

AITRP CONNECTIONS

The newsletter of the UIC AIDS International Training & Research Program

<http://www.uic.edu/sph/AITRP>

Spring/Summer 2007

ABOUT THE UIC-AITRP

Awarded in 2000, the UIC-AITRP is funded by the John E. Fogarty International Center (FIC). Additional support is provided by the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR). The program's goal is to build long-term scientific capacities through training and research that help to address the AIDS epidemic in Chile, China, Indonesia, and Malawi.

PROGRAM FACULTY

SPH - Robert Bailey, Carol Ciesielski, Mark Dworkin, Paul Goldstein, Ronald Hershov, Lena Hatchett, Michele Issel, Judith Levy, Susan Levy, Edward Mensah, Claudia Morrissey, Lawrence Ouellet, Nadine Peacock, Thomas Prohaska, Jesus Ramirez-Valles, Wayne Wiebel, Chyvette Williams

CON – Barbara Berger, Carol Christiansen, Barbara Dancy, Marquis Foreman, Tonda Hughes, Gwen Brumbaugh Keeney, Linda McCreary, Beverly McElmurry, Arlene Miller, Kathleen Norr, Patrick Robinson, Marie Talashek, Diana Wilkie

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Congratulations to Dr. Abigail Kazembe and Dr. Ellen Mbweza



We are proud to announce that two of our AITRP doctoral trainees, Abigail Kazembe (SPH) and Ellen Mbweza (CON), successfully defended their doctoral dissertations in fall 2006 and received their PhDs at the May 2007 UIC graduation ceremony and CON/SPH commencements. Congratulations, Drs. Kazembe and Mbweza!

Dr. Kazembe's study, "Female Adolescent-Sexual Decision-Making in Selected Secondary Schools of the Lilongwe District in Malawi" provided valuable insight into the social constructions of risk and the environmental factors that influence Malawian female adolescents' sexual behavior. Dr. Mbweza's study, "Relationship Power Among Married Couples in Malawi: Implications for HIV Prevention," proposed and tested a model explaining the relationship power of spousal dyads and HIV in matrilineal and patrilineal marriage systems of Malawi. Summaries of findings from both studies can be found on pages 5 and 6. Both Ellen and Abigail have returned with their new doctorates to the faculty of the Kamuzu College of Nursing at the University of Malawi.

Meet Alejandra, our most recent AITRP doctoral trainee

We are pleased to introduce Alejandra Araya who began her doctoral program in CON this January, 2007. Alejandra comes to us from our Chilean university partner, Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile. Her prior research focuses on a wide range of topics including the effects of HIV/AIDS on healthcare workers and also AIDS among women. Welcome Alejandra!



The UIC-AITRP is supported through Co-funding from the NIH John E. Fogarty International Center and the National Institute for Nursing Research

Director: Judith A. Levy, PhD

Co-Director: Beverly McElmurry, EdD, RN, FAAN

Moments to Remember



On October 4th 2006, the Department of Psychiatry at UIC and Habilitative Systems Incorporated (HSI) held a commemorative gathering honoring the 25-year anniversary of the global fight against HIV/AIDS. Dr. Willo Pequegnat, Associate Director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Center for Mental Health Research on AIDS, delivered the keynote address on “*25 years of Social/behavioral HIV/AIDS Interventions: Successes, Challenges, and Beyond.*” The presentation was followed by a panel discussion of “*Tackling HIV Disparities in Chicago: Academic, Community, & Government Perspectives.*” Panelists included AITRP faculty members Drs. **Carol Ciesielski** and **Jesus Ramirez-Valles**. AITRP faculty and students were well represented in the audience.

