

NIH defines success rates as the percentage of reviewed grant applications that receive funding. Success rates published in NIH RePORTER are determined by dividing the number of competing applications funded by the total number of competing applications reviewed. Applications having one or more submissions for the same project in the same fiscal year are only counted once.

However, we noted that each year about 20% of NCI F32 applicants declined the award in lieu of non-NIH postdoctoral fellowships or because they decided to pursue other career opportunities, although NCI had committed to funding these applications. A similar phenomenon was observed with the K99 grant mechanism.

Therefore, the "actual" success rate could be determined by dividing the number of applications selected for funding by the number of competing applications, which would be consistently higher than what is reported in the NIH RePORTER for the F32 and K99 grant mechanisms. While the difference in the K99 success rates are not as statistically significant, there were a few K99 applicants to decline the award each year.

This phenomenon is not observed with other training mechanisms to this extent.

The Picture is Rosier than We Think An in-depth look at the success rates of NCI's F32 and K99 training grants The National Cancer Institute's Center for Cancer Training (CCT) **Funding for Extramural Cancer Training by the Cancer Training Branch (CTB)** Sasha Torres, Sonia Jakowlew, Michele McGuirl, Michael Schmidt, Sergei Radaev, Jonathan Wiest, and Ming Lei **Cancer Training Branch/CCT/ NCI**

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) supports fellowships, research career development awards, and training/education research in all areas of cancer research.

Fiscal Year	Applications Reviewed	Awards Offered	Applications Awarded	NIH RePORTER Success Rate	"Actual" Success Rate	Net Difference
2012	232	48	42	18.1%	20.7%	6%
2013	265	63	50	18.9%	23.8%	4.9%
2014	238	58	47	19.7%	24.4%	4.2%
2015	221	52	43	19.5%	23.5%	4.5%
2016	223	53	43	19.3%	23.8%	4.5%
2010	223	55	43	T2.2/0	23.0/0	4.3/0

F32 Success Rate Comparisons



NIH RePORTER Success Rate

Fiscal Year	Applications Reviewed	Awards Offered	Applications Awarded	NIH RePORTER Success Rate	"Actual" Success Rate	Net Difference
2012	147	27	25	17%	18.4%	1.4%
2013	134	37	34	25%	27.6%	2.6%
2014	179	49	46	26%	27.4%	1.4%
2015	138	35	33	23.9%	25.4%	1.5%
2016	159	52	51	32.1%	32.7%	0.6%

K99 Success Rate Comparisons



32.1%32.7% 26% 27.4% **23.9%25.4%** 2014 2015 2016 Actual Success Rate

K99

• Gaining an understanding of why awards are being declined can help us determine how to improve mechanism programs • Postdocs applying for the F32 or K99 training grants could see a rosier picture. Their chances of receiving an award may be greater than the reported rates suggested. If the higher actual success rates for mechanisms are available to applicants, their interest in applying for the grants could increase. In turn, NIH could have a more competitive pool of postdoc applicants.





Grant echanism	Area of Support
	Mentored cancer research training for individuals with a doctoral degree
	Postdoctoral and clinical fellows in transitioning from the mentored stage of their cancer research careers (K99) to independent investigators (R00)

Conclusion and analysis:

Reasons that applicant(s) may decline awards: • Timeframe from the F32 and K99 application deadline to decision is up to 10 months, which can be too long for postdocs to wait Postdocs accepted non-academic positions Postdocs accepted awards from other funding sources

How NIH can benefit from this analysis: