The Unity Project:
A Multi-site Clinical Trial of a Health-Related Intervention for People Living with HIV

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This is a collaborative study between University of California at San Francisco, University of California at Los Angeles, Columbia University in New York & the Medical College of Wisconsin.

The investigators hope to determine the specific challenges that HIV-positive men and women face while studying the effectiveness of a one-on-one clinical intervention to improve the overall health and well-being of people living with HIV.

The study is funded by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health.

Objectives
- Design, implement and evaluate a one-on-one, cognitive-behavioral intervention to improve health care practices and quality of life for people living with HIV
- Assist people living with HIV in enhancing coping skills, effectively accessing health care, and adhering to health regimens
- Examine social, psychological, situational, and contextual factors that influence and mediate patterns of high-risk behavior among people living with HIV, including affective states, coping patterns, psychological distress, substance use, serostatus disclosure, relationship status, and sex patterns

Study Design & Timeline

San Francisco Recruitment Methodology
- "Casting a wide net"
  - Fliers posted in agencies, businesses & community bulletin boards frequented by people living with HIV
  - Staff worked with case managers, etc. to educate them about the study for referral purposes
  - Mailings sent to local physicians, nurse practitioners, and other health care providers encouraging them to refer their patients; fliers and brochures were included in these mailings for convenience
  - Advertisements placed in local presses on an alternating bi-monthly basis
  - One-time advertisements placed in newsletters targeting particular populations, e.g. women, in specialty publications, e.g. the Folsom Street Festival Program
  - Media developed and distributed to inform potential participants of the study and how to contact us, e.g. press release and a listing in the HIV/AIDS Trials Search Guide

- A listing of all UCSF-Center for AIDS Prevention Studies currently active studies included a description and point of contact for the study for internal referral purposes
- Each participant completing a baseline interview was offered brochures to encourage "snowballing" among people they know who are also living with HIV and might be interested in participating
- Recruitment line callers encouraged to tell their friends about the study and to pass on our recruitment line number

Cross-site Summary*

San Francisco—Age*

Where San Francisco participants reported hearing about the study*

Discussion Points
- The San Francisco site oversampled women and IDUs compared to the Bay Area’s (San Francisco and Alameda counties) total percentages among these target groups
- Due to current active status of the Unity Project, we cannot report on intervention outcomes or assessment findings.
- Criteria for participant eligibility remain blind pending completion of the intervention phase
- Because the intervention was unable to address specific concerns of the self-identified transgender population, they were excluded from the study.
- Compared to other sites, San Francisco’s inflated eligibility rate, given fewer baseline assessments, reflects the “casting a wide net” strategy.