

NIH Technologies in the Development of Drugs, Diagnostics and Research Tools

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has as its mission the conduct and support of biomedical research to improve the public health. The Office of Technology Transfer (OTT), Office of the Director, NIH, is responsible for identifying, evaluating, protecting and marketing technologies derived in NIH intramural laboratories. OTT transfers these technologies through licenses to the private sector, where they can be further developed into products used in the prevention, diagnosis, or treatment of disease.

Effectively measuring the public health outcomes that result from such technologies is challenging and complex. Traditionally, efforts to measure the affect of technology transfer activities focus on outputs such as the number of patents and licenses or the amount of royalties generated. However, this approach does not depict the full scope of activities, and may, in fact, distort the importance of ensuring that novel biomedical inventions are commercialized.

Therefore, NIH has developed a new method for measuring technology transfer outcomes that focuses on the manner and extent to which technologies developed in NIH laboratories and transferred to commercial partners are meeting the NIH mission of improving the public health. NIH conducted five case studies using this method. These case studies are a part of a series.

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