

Pace of biomedical research not sustainable without funding changes

In the current issue of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), four distinguished scientists make an urgent case for reforming how biomedical research is funded and carried out in the United States.

While biomedicine has flourished in the U.S. since the end of World War II, the authors argue that its current trajectory is unsustainable. Beginning in the 1990s and worsening after 2003, when the NIH budget doubled, there has been an increasing mismatch between the demand for research dollars and the supply. Over the past decade, as a result of the Great Recession and the sequestration, expansion has stalled and even reversed.

The root of the problem, according to the authors, is the longstanding, unquestioned assumption that the biomedical enterprise would continue to expand indefinitely. This “Malthusian” mindset has led to the training of many more scientists than can find jobs in academia, government, or the private sector. Graduate students and postdoctoral fellows do most of the hands-on research in academic institutions, and their ranks have swelled to enable scientists to expand their research productivity. This growth was made possible, in part, by paying postdocs less than permanent staff scientists.

Read the full, original story: [Top Scientists Call For Reform Of “Unsustainable” Biomedical Research Enterprise](#)