

When an institute encompasses many broad fields, however, it is extremely difficult to make special policy for one area with special needs and to provide programs which apply to this area to the exclusion of others.

This is especially true when one considers the real need for researchers and academic personnel in the area of ophthalmology—a problem which seems to me the most serious one we face.

The need for encouraging physicians to develop academic skills and research interests, the desperate need for teachers who can train more ophthalmologists, the very real requirement for more basic scientists to be interested in problems of blindness and to remain in this area of research—these are our greatest problems, and are needs which have not been adequately met.

I would be the last to suggest that there is a panacea for these problems, but we must recognize that the problems in this area are quite different from those in an area such as neurophysiology or neuroanatomy.

The enormous shortage of capable people demands that we conserve the brains and ability that are available to us and encourage them to remain in this area of desperate need.

To do this, we must supply some basic security to the researchers of proven ability and must assure them that they can continue on in these areas of research without the vagaries of periodic grant reviews and the possibility of salary cancellations within a few years.

Provisions for long-term security of outstanding researchers and teachers must be made to apply not only to large institutions with major projects, but to the smaller institutions with outstanding personnel who can make tremendous contributions to our fight against blindness.

Both in terms of salary and in terms of assurance that research activity can continue, some type of long-term assurances and commitments should be possible.

In many other areas in which a shortage of research personnel and teachers is not so critical, this type of commitment might not be necessary, and a periodic review might well be desirable to assure the highest level of productivity.

But in an area such as ophthalmic research, where the temptations of private practice in terms of financial reward and leisure time are so great, and the insecurity involved in an academic career is now so enormous that some provision for encouraging people to remain in this field is necessary.

Remember that only a few years ago an enormous proportion of approved vision research projects were not funded.

This may be a situation which is quite different for other areas of neurology and basic neurological research, and the difficulty of finding a program which applies equally to all areas of neurological investigation and to the area of vision research may be formidable.

In fact, regardless of the enormous amount which the present NINDB has accomplished, and regardless of the good faith and tremendous effort on the part of the administration of NINDB, the need for adequate research personnel and teachers has not been met and I doubt that anyone could deny this.