

# Brief Summary of NIH Foreign Interference Cases

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## Overview

This report summarizes the characteristics and outcomes of NIH foreign interference compliance reviews as of December 3, 2025. Since 2017, NIH has received allegations involving 691 scientists. Figure 1 shows the number of allegations received each year (from 2018 through December 3, 2025), along with the number of cases in which NIH contacted institutions. In this report, we will focus on the 271 cases in which staff from the NIH Office of Extramural Research have contacted institutions from 2018 to December 3, 2025.

## Case Characteristics

Table 1 shows characteristics of foreign interference cases according to the original source of concerns. The most common source was internal, that is agency staff discovering discrepancies in grant documents and published materials. Self-disclosures have increased in recent years, while referrals from the FBI have decreased. Most affected scientists are self-reported as Asian, which is not surprising given the well-described recruiting efforts on the part of the government and institutions of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The proportion of white scientists is greater for self-disclosed cases, but one-fifth of these came from one institution (Moffitt Cancer Center). [As noted by NIH](#), PIs provide demographic data on a strictly voluntary basis, and these data are not used for making funding decisions. The PRC accounted for the vast majority of foreign interference concerns. Figure 2 shows the number of new cases according to the year when we contacted the institution. The number of cases peaked in 2019 and has been declining since.

## Case Outcomes

### Compliance Reviews

Table 2 shows outcomes of compliance reviews to date. Even though some reviews are still open, we have already determined that for over 85 percent of cases there was at least one serious compliance violation (that is undisclosed grant support, undisclosed talents award, undisclosed equity, undisclosed patent, or other undisclosed financial conflict of interest). Less than five percent were found to have no violation (that is, no undisclosed foreign affiliation and no serious violation). More than 60 percent of scientists were removed from NIH grants (either through institutional separation or other internal institutional actions). Table 3 shows the same data according to the original source of concerns.

## Criminal and Civil Actions

There have been few cases that have led to criminal and civil actions. To date there have been three convictions ([Charles Lieber at Harvard University](#), [Xiao-Jiang Li at Emory University](#), and [Song-Guo Zheng at Ohio State University](#)) and three false-claims civil settlements ([two with Van Andel Research Institute](#) and [one with Cleveland Clinic](#)).

## Repayments

In 53 cases, the United States government received or reached agreement regarding repayments totaling \$37,846,508. Department of Justice actions (criminal or civil) led to the final resolution in 6 cases (\$17,683,600). Thus, in the majority of cases, repayments were secured through administrative means.

