

Division of AIDS and Health and Behavior Research (DAHBR)

The Division of AIDS and Health and Behavior Research (DAHBR) supports research and research training to:

- Develop and disseminate behavioral interventions that prevent HIV/AIDS transmission.
- Clarify the pathophysiology and alleviate the neuropsychiatric consequences of HIV/AIDS infection.
- Use a public health model to reduce the burden of mental illness from medical comorbidities, non-adherence to treatment, societal stigma, health disparities, and unhealthy behaviors.

Within the Division, the Center for Mental Health Research on AIDS (CMHRA) is a fully integrated program supporting studies that range from the molecular and cellular basis of HIV/AIDS CNS infection to the domestic and international dissemination of effective preventative interventions. The program is grounded in a public health model that seeks the rapid translation of data from biological, behavioral, and epidemiological studies into interventions designed to prevent new HIV infections and limit morbidity and mortality among those infected. Using behavioral approaches effective in the HIV/AIDS arena, the Division also supports research on comorbidity between mental illness and general medical illness and translates basic behavioral and social science research into the study of stigma, health disparities, treatment adherence, and behavioral change factors influencing the onset and course of mental illness.

Division Center, Offices, and Branches

Center for Mental Health Research on AIDS (9A-AS)

Neuroscience and Neuropsychiatric Research Branch (9A-ASN)

Prevention and Behavioral Research Branch (9A-ASP)

Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program and the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Program (9A-ASBZ)

Research Training and Career Development Program (9A-ASTA)

Health and Behavior Research Branch (96-BH)

Director

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Center for Mental Health Research on AIDS (9A-AS)

The Center for Mental Health Research on AIDS supports domestic and international studies to: develop behavior change and prevention strategies to reduce the transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs); develop and test interventions to reduce the neuropsychiatric morbidity associated with HIV infection; clarify the impact on HIV risk behaviors of using new biomedical technologies (e.g., rapid testing, vaccines, microbicides); clarify the pathophysiology of HIV CNS infection and associated motor/cognitive disturbances; identify the

role of couples, families, and communities in preventing and adapting to HIV/STDs; develop therapeutic agents to prevent or reverse the effects of HIV on the CNS; and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of mental health services relevant to HIV infection and people living with HIV and co-occurring mental illness.

Center Offices and Branches

Center Office of the Director

Neuroscience and Neuropsychiatric Research Branch (9A-ASN)

Prevention and Behavioral Research Branch (9A-ASP)

Areas of Emphasis

- Clarify the impact of new biomedical technologies (e.g., microbicides, vaccines, rapid tests, genetic advances) on HIV risk behaviors.
- Foster dissemination, translation, and operational research on ways to implement and enhance long-term maintenance behavior change.
- Promote the global adoption of primary preventive interventions.
- Identify molecular and cellular mechanisms underlying HIV-associated dementia.
- Identify host and HIV viral genetics that render susceptibility or protection to neuronal dysfunction.
- Identify/characterize HIV-associated cognitive or motor dysfunction and assess it in the context of mental illness and HIV-associated comorbidities.

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CMHRA Office of the Director

The CMHRA Office of the Director includes programs that cut across programs within the Center (see below).

Office Programs

AIDS Research Centers Program (9A-ASC)

International Prevention and Structural Research Program (9A-ASI)

HIV/AIDS Health Disparities Program (9A-ASH)

Technology Transfer Program (9A-ASL)

Research Training and Career Development Program (9A-ASTA)

Small Business Innovation Research Program (9A-ASBZ)

Areas of Emphasis

See the areas listed in the Center description above.

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AIDS Research Centers Program (9A-ASC)

The NIMH AIDS Research Centers Program seeks to foster a synergistic approach to research on mental health issues of HIV infection. Its goal is to encourage the application of multiple scientific perspectives and approaches to stimulate inter- and multi-disciplinary collaboration and coordination. NIMH AIDS Research Centers are broadly based investigative endeavors, encompassing or supporting research in a variety of areas including biological, biomedical, behavioral, neuroscience, prevention, clinical sciences, and services research.

Areas of Emphasis

See the areas listed in the Center description above.

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International Prevention and Structural Research Program (9A-ASI)

This program supports research on effective ways to prevent or reduce the spread of HIV/STDs worldwide. The primary goal is to adapt efficacious prevention strategies developed in the U.S. and to conduct randomized controlled trials in international sites. The program encourages studies of multilevel social organization and complex relationships, such as those at the couple, family, community, societal (media, policy), and technological (Internet) levels.

