

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

1. REASON FOR ISSUE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook establishes procedures, assigns responsibilities, and specifies authority for ensuring that the contributions of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to research are appropriately acknowledged and publicly disclosed.

2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES:

a. Removed the requirement that VA affiliation must be named first as this is often not possible when there are multiple authors.

b. Added information to describe the Public Access requirement for Office of Research and Development (ORD)-supported peer-reviewed publications.

c. Eliminated responsibilities of the Medical Center Director, Associate Chief of Staff for Research, and the Research and Development Committee.

3. RELATED ISSUES: VA Directive 0005 and VHA Directive 1200.

4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: The Office of Research and Development (10P9) is responsible for the contents of this VHA Handbook. Questions may be referred to 202-443-5600.

5. RESCISSIONS: VHA Handbook 1200.19, dated September 17, 2008, is rescinded.

6. RECERTIFICATION: This VHA Handbook is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working date of July, 2019.

Carolyn M. Clancy, MD
Interim Under Secretary for Health

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CONTENTS

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

PARAGRAPH	PAGE
1. Purpose	1
2. Background	1
3. Scope	1
4. Procedures for Acknowledging VA Research Support and VA Employment	2
5. Public Access to Peer-Reviewed Articles	3
6. Responsibilities	4

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook establishes procedures, assigns responsibilities, and specifies authority for ensuring that the contributions of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to research are appropriately acknowledged and publicly disclosed. **AUTHORITY:** 38 U.S.C. 1704, 7303, 7320, 7325, 7327, and 7328.

2. BACKGROUND:

a. The VA Office of Research and Development (ORD) encourages free exchange of scientific, technical, and medical information both inside and outside VA. The American public has a right to know how public funds are expended as well as the outcomes of funded research. Accordingly, VA investigators are encouraged to report their scientific work at professional meetings and in scientific, technical, and medical publications, and to participate in the activities of their professional organizations.

b. The nature of medical and scientific research and development (R&D) carries with it an enormous potential for media and public attention to the investigators and institutions involved, as well as resulting support for the agency generally. In the past, there have been occasions when VA investigators neglected to ensure proper identification of employment by VA or of the source of their research support. Consequently, both credit and public attention were inappropriately focused on organizations other than VA. Timely notification to local and ORD Communication staff about upcoming publications and presentations allows the preparation of effective communication plans to the media in order to highlight the contribution of VA research to the health and well-being of Veterans and the world at large.

c. VA expects its contributions to medical and scientific research to receive due credit. Research investigators are entirely responsible for complying with the policy to properly cite VA research support per this Handbook.

d. VA recognizes that public stakeholders have a keen and legitimate interest in accessing the results of federally-funded research. VA is committed to ensuring that the final study results of VA-funded scientific research are made available to the scientific community, industry, and the general public with the fewest constraints possible.

3. SCOPE: This Handbook applies to all VA research that is directly or indirectly supported by VA, in the form of research funding, use of VA resources, or as a result of the investigator's VA appointment. The policies herein extend to all forms of VA research results, including publications, presentations, media interviews, and other professional activities. Requirements for public access to peer-reviewed articles are limited to research directly funded by ORD (see paragraph 5). **NOTE:** *This Handbook does not apply to research that was conducted prior to an investigator being appointed as a VA investigator, if all aspects of the research and the development of the publication or presentation occurred prior to the VA appointment.*

4. PROCEDURES FOR ACKNOWLEDGING VA RESEARCH SUPPORT AND VA EMPLOYMENT:

a. **Acknowledgment of VA Research Support.** All publications and presentations of VA research results must contain the following (or equivalent) acknowledgment:

(1) “This work was supported (or supported in part) by (type of award, e.g., Merit Review, Career Development Award, Pilot Project) Award # (award/project number, e.g., I01 RX000123) from the United States (U.S.) Department of Veterans Affairs (as applicable, Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development, Clinical Sciences Research and Development including the Cooperative Studies Program, Rehabilitation Research and Development Service, or Health Services Research and Development) Program.” The type of award and the electronic award/project number (e.g., I01 BX123456) must be included in the acknowledgment as indicated above unless prohibited by journal policy.

(2) If VA provided no direct research funding, but the research involved the use of other VA resources (e.g., facilities or patients), the publications or presentations must contain a similar acknowledgment. For example, “This material is the result of work supported with resources and the use of facilities at the (name and location of VA medical facility).”

(3) Failure to acknowledge VA support or employment may result in discontinuation of current VA R&D funding or eligibility to apply for funding. In extreme circumstances, it may result in the revocation of the privilege to conduct research in VA.