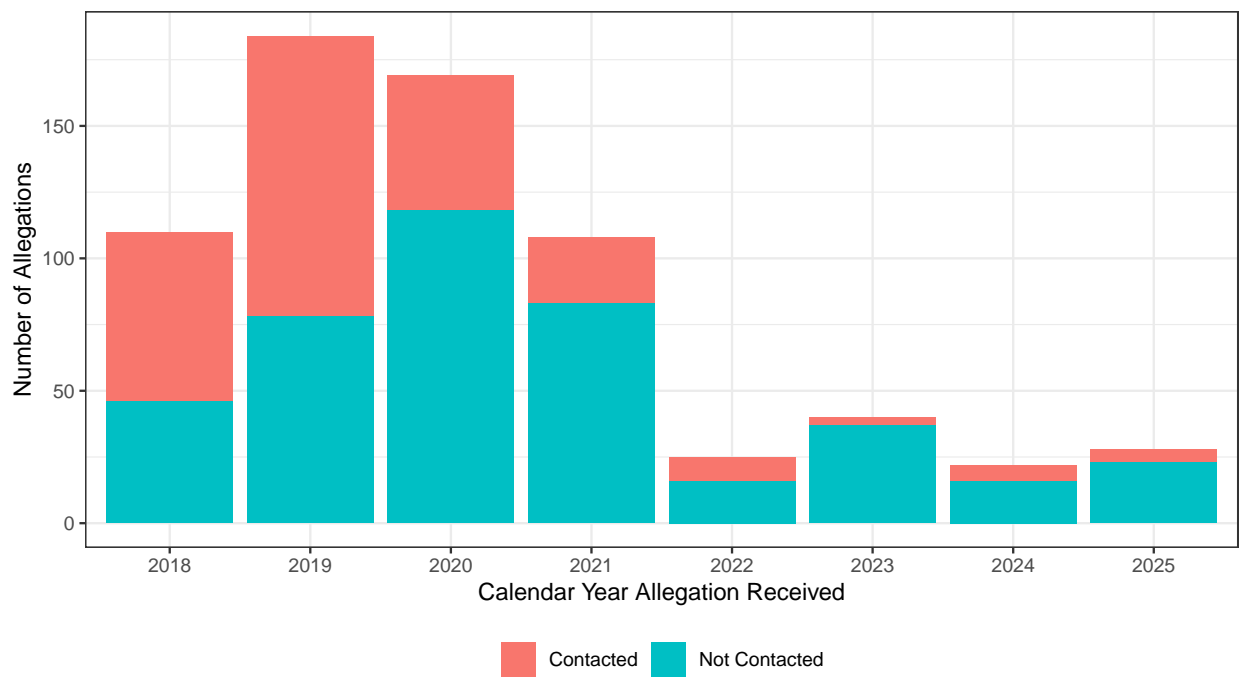


Figure 1: Number of allegations and number of institutions contacted according to the calendar year that the allegation was received. Data for calendar year 2025 are up to December 3, 2025.

Table 1: Characteristics of foreign interference cases reported to the NIH Office of Extramural Research (OER) according to the original source of concerns. Values shown are for cases in which NIH Staff have contacted the Institution. Values shown are Number (column %). % data in each column represent values based on Total N (271). Percentages do not necessarily add up to 100 due to missing or withheld values. PRC = People’s Republic of China.

Characteristic		Reported Source		
		Internal	Self Disclosure	FBI
Total N (271)	Total	134 (49.4%)	84 (31%)	53 (19.6%)
Year Institution Contacted	2018 to 2019	96 (71.6%)	20 (23.8%)	42 (79.2%)
Year Institution Contacted	2020 to 2025	38 (28.4%)	64 (76.2%)	11 (20.8%)
Sex	Female	22 (16.4%)	13 (15.5%)	10 (18.9%)
Sex	Male	112 (83.6%)	70 (83.3%)	41 (77.4%)
Race	Asian	104 (77.6%)	54 (64.3%)	42 (79.2%)
Race	White	25 (18.7%)	25 (29.8%)	3 (5.7%)
Country of Concern	PRC	119 (88.8%)	70 (83.3%)	53 (100.0%)

Table 2: Outcomes of NIH foreign interference cases. Values shown are for cases in which NIH Staff have contacted the Institution. Any serious violation means one or more of the following: undisclosed grant support, undisclosed talents award, undisclosed equity, undisclosed patent, or other undisclosed financial conflict of interest. No violation means no undisclosed foreign affiliation and no serious violation. Removed from grants refers to cases with institutional separation or other internal institutional actions. SFI = significant financial interest. Values shown are Number (column %). % data in each column represent values based on Total N (271).

Outcome	Number (%)
Total N (271)	271 (100%)
Undisclosed Affiliation	237 (87.5%)
Undisclosed Grant Support	198 (73.1%)
Undisclosed Talents Award	140 (51.7%)
Undisclosed Equity, Patent, or SFI	54 (19.9%)
Any Serious Violation	237 (87.5%)
No Violation Found After Compliance Review	8 (3.0%)
Termination or Resignation	121 (44.6%)
Institutional Exclusion from Grants	56 (20.7%)
Removed from Grants	177 (65.3%)
Removed from Peer Review	215 (79.3%)
Compliance Review Open	33 (12.2%)

