



## NIH Preprint Pilot Q1 – Status Update

On June 9, 2020, NLM launched the first phase of a pilot project designed to test the viability of making full-text preprints resulting from NIH-funded research searchable in PubMed Central (PMC), with an accompanying citation discoverable in PubMed. Including preprints in PMC and PubMed is a way to enhance their discoverability.

### Phase 1

Phase 1 of the pilot focuses on preprints from NIH-supported research related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It launched by acquiring approximately 350 preprints that had been posted in select preprint servers between January and early June 2020. The scope of the first phase was limited to preprints curated for inclusion in the [NIH iSearch COVID-19 Portfolio](#) identified as having NIH intramural or extramural support.

To differentiate them from published articles, preprint records in both PubMed and PMC are clearly marked with human and machine-readable notices as preprints. Large banners explain that the papers have not been peer reviewed and link to PMC information about the NIH preprint pilot for additional context. Newly created filters provide users with the option to exclude preprint records from search results in both PMC and PubMed.


**Preliminary results** – as of the end of the first quarter of the pilot (June 9-September 9):

- 964 preprints were discoverable in PMC, each with a corresponding citation in PubMed.
- Preprints had been accessed a combined total of more than 500k times.
- 82% of the content was available only as a preprint; not yet published in a journal
- Cost-effective workflows for curation, ingest, updates, and linking to published versions were successfully implemented.
- Feedback received to-date has been mostly positive.
- Processes and activities that promote transparency and continued trust in NLM resources, such as the prominent display of disclaimers and search filter features, in addition to webinars and stakeholder outreach, were implemented to increase awareness and understanding of preprint records.

Results to-date demonstrate the viability of NLM making preprints available in PMC and PubMed. Further monitoring and analysis will be conducted during the second quarter to inform future developments, such as potential expansion of the pilot to include the full spectrum of NIH-funded research.

## Implementation Details

- **Scope:** Preprints acknowledging NIH support and relating to COVID-19.
- **Preprint Server Sources:** arXiv, bioRxiv, ChemRxiv, medRxiv, Research Square, and SSRN.
- **Workflows:** Curation, including text mining to identify NIH support; preprint ingest; automated preprint version updates; and automated linking of preprint with published article, when available.
- **User Interface:** Preprint banners and citations, Links to preprint servers via DOI and LinkOut.

 **This article is a preprint**  
 Preprints have not been peer reviewed.  
 Learn more about preprints in the [NIH Preprint Pilot](#).



[medRxiv](#). 2020 Oct 4;2020.10.01.20205377. doi: 10.1101/2020.10.01.20205377. Preprint

### Racial-ethnic disparities in case fatality ratio narrowed after age standardization: A call for race-ethnicity-specific age distributions in State COVID-19 data

[Ishaan Pathak](#), [Yoonjung Choi](#), [Dazhi Jiao](#), [Diana Yeung](#), [Li Liu](#)

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## Related Activities To-Date

### General Communications about the Pilot:

- **Online:** Press release, Pilot overview/FAQ, NIH Director's blog, and OER blog.
- **Webinar:** Technical Showcase at the Medical Library Association annual meeting in August.
- **Email feedback** ([pmc-preprints@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](mailto:pmc-preprints@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)). Email feedback has been low in volume but largely positive. Most messages focus on opportunities to expand the pilot to include additional preprints. Responses to the handful of concerned users emphasized NLM's measured approach to this pilot and brought the customer's attention to the fact that the scope of the pilot is limited to NIH-funded research.
- **Social Media:** Feedback has been positive and supportive.

### Communications & Engagement on Preprint Best Practices

NLM is working to encourage best practices through [preprint server eligibility criteria](#), engagement with NIH investigators and other stakeholder groups, and communications, including the following:

- A preprint: [Building trust in preprints: recommendations for servers and other stakeholders](#);
- A post on NIH's [Science, Health, and Public Trust](#) blog with tips for health communicators; and
- A post on [Open Mike](#) blog highlighting NIH guidance for investigators around posting preprints.

### Upcoming Activities – Planned and Proposed:

- Simplify workflow for NIH-funded investigators to report preprints as products of NIH award.
- Improve labeling of preprints in PubMed search results.
- Survey of PMC and PubMed users.
- Engagement with NIH intramural researchers.