Areas of Emphasis

See the areas listed in the Center description above.

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HIV/AIDS Health Disparities Program (9A-ASH)

This program promotes multidisciplinary research and research training on mental health issues of HIV/AIDS among minority communities in an attempt to reduce the disproportionate burden of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on racial and ethnic minority populations. The specific research areas emphasized include HIV prevention, HIV therapeutics and basic/clinical neuroscience of HIV. This program has three interrelated objectives that are targeted to racial and ethnic minorities: (1) coordinate and expand the scientific knowledge base on health disparities across the CMHRA research portfolio; (2) support infrastructure development and facilitate the establishment of

collaborative research partnerships to provide cutting edge resources for minority institutions to conduct multidisciplinary, NIMH funded HIV mental health research; (3) support programs for research capacity building by expanding and retaining the cadre of research scientists from minority groups to carry out a long-term research agenda on the mental health of HIV/AIDS.

Areas of Emphasis

See the areas listed in the Center description above.

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Technology Transfer Program (9A-ASL)

The Technology Transfer Program supports multidisciplinary research on the translation and adoption of proven HIV research-based prevention interventions into community-based public health settings. The program supports studies of the use of new technologies in HIV prevention, studies of the cost-effectiveness of these interventions, and studies of characteristics that facilitate or impede successful AIDS prevention program implementation.

Areas of Emphasis

See the areas listed in the Center description above.

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Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program and the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Program (9A-ASBZ)

Small Business Innovation Research Program (SBIR) supports research by small businesses to develop innovative technologies with high potential to succeed commercially or to provide significant societal benefit. CMHRA's Small Business Technology Transfer Program (STTR) pursues the same objectives with academic research involvement. The SBIR and STTR programs in CMHRA support research aimed at changing risky behaviors, promoting strategies to reduce AIDS transmission, elucidating the pathophysiology of HIV-related neuropsychiatric dysfunction, and investigating processes that influence adherence to treatment in individuals with HIV.

Areas of Emphasis

See the areas listed in the Center description above.

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AIDS Research Training and Career Development Program (9A-ASTA)

The Research Training and Career Development Program supports research training at the pre-doctoral, post-doctoral, and early investigator level of career development in areas relevant to the Division, such as research on changing risky behaviors to help prevent AIDS transmission, the pathophysiology of HIV-related neuropsychiatric dysfunction, and treatment adherence and behavior change in patients with HIV. The primary goal of the office is to ensure that sufficient numbers of highly trained independent investigators will be available to address the complexities of HIV research.

Areas of Emphasis

See the areas listed in the Center description above.

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Neuroscience and Neuropsychiatric Research Branch (9A-ASN)

The Neuroscience and Neuropsychiatric Research Branch supports an integrated program of studies to elucidate the pathophysiology of HIV-related neuropsychiatric dysfunction; discover novel treatment approaches to mitigate neuropsychiatric complications of HIV infection; and develop interventions targeting the sequelae of HIV infection among people with mental illness.

Branch Programs

HIV-1 Neurovirology, Genetics, and Molecular Therapeutics Program (9A-ASNB)

Secondary Cellular and Molecular Mechanisms of Neuropathogenesis Program (9A-ASNK)

Neuropsychiatry of HIV/AIDS Program (9A-ASNM)

Areas of Emphasis

See the areas listed in the Center description above.

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Neurovirology, Genetics, and Molecular Therapeutics Program (9A-ASNB)

This program supports research to determine the viral and genetic factors regulating HIV-associated neurobehavioral and neurologic dysfunction and the development of therapeutic strategies to treat central nervous system disease.

Areas of Emphasis

See the areas listed in the Center description above.

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Secondary Cellular and Molecular Mechanisms of Neuropathogenesis Program (9A-ASNK)

This program supports research to discover the cellular and molecular mechanisms by which HIV-1 infection promotes neurological and behavioral impairment. More specifically, the program addresses neuropathogenic mechanisms that are secondary to the viral infiltration and infection of the brain.

Areas of Emphasis

See the areas listed in the Center description above.

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Neuropsychiatry of HIV/AIDS Program (9A-ASNM)

This program supports research to study the risk of HIV infection and its consequences among people with severe mental illness and the neuropsychiatric aspects of HIV infection and CNS-related complications. The program is focused on human studies and draws from multiple disciplines, including epidemiology, psychology, psychiatry, neuropsychology, neurobehavior, neuroimaging, neurobiology, and neuropathology.

