

## Brain science pioneer shifts focus of NIMH to basic neuroscience and genetics

The *New York Times* profiles brain science pioneer, Dr. Thomas R. Insel director of the National Institute of Mental Health. As director he has “sharply shifted the agency’s focus — to basic neuroscience and genetics, at the expense of the very type of behavioral research he himself had once done. That change has generated a mix of optimism and outrage.”

[Dr. Insel has a] stubborn conviction is that the only way to build a real psychiatric science is from first principles — from genes and brain biology, as opposed to identifying symptom clusters. Some of the mental health institute’s largest outlays under Dr. Insel have been to support projects that, biologically speaking, are like mapping the ocean floor.

One is the Psychiatric Genomics Consortium, a far-flung group of top research centers that share data and analysis, based at the lab of Dr. Patrick F. Sullivan at the University of North Carolina. The other is the Human Connectome Project, a \$40 million, five-year program to build a baseline database for brain structure and activity using M.R.I. imaging.

**Read the full, original article:** [Blazing Trails in Brain Science](#)

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- [Bad brains: Did my DNA make me do it?](#), Genetic Literacy Project
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