

## MENTAL HEALTH: UNDERVALUED, UNDERFUNDED AND FAILED PRIORITIES

James W. Prescott, Ph.D.  
BioBehavioral Systems

The review perspective provided by Francis S. Lee, et al: Adolescent mental health—Opportunity and obligation, *Science* 20014; V346: 547-549 illustrates the consequences of decades of indifference and neglect by the National Institutes of Health.

The authors rightly report: “Mental health costs are the highest single source of global economic burden in the world” and should have added: and the “single greatest threat to public health and planetary survival”; and

**“Yet, we estimate that less than 1% of the budget of the U.S. National Institute of Health was directed toward adolescent brain research in fiscal year 2014 (6)”.**

**Tragically, Violence and Depression were not singled out as the primary mental disorders of human societies and their costs to society.**

On October 26, 1982, in an address **Violence and Public Health**, before the *American Academy of Pediatrics*, PHS Surgeon GENERAL KOOP stated: “...violence, which is one of the most extensive and chronic epidemics in the Public Health of this country” did not recognize the NIH April 1994 publication **“Report of the Panel on NIH Research on Antisocial, Aggressive, and Violence-Related Behaviors and their Consequences”** that stated

*To date, investment across all Institutes and ICDs in violence-related research has been minuscule relative to the total NIH budget (i.e.0.5%).”*View Page [138](#)  
[http://www.violence.de/history/NIHR\\_1994.html](http://www.violence.de/history/NIHR_1994.html)

Tragically, *the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development* abandoned its Research obligations mandated by the Congress under PL 87-838 that established the mission of NICHD to study the **special health problems and requirements of mothers and children...**(PL 87-838 Sec 441).

The refusal by the NICHD to meet its obligations under **PI 87-838** is reflected in an NICHD Memorandum of May 14, 1975:

May 14, 1975

NIH Memo to Jehu C. Hunter from Joseph Bobbitt, Ph.D., explicitly states that DHEW Secretary Weinberger is upset by the lack of response from various federal agencies to his directive to increase activity and research on child abuse and neglect. "He finally said that perhaps the Secretary would have to remind the agencies and set fiscal obligations as he did for FY [fiscal year] 74." Bobbitt stated, "that specific requirements were never set for FY 75 (but that NICHD had maintained its FY 1974 mandate level)".

<http://www.violence.de/history/coverup.html> [View Document](#)

The refusal of the NIH to meet its obligations under **PL 87-838** calls for more drastic action than called for by the authors of Adolescent Mental Health. <https://tffuture.org/blog/1181/motherless-mothers-violence-brain-disorders>

As notable as the adolescent period of development is, it should be recognized that **mental health begins before birth where the maternal-fetal/infant/child relationship provides the foundation for the neuromaturation of brain structures that are vital for the development of mental and social health.** These perspectives are further developed at

<http://tffuture.org/blog/1181/prematurity-infant-mortality-and-utero-sensory-deprivation-aberrant-brain>

which explores the social environment as the sensory environment for normal and aberrant brain-behavioral development.

The following video clips dramatize the pathology of vestibular-cerebellar sensory deprivation upon behavior.

<https://vimeo.com/69200952> -9 Min

<https://vimeo.com/71761209> -2 Min

The conditions of Mental and Social Health of this Nation are so perilous and given the history of failure of the National Institutes of Health to effectively address fetal, child and adolescent health development that an Executive action by the President is necessary.

An Executive Order is recommended that President Obama invoke the Weinberger Rule that set fiscal obligations for the various federal agencies involved in Mental and Child Health and implementation of **PL 87-838**.

The authors conclude:

*Increased commitment and resources are needed to help address our social obligation to reduce the unacceptably high burden of mental illness on youth today and to ensure a healthier tomorrow.*

Our failure is not due to a failure of “commitment or resources” but the failure of culture and society to support Women as Breastfeeding Nurturing Mothers—the core of Humanity.

The author is a developmental neuropsychologist and cross-cultural psychologist; and was Health Scientist Administrator, Developmental Behavioral Biology Program, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, NIH, (1966-1980).

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November 12, 2014

James W. Prescott, Ph.D.  
BioBehavioral Systems  
1140-23 Savannah Road  
Lewes, DE 19958  
302.645.7436  
[jprescott34@comcast.net](mailto:jprescott34@comcast.net)  
<http://www.violence.de>  
<http://montagunocircpetition.org>  
<http://ttfuture.org/bonding/article>  
[http://ttfuture.org/bonding/dvd\\_archive/overview](http://ttfuture.org/bonding/dvd_archive/overview)