

# Scientists study scientific secrecy

January 26 2006

---

Two Massachusetts General Hospital studies have developed a broad picture of how secrecy is affecting the world of science.

Open sharing of information is a basic principle of the scientific process, but it's well known secrecy has become a fact of life in academic science, the study said.

The hospital's Institute for Health Policy examined a broad range of withholding behaviors and found data withholding is affecting researchers in several fields.

"Secrecy in science reduces the efficiency of the scientific enterprise by making it harder for colleagues to build on each other's work," said Dr. David Blumenthal, the institute's director. "Secrecy cannot be totally eliminated; but to minimize it, we need to understand it better. That was the purpose of this work."

Blumenthal is lead author of a study surveying more than 1,800 life scientists at the 100 U.S. universities receiving the most National Institutes of Health funding in 1998.

The second study surveyed more than 1,000 scientific trainees -- graduate students and postdoctoral fellows from 50 U.S. universities granting the most degrees in the fields surveyed.

The results of both studies appear in the February issue of *Academic Medicine*.

*Copyright 2006 by United Press International*

Citation: Scientists study scientific secrecy (2006, January 26) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2006-01-scientists-scientific-secrecy.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.