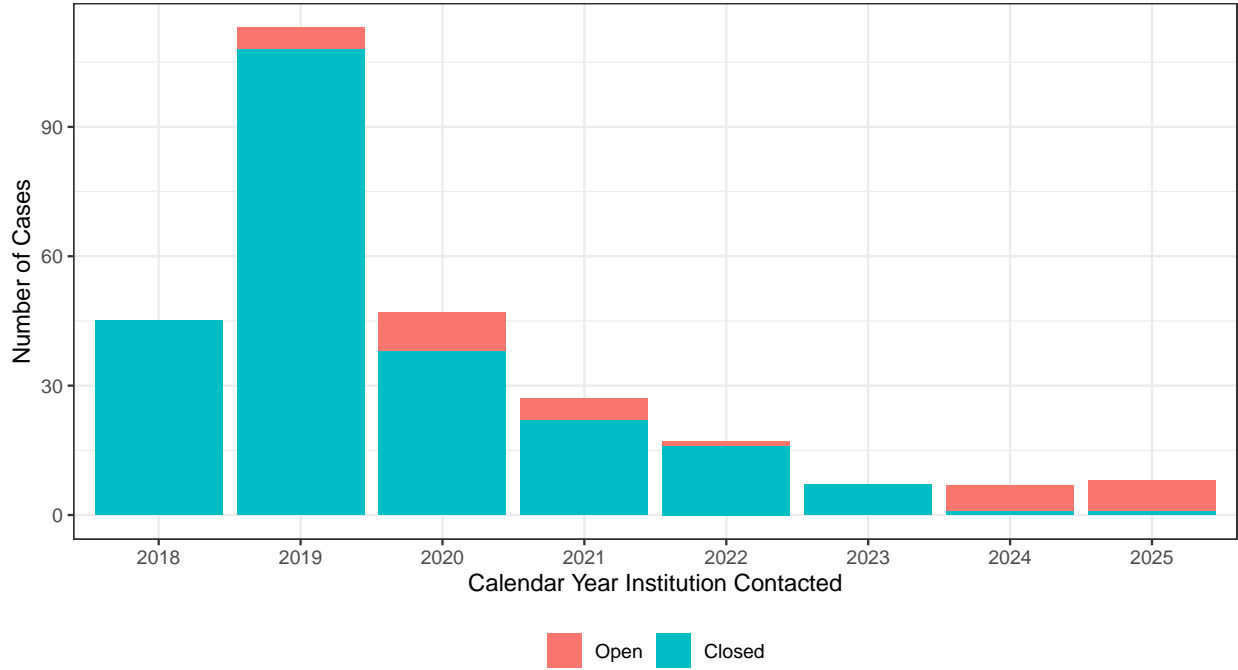


Figure 2: Number of cases and current status (Open or Closed) according to year in which OER contacted the institution.

Table 3: Outcomes of NIH foreign interference cases according to the original source of concerns. Values shown are for cases in which NIH Staff have contacted the Institution. Any serious violation means one or more of the following: undisclosed grant support, undisclosed talents award, undisclosed equity, undisclosed patent, or other undisclosed financial conflict of interest. Removed from grants refers to cases with institutional separation or other internal institutional actions. SFI = significant financial interest. Values shown are Number (column %). % data in each column represent values based on Total N (271).

Outcome	Internal	Self Disclosure	FBI
Total N (271)	134 (49.4%)	84 (31%)	53 (19.6%)
Undisclosed Affiliation	111 (41.0%)	75 (27.7%)	51 (18.8%)
Undisclosed Grant Support	100 (36.9%)	57 (21.0%)	41 (15.1%)
Undisclosed Talents Award	50 (18.5%)	41 (15.1%)	49 (18.1%)
Undisclosed Equity, Patent, or SFI	21 (7.7%)	23 (8.5%)	10 (3.7%)
Any Serious Violation	112 (41.3%)	74 (27.3%)	51 (18.8%)
Termination or Resignation	46 (17.0%)	46 (17.0%)	29 (10.7%)
Institutional Exclusion from Grants	36 (13.3%)	13 (4.8%)	7 (2.6%)
Removed from Grants	82 (30.3%)	59 (21.8%)	36 (13.3%)
Removed from Peer Review	98 (36.2%)	72 (26.6%)	45 (16.6%)
Compliance Review Open	18 (6.6%)	13 (4.8%)	2 (0.7%)