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Lauer Elaborates on Research Misconduct Allegation Stats

Allegations of traditional research misconduct and professional misconduct “rose precipitously” over the past five years, Mike Lauer, NIH deputy director for extramural research, said in releasing new data on total research integrity allegations and NIH’s efforts to identify and address integrity issues. In his *Open Mike* blog, Lauer said that NIH “generally handled an average of 100 violations each year up to around 2017.” However, the number of violations jumped to 342 in 2018 and rose even further to 549 in 2019, 531 in 2020, 573 in 2021 and 564 in 2022.

“Our integrity portfolio broadened greatly around 2018 as professional misconduct became a major focus along with traditional scientific misconduct,” Lauer said. “Importantly, we also made concerted efforts with the research community over recent years to identify and address integrity issues.” Specifically, allegations of research misconduct—fabrication, falsification and plagiarism—were generally less than 100 per year; however, the numbers started rising in 2019, Lauer said, possibly because of NIH’s reminder in late 2018 that recipients should notify NIH when they identify or suspect research misconduct that impacts or may impact an NIH-supported project. Alleged violations of peer review rules also rose around tenfold between 2013 and 2022, he said, commensurate with “many reminders” to the research community about rules and violations.

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