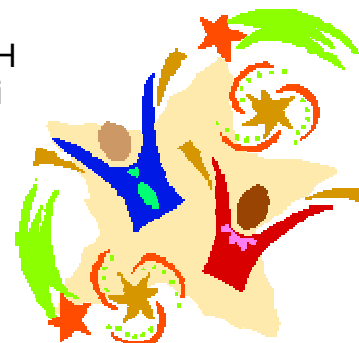


Tigwirizane

NIH Fogarty Alumni Association of Malawi

FAAM in Malawi

The UIC-AITRP was very honored when asked by Dr. Ken Bridbord of the NIH Fogarty International Center to take the lead in organizing the Fogarty Alumni Association of Malawi (FAAM). The Association is designed to serve former fellows of five Fogarty programs in Malawi offered by four U.S. universities (UIC, John Hopkins University, University of North Carolina, and Michigan State).



January and February were busy months for the UIC-AITRP and the new organization. Invitations to join FAAM were sent out and 35 former fellows enrolled as members. The FAAM Steering Committee composed of former fellows is planning a social event in both Lilongwe and Blantyre that will bring together FAAM members to share conviviality, reminisce, and network with each other around helping Malawi to successfully address its health care needs. Meanwhile, the website will keep the membership posted on research opportunities, conferences, and other happenings. The new FAAM website, *Tigwirizane* (Chechewa for “working together”), can be viewed at <http://www.tigwirizane-faam.org>

Heavenly Hainan

Our AITRP has sponsored workshops in all kinds of weather in cities all over China from winter in Jilin near the Korean border to the heat of Urumqi on the old Silk Road near the borders of Kazakhstan and Mongolia. This April, we partnered with the local provincial CDC and other organizational collaborators to hold our spring 4-day workshop in the tropical climate of Hainan Island, the “Hawaii of China.” Topics included prevention of HIV among MSM, a concern that is gaining considerable programmatic and research interest in China. The audience consisted of about 100 CDC staff, government officials, health providers, and research scientists.

Our Fantastic Fellows.....

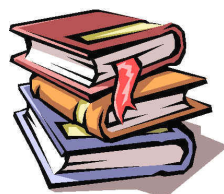
Wow Kapow!

The National Institute on Drug Abuse chose both Gambit Praptoraharjo and Iko Safika to receive a \$500 travel award to present their research findings at the NIDA International Forum in Quebec City this past June. Gambit's poster focuses on "IDU Sexual Networks & the Potential for HIV Transmission in Indonesia." Iko's poster investigates, "Injection Risk Practices among Injection Drug Users in Jakarta, Indonesia." Iko will also present, "Migration Patterns of Female Sex Workers in Papua, Indonesia" at the International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP) at Colombo, Sri Lanka in August.



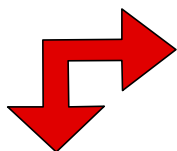
A Double Whammy!

In addition to being awarded the NIDA prize, Gambit also received a second honor this summer. He is the recipient of a travel award from the University of Washington AITRP to attend the 15th Annual Course on Principles of STD and HIV Research at U.W. in Seattle. The award covers round-trip airfare from Chicago, food and lodging, and also tuition for the 10-day Course.



Now Read This....

Alejandra Araya, the AITRP's newest fellow from Chile, co-authored two publications that just appeared in print: I. Araya A, Monsalve E. Acciones de Enfermería otorgadas frente al dolor de los Recién Nacidos sometidos a punciones venosas e intradérmicas (Nursing intervention to manage newborn pain secondary to intravenous or skin puncture)." *Revista Horizonte de Enfermer*, 2006 17(1), 11-17. II. Araya A, Urrutia MT, Cabieses B., "Climaterio y Menopausia: Aspectos educativos a considerar segun la etapa del periodo (Climacteric and Postmenopause: educative aspects to consider according to the stage of the period)," *Cienc. Enferm* 2006. 12 (1), 19-27.



AITRP Faculty Corner

Beverly McElmurry, Co-director of the AITRP and Professor & Associate Dean for International Studies in the CON, has been selected as a Global Health Ambassador by The Rogers Society for Global Health Research. Beverly is one of 27 scientists to receive the inaugural award from the society, which is named after the former Florida congressman who championed utilizing research to improve health.



