

# Community Health Matters

Brought to you by the Community Engagement Research Program (CERP) & Clinical Research Network (CRN)



Atlanta Clinical & Translational Science Institute  
Community · Discovery · Training

## Inside this issue:

HIV Research: The Need for Increased Community-based Research	2
Get Involved: ResearchMatch	2
Partners in Prevention	3
Get Connected	3
Preventing Bone Thinning in Women Living with AIDS & Faith-based Programs to Prevent HIV Infection	4

## Why a Newsletter?

Daniel Blumenthal, MD, MPH  
 Director, Community Engagement Research Program (CERP)  
 Atlanta Clinical & Translational Science Institute  
 Morehouse School of Medicine



Daniel Blumenthal, MD, MPH

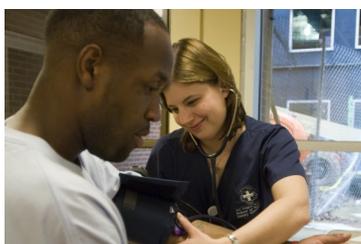
The Atlanta Clinical & Translational Science Institute (ACTSI) is a partnership among Emory University, Morehouse School of Medicine, and Georgia Institute of Technology. It is funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The purpose of the ACTSI is to conduct research that will eventually lead to healthier communities in Atlanta, a healthier State of Georgia, and a healthier United States.

To conduct research, ACTSI partners with patients and with communities. It is important that we view each other as partners; we have come a long way from the days when university research scientists just considered patients and communities to be research subjects. These days, research investigators and communities agree on what kind of research needs to be done and how it should be conducted.

If ACTSI is in a partnership with communities and with patients, then part of the relationship has to be that the results of the research are shared with the communities and patients that make it possible. That is the intent of this newsletter. In it, we hope to publish the results of the research that is of particular interest to local communities, in language that can be understood by non-scientists.

This first issue is devoted to research on HIV and AIDS, a health problem that leads the list of health concerns in many Atlanta communities. This is especially so because it represents a major disparity: the death rate from AIDS is about seven times as high in African-Americans as in other racial or ethnic groups.

What would you like to hear about in future issues? Let us know by sending an email to [dblumenthal@msm.edu](mailto:dblumenthal@msm.edu) or calling 404-752-1625.



Participating in research can be as easy as regular blood pressure checks

## What is Research and How Does it Benefit Me?

Participating in a research study can be as simple as answering a few questions or it may require more of your time, it may require willingness to try a new drug or a change in medication as well as more tests.

Your participation in research is important because you are a unique individual. Your information will always contribute knowledge that allows researchers to develop new ways to treat disease.

By working together with researchers, you will be able to impact the health of your loved ones and your community.



## HIV Research: The Need for Increased Community-based Participation

Ernest Alexander Hopkins, III  
Chair, CERP Community Steering Board

Over the last 30 years HIV/AIDS changed the social imprint of all our communities with respect to how we share experiences, our cultural order and how we share life's most precious moment the art of intimacy. HIV leaves us to question who our partners are, where they come from, how did I end up here, and why me? HIV divides families because of stigma and shame; it devastates the real fiber of who we are and how we relate to intimacy, relationships, even the institution of marriage. Socially, HIV affects our communities through subcultures often identified as LGBT and homeless indigent populations including African-American men between 18-24 years of age.

HIV research is the study of the disease, its characteristics and its weaknesses. Research is needed to find how we can prevent new infections and how we can better understand the disease. Research efforts are often challenged by the lack of trust from underserved populations' i.e. African-Americans, and to assure that other populations to include women and youth having knowledge of older research studies such as the "Tuskegee Experiment." It is important that research professionals or research cores consider developing culturally sensitive or culturally centered research that allows for more "community participation." HIV research is greatly needed and educating our community overall is so very essential to successful research. The community is full of gatekeepers and stakeholders who know there neighborhoods and their communities for disseminating findings.

The importance of research and the need for increased community participation is vital to finding a cure to end HIV /AIDS. There are many opportunities for community participation through research clinical trials and pharmaceutical tests programs. Our communities are at times untrusting leading to low participation in clinical trials, due to lack of education, and a sense of partnership. HIV research and community participation is critical for at risk communities who are directly affected by HIV.

### How Can I Participate in Research?

Picture this...you have just been diagnosed with a disease, your doctor provided you with the most up-to-date information he has, and wrote you a prescription for medication to treat your disease. You leave the doctor's office feeling confident that you will get better. But, where did the doctor get his information? Who developed this medication? Research is the answer.

In order to learn about diseases and medications, we need to do research. And to do research, we need people willing to volunteer. ResearchMatch is a national list developed to help connect willing volunteers with researchers searching for people to become involved in their research. It is free and you choose whether or not you ever want to participate in any studies for which you may qualify. To find out more go to [www.researchmatch.org](http://www.researchmatch.org).

