**Core Function of Public Health (NIH and USAID)**

**Introduction**

Concern for the public health has been one of the most important policies of the United States since independence. It has been a core aspect of government planning and execution and has allowed for the considerable advancement of health research and discoveries in the years since. The United States has become a leader in the promotion of the health of individuals not only in the country, but also in the rest of the world. It has presided over the creation of agencies whose core functions are aimed at research, discovery, and prevention of a diversity of diseases that have become a public health concern. In this paper, there will be an analysis of the core functions of two major American agencies, namely the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

**The NIH**

The most significant function that is conducted by the NIH is to ensure that there is research concerning a diversity of diseases. This research is a critical aspect of making sure that there is the advancement of a situation where there is a better understanding of disease and the manner through which they can be prevented (NIH, 2000). Furthermore, it is an essential means of promoting the health of members of society through finding out the diverse characteristics of disease and how they manifest themselves in the human body. The NIH receives direct funding from the government and as a government agency, has the responsibility of making sure that it undertakes to provide scientists with the means through which to receive financial support for their research. One of the core functions of this agency is to conduct intramural research, and this is done through dedicating a part of its budget towards facilitating research within its own facilities. In addition to the intramural research, this agency gives a majority of its budget to extramural research in such a way that promotes the advancement of scientific research into disease. The extramural programs are those that provide funding to individual scientists, organizations, and educational institutions, with the aim of furthering the ability of the latter to bring about effective medical research. This agency has ended up being one of the most important providers of grants for medical research in the country, which has ensured that its role as a leader in research when it comes to public health issues has been firmly secured. Through the development of means through which to bring about the achievement of greater health research, the NIH has essentially been responsible for some of the most pertinent discoveries that have been made through its grants program.

As an agency dedicated to research, the NIH requires that all the individuals or institutions that have received its grants and have conducted research have to publish their findings in the National Library of Medicine's research repository, PubMed Central (PMC), within a year of initial publication (Margolis et al., 2014). This is an extremely important means of making sure that health research is made available not only to the public, but also to other researchers. It allows for the further advancement of the research that has been already conducted in such a way that helps to bring about the achievement of the goal of furthering public health. The promotion of such initiatives is also critical to furthering research because it ensures that the research published becomes the basis for further research into the field or subject that has been studied. Moreover, the NIH has promoted the conduct of research into the manner through which pain takes place in the body. It has brought together a number of agencies, organizations, and institutions with the aim of learning more about this problem. Pain research has for the most part tended to lack enough funding, but with the involvement of the NIH, it has become possible to make sure that there is the development of means through which to enhance knowledge concerning it (Reuben et al., 2015). By bringing all of these organizations together to conduct research, the NIH has essentially decided to take on a major public health issue because the results of the research will in the long-term allow for the development of means through which to ensure that there is effective pain management in the public health setting. It is possible that the research will end up helping individuals suffering from such diseases as arthritis, who tend to suffer from considerable pain.

**USAID**

As one of the most important and well-known American agencies in the world, USAID has undertaken to achieve a number of core objectives. The first of these is disaster relief, which this agency has been able to specialize in over the past decades. USAID provides disaster relief in those areas of the world that has either undergone conflict or natural disasters (Pablos-Méndez, 2012). A result of this situation is that USAID has been responsible for saving a considerable number of lives since its formation. USAID is one of the most important American agencies when it comes to handling the diversity of issues surrounding conflict and natural disaster areas and this is especially the case considering that it has been responsible for making sure that it not only provides food to prevent starvation, but also the provision of essential services such as education for children whose schools have been destroyed because of conflict. This agency has also come to play a pertinent role in promoting the bilateral relations of the US and other countries in such a way that allows the former to have considerable influence and to project its power across the world through the provision of aid following the disasters that have been mentioned above.

