

CHAPTER 11

APPROACH SUBSECTION OF RESEARCH STRATEGY: JUSTIFICATION & FEASIBILITY; PROGRESS REPORT; BIBLIOGRAPHY & REFERENCES CITED SECTION

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

As noted earlier, the changes in how research-grant applications are submitted to NIH represent a true and dramatic paradigm shift. Nowhere is this more evident than in how review of the literature and preliminary data are now handled. Instead of having their own separate sections of the Research Plan, as they did in the past, they now are integrated into other sections of the proposal. As a result, it is now easier for applicants to grasp how review of literature and preliminary data should be used to support an application. In addition, it has become more evident which data and citations are extraneous. The result is a leaner, more pertinent proposal.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

For years, we have been writing and speaking about the Background subsection of *Background and Significance* section of the previous format as the least well understood part of the application. Almost to a person applicants viewed it as an opportunity to impress reviewers with the scope and breadth of their knowledge of the area. The literature review was almost always an attempt to summarize the relevant field comprehensively, which is precisely what it should not have been. Very few applicants used it for the purpose it was intended to have: *justification of the need* for the proposed research.

To help solve this problem, NIH has eliminated review of the literature as a separate section in the current format. Relevant citations in support of the proposal are now scattered throughout the components of the Research Plan, the format of which is outlined, below. An asterisk denotes where selective review of existing relevant literature may be needed in the new approach.

SPECIFIC AIMS *

RESEARCH STRATEGY

Significance *

Innovation *

Approach

Each Aim:

Introduction

Justification & Feasibility

Review of Relevant Literature *

Preliminary Studies

Research Design *

Expected Outcomes

Potential Problems & Alternative Strategies *

Timetable

Future Directions