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September 24, 2009

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The Honorable Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D.
Director
National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Dr. Collins:

We write to request information about the National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant review and award procedures as well as certain grants recently awarded by the NIH.

The NIH is the primary Federal agency that conducts and supports medical research. Over the last five fiscal years, the funding for the NIH has been relatively static, with Congress appropriating between \$25 and \$30 billion dollars each year for the NIH. Approximately 80 percent of this funding is then awarded through competitive grants to researchers at universities, medical schools, and other research facilities in the United States and around the world.

While NIH funding has remained level, the number of applications submitted for each funding opportunity has increased over the last five years. It has become increasingly difficult, therefore, for researchers to obtain funding for their projects. For example, in 2004, 24.6 percent of grant applications submitted to NIH received funding, or 10,052 of 40,861 grant applications. In 2008, the success rate for obtaining NIH funding had decreased, with only 21.8 percent, or 9,460 of 43,467 applications submitted, receiving funding.

Inevitably, some projects that have scientific merit and may benefit the health of U.S. citizens were not funded. To get a better idea of what types of projects did survive the NIH peer review process and receive funding, Minority Committee staff conducted a review of recently awarded NIH grants. We identified a number of grants that, from our point of view, do not seem to be of the highest scientific rigor which raises questions about how the NIH peer review system is working. We have listed the NIH summaries of those grants in an attachment to this letter.

While we understand that NIH recently enhanced its peer review criteria for grants awarded for Fiscal Year 2010 and thereafter, the peer review system in place at the time these particular grants were awarded nonetheless required that reviewers find that the project “address[ed] an important problem.” At first glance, some of the grants we identified do not seem to meet this standard. For example:

- Grant Number 5R03CA128482-02 proposes to study the “Impact of Dragon Boat Racing on Cancer Survivorship.” According to the abstract, the applicants will examine “whether participation in a dragon boat paddling team enhances quality of life in cancer survivors above and beyond an organized walking program.” The applicant states that the “impact of dragon boat racing . . . has the potential to advance our understanding of survivorship outcomes.”
- Grant Number 1R21DA026324-01A1 proposes to study “Substance Use and HIV Risk Among Thai Women.” The applicant states in the study abstract that the project will “investigate the sociocultural contexts of HIV risk behaviors and drug use among Thai female and male-to-female transgender . . . sex workers in Bangkok.”
- Grant Number 2R24MD001764-04 proposes to study “The Healing of the Canoe.” According to the abstract, the study will examine “alcohol and drug abuse and a need for increased cultural and community identity” among the Suquamish Tribe. The focus of this study is an unspecified “culturally relevant intervention.”
- Grant Number 5R03TW007612-03 proposes to study the “Patterns of Drug Use and Abuse in the Brazilian Rave Culture.” According to the study abstract, the applicants would “explore the emerging club drug epidemic in the Southern part of Brazil. The topic is interesting and the data will be useful to understand the emerging problem of club drugs and raves in Brazil.”

We do not doubt that there may be some degree of scientific benefit to be gained from these studies. However, given the number of urgent public health issues facing the NIH, such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and pandemic disease, we question how peer review panels determined these projects to have “high scientific caliber” and how they are particularly relevant to the NIH Institute and Center research priorities. For this reason, with regard to the grants listed in the attachment, we request that you provide written responses to the following questions no later than four weeks from the date of this letter.

1. For each grant listed in the attachment, please explain how the grant relates to the funding priorities of the relevant NIH Institute or Center.
2. For each grant listed in the attachment, please provide the overall impact score.
3. For each grant listed in the attachment, please list the number of peer reviewers at the initial peer review meeting and the second level of review who reviewed the grant,

the score each reviewer gave the grant, and the designated "payline" or fundable score.


4. For each grant listed in the attachment, with regard to the initial peer review meeting during which the grant in question was reviewed, please identify the number of grants that were reviewed at that meeting and the number of grants that received a second level of review.

We appreciate your attention to this important issue. If you have any questions, please contact Minority Committee staff at (202) 225-3641.