Areas of Emphasis

See the areas listed in the Center description above.

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Prevention and Behavioral Research Branch (9A-ASP)

This Branch supports research to identify emerging populations at high risk for HIV infection, to identify potentially modifiable risk factors for HIV transmission in these populations, and to develop effective interventions to prevent or reduce the transmission of HIV/AIDS and STDs. Major research foci within the Branch include: (1) primary prevention and behavior change at multiple levels to reduce incident HIV infections; (2) secondary prevention and treatment adherence to reduce high-risk behavior and develop strategies to improve treatment adherence for individuals infected with HIV; (3) prevention of new HIV infection and psychiatric consequences in child and adolescent populations; (4) development of family-based primary and secondary intervention strategies for HIV prevention; (5) development of strategies to slow HIV transmission and promote adherence to treatment regimens in HIV infected individuals with attendant co-occurring mental illness; (6) development of HIV prevention strategies targeted to communities at risk.

Branch Programs

Child and Adolescent Prevention Research Program (9A-ASPA)

Secondary HIV Prevention and Treatment Adherence Program (9A-ASPG)

Primary Prevention and Behavior Change Program (9A-ASPQ)

Acting Branch Chief

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Child and Adolescent Prevention Research Program (9A-ASPA)

This program supports primary and secondary prevention research and research on the consequences of HIV infection and methods for coping with HIV disease in children, adolescents, and their families.

Areas of Emphasis

See the areas listed in the Center description above.

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Secondary HIV Prevention and Treatment Adherence Program (9A-ASPG)

This program supports research to understand, prevent, and delay adverse health outcomes among individuals already infected with HIV. Initiatives in this program—including the development and testing of theory-driven behavioral interventions to improve adherence to medication therapies and other treatments to reduce the risk of HIV transmission—promote healthy lifestyle choices, encourage the cessation of high-risk behaviors, and investigate and promote strategies to protect the health of infected individuals and others in their communities.

Areas of Emphasis

See the areas listed in the Center description above.

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Primary Prevention and Behavior Change Program (9A-ASPQ)

This program supports research on behavioral interventions that reduce HIV transmission. The primary goals of the program are to support interdisciplinary research that develops, implements, and evaluates theoretically based interventions designed to prevent HIV transmission.

Areas of Emphasis

See the areas listed in the Center description above.

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Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program and the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Program (9T-BZ)

DAHBR's Small Business Innovation Research Program (SBIR) supports research by small businesses to develop innovative technologies with high potential to succeed commercially or to provide significant societal benefit. The Division's Small Business Technology Transfer Program (STTR) pursues the same objectives with academic research involvement. The SBIR and STTR programs in this Division support research aimed at changing risky behaviors, promoting strategies to reduce AIDS transmission, elucidating the pathophysiology of HIV-related neuropsychiatric dysfunction, and investigating processes that influence adherence to treatment in individuals with HIV and mental disorders.

Areas of Emphasis

See areas listed for Center for Mental Health Research on AIDS and Health and Behavior Research Branch.

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Research Training and Career Development Program (9K-TA)

The Research Training and Career Development Program supports research training at the pre-doctoral, post-doctoral, and early investigator level of career development in areas relevant to the Division, such as research on changing risky behaviors to help prevent AIDS transmission, the pathophysiology of HIV-related neuropsychiatric dysfunction, and treatment adherence and behavior change in patients with HIV and mental disorders. The primary goal of the office is to ensure that sufficient numbers of highly trained independent investigators will be available to address the complexities of HIV and health behaviors involved in mental illness. Support is provided through five types of research training and career development programs:

- Institutional Training Program (T32)
- Mentored Career Development Program (K01, K08, K23, K25)
- Individual Pre-doctoral and Post-doctoral Fellowships (F30, F31, F32)
- Mental Health Education Program (R25)
- Dissertation Research Grants to Increase Diversity (R36)

Areas of Emphasis

See areas listed for Center for Mental Health Research on AIDS and Health and Behavior Research Branch.

