

### **RCT of an Integrative Intervention for Non-Treatment-Seeking Meth Users**

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#### **Project Description**

In the era of HIV treatment as prevention (TasP), efforts are needed to identify evidence-based combination prevention approaches that achieve greater decreases HIV viral load among populations that are more likely to engage in HIV transmission risk behavior. Because methamphetamine-using men who have sex with men (MSM) are at greater risk for acquiring and transmitting medication-resistant strains of HIV, interventions targeting stimulant use in this population of high-risk men could boost the effectiveness of TasP. At present, only conditional cash transfer approaches such as contingency management (CM) have demonstrated short-term efficacy in reducing stimulant use among substance-using MSM who are not actively seeking formal treatment. The proposed RCT will examine the efficacy of a positive affect intervention that is designed to optimize the effectiveness of CM to achieve long-term reductions in stimulant use and HIV viral load in this population. Our team will examine the efficacy of this integrative intervention in a randomized controlled trial (RCT) with 230 HIV-positive, methamphetamine-using MSM. After enrolling in CM, participants will be randomized to receive either: 1) the positive affect intervention; or 2) an attention-matched control condition. Follow-up data will be collected at 2, 3, 6, and 12 months post-randomization. This RCT will provide an opportunity to examine the efficacy of an integrative intervention designed to promote long-term reductions in HIV viral load as the primary outcome. Secondary outcomes that will be examined include: increases positive affect, reductions in stimulant use, improvements in T-helper (CD4+) count, and decreases HIV transmission risk behavior. Identifying an efficacious intervention approach to decrease HIV viral load among methamphetamine-using MSM would substantially support the goals of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy to reduce HIV incidence and mitigate HIV-related health disparities.

#### **Significance**

The proposed randomized controlled trial addresses a critical public health issue facing men who have sex with men (MSM). By utilizing contingency management as the platform for the delivery of an innovative positive affect intervention, this research could identify the first efficacious integrative intervention for promoting long-term reductions in HIV viral load among methamphetamine-using MSM. Efficacious interventions for this population are desperately needed to alleviate human suffering associated with substance abuse as well as optimize health outcomes and decrease HIV transmission rates.

**Project End Date:** December 2018