

Neurosurgery Research & Education Foundation (NREF)

<https://www.nref.org/>

The [American Association of Neurological Surgeons \(AANS\)](#) [Neurosurgery Research and Education Foundation \(NREF\)](#) provides ongoing competitive [research fellowships](#) for [residents](#) and young [investigators](#).

Wilson et al., sought to determine the characteristics and career tracks of [award](#) recipients.

They analyzed characteristics and academic productivity parameters of NREF resident and young investigator awardees in the United States and Canada from 1983 to 2017. Data were extracted from the NREF database and online resources (Web of Science, NIH reporter).

In total, 224 research grants were awarded to 31 women (14%) and 193 men (86%) from 1983 to 2017. Neuro-oncology (36%) was the most common research category. Sixty percent of awardees were in training and most resident award winners were in postgraduate year 5 (37%). Forty-nine percent of all awardees had an additional postgraduate degree (PhD 39%, Master's 10%) with a significantly higher number of PhD recipients being from Canada in comparison to any US region ($p = 0.024$). The Northeastern and Southeastern United States were the regions with the highest and lowest numbers of award recipients, respectively. More than one-third (40%) of awardees came from institutions that have a National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke Research Education Grant (NINDS R25) for neurosurgical training. Awardees from NINDS R25-funded programs were significantly more likely to go on to receive funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) (40.4% vs 26.1%; $p = 0.024$). The majority of recipients (72%) who were no longer in training pursued fellowships, with a significant likelihood that fellowship subspecialty correlated with NREF research category ($p < 0.001$). Seventy-nine percent of winners entered academic neurosurgery practice, with 18% obtaining the position of chair. The median h-index among NREF winners was 11. NIH funding was obtained by 71 awardees (32%) with 36 (18%) being a principal investigator on an R01 grant from the NIH Research Project Grant Program.

The majority of AANS/NREF research award recipients enter academics as fellowship-trained neurosurgeons, with approximately one-third obtaining NIH funding. Analysis of this unique cohort allows for identification of characteristics of academic success ¹⁾.

The [Neurosurgery](#) Research and Education Foundation (NREF) is a not-for-profit 501 (C)(3) organization created in 1980 by the [American Association of Neurological Surgeons \(AANS\)](#) to support research and education efforts that enhance and confirm the critical role [neurosurgeons](#) play in improving lives.

The NREF is dedicated to providing education to neurosurgeons at all stages of their careers, as well as funding research into new and existing neurosurgical treatments, in order to identify links between best practices and improved outcomes in patient care. Through voluntary public donations, corporate support, and donations from allied groups, the NREF supports endeavors that impact the lives of those suffering from epilepsy, stroke, brain tumors, spinal disorders, sports-related head injuries, lower back pain and Parkinson's disease.

Goals

The goals of the foundation are:

To provide a private, non-governmental source of funding for research training in the neurosciences related to the field of neurological surgery.

To ensure the continued viability and expansion of the field of neurological surgery based on fundamental research in the basic sciences and clinical enterprises pertinent to neurosurgery.

To augment support for research endeavors by the neurosurgical community.

To stimulate learning by neurosurgeons and enhance educational opportunities for them throughout their careers.

¹⁾

Wilson TA, Langston RG, Wong KH, Rodriguez A. Characteristics and career outcomes of Neurosurgery Research and Education Foundation research fellowship recipients. J Neurosurg. 2019 Feb 8;1-7. doi: 10.3171/2018.10.JNS18859. [Epub ahead of print] PubMed PMID: 30738408.

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