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The Relationship Between OREF Grants and Future NIH Funding Success

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Abstract

Background: The Orthopaedic Research and Education Foundation (OREF) is the leading specialty-specific nongovernmental organization providing orthopaedic funding in the United States. As extramural research funding has become increasingly difficult to acquire, one mission of the OREF is to support investigators to generate data needed to secure larger extramural funding from agencies such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The objectives of this study were to evaluate the rate of translating OREF faculty-level grants into subsequent NIH funding and to determine if there are identifiable factors that increase the rate of converting an OREF grant into NIH funding.

Methods: This is a retrospective review of OREF grants awarded to full-time faculty orthopaedic surgeons between 1994 and 2014. Grants were analyzed on the basis of award type and were categorized as basic science, clinical, or epidemiological. Sex, individual scholarly productivity, and publication experience were evaluated. All awardees were assessed for subsequent NIH funding using the NIH RePORTER web site.

Results: One hundred and twenty-six faculty-level OREF grants were awarded to 121 individuals. Twenty-seven OREF grant awardees (22%) received NIH funding at a mean of 6.3 years after OREF funding. Nineteen (46%) of 41 Career Development Grant winners later received NIH funding compared with 10 (12%) of 85 other award winners. OREF grants for basic science projects were awarded more often (58%) and were more than 4 times as likely to result in NIH funding than non-basic science projects (odds ratio, 4.70 [95% confidence interval, 1.66 to 13.33]; $p = 0.0036$). Faculty who later received NIH funding had higher scholarly productivity and publication experience ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusions: The OREF grant awardee conversion rate of 22% and, particularly, the 46% for Career Development Grant winners compares favorably with the overall NIH

funding success rate (18% in 2014). Faculty-level OREF grants appear to achieve their purpose of identifying and supporting researchers who aim to secure subsequent federal funding.

Clinical relevance: The goal of this study is to examine how successful faculty who have obtained OREF grants have been in securing NIH funding later in their careers. Although subsequent accrual of NIH funding is not the only goal of OREF funding, it can be used as an important benchmark to assess the development of orthopaedic clinician-scientists.

Figures

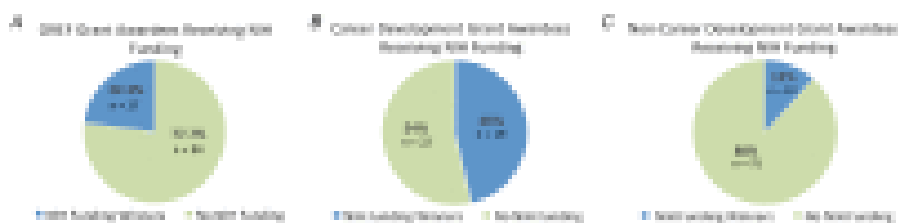


Fig. 1

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Figs. 1-A, 1-B, and 1-C...

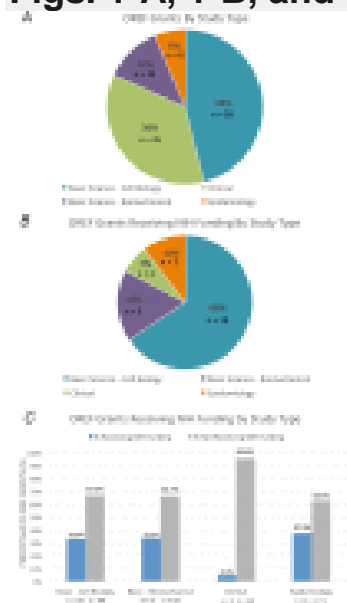


Fig. 2

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Figs. 2-A, 2-B, and 2-C...

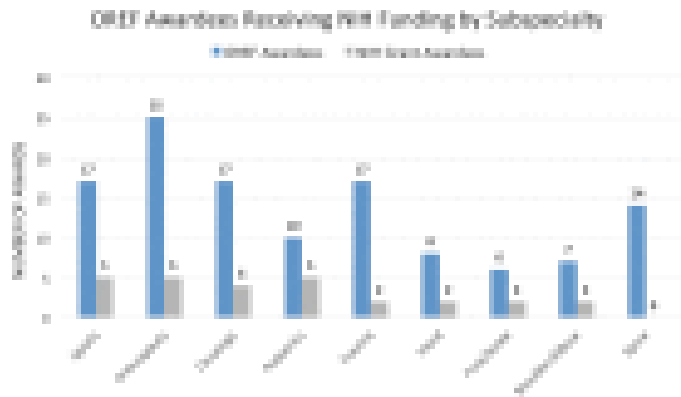


Fig. 3

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Bar graph showing the relationship...