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**From:** Charles O'Brien [mailto:obrien@mail.trc.upenn.edu]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 04, 2009 2:57 PM  
**To:** Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD)  
**Subject:** Review board meetings for consideration of NIAAA-NIDA merger

Dear Dr. Tabak,

It has come to my attention that your committee is interested in obtaining opinions on the advisability of the merger of the two institutes involved in research on substance use disorders. I am writing to offer my services if you would like to hear from someone who has been doing research on all forms of drug abuse including ethanol for the past 40 years and has served as an adviser many times to both institutes.

I was a member of the committee in the 1980s that formed the modern definition of alcohol dependence and am currently the chair of the APA committee that is revising the definition for a new edition to come out in 2012.

In brief, I have been an active alcohol researcher since 1971, but I have never limited my research to the single drug, ethyl alcohol. In the past decade and a half it has been difficult to find pure alcoholics to study. Most patients are dependent on alcohol plus other drugs. For political reasons, we can't usually mention this in alcohol applications, but we have always been permitted to study alcohol along with other drugs on NIDA grants. This is how we discovered that naltrexone is effective in alcoholism. It might never have been discovered otherwise because naltrexone was known at that time as a "heroin drug." It is now used all over the world to treat alcoholism.

It is a complete waste of taxpayer money to support two institutes. Our patients make no such distinction.

Best wishes for this important work.

Charles P. O'Brien, MD, PhD  
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