

Formative Research for an HIV Prevention Intervention in Rural China

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Project Description: The HIV epidemic in China stands among the world's most imperative public health crises. The situation is particularly threatening in rural China where the epidemic spreads quickly yet where few culturally tailored HIV prevention efforts have been implemented. To date, most HIV-related research in China has focused on epidemiological studies to quantify the scope of the epidemic and estimate the number of individuals infected, without sufficient understanding of the cultural and ecological landscape contributing to HIV vulnerability. There is strong reason to believe that existing HIV prevention approaches, developed largely in Western societies, will not resonate with traditional Chinese approaches to health and medicine.

The proposed one-year research will use qualitative methods to investigate sociocultural factors associated with HIV risk and protective health factors in Anhui, a rural, resource-poor province in China. The specific aims are as follows: 1) To describe how traditional Chinese cultural approaches to health and medicine are associated with HIV-related beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. 2) To explore and document the feasibility of recruiting rural Chinese villagers into an HIV prevention intervention. 3) To develop strategies for embedding culturally relevant practices into models of HIV prevention.

Significance: Findings from this study will be used to shape a larger community-based HIV prevention intervention research project appropriate to the cultural and ecological context of rural China.

Project Recruitment Dates: Participant recruitment for individual interviews begins March 2004

Project End Date: February 2005