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Health and Behavior Research Branch (96-BH)

The Health and Behavior Research Branch supports research on a range of health behaviors in people with mental disorders. Research is supported on identifying potent, modifiable risk and protective factors for mental disorders that may guide the development and initial testing of theory-driven interventions. Interventions may be prevention, treatment, or rehabilitation and include biological, pharmacological, behavioral, psychosocial, or environmental components. Research is supported on co-morbid mental and other physical disorders, adherence to interventions for mental disorders, ethics in mental disorders research, mental disorders stigma and discrimination, mental health disparities, health behavior change in people with mental disorders, and functional assessment in people with mental disorders.

Branch Programs

Adherence Research Program (96-BHA)

Behavior Change Research Program (96-BHB)

Comorbidity Research Program (96-BHC)

Functional Assessment and Mental Disorders Program (96-BHF)

Stigma and Health Disparities Program (96-BHH)

Areas of Emphasis

- Identifying the potent, modifiable mechanisms and processes linking mental and medical illnesses (comorbidity) and developing early stage interventions.
- Translating findings from basic behavioral research into processes to improve adherence to treatment, discourage harmful behaviors associated with mental disorders and physical disorders, and promote therapeutic alliances and help-seeking behaviors.
- Identifying effective strategies for reducing mental illness stigma and discrimination, and examining the mechanisms through which they work.
- Studying cognitive processes, decision-making, and other basic behavioral and social processes to clarify factors that influence the choice of treatment or mental health services, acceptance or denial of illness, and coping response to stigma.
- Developing behavioral strategies for assessing mental health functioning and disability.
- Using findings from basic behavioral and social sciences research to elucidate factors involved in mental health disparities.

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Adherence Research Program (96-BHA)

This program supports studies of factors that influence decisions and behaviors related to adopting and adhering to treatment and preventive interventions (including person related, disease related, and treatment related factors and treatment alliance issues). The program also supports empirical studies of informed consent, research ethics, the development and testing of measures of adherence and behavior change, and epidemiological studies of risk factors for good or poor adherence.

Areas of Emphasis

See the Branch description above.

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Behavior Change Research Program (96-BHB)

This program supports research on basic behavioral processes (such as cognition, emotion, decision-making, and motivation) to improve our understanding of the etiology and course of health behaviors among people with mental disorders. It also facilitates the development of behavioral and psychosocial interventions aimed at changing health behaviors among people with mental disorders to improve functional outcome and to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with mental disorders.

Areas of Emphasis

- Epidemiologic studies elucidating the frequency and distribution patterns of health behaviors in people with mental disorders.
- Studies of the predictive validity of health behaviors with respect to morbidity and mortality.
- Studies of biological, behavioral, and psychosocial risk factors and protective processes underlying health behaviors to identify modifiable processes that have the greatest relative impact on morbidity and mortality.
- Studies that use explanatory theories of behavior change to modify potent risk and protective processes underlying health behaviors.
- Initial tests of innovative interventions, based on behavior modification theories, designed to change behavior and reduce morbidity and mortality associated with mental disorders.

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Comorbidity Research Program (96-BHC)

This program supports research on mental disorders and their relationship to other physical disorders and behavior. Emphasized are: (1) the development of reliable and valid assessment approaches to identify comorbid disorders accurately; (2) epidemiology to elucidate the potent, modifiable mechanisms and processes linking mental and other physical disorders; and (3) the development and early testing of innovative interventions—prevention and treatment—targeting these potent, modifiable mechanisms and processes.

Areas of Emphasis

See the Branch description above.

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Functional Assessment and Mental Disorders Program (96-BHF)

This program supports research on the translation of findings from basic behavioral and social science research to improve the definition and assessment of functioning and disability in people with mental disorders. The goal of the program is to encourage the further translation of knowledge gained from assessment approaches into innovative interventions for both prevention and treatment in order to improve function and reduce disability in people with mental disorders.

Areas of Emphasis

See the Branch description above.

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Stigma and Health Disparities Program (96-BHH)

This program is concerned with mental illness stigma and discrimination and mental health disparities. It supports research to understand better the processes underlying stigma and discrimination; to develop effective strategies and approaches for reducing stigma and discrimination; and to examine media influences on attitudes about mental illness and its treatment. In the area of health disparities, the program supports research to examine the influence of social, cultural, and environmental factors on diagnosis, help-seeking decisions and preferences, and the helping relationship. It also supports examinations of the mechanisms through which social, cultural, interpersonal, and environmental factors affect disparities in risk for and course of mental disorders.

Areas of Emphasis

See the Branch description above.

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