



# Funders and Publishers

Responsible communication: Balancing Security and  
Transparency

# Balancing open science & safety/security

- Open science including sharing of reagents, strains is key for
  - Reproducibility
  - Faster progress
- Funders (incl NIH) increasingly insist on it
- Potential conflict with biosafety and biosecurity:
  - Malevolent actors and well-meaning scientists lacking appropriate safety and security controls may have a “right” to obtain ePPP per journal or funder policies
  - Even with perfect system of control for funded research, mere possession of these agents may be a large risk

# Solutions

- Need to enact the mandate to develop standards for "Responsible Communication" (P3CO p. 5)
- Journal and funder access policies should have special provisions in the case of ePPP or other agents posing accidental transmission risk and/or dual use concerns
- Details require discussion: potential recipient must document IBC or equivalent permission to use the organism? May be inadequate especially for security.
  - ATCC Form 62 Customer Acceptance of Responsibility for Potentially Highly Pathogenic Biological Materials as a starting point – should evaluate fitness for this purpose

# Non-USG Funders and Publishers

- P3CO policy applies to USG funding
- Non-USG funders under no obligations
- Publishers (journals and preprints) have spotty policies on biosecurity requirements, nearly none on population-level biosafety risks (those posed by PPP)

# Proposed solution: USG should recommend best practices

- **Other funders:** Similar to the HHS policy, funding of enhanced PPP experiments should follow only if independent, transparent review involving appropriate expertise finds the risks outweigh the benefits.
- **Publishers:** Similar to human subjects protection requirements, publishers should publish only if the funder or equivalent has provided documentation of this review, including the risks and benefits and weighing thereof. Exactly how to implement this needs further discussion
- **Preprint publishers:** Policy development needed. Extensive review is antithetical to their purpose, but biosecurity risks are real.

# Thank you