

### ICOHRTA Brazilian Scientists Program

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#### Project Description

This project is an extension of the International Traineeships in AIDS Prevention Studies Program (I-TAPS) through a partnership with the Centro de Estudos de AIDS do Rio Grande do Sul (CEARGS) in Porto Alegre, Brazil and with the Universidade Federale do Bahia (UFBA) in Salvador, and funded by the Fogarty International Center. It is aimed at training Brazilian scientists, as well as scientists from other lusophone countries, in AIDS prevention research, with a focus on epidemiological and behavioral studies. In-country training at CEARGS and UFBA are conducted in Portuguese. Our Brazilian collaborators work in conjunction with the Brazilian Ministry of Health, UNAIDS, CDC, and other partners to identify trainees from all across Brazil. The main goal is to provide self-sufficiency for research scientists, capable of designing and implementing AIDS prevention research, independently or in collaboration with US investigators.

This project began in 2001 and was renewed for 2006-2011. In the first funding cycle, training of Brazilian scientists was supported both at CAPS and in Brazil. In the current funding cycle, we continue to recruit and support Brazilian scientists at CAPS, but supported through other sources. We also have had two Brazilian scientists join us at CAPS as advanced research trainees, preparing grant applications to the NIH on which the trainee is the principal investigator. Our primary focus of our ICOHRTA funding is on in-country training, and an expansion of this training to reach scientists in previously underserved parts of the country.

At CEARGS in Porto Alegre in the south of Brazil, 168 Brazilian scientists have been trained since 2002 in several short courses on clinical research methods, basic epidemiology, data management and analysis, and scientific writing. A distance learning component was added at the end of 2005, enabling scientists from all over Brazil to attend the basic clinical research methods trainings through teleconferencing, and a distance learning scientific writing module is also under development.

In the current funding cycle, a second training site, in addition to CEARGS, has been established at UFBA, in order to attract scientists from the north and northeast of Brazil. The first training course at UFBA in research methods took place in the fall of 2007 and trained 16 scientists from the region. Several of these scientists are in the process of fielding pilot research projects developed at this training.

#### Interesting Findings

Our trainees have made many important contributions to the AIDS prevention literature.

- A recent alumna identified and described the use of blood banks in Brazil as a means by some persons to test for HIV and avoid test sites primarily identified as HIV/STD testing and treatment clinics.
- Another alumnus has contributed to methodological issues involving respondent-driven sampling of MSM

**Project Website:** [www.ceargs.org.br](http://www.ceargs.org.br)

**Project End Date:** May 2011