts, summaries, reviews, and analyses of these data; and make this information available, both to the Institute for program planning and to the scientific community at large. Integration of the activities of the Center with the national network of specialized information centers, now being developed with the support of NIND, is under way.

Conferences

The NINDB in cooperation with the American Academy of Neurology and the American Neurological Association jointly sponsored a Conference on Education in the Neurological Sciences which featured a symposium on research horizons in several areas of neuroscience, including vision, as well as round-table discussions of aspects in neuroscience education. During the year, the Institute also sponsored a symposium on the retina and a workshop on refractive anomalies of the eye.

Program-Projects

In addition to supporting research projects related to specific problems of the blinding diseases, the Institute is now developing a group of eye research centers in which strong multidisciplinary teams are being mobilized to carry out the broad-scale attack on these disorders. Excellent studies have been reported from four of these vision program-projects now in full operation: The Retina Foundation of Boston, The Neurosensory Center at the State University of Iowa, the University of Chicago Program-Project for studies on glaucoma and disorders of the retina, and the Research Center for Corneal Disorders at Columbia University in New York. This year, with funds appropriated specifically for this purpose, three new centers have been established at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary in Boston, the Institute of Medical Services in San Francisco, and at the University of California in San Francisco.