



Walter J. Koroshetz, MD

Director

*NIH's HEAL Initiative in Pain Science*

Dr. Koroshetz became Director of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) in 2015. In that capacity, he is chair of the Interagency Pain Research Coordinating Committee that coordinates pain research across the federal government and is co-chair of the Acute to Chronic Pain Signatures Program, part of the NIH Common Fund. He leads a number of programs as part of the Helping to End Addiction Long Term (HEAL) Initiative. He has also held leadership roles in the NIH BRAIN Initiative, NIH Blueprint for Neuroscience, and the NIH Office of Emergency Care Research.

Dr. Koroshetz joined NINDS in 2007 as Deputy Director. Prior to that, he served as Vice Chair of the neurology service and Director of stroke and neurointensive care services at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). He was a professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School (HMS) and led neurology resident training at MGH between 1990 and 2007. Over that same period, he co-directed the HMS Neurobiology of Disease Course with Drs. Edward Kravitz and Robert H Brown.

A native of Brooklyn, New York, Dr. Koroshetz graduated from Georgetown University and received his medical degree from the University of Chicago. He trained in internal medicine at the University of Chicago and Massachusetts General Hospital. Then trained in neurology and neuroscience at MGH and later at Harvard Neurobiology. A major focus of his clinical research career was to develop measures in patients that reflect the underlying biology of their disorders. This led to clinical research using brain imaging techniques including MR spectroscopy in Huntington's disease, diffusion/perfusion MR and CT imaging, CT angiography, and acute clot removal for large artery stroke.

Abstract: The Helping to End Addiction Long-term (HEAL) Initiative is an aggressive, trans-agency effort to speed scientific solutions to stem the national opioid public health crisis. Almost every NIH Institute and Center is accelerating research to address this public health emergency from all angles. Understanding, managing, and treating

pain is a core goal of the initiative, and this has taken the form of a number of diverse programs. The NIH HEAL Initiative aims to accelerate the discovery and preclinical development of new medications and devices to treat pain as well as advance clinical research on pain management. More effective medications for pain are needed, but poorly predictive animal models, changes in biopharmaceutical industry focus, and perceived regulatory and reimbursement concerns have made research challenging. NIH is supporting a suite of targeted research efforts to address this need. Additionally, the HEAL Initiative is supporting both new clinical trial programs and the expansion of existing programs to evaluate the safety and efficacy of innovative therapies for pain management. These clinical trials will help establish evidence-based guidelines for treating pain with non-opioid therapies to reduce use of prescription opioid medications. The HEAL Initiative is also taking steps to harness the power of patients and other stakeholders to advance research goals. In this talk, I will address the scope of the HEAL Initiative and current and future programs.