

Deborah H. Olster, Ph.D. joined the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR) in 2002 and is currently serving as its Acting Director. She came to the NIH following completion of an American Association for the Advancement of Science/National Science Foundation (NSF) Science and Technology Policy Fellowship in 2000-2001. Prior to that, Dr. Olster was a Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Since joining OBSSR in 2002, she has developed extramural research programs at the intersection of the biological, behavioral and social sciences. Dr. Olster participates in several trans-NIH activities, including the NIH Roadmap for Medical Research, the NIH Genes, Environment and Health Initiative, the NIH Obesity Research Task Force, the NIH Blueprint for Neuroscience Research, and the NIH Basic Behavioral and Social Science Opportunity Network.

Dr. Olster earned a Ph.D. in Physiology from The University of Michigan, after which she did postdoctoral work in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University and in the Department of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Her primary research focus has been the neuroendocrine control of reproduction. With support from the NIH and the NSF, she has investigated seasonal and pubertal transitions in reproductive function, sexual motivation, and reproductive dysfunction related to stress, obesity and under-nutrition, using a variety of animal models. She has also collaborated on research projects related to stress hormones and human behaviors, the regulation of food intake and body temperature in laboratory animals and color perception and seasonal sexual displays in Australian bowerbirds.