

## Computer-Based vs Interpersonal HIV Preventive Intervention for At-Risk Youth

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### Project Description

Building on the results of three efficacious HIV prevention programs with those at high HIV risk (LIGHT, Adolescent LIGHT, & Street Smart), this study aims to examine the relative efficacy of LIGHT in an interpersonal or a computerized delivery format, in contrast to a standard care HIV prevention condition. The project has proceeded in two phases.

During Phase 1, we further enhanced the existing computerized LIGHT prevention program to ensure acceptability; finalized and programmed assessment measures on a combination ACASI/CAPI program; finalized recruitment scripts and tracking programs; and conducted orientation sessions for all school personnel, parents, and stakeholders.

The main intervention trial, Phase 2, utilizes a complete randomized block design with youth recruited over a two-year period. Twenty four schools (n=960 students) in the Los Angeles Department of Education were randomly assigned into one of three experimental conditions:

1. Interpersonal Light in 8 schools
2. Computerized Light in 8 schools (n=320 youth)
3. A standard HIV control condition

Youth in each condition are assessed at a baseline interview, and reassessed longitudinally at three, six and 12 months.

### Significance

Adolescents' contact with the criminal justice system is associated with a number of long-term negative adult outcomes: unemployment, substance abuse, and incarceration. The most recent statistics indicate that nationally, there are at least 634,100 youth on probation and 39,000 youth in LA County are on probation. Delinquent youth on probation have multiple sexual partners, frequent unprotected sexual risk acts, high rates of sexually transmitted diseases and substance use, as well as gang involvement. HIV prevention is highly efficacious with adolescents; however, a successful program has not been developed for these youth. The results of this study will inform researchers and the public health community about the generalizability of an HIV preventive intervention and feasibility and acceptability of an interpersonal intervention delivered in classrooms compared to delivery on a CD-ROM at computers within each classroom.

### Interesting Findings

- Thus far we have recruited 633 students between the ages of 14-18 (average 16 years of age)
- Half of the students were incarcerated at time of recruitment and intervention delivery
- In a pilot study of this intervention with 133 adolescents, we found that adolescents in the computerized intervention were significantly less likely to engage in sexual activity and reported significantly fewer sexual partners

**Project End Date:** July 2009