USAID is also directly involved in poverty relief and has been responsible for the promotion of initiatives aimed at preventing or bringing an end to poverty in diverse parts of the world. This is especially the case considering that over the years, this agency has sought to make sure that it targets the poorest individuals in the world for the provision of such services as healthcare and education (Pablos-Méndez, 2012). It is aimed at making sure that there is the development of means through which individuals from this population can have some relief when it comes to their responsibilities. Furthermore, through having access to health and education, it is expected that the children from poor backgrounds can have an opportunity to break away from the cycle in such a way that they are able to improve their economic circumstances. It is also important to note that USAID has been responsible for the management of the food aid that has been provided by the US Department of Agriculture for distribution to disaster areas in the world and this has allowed for the development of means through which to promote the interests of those people who have been affected by famine or poverty.

USAID is a primary actor across the world when it comes to handling a diversity of global issues including the prevention of communicable disease and the environment. It is noteworthy to consider that this agency has been at the forefront in the development of bilateral relationships aimed at making sure that there is the prevention of communicable diseases from moving from one part of the world. This has been achieved through the establishment of collaborations with the countries affected so that these diseases can be prevented from their sources rather than being allowed to become epidemics (Nsubuga, Nwanyanwu, Nkengasong, Mukanga, & Trostle, 2010). Furthermore, USAID has been at the forefront of fighting for environmental conservation and this has been to such an extent that it has allowed for the development of means through which to make sure that there is the creation of initiatives aimed at bringing about the significant reduction of the ecological footprint. The actions undertaken by USAID to ensure the development of awareness concerning the environment through a study of its effects can be considered essential when it comes to making sure that efforts towards the achievement of sustainable development are achieved effectively.

**Similarities and Differences**

USAID and NIH are some of the most important agencies when it comes to the promotion of public health. However, while USAID tends to work outside American boundaries through bilateral agreements aimed at promoting public health in other countries, NIH focuses more on the domestic front. Furthermore, NIH makes use of most of its budget in the provision of grants aimed at promoting health research. The research conducted is pertinent to the promotion of public health in such a way that it ensures that there is the advancement of an understanding of disease and their characteristics. This is not the case with USAID, whose core function is using its budget to provide aid to those who need it. The latter are often individuals that require essential health services, especially food and medicines after being hit by natural disaster or conflicts. Despite these differences, both USAID and NIH seek to promote a situation where they are able to undertake actions aimed at the prevention of disease so that it does not end up becoming a public health crisis.

**Conclusion**

Both NIH and USAID play important roles when it comes to the advancement of means through which to ensure that there is the promotion of public health. They use the budgets that they have been allocated by the federal government in the promotion of public health, albeit in different ways. Thus, while NIH focuses more on making sure that there is the advancement of research concerning a diversity of health issues, USAID takes on a more direct approach, such as seeking to prevent communicable diseases and undertaking to prevent the emergence of such disasters as hunger through the provision of food aid. There agencies have therefore become pertinent players in the promotion of public health. The latter has been in such a way that allows for the advancement of different means through which to make sure that problems related to health are resolved as swiftly as possible.

**References**

Margolis, R., Derr, L., Dunn, M., Huerta, M., Larkin, J., Sheehan, J., . . . Green, E. D. (2014). The National Institutes of Health's Big Data to Knowledge (BD2K) initiative: capitalizing on biomedical big data. *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association, 21*(6), 957-958.

NIH. (2000). *National Institutes of Health Strategic Research Plan to Reduce and Ultimately Eliminate Health Disparities: Fiscal Years 2002-2006*: US Department of Health and Human Services.

Nsubuga, P., Nwanyanwu, O., Nkengasong, J. N., Mukanga, D., & Trostle, M. (2010). Strengthening public health surveillance and response using the health systems strengthening agenda in developing countries. *BMC public health, 10*(1), S5.

Pablos-Méndez, A. (2012). USAID's global health strategic framework. Better health for development. *Washington DC: USAID*.

Reuben, D. B., Alvanzo, A. A., Ashikaga, T., Bogat, G. A., Callahan, C. M., Ruffing, V., & Steffens, D. C. (2015). National Institutes of Health Pathways to Prevention Workshop: the role of opioids in the treatment of chronic pain. *Annals of internal medicine, 162*(4), 295-300.