Sincerely,



Joe Barton
Ranking Member



Greg Walden
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight
and Investigations

cc: The Honorable Henry A. Waxman, Chairman

The Honorable Bart Stupak, Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Attachment

Grant Number	Title	Project Start	Amount	Institute
1	5R21AA016286-02 HIV/STI Prevention among Alcohol-Abusing Women in Mongolia	08-01-2007	\$191,188	National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
<p>Targeted, low cost, empirically-validated prevention interventions are needed to help prevent the proliferation of HIV/STIs among women in resource poor societies. Centrally located in Asia, Mongolia is bordered by Russia and China: two countries experiencing rapidly expanding HIV epidemics. Since 1990, Mongolia has endured devastating economic changes leading to over 36% of the population living in poverty, and driving a disproportionate number of women out of the labor force. Lack of employment has resulted in increases in internal and external migration among men in search of employment and a great increase in the number of women engaging in survival sex work along borders and trade routes. Such migration patterns have been linked with unprotected sex exchange transactions and transmission of HIV/STIs across geographic boundaries. Concurrent with increasing opportunities for risky heterosexual behaviors are rising rates of alcoholism and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). In the general adult population, 88% of men and 58% of women report alcohol use. Alcohol abuse among women is largely underreported due to cultural denial and stigma, but a pilot study among 48 women engaging in recent HIV/STI sexual risk behaviors found that 85% were engaged in harmful alcohol use. Up to 58% of women under the age of 25 have at least one diagnosed STI. Strong evidence that unprotected sexual contact in the presence of STIs enhances the probability of HIV transmission and that alcohol use is associated with increased sexual risk suggests that, without urgently needed interventions, Mongolia is poised to become a significant contributor to the regional Central Asian HIV epidemic. Innovative adaptation, introduction and testing of low cost, targeted, empirically validated prevention interventions may help prevent the rise of HIV in Mongolia. The proposed study is designed to achieve the following primary aims: 1) to adapt and combine a 4-session HIV sexual risk reduction intervention (HIV-SRR) and a 2-session motivational interviewing (MI) intervention and tailor them to alcohol-abusing women who engage in high risk sexual behaviors in Mongolia; 2) to obtain preliminary estimates for the efficacy of the combined intervention (HIV-SRR+MI) on reduction in sexual risk behaviors by conducting a 3-arm randomized clinical trial (RCT) with 165 women, assigned to either a combination (HIV-SRR+MI) or single, time-matched (HIV-SRR) risk reduction intervention or a time-matched wellness promotion (WP-C) condition; and 3) to examine and enhance the feasibility of a future, larger-scale RCT testing the efficacy of the combination HIV-SRR+MI or single component HIV-SRR only interventions among the target population. Women clientele of the National AIDS Foundation (NAF) program in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia will be recruited. Study assessments will be completed at baseline, immediately post-intervention, and 3 and 6 month follow-up. In partnership with the NAF, the Mongolian National Center for Communicable Diseases and the Center of Mental Health and Narcology, the study will be conducted by Drs. Susan Witte and Dr. Nabila El-Bassel of the Social Intervention Group at the Columbia University School of Social Work.</p>				

Grant Number	Title	Project Start	Amount	Institute
2	5R03CA128482-02 The Impact of Dragon Boat Racing on Cancer Survivorship	06-01-2007	\$73,000	National Cancer Institute
<p>We will carry out a small-scale nonrandomized trial to determine whether participation in a dragon boat paddling team enhances quality of life in cancer survivors above and beyond an organized walking program. Building upon previous research which documents the salubrious impact of exercise in cancer survivors, evaluating the impact of dragon boating on factors that contribute to overall quality of life among cancer survivors has the potential to advance our understanding of survivorship outcomes. We hypothesize that physical activity conducted within the context of social support of a dragon boat team contributes synergistically to improved overall quality of life, as the collective experience of dragon boating is likely enhanced by team sport factors such as cohesion, teamwork and the goal of competition and by paddling on the water creating greater feelings of inner peace and harmony. Aims: To determine the impact of participation on a dragon boat racing team on well-being 1) psychologically; 2) physically; and 3) enhanced overall quality of life. Methods: Cancer survivors will choose to participate in an 8-week dragon boat paddling (experimental n=66) or walking (control n=66) program. The intervention and control arms will each be comprised of a series of 3 groups of 22 participants, with data collected before and after the interventions to compare quality of life and physical functioning outcomes pre-post within and between study arms. To control for potential confounding, data will be collected on predisposing baseline demographic and lifestyle characteristics and involvement in supplementary exercise or support group activities, and important differences will be adjusted for in the analyses. Summary: Our study tests a novel, holistic approach to survivorship that could have broad implications for understanding how best to improve the post-diagnosis experience and will provide strong pilot data in support of a subsequent large-scale R01 submission. There are approximately 10 million cancer survivors in the U.S., but much remains to be learned about optimizing quality of life among survivors. This project will test a novel, team-oriented exercise program (dragon boating) that will help us learn more about how physical, mental, social and spiritual factors impact the quality of life of cancer survivors.</p>				