---

*"The importance of research and the need for increased community participation is vital to finding a cure to end HIV/AIDS."*  
- Ernest Hopkins



## Partners in Prevention: A Community-based Participatory Research Approach to HIV/AIDS Risk Reduction

Elleen M. Yancey, PhD

Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Research Center

My colleagues and I at the Morehouse Prevention Research Center developed an educational intervention to help heterosexual African-American men and women avoid exposing themselves to HIV and other sexually-transmitted infections. Using a community-based participatory approach, our research showed that the intervention – called HIV-RAAP – works. HIV-RAAP stands for HIV/AIDS Risk Reduction among Heterosexually Active African-American Men and Women: A Risk Reduction Prevention Project.

HIV/AIDS affects African-American men and women disproportionately, accounting for over 40% of new U.S. infections. How can we effectively address this serious problem? Individuals who live and work in the affected communities must participate. The efforts of healthcare professionals who partner with these communities are also needed. These are the elements of *community-based participatory research* – the approach that was used in conducting this research.

**HIV-RAAP teaches ways to develop effective communication and sexual negotiation between African-American men and women – critical HIV/AIDS prevention skills. It is a seven session class that addresses behaviors and beliefs related to HIV risk behavior among African-American men and women. The sessions create an environment for men and women to jointly express opinions and thoughts related to HIV/AIDS and to learn ways to reduce risk. HIV-RAAP assists African-American men and women to understand the gender and cultural contexts of their sexual relationships by addressing communication, power, control, and trust issues.**

For additional information contact Elleen Yancey, PhD, Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Research Center, [eyancey@msm.edu](mailto:eyancey@msm.edu), 404-752-1511, 720 Westview Drive, SW, Atlanta, Georgia 30310



Community-based Research Project

*“HIV/AIDS affects African-American men and women disproportionately, accounting for over 40% of new U.S. infections.”*  
-Elleen Yancey, PhD

## Get Connected

How can I find out about research in Atlanta?

Check out these links:

- ⇒ [www.cfar.emory.edu/stu-vol/research](http://www.cfar.emory.edu/stu-vol/research)
- ⇒ [rcenterportal.msm.edu/node/95](http://rcenterportal.msm.edu/node/95)
- ⇒ [www.emoryhealthcare.org/clinical-trials](http://www.emoryhealthcare.org/clinical-trials)
- ⇒ [www.researchmatch.org](http://www.researchmatch.org)



## Preventing Bone Thinning in Women Living with AIDS & Faith-based Programs to Prevent HIV Infection

Igho Ofotokun, MD, MSc  
Associate Professor of Infectious Disease, Emory University

Gina Wingood, ScD, MPH  
Agnes Scott Endowed HIV Faculty, Professor, Behavioral Sciences and Health, Emory University

Among the complications of AIDS, particularly in women, is osteoporosis or thinning of bones. Dr. Ofotokun of ACTSI and the Emory Center for AIDS Research (CFAR) has shown that this is actually caused by successful HIV treatment. He is now doing research to determine if the drug Reclast® can prevent this problem if taken by women starting therapy for HIV.

Dr. Ofotokun discovered that white blood cells (B-cells and T-cells) produce proteins needed for bone health. These cells are reduced in number by HIV infection; they recover with therapy, but do not produce the protein in sufficient quantities. Reclast® is a drug used to prevent osteoporosis that occurs in many elderly women; Dr. Ofotokun's research will show whether it also protects the bones of HIV-infected women.

Meanwhile, Dr. Wingood is partnering with several large African-American churches in the Atlanta metro area to assess the effectiveness of a faith-based HIV intervention, "P4 for Women." These partnerships are helping to sustain and enhance HIV prevention efforts and reduce HIV stigma within communities. Dr. Wingood is a professor at the Emory Rollins School of Public Health, CFAR, and the Grady Infectious Diseases Program.

For additional information contact Igho Ofotokun, MD, MSc, [iofotok@emory.edu](mailto:iofotok@emory.edu), 404-616-0659 or Gina Wingood, ScD, MPH, [gwingoo@emory.edu](mailto:gwingoo@emory.edu), 404-727-0241



Igho Ofotokun, MD, MSc  
Gina Wingood, ScD, MPH



Atlanta Clinical  
& Translational  
Science Institute

Emory University, Woodruff Health Sciences  
Center Administration Building  
1440 Clifton Road NE  
Atlanta, GA 30322

Phone: 404-727-2579  
Fax: 404-778-5674  
E-mail: [actsi@emory.edu](mailto:actsi@emory.edu)

**CTSA** Clinical & Translational  
Science Awards®

Visit us online:  
[www.ACTSI.org](http://www.ACTSI.org)

The **Atlanta Clinical & Translational Science Institute (ACTSI)** of *Emory University*, with partners *Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM)* and *Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech)*, is one of a national consortium striving to improve the way biomedical research is conducted across the country. The consortium, funded through the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, part of the National Institutes of Health's Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA), shares a common vision to translate laboratory discoveries into treatments for patients, engage communities in clinical research efforts and train the next generation of clinical investigators. Through the Emory, MSM, and Georgia Tech partnership, laboratory and physician investigators and educators can accelerate the pace of bringing basic research findings to patients and communities.

### ACTSI Mission

Through focused **education and training**, innovative **support of discovery**, and **ethical community engagement**, the **collaborative partners** of the Atlanta Clinical & Translational Science Institute rapidly and efficiently **translate scientific discoveries to impact all populations** of the Atlanta community and beyond.