

## Understanding the Social and Psychological Context of Acute HIV Infection

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**Project Description:** The purpose of this study is to collect data to lead to behavioral interventions to prevent HIV transmission during acute HIV infection, the period of time immediately following infection when HIV is replicating in a person's body but an antibody response has not yet developed. The research aims to determine the feasibility of detecting and recruiting individuals with acute HIV infection for prevention research; to understand better the social and psychological context of recent HIV transmissions; and to assess sexual behavior, substance use, and psychological state of individuals with acute infection.

The study is funded as supplemental grants to each of the six NIMH AIDS Research Centers (UCSF, UC Los Angeles, UC San Diego, Columbia, Medical College of Wisconsin, and Yale). Each site has arranged collaborations with clinical research colleagues to identify and recruit individuals with acute HIV infection. Participants complete in-depth qualitative interviews about HIV infection, diagnosis, and transmission events, as well as quantitative assessments of HIV transmission risk behaviors.

**Significance:** People who are in the first ten weeks of HIV infection are up to 11 times more likely to transmit the virus to others than individuals who have been infected for longer. Given this finding, identifying acutely-infected individuals and developing interventions to change their transmission risk behaviors offers a promising new direction for reducing significantly the spread of HIV.

**Project End Date:** August 31, 2007