Grant Number	Title	Project Start	Amount	Institute
3	1R21CA125909-01A2 Soy Almond Bread as Complimentary Therapy for Prostate Cancer	07-01-2008	\$168,750	National Cancer Institute
<p>The role of complementary and alternative interventions for prostate cancer prevention, and as an adjunct to treatment, is of great interest to the public and patients, but a highly contentious area among physicians and scientists. Soy is hypothesized, but not proven, to reduce the risk of prostate cancer or enhance the efficacy of therapy. One of the obstacles to soy consumption is the lack of consumer friendly, food-based, "phytochemical delivery systems". Our team of investigators have formulated two such systems: (a) a soy bread providing 33 mg isoflavones per 50g slice, and (b) 2-glucosidase-enriched soy bread that increases by 100% the aglycone form (potentially most active and more readily absorbed). Hypothesis. We hypothesize 2 -glucosidase-enriched soy bread will serve as an excellent source of bioavailable soy isoflavones for future phase II/III randomized clinical trials. Experimental Approach. We propose a randomized phase II cross-over trial in 40 men with prostate cancer and experiencing asymptomatic biochemical failure (rising PSA). Men will be randomized to consume 3 slices/day of soy bread or 2-glucosidase-enriched soy bread for 8 weeks and after a two week soy-free period cross over to the other arm for another 8 weeks. The following aims will be addressed. Aim 1. We hypothesize men will achieve excellent compliance with consumption of the soy breads with minimal toxicity. Aim 2. We hypothesize that consumption of the 2-glucosidase-enriched soy bread compared to control soy bread will result in an increase in the bioavailability of soy phytochemicals in the blood and provide distinct daidzein metabolite profiles. Aim 3. We hypothesize that consumption of the 2-glucosidase-enriched soy bread compared to control soy bread will have a greater effect on blood biomarkers that favor anti-cancer activity. Value: The proposed studies will characterize the ability of 2 -glucosidase-enriched soy bread to serve as a vehicle for bioactive soy phytochemicals in future definitive randomized clinical trials.</p>				

Grant Number	Title	Project Start	Amount	Institute
4	2R24MD001764-04 The Healing of the Canoe	09-30-2005	\$440,865	National Cancer Institute
<p>During the Phase I developmental/planning grant from the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD), using Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) and Tribal Participatory Research (TPR) methods, we worked in partnership with the Suquamish Tribe. Through a series of key stakeholder interviews and focus groups with tribal Elders, service providers, youth and community members, the community identified alcohol and drug abuse and a need for increased cultural and community identity by youth as the two primary, and related, areas of concern. A work group composed of members from the University and Suquamish research teams, Elders, and community members developed a culturally relevant intervention to address these dual concerns, with guidance from the Tribe's Cultural Cooperative (which serves as our Community Advisory Council). The intervention and its accompanying assessment instrument have undergone an initial small pilot testing to determine issues of feasibility. The overall goals of the proposed project are (1) to continue to use the principles and methods of CBPR and TPR to further plan, refine, implement, and more rigorously evaluate this community-based and culturally congruent substance abuse prevention intervention among Suquamish tribal youth, and (2) to extend, adapt, and evaluate this model with the Port Gable S'Klallam Tribe. Both Tribes are rural, federally recognized American Indian/Alaska Native reservation communities within the same county and school district.</p>				

