Center for LGBT Health Research

Presentation by the Center to Dean Burke
Pitt Public Health
January 22, 2014
Center for LGBT Health Research

*Our goals are simple:*

- National and International Leader in Research on LGBT Health
- Center of Excellence for Training in LGBT Health Research
- Resource for Pitt Public Health and for Local Agencies to Address LGBT Health Disparities

- *To help inform the growing national and international resolve to address health disparities among LGBT populations*
DASHBOARD PRESENTATION OF CENTER METRICS
Historical Context of the Center

• Center for Research on Health and Sexual Orientation (est. 1999), renamed in 2011
• National landscape
  – Healthy People 2010 Companion Document, inclusion in Healthy People 2020
• Administration change in 2001
  – Feds understood need for change
  – Began preparing scholars for next administration
• Now more sustained changes (e.g., recent legislation)
  – Limited by number of academics prepared to do the work
Center Faculty

• Pitt Public Health:
  Behavioral and Community Health Sciences:  Mark Friedman, Thomas Guadamuz, Mary Hawk, Amy Herrick, Derrick Matthews, Ron Stall
  Epidemiology: Michelle Danielson, Nina Markovic
  Infectious Diseases and Microbiology: Mack Friedