

**Report 4:** What is the environment? What is the scope? Is there a box?

NIEHS as the ultimate integrative institute in the NIH and broader arena.

Fate and transport of contaminants and hazardous substances in the environment. Is it ours (NIEHS). If not, how do we coordinate on this issue with other agencies.

**Convener:** Victoria Seewaldt, M.D., Ed Levin, Ph.D., Heather Henry, Ph.D.

**Brief History:**

NIEHS has an opportunity to be an integrative force that helps people to stay healthy. The public is interested in the relationship between the environment, food, health, and wellness. There was a perception that NIEHS's scope has been too limited. The scope was on single point source pollution and disease. There was missed opportunity to broaden this perspective to integrate with cutting edge scientific discoveries and to go beyond a traditional definition of environment. Current scientific thinking finds connectiveness between how the environment impacts our health and how we as a species impact the environment. That instead of focusing on the one gene that causes cancer that many integrated "small factors" contribute to health and disease. To promote wellness requires integration between many disciplines and the community.

**Discussion Highlights:**

The environment is a moving target that changes as the field advances.

The goal is to be cross cutting and integrative

There was disagreement on whether the scope of how the term "environment" is defined:

One view is that given limited resources, the focus needs to be "boxed"

The second view is that the scope should be defined broadly as new scientific discoveries are made.

Information and discovery should be a synergistic two way street between NIEHS and the scientific community.

NIEHS can serve as an honest broker of information

There needs to be new methods and messaging to communicate to the public the key role of environment in health and disease.

Part of the message should be preventing disease and staying healthy.

Examples of the environment:

Environment is multifactorial and modifiable

Exogenous factors such as air pollution, water pollution, chemicals, hormones, pesticides, endocrine disruptors.

The environment also includes psychosocial stress, nutrition, income, obesity, education.

Fetal environment, sex differences, age

Targets are health and injury as well as disease

**Recommendations:**

1. Promote a message of health and wellness.
2. NIEHS should be an honest broker of health and environmental information to the public, students, researchers, and the world community.
3. NIEHS should be a driver in finding solutions e.g. green chemistry, healthy lifestyle, nutrition, obesity prevention.
4. The solutions should be integrative, cross disciplinary, and forward thinking.
5. Integrating with other institutions and institutes and the community is important for finding solutions.

**Discussion Participants:**

Trevor Archer, Terry Collins, Barry Dellinger, Dana Dolinoy, Michael Gould, Joe Graedon, Phillip Hanawalt, Heather Henry, Paul Jung, Ed Levin, Daniel Madrigal, Cheryl Marks, Richard Mural, Karen O'Brian, Heather Patisaul, Richard Paules, James Putney, Ericka Reid, Victoria Seewaldt, Fred Tyson, Scott Williams