Grant Number	Title	Project Start	Amount	Institute
5	5R03TW007612-03 Patterns of Drug Use and Abuse in the Brazilian Rave Culture	07-01-2007	\$29,469	University of Delaware
<p>Since the 1970s there has been the emergence and expansion of the so-called "club drugs" and "club culture." Club drugs (alternatively called "rave drugs," "dance drugs" and "party drugs") is a vague term that refers to a wide variety of substances, yet in the U.S. the most popular of the club drugs have been MDMA (ecstasy), GHB, ketamine, LSD, methamphetamine, and a few prescription drugs, such as dextroamphetamine and methylphenidate. Recently, reports in both popular and scientific media have begun to indicate that ecstasy use is increasing markedly in many parts of Brazil. Although ecstasy was first introduced in Brazil as early as 1994, by most accounts its use remained localized and sporadic until 2000-2001. Currently, ecstasy use has spread to most major cities in Brazil, and occurs primarily in rave and night-club settings. The handful of published studies on this topic in Brazil suggests that ecstasy users are often polydrug abusers, and have significantly higher rates of illicit and prescription drug abuse than do non-ecstasy users. Because of the young age of the vast majority of club drug users and their tendency to mix numerous drugs during their typical drug binges, club drug users tend to be a highly vulnerable population. However, there are few published scientific studies of the health and social consequences of club drug use in general, and none that have been conducted in Brazil. Within this context, the overall goal of the proposed study is to develop the capacity of local investigators to address this emerging health problem through a collaborative research process. The specific aims of the proposed study are to: 1) Recruit a sample of 200 out-of-treatment club drug users ages 18-39 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and at baseline assess their life histories of alcohol and drug abuse onset and progression (changes in quantity, frequency, and types), and extent of current alcohol, club, prescription, and other drug use; 2) at 6 and 12 months, assess changes in onset, progression, and extent of respondents' alcohol and club, prescription, and other drug use; 3) at baseline, 6 months, and 12 months, investigate the impact of quantity, frequency, types and duration of drug abuse on the nature and extent of health and social consequences within this population, including: sexual risk-taking and coercion; drug interactions and overdose; chronic drug use; impairment of daily activities; physical problems; mental health problems; and legal problems; and 4) examine the impact of gender on onset, progression, and extent of drug use and the nature and extent of health and social consequences. Data analyses will use a variety of statistical techniques to describe the population, the epidemiology of club, prescription and other drug use, and the nature and prevalence of related health consequences. This research will be conducted in Porto Alegre, Brazil, at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul in collaboration with Dr. Flavio Pechansky, as an extension of NIH grant #R01DA019048 (Inciardi, PI). The proposed exploratory project represents a significant first step in the process of better understanding the emerging club drug epidemic in the South of Brazil. Preliminary studies in Miami suggest that club drug users are at high risk for both physical and mental health consequences requiring intervention, particularly those who also abuse prescription drugs, and it would appear that the abuse of prescription drugs is an emergent problem in Brazil as well. The proposed work will begin to identify the nature and extent of the consequences of club and prescription drug abuse in the Brazilian context - information from which appropriate interventions, health services, and prevention policies can ultimately be developed. As a first step, the data collected will be used to generate Portuguese language training materials that will be made available to local treatment providers and health</p>				

practitioners.

Grant Number	Title	Project Start	Amount	Institute
6	5R03HD056962-02 Gender Roles and Ideology Effects on HIV Risk in Tanzania	09-01-2007	\$ 79,199	Battelle Memorial Institute, Centers for Public Health Research & Evaluation
<p>Along with practicing monogamy or abstinence, condom use is one of the most effective methods for preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS. However, condom use relies on the agreement and participation of both partners, and in the African context, men typically dominate sexual interactions. Therefore understanding how gender roles and relative power within couples influence male practices of high-risk sexual behaviors, such as inconsistent condom use, engaging in paid sex, or having multiple partners, is essential for countering the spread of the HIV/AIDS across both male and female populations. To better explain this the proposed study will use recent data from the 2004-5 Tanzanian Demographic Health Survey (DHS) to investigate: (1) the effects of individual, household, and relationship characteristics (type and length) on men's sexual risk behaviors (condom use, alcohol use or drunk when have sex), as well as how the effects of relationship characteristics are moderated by (interact with) men's gender attitudes and HIV-risk related attitudes and knowledge; and, (2) how individual, household, relationship, and partners' relative characteristics (age, economic, sexual history, decision-making) influence men's sexual risk behaviors (monogamous, condom use, alcohol use or drunk when have sex, paid sex), as well as how the effects of partners' relative characteristics are moderated by (interact with) men's gender attitudes and HIV-related attitudes and knowledge. The results from the proposed study will help to identify which aspects of gender attitudes and HIV-related attitudes and knowledge are related to men's risky sexual behaviors, and provide information that will inform individual- and couple-level interventions to decrease practices that influence the spread of HIV in sub-Saharan Africa. Understanding the effects of partners' relative power on individual behavior within the context of marriage/ cohabitation will also inform other HIV-related interventions such as adherence to anti-retroviral therapies within families. Overall the proposed study will address a significant gap in the understanding of how gender attitudes and roles in sexual relationships contribute to heterosexual men's HIV-related sexual risk behaviors which will aid in the development of more effective programs to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. The results from the proposed study will address a significant gap in the understanding of how gender attitudes and roles in sexual relationships contribute to heterosexual men's HIV-related sexual risk behaviors in Tanzania. The study uses information from men and their married/cohabiting partners in order to better understand how relative power within couples influences men's behaviors. This will aid in the development of more effective public health programs to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.</p>				

Grant Number	Title	Project Start	Amount	Institute
7	Alcohol and HIV Risk Reduction in St. Petersburg, R.F	09-30-2007	\$65,472	National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
<p>This research proposal is in response to the request for Applications 'Integrative Prevention Research for Alcohol Users At-Risk for HIV/AIDS' (RFA-AA-07-020) and requests 4 years of support to conduct developmental research to design and field test a culturally adapted theory-based behavioral risk reduction intervention for men and women who use alcohol and are at risk for HIV infection in the city of St Petersburg in Russia. Russia has one of the highest HIV incidence rates in the world and HIV prevalence in St Petersburg increased 100-fold (from 0.013% to 1.3%) between 1998 and 2003, mostly affecting young injection drug-users. While HIV prevalence in the general population in Russia has remained low, a young sexually active population with high risk sexual behavior, high levels of alcohol abuse, and low levels of knowledge of HIV transmission provides fertile ground for an expanding HIV epidemic that becomes generalized in the heterosexual population. Guided by a previously tested Information-Motivation-Behavioral Skills model of health promoting behaviors we will conduct 3 phases of intervention development research: (1) Initial interviews, focus groups, and quantitative surveys with men and women who use alcohol and are at risk for sexual HIV transmission in the city of St Petersburg in Russia. Based on information gained from these rapid formative studies, this first phase of research will design a theory-based alcohol related risk reduction intervention; (2) Test the feasibility of the culturally-adapted alcohol related HIV risk reduction intervention with a small sample of men and women who use alcohol and engage in sexual risk behavior, and (3) Conduct a randomized field test to determine the potential efficacy of the alcohol risk reduction intervention for men and women in St Petersburg, Russia. Participants in the field test will be randomly assigned to either receive the newly developed intervention or assigned to a time- matched attention comparison condition. Following a 6-month follow-up period, we will test for differences between groups on sexual behavioral outcomes. We will also test the mediating effects of information, motivation, and behavioral skills constructs on intervention outcomes. Results of the proposed research will provide critical information about the role of alcohol in HIV transmission risks and will offer urgently needed strategies for improving HIV prevention interventions in St Petersburg, Russia. There are estimated 300,000 HIV infections in Russia and with the increasing number of HIV infections transmitted sexually, intervention initiatives in Russia need to target women and youth as the agent of behavior change. Russian investigators concerned with the HIV epidemic believe that it is imperative for behavioral research to rapidly develop and test interventions targeted to men and women at risk for HIV. We propose to immediately develop and test a theory-based risk reduction intervention for men and women who drink alcohol, who are seeking VCT at STI clinics and are at risk for contracting and transmitting HIV in St Petersburg, Russia.</p>				