Research!America launched the Paul G. Rogers Society early last year to increase awareness of diseases that disproportionately affect the world's poorest nations and to make the case for greater U.S. involvement in research to fight those diseases. The organization was established with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The ambassadors, recognized leaders in medical and global public health research, were selected by an advisory council that includes three Nobel laureates. Global Health Ambassadors meet with opinion leaders and decision makers to convey the importance of global health research to Americans and to the nation.

Faculty on the Move!



Carol Ciesielski has been named "Chief of Party," which is the title for the Director of CDC's Global AIDS Program Office in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Carol is in the process of relocating to Cambodia, but she will continue mentoring AITRP scholars via email and when she is in Chicago. We are going to miss Carol, but we look forward to hearing from her on Cambodia's successes in its fight against AIDS.

We warmly welcome **Mark Dworkin** to our UIC AITRP faculty. Mark joined the UIC as Associate Professor, Epidemiology and Biostatistics in the School of Public Health. His former positions include Project Officer for the Adult and Adolescent Spectrum of Disease Project of the Surveillance Branch, Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Lieutenant Commander and Commander, US Public Health Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA. For the last 5 years, he also was State Epidemiologist with the Illinois Department of Public Health, Chicago. Mark also brings considerable experience in conducting research in many different countries to his AITRP mentorship role.

Kudos to our AITRP Affiliating Faculty!

Geri R. Donenberg was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship in Cape Town, South Africa, from January, 2007 to December, 2007. Her scholarship entails working with the Human Science Research Council and the University of Western Cape on a combination of formal teaching, informal supervision and mentorship, and capacity development. Sounds like a great experience!

Nathan Linsk continues to be actively involved with Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia as a visiting faculty member with the Graduate School of Social Work. The School was launched in 2004 after Dr. Linsk assisted in developing the Social Work Education in Ethiopia Project, which helped create the first graduate college of social work in Ethiopia. Last year he served as an African AIDS Regional Research Fulbright scholar, a role which included conducting research on Anti-retroviral Treatment implementation and adherence. His research found high levels of reported adherence but also significant cultural barriers in provider-PWHIV communication that might affect these estimates and which must be addressed in future interventions. In addition, Nathan supervised nine MSW theses related to HIV in areas such as social media and ART, religious practices and HIV, care and support of orphans and vulnerable children, program evaluation and situational analyses of a variety of urban and rural areas. Nathan is now launching an HIV Twinning Center, with the Institute of Social Work in Dar es Salaam, assisting in training of social workers and paraprofessional on care and support of orphans and their caregivers. The effort represents a partnership between the Institute of Social Work and the Jane Addams College of Social Work at UIC.

Female Adolescent-Sexual Decision-Making in Selected Secondary Schools of the Lilongwe District in Malawi

Doctoral Dissertation: Abigail Kazembe, PhD

Committee: Judith Levy (Chair), Robert Bailey, Michael Fagan, Beverly McElmurry, Susan Levy

Dr. Kazembe's dissertation examined risk perception, sexual decision-making, and the role of social environment in facilitating or protecting secondary school girls in Malawi against acquiring HIV. Using a grounded theory approach to data collection and analyses, the study drew its findings from data obtained at seven community secondary schools in the Lilongwe District of Malawi. Three sets of the study's major findings are described briefly below.

The first analysis explored how youth in Malawi socially construct and understand HIV/AIDS risk. A sealed question box was placed from June to September 2005 at each of the seven schools in the study, and students were invited to anonymously submit questions that they would like answered about HIV/AIDS. The questions subsequently were content analyzed to identify emergent themes. Findings show that students know the basic facts about HIV but have difficulty applying these facts to themselves when calculating their own risk. The students drew their understanding of HIV/AIDS risk from a varying mix of scientific, socio-cultural, historical, and experiential knowledge. Seven heuristic categories were used to socially construct and calculate personal risk: age, ejaculating practices, role of menses, exposure through casual contact, witchcraft, vector transmission, and preventive strategies.

