



Update

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NEW GRANT AWARDS BOOST INTERNATIONAL AIDS RESEARCH

To encourage studies of AIDS in foreign countries with epidemic numbers of people harboring the AIDS virus or suffering from the disease, five new grants have been awarded for International Collaboration in AIDS Research (ICAR). These grants will enable U.S. scientists to work with researchers in Africa, Mexico, and Brazil to investigate pressing AIDS-related health problems in these countries. The first-year budget for the ICAR program, funded by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), totals \$2 million.

At least 70 percent of the research will be carried out in the foreign countries. Valuable information about how cultural, geographic, and genetic differences influence the course of HIV infection is expected to result from these 3- and 5-year studies.

ICARs are supported as program project grants. As such, they consist of three or more interrelated projects that contribute to a well-defined central research objective. Each project is led by a principal investigator, and the overall research is headed by a program director.

The program directors and research objectives of the newly established ICAR grants follow.

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Frederick C. Robbins, M.D., Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, Cleveland, Ohio, will collaborate with Ugandan researchers from Makerere University and Mulago Hospital in Kampala, and the Ministry of Health in Entebbe. They will examine how endemic infectious agents, exposures, and behavioral practices influence transmission and expression of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the cause of AIDS.

Nancy E. Mueller, Sc.D., Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, Massachusetts, will work with investigators from the Ministry of Health and the National Autonomous University of Mexico, both in Mexico City, to characterize the virology, epidemiology, and clinical features of the Mexican epidemic, with a secondary goal of helping to develop a national strategy of intervention.

Alfred J. Saah, M.D., M.P.H., The Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, Baltimore, Maryland, will study the epidemiology of perinatal and maternal HIV infection in Malawi, examining what factors influence transmission of HIV from infected women to their offspring and sexual partners. Collaborators will be from the Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Blantyre and the Kamuzu Central Hospital in Lilongwe.

Warren D. Johnson, Jr., M.D., Cornell University Medical College, New York, New York, will investigate the AIDS epidemic in Brazil, in particular comparing the seroprevalence, incidence, and natural history of HIV infection in a high-risk urban community and a low-risk rural community. HIV isolates from these areas will also be compared. He will collaborate with investigators from the Federal University of Bahia in Salvador and the Hospital Emilio Ribas in Sao Paulo.

Gerald T. Keusch, M.D., New England Medical Center Hospitals, Boston, Massachusetts, will work with researchers from the University Hospital of Kinshasa, Zaire, and other

established AIDS projects in the country to establish the significance of AIDS-associated diarrhea and wasting syndrome in the natural history of HIV infection.

AIDS cases have now been reported in 140 countries and territories worldwide. The ICARs will strengthen NIAID's ongoing commitment to international AIDS research. NIAID scientists are already involved in studies of AIDS in five African countries--Zaire, Kenya, Nairobi, Gambia, and the Sudan. In addition, NIAID and the Pan-American Health Organization have established collaborative studies of AIDS in the Caribbean, where the disease is known to be widespread. Southeast Asian countries so far have many fewer cases of AIDS than countries in the Americas, Europe, and Africa; however, NIAID has provided training, consultants, and reagents to the Indian government for studies among people at high risk for HIV infection.