Grant Number	Title	Project Start	Amount	Institute
8	5R01AA015423-05 Young Adult Food Service Workers: Alcohol Use & Risk	08-01-2005	\$401,884	National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
<p>The overall goal of this study is to gain an understanding of the influence of the workplace on patterns of alcohol use, and resulting problems, among young adults in the restaurant industry, a food service work force at high risk for alcohol-related problems. We seek to identify specific characteristics of occupational culture, in combination with personal backgrounds that put young adults at risk for heavier and problematic drinking. We address this goal with the following objectives: (1) to estimate the prevalence of alcohol use patterns and alcohol problems in this workforce, both work-related and non-work-related; (2) to investigate effects of alcohol use patterns on health and social problems (e.g., absenteeism, injuries, hangovers) both at work and generally; (3) to examine drinking in relation to individuals' personal background characteristics (gender, ethnicity, age, family, kinship, and social group drinking); (4) to analyze the relationship between work environment and alcohol use, with a focus on major conceptual areas of social control (e.g., relevant policies, procedures for enforcement, visibility, and mobility), availability (social and physical access to alcohol), and stress factors; and (5) to assess the impact of characteristics of restaurant culture (including specific cultural factors such as rituals, role modeling and drinking groups) on normative beliefs, expectancies and behaviors in the domain of alcohol use. To meet our study goals, we shall conduct mixed-method research with randomly selected young adults working in kitchen, wait staff, bussing and bartending roles in Applebee's chain restaurants found throughout the United States. The research design calls for a 5-year study using multiple methods and research stages including: (1) 100 ethnographic interviews and on-site observations to assess research objectives in the context of work cultures, and (2) a survey conducted with 1200 randomly selected employees to assess prevalence and correlates of drinking practices and related problems; these correlates would include such elements of our conceptual model as policy, availability, and stress. The findings from this project will provide a better understanding of characteristics of work environments that influence drinking patterns and problems of young adults in the food service industry. The study will provide guidelines for the development of culturally relevant prevention programs.</p>				

Grant Number	Title	Project Start	Amount	Institute
9	IG13LM009601-01A1 Public Health Education and Campaigns in China, 1910-1990	04-01-2009		National Library of Medicine
<p>This project will produce the first comprehensive and analytical book about public health education and campaigns in twentieth-century China. The study examines the various national public health movements conducted by private groups and different regimes over eight decades. It analyzes the diverse public health concerns that were tied to China's revolutions, agrarian reforms, economic productivity, and even military engagements at different times. The project investigates key important issues in the public health movements, such as public health and modernization, the dominance of scientific knowledge of medicine in public health education, the challenge of transmitting scientific knowledge of health and diseases to a large population with high illiteracy rate, and the tension between traditional Chinese medicine and modern Western medicine in public health programs. The study also examines how health campaigns contributed to the elimination and reduction of epidemic diseases. The book has seven chapters that discuss (1) pioneering groups in public health education, (2) the ascendance of scientific knowledge of medicine and health in China, (3) the experiment of community-based health demonstration stations, (4) politicization of public health movements and maximization of methods for the prevention of diseases, (5) rural health reform and agrarian transformation, (6) maternal and child health care and education, and (7) transition to market economy and new challenges to public health. This study shows that public health was integral to modern nation-building. The project draws on extensive research I have conducted at more than ten major archival institutions and libraries in the United States, the United Kingdom, and China. Primary sources include archival documents and statistical information, oral history, and visual materials of posters, photos, and medical advertisement. The dissemination of health knowledge and the change in health-related behavior in China brought about by the public health campaigns offer useful lessons for many nations, including China today.</p>				