A second analysis considered the role of residential place in influencing risk behavior. In-depth interviews were conducted with 39 participants that lived in either a school dorm, rented facility, or with their family. Results show that HIV risk behavior was a product of the interplay between residential place and permutations of available leisure time, parental pressure, peer pressure, and adult supervision. Those who lived in rented quarters off campus had the highest opportunities to engage in risky behavior. Opportunities for constructive and supervised use of leisure time was critical in shaping whether or not the youth were exposed to or engaged in behavior that could result in HIV risk.

A third analysis focused on factors that influence the sexual decisions of female adolescents. Data from in-depth interviews with 17 abstinent and 22 sexually active female adolescents ages 15 - 17 years indicated that future oriented goals, religious values, peer influence, parental influence, and fear of consequences of sexual activity influenced the sexual decisions of abstinent girls. In contrast, sexually active participants reported that their sexual decision-making was influenced by a different set of criteria that included cultural values that supported sexual behavior, sexual desire, romantic interpersonal relationships, material gain, parental and peer influence.

When viewed as a whole, the findings from the study point to a general lack of in-depth understanding among female adolescents as to how to interpret factual information about HIV when calculating their own risk. The study also demonstrates the need for supervised and productive use of leisure time to militate against opportunities that might lead to HIV risk. Also, fostering future goals among this group appears the critical factor to promote attitude & behavior that will help students to motivate adolescents to make wise choices and to avoid unwanted pregnancies and STDs including HIV/AIDS. Finally, poverty is a serious problem affecting young people in school. To be successful, prevention programming for youth must address the risky behavior that teens sometimes adopt to ameliorate this condition.

Relationship Power among Married Couples in Malawi: Implications for HIV Prevention

Doctoral Dissertation: Ellen Mbweza, PhD

Committee: Kathleen Norr (Chair), Stephanie Riger, Beverly McElmurry, Barbara Dancy, Constance Dallas

The role of relationship power in HIV risk reduction has drawn increasing attention because of the dyadic nature of sexual behavior. The purpose of this study was to generate a model of relationship power of husband and wife dyads in matrilineal and patrilineal marriage systems of Malawi. The decision making processes examined were money, food, pregnancy/contraception, sexual relations, and HIV prevention behaviors of the dyads.

A qualitative design with application of grounded theory was used for data collection and analysis. The study was conducted in four rural communities in two districts: Chiradzulo where a matrilineal marriage system tends to dominate and Chikwawa which largely favors a patrilineal marriage system. Sixty husbands and wives (30 couples) were interviewed separately in the study, 15 couples from each district. The couples were diverse in age and length of marriage, but most had little education and relied on subsistence farming and small businesses for income.

The interviews identified a consistent decision making process across diverse types of problems: one member initiated communication about an issue; the couple explored solutions; and a final decision was made. Occasionally, the couples consulted members outside the marriage when a resolution could not be reached. The couples used three decision making styles: husband dominated, wife dominated, and shared. Most couples used a mix of the three styles. Gender and non-gender cultural scripts were consistently used to provide rationales for their specific decisions. Gender cultural scripts were husband-dominant and wife-authority and these scripts were used to justify the dominant decision making style. The couples used non-gender cultural scripts to support shared decision making: communicating openly, maintaining harmony, and children's welfare. Gender cultural scripts were used in decision making more often among couples from the district with a patrilineal marriage system and less often among couples where the husband had secondary school education.

The study adds insights about the variations in couple decision making styles, especially the role of non-gender cultural scripts in encouraging shared decision making. These insights can be used in designing culturally tailored HIV prevention interventions for couples. Shared decision making for safer sex can be fostered using the widely accepted cultural scripts of communication openly, maintaining harmony, and children's welfare.



Ellen (left) with study participant

