

DRUM & SASH: CONTEXTUALIZING BARRIERS AND LEVERAGING STRENGTH



“Nothing about us without us”; this has been the resounding message delivered by community members about the need for patient involvement in the research process.

This notion is equally true for research that focuses on successful implementation of programs and services.

In some communities, HIV and STBBI treatment and prevention programs have been very successful. However, these programs often have not fit with specific community needs and have not been adapted well to local contexts.

CTN 301, The DRUM Study, is an ongoing study that aims to integrate culturally-relevant prevention, treatment, and care of HIV and related conditions using a shared-care model (SCM) approach in Northern Alberta First Nation communities. A SCM refers to a partnership between community members, clinicians, and health providers, where patients are empowered to become involved in their health and care.

Resulting from the ongoing community feedback in DRUM, a new sub-study, CTN 301-2: DRUM & SASH, has been launched to respond to the barriers, gaps, and needs identified by First Nation and Métis communities. Specifically, CTN 301-2 is examining the barriers and facilitators of HIV and STBBI prevention and treatment

programs in Alberta rural and urban First Nation and Métis settings.

“The DRUM communities identified local relevance and appropriateness as being key to successful HIV prevention programs,” said Dr. Cathy Worthington, study principal investigator. “Much of the past research in this area has taken a pan-Indigenous approach, which assumes that what works for one community will work for others, regardless of nation or cultural context.”

As in CTN 301, DRUM and SASH is using community-based participatory research methods to ensure that communities are leading program initiatives. The study will use a combination of qualitative research and policy analysis to understand the context of rural and urban HIV and STBBI programs for First Nations and Métis people, while ensuring that communities’ distinct characteristics are respected.

“Our overarching goal is to contextualize the barriers experienced by each community, but also to identify how each community leverages its strengths and wise practices when it comes to prevention services,” noted Dr. Worthington.

NEWS BRIEFS

After 29 years and more than 100 issues, Connections is going digital. The Network’s new communication strategy will leverage the digital environment to bring Canadian HIV research stories online to our blog and e-newsletter. Sign up at www.hivnet.ubc.ca for updates.

Congratulations to CTN National Co-Director Dr. Marina Klein on becoming a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Clinical and Epidemiologic Studies of Chronic Viral Infections in Vulnerable Populations at McGill University.

Michaela Davies has joined the CTN as our new Director of Communications. She will be leading our communications team in our new digital strategy.

Renee Cormier has taken a new role in the network as the Director of Research Development to return to her passion for grant development and research support.

Jenna Pullen joined the CTN as the Programs and Committees Coordinator. She will be organizing the CTN meetings among her many other duties.

Farewell to Phill St. Louis who retired after more than 20 years working at the CTN as a systems administrator. We wish him all the best in the future.

The CIHR Centre for REACH in HIV/AIDS has been renewed for 5 more years. Now REACH (3.0), the Centre will further advance the national success of REACH 1.0/2.0 and continue to enhance/strengthen an innovative, nation-wide interdisciplinary collaborative platform and network for implementation science, intervention research, and participatory evaluation.

Congratulations to CTN investigators who received CHIR Grants. Notable in the network were Planning and Dissemination Grants received by Drs. Sharon Walmsley, Marina Klein, and two by Keith Fowke; and a Project Grant received by Dr. Jean-Pierre Routy.

Two new Indigenous HIV research centres have been funded by CIHR and include CTN researchers:

The Wuniska Centre will employ the concept of Two-eyed Seeing to employ Indigenous and Western knowledge to address the HIV epidemic in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. CTN Investigator Alexandra King is a principal investigator on the project, which includes many other CTN investigators and community members.

The Feast Centre for Indigenous STBBI Research has been designed to enhance the use of Indigenous knowledges in current efforts to design research into impactful health programs. It is focused on reducing the health impacts of sexually-transmitted and blood-borne infection (STBBIs) for Indigenous communities. CTN Investigators Renee Masching, Doris Peltier, Anita Benoit and Tracey Prentice are among the Principal Investigators.