Grant Number	Title	Project Start	Amount	Institute
10	IR21DA026324-01A1 Substance Use and HIV Risk among Thai Women	05-15-2009		National Institute on Drug Abuse
<p>The proposed study will investigate the social, cultural, and environmental factors which influence substance use and HIV risk behaviors among female and transgender female (kathoe) sex workers who work at bars/clubs and massage parlors, and on the street in Bangkok, Thailand. Recent studies show the high HIV/STI infection rates and illegal drug use among these sex workers. The results of the proposed study will help to develop substance abuse and HIV/STI prevention intervention programs which will be culturally appropriate to Thai female and kathoe sex workers. Internationally, studies are needed on how to translate and adapt interventions that have proven to be effective in the U.S. to other communities and international settings, and to learn from other conditions and cultures to inform our understanding of the causes, consequences, and differences in HIV-related risks, morbidity, and mortality in diverse populations.</p>				
Grant Number	Title	Project Start	Amount	Institute
11	IR21HD060447-01 Barriers to Correct Condom Use	06-01-2009	\$423,500	Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction
<p>Sexually transmitted infections (STI), including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), pose significant health risks. About half of the new HIV infections in the US are among people under age 25 years with the majority infected through sexual behavior. About one in three new diagnoses with HIV/AIDS are attributed to heterosexual transmission. Men who have sex with women play a major role in HIV transmission to women who can also pass it on to offspring. Consistent and correct use of condoms can be a highly effective method of preventing the transmission of HIV and many STIs. Yet, studies show that problems with condom use are common and that these problems pose a barrier to consistent and complete condom use. This project aims to advance our understanding of, among other factors, the role of cognitive and affective processes and condom application skills in explaining problems with condom use in young, heterosexual adult men. A multi-method approach - consisting of two studies and involving questionnaires, observational, and psychophysiological methods - will be used in conjunction with a skill-based intervention. The knowledge gained from the proposed research can be used to inform the development of innovative, more effective, and targeted intervention and education strategies tailored to the needs of individuals who have trouble using condoms effectively.</p>				

Grant Number	Title	Project Start	Amount	Institute
12 1R01AA018090-01	Venue-based HIV and alcohol use risk reduction among female sex workers in China	09-25-2008	\$2,600,000	National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
<p>The global literature indicates an important role of alcohol use in facilitating HIV/AIDS transmission risk in commercial sex venues where elevated alcohol use/abuse and sexual risk behaviors frequently co-occur. Because the relationship between alcohol use and sexual risk behaviors in commercial sex venues results not only from individual attributes (personal knowledge, attitudes, and skills), but also from complex interactions among individual, relational, situational, and social environmental factors, there is a need for intervention approaches that extend beyond the individual level and address structural or community level factors. Although structural-level changes (e.g., legislation, governmental policy) regarding commercial sex have demonstrated considerable success in effecting sustainable risk reduction among female sex workers (FSWs) and their clients in several nations, the introduction of such changes remains challenging in many nations including China. In these later countries, local-level, establishment-based approaches may be needed to curtail the interrelated epidemics of alcohol use and HIV/STD among this high risk population before broader structural changes become feasible. Previous studies in Asia and Africa and our own data from FSWs in China suggest that the social norms and institutional policy within commercial sex venues as well as agents overseeing the FSWs (i.e., the "gatekeepers", defined as persons who manage the establishments and/or sex workers) are potentially of great importance in influencing alcohol use and sexual behavior among establishment-based FSWs. Therefore, in this application, we propose to develop, implement, and evaluate a venue-based alcohol use and HIV risk reduction intervention focusing on both environmental and individual factors among venue-based FSWs in China. The proposed venue-based intervention consists of three components: (1) gatekeeper training with a focus on changing or enhancing the protective social norms and policy/practice at the establishment level; (2) FSW training with a focus on the acquisition of communication skills (negotiating, limit setting) and behavioral skills (e.g., condom use skills, consistent condom use); and (3) semi-annual boosters to reinforce both social norms within establishments and individual skills. The efficacy of the venue-based intervention will be evaluated through a community-based cluster randomized controlled trial among 100 commercial sex venues in Beihai, a coastal tourist city in Guangxi, China. We anticipate that the venue-based intervention program will be culturally appropriate, feasible, effective and sustainable in alcohol use and sexual risk reduction among FSWs. We hypothesize that the venue-based intervention will change and enhance the protective social norms and institutional policies at the establishment level and such enhancement, accompanied by individual skill training among FSWs, will demonstrate a sustainable effect within commercial sex establishments in decreasing problem drinking and alcohol-related sexual risk, increasing consistent and correct condom use, and reducing rates of HIV/STD infection among FSWs.</p>				