NIH Botanical Research Centers Program

Applicant Information Meeting
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Congressional Mandate Botanical Initiative 1999

“Establish a botanical research initiative with major research institutions in the United States”
What is a Dietary Supplement?

A product (other than tobacco) that
- is intended to supplement the diet
- contains one or more dietary ingredients:
  - vitamins
  - minerals
  - Herbs or other botanicals
  - amino acids
  - other substances and their constituents
- is intended to be taken by mouth
Intended Use
(FDA Regulation)

“Dietary supplements are not intended to diagnose, cure, mitigate, treat, or prevent disease.”
“ODS has a particular interest in botanicals as part of health care for conditions relating to health maintenance or primary prevention.”
1. NCCAM shares significant overlap with the interests of ODS

2. Limited emphasis on treatment

3. Advanced technologies for the characterization of botanicals
“NCI Division of Cancer Prevention is interested in supporting research focused on mechanisms by which botanically derived bioactive food components might influence cancer risk and tumor behavior”
What is a Botanical?

- Whole plants or plant parts (e.g., bark, leaves, stems, roots, flowers, fruits, seeds, berries, extracts)
- Medicinal Plants and Foods
- Algae and macroscopic fungi

Cranberry
*Vaccinium macrocarpon*

Flaxseed
*Linum usitatissimum*

Green Tea
*Camellia sinensis*

St. John’s Wort
*Hypericum perforatum*

Ginkgo
*Ginkgo biloba*
Sample Research Questions

- Does Soy Have Beneficial Skeletal Effects in Postmenopausal Women?
- Can Black Cohosh Alleviate Menopausal Symptoms?
- Does Echinacea Have Antiviral Activity?
- Do Blueberries Improve Insulin Sensitivity?
Botanical Research Centers

- Multidisciplinary Teams
- Emphasis on Quality Assurance/Quality Control
- Emphasis on Basic Science (Mechanisms of Action)
- **Identify Active Constituent(s) and Explore Mechanism(s) of Action**
- Clinical Evaluation (optional)
- Thematic Focus With High Public Health Impact
Botanical Research Centers: Goals
RFA 0D-09-001

- Advance the Spectrum of Botanical Research Activities- Ranging From Plant Identification to Early Phase Clinical Studies (optional)
- Characterize Chemical Composition of Botanicals and Study Their Biological Effects
• Cultivate the Use of Contemporary Technologies and Innovative Research Approaches
• Develop and Improve Preclinical Model Systems
• Promote Integrated, Collaborative, Interdisciplinary Study of Botanicals Relevant to Dietary Supplements
P50 Issues

• Research Projects Must be Hypothesis Driven
• Cores to Support Projects
• Whole Must be Greater Than Sum of Parts
P50 Issues

- Complex Research Structure
- Effective Administration Essential
- Qualifications of Center Director (PI)
Thematic Focus

- Requirement of RFA
- Focal Point for Research Activities
- Promotes Synergy
- Relevance to Dietary Supplements
Research Theme (RFA examples)

- The effect of botanicals on a biological process (e.g., inflammation) with multiple clinical endpoints
- Biological effects of botanicals on an organ system (e.g. gastrointestinal, cardiovascular)
- Biological effects of botanicals enriched with a class of bioactive compounds
Research Theme (Additional Considerations)

• Potential for the research to be translated into practical benefits for human health
• Relevance to dietary supplements
Botanical Research Challenges

- Botanicals Expose Consumers to Complex Chemical Mixtures
- Active Constituent/Constituents May Not Be Known
- Constituents Within Botanicals May Have Synergistic or Antagonistic Effects
- Potential for Matrix Effects
Study Materials Must be Adequately Characterized

- Sourcing of Botanical Materials
  - (Herbarium Specimens)
- Processing
- Chemical Characterization
- Quality Control

Biologically Active Agents Used in CAM and Placebo Materials — Policy and Guidance
http://nccam.nih.gov/research/policies/bioactive.htm
Botanical Research Opportunities

• Availability of Contemporary Technologies
  • Genomics, Proteomics, Metabolomics
  • Mass Spectrometry
• Collaboration/Team Science
Office of Dietary Supplements
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