NOTE: Some journals do not have an acknowledgement section in their published articles so this requirement would not apply.

b. **Disclaimer Requirement.** Publications or presentations must include a disclaimer stating that the contents do not represent the views of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or the United States Government.

c. **Acknowledgment of VA Employment.** Authors of research manuscripts, abstracts, books, book chapters, and presentations that use VA resources must acknowledge their employment using the following format: “VA title, name of VA medical facility, city, and state.”

(1) When the author also holds a faculty appointment, the academic title and school also may be acknowledged.

(2) When the work was solely funded by VA, authors must list their VA affiliation first.

d. **VA Acknowledgment in Media Reports.** News media and other individuals outside VA may not understand the contributions and roles of VA in intellectual advances, or VA’s collaborative relationships with universities and other affiliated institutions. Accordingly, investigators with VA salaries or funding support must make, when presenting or discussing with the news media their VA research results, a serious and good-faith effort to obtain appropriate recognition for VA. A serious and good-faith effort requires:

(1) Securing a written agreement, or an oral agreement when a written agreement is not possible, that VA will be cited in news reports before participating in a media interview; or

(2) Providing news media, prior to interviews, with a document on VA letterhead that:

(a) Contains the investigator's name, VA title, and VA medical facility;

(b) Explains the importance to VA of citing the investigator's VA employment in any resulting feature; and

(c) Expresses a preference that the investigator's VA title be used when media time or space limitations permit the use of only one professional title.

NOTE: The media's failure to acknowledge VA support despite an investigator's good-faith effort to comply does not jeopardize the investigator's funding.

e. **VA Acknowledgment During Other Professional Activities.** VA support and employment, as appropriate, must be acknowledged during professional activities in which VA research results are being discussed or recognized. Acknowledgment may be oral or written, in accordance with the nature of the professional activity.

f. **Publications by Contractors.** Publication of research results by firms providing contracted services to VA is governed by the terms of the contract. The contract terms must be consistent with the provisions of this Handbook with respect to review and acknowledgment of VA support.

g. **U.S. Copyright Act.** Title 17 United States Code (U.S.C.) Section 105, the U.S. Copyright Act provides that copyright protection is not available for any "work of the United States Government" defined under the Copyright Act as a work prepared by an U.S. Government employee as part of that person's official duties (17 U.S.C. 101). Consequently, VA employees cannot copyright material prepared in the course of their employment and must decline to sign any copyright assignment. However, they may authorize a publication to publish a submitted article in accordance with their standard editorial policies.

5. PUBLIC ACCESS TO PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES:

a. Investigators must make available to the public all peer-reviewed publications reporting the results of ORD-funded research without restriction, in accordance with this Handbook.

b. Investigators are responsible for depositing manuscripts in PubMed Central operated by the National Library of Medicine (NLM) upon acceptance for publication. Manuscripts are made available to the public no later than 12 months after publication in PubMed Central. Specific procedures for depositing manuscripts are detailed at:

<http://www.research.va.gov/resources/policies/default.cfm>.

(1) Investigators are responsible for ensuring that any publishing or copyright agreements concerning submitted articles fully comply with this policy.

(2) The final peer-reviewed manuscript includes all graphics and supplemental materials that are associated with the article.

NOTE: VA investigators receiving research funds from entities external to VA (e.g., the National Institutes of Health, Department of Defense) may be subject to public access requirements specific to those funders.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES:

a. Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Research Office.

(1) Notifies the ORD Communications staff when:

(a) Research results are accepted for publication in a scientific journal;

(b) Presentations are scheduled involving a national venue or the media;

(c) Media interviews are scheduled; or

(d) Professional activities are scheduled or known that involve a national venue or formal recognition.

(2) When notification in advance of the activity is not possible, notification must be provided at the earliest possible opportunity.

(3) Procedures for providing notification, and required elements of information, can be found on the ORD website at: http://www.research.va.gov/resources/policies/pub_notice.cfm.

b. Office of Research and Development Communications Staff. ORD's Communications staff is responsible for the following procedures for coordinating research acknowledgment and publicity:

(1) Provides advice and guidance to local research offices in developing procedures for ensuring compliance with this Handbook.

(2) As appropriate, informs ORD, the Director of the applicable research service within ORD, and the Office of the Under Secretary for Health of the research publication, presentation, media interview, or other professional activity.

(3) Works with the Office of Public Affairs and medical facility Public Affairs Officers and makes appropriate news media arrangements in concert with the Principal Investigator and appropriate Research Service Associate Chief of Staff (ACOS) or Coordinator.

(4) Facilitates communication of any embargoes placed upon a publication prior to its release.