

Leading researchers warn of 'brain drain' as scientists struggle to find funding

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BrightFocus Foundation, a nonprofit organization that funds research worldwide to save sight and mind, today released the results of a survey of more than 170 leading biomedical scientists that explores the most significant barriers to progress in ending brain and eye diseases. The survey indicates that a lack of dependable funding is threatening to create a deficit of highly skilled scientists at a time when the nation could soon face a health care crisis brought on by devastating disorders like Alzheimer's, macular degeneration, and glaucoma.

"Cures for these brain and eye diseases can be found if we give researchers the resources and tools they require," said Stacy Haller, president and [chief executive officer](#) of BrightFocus Foundation, formerly named American Health Assistance Foundation. "Nearly 20 million people in the U.S. are affected by Alzheimer's disease, macular degeneration, or glaucoma. That number is climbing with an [aging population](#), threatening our families, our health care, and our economy. Eradicating these diseases should be a much higher national priority."

The new survey taps into the attitudes and opinions of more than 170 top brain and [eye disease](#) scientists from around the world who have received foundation research grants in recent years. Respondents expressed near-consensus on the impact that funding sources play in their field:

- 94 percent agreed that a lack of federal funding for brain and eye

disease research is impeding scientific discoveries.

- 91 percent agreed that a lack of research funding is driving scientists from the field.
- 96 percent identified limited funding as a top barrier to entry for new scientists in the fields of brain and eye disease research.

"By now, it should be clear that the cost of adequately supporting efforts to prevent and treat cognitive and vision diseases is minuscule compared to the cost of failing to do so," said Guy Eakin, Ph.D., vice president of Scientific Affairs for BrightFocus Foundation. "The total U.S. [health care](#) cost for Alzheimer's alone is \$200 billion annually and is expected to soar to \$1.1 trillion per year by 2050 if we don't have the [scientific discoveries](#) made possible by research funding. Yet budget cuts for research continue, and we're losing the talents of a generation of scientists."

More information: For more in-depth analysis of survey results and recommendations, visit www.brightfocus.org/ResearcherSurvey2013

Provided by American Health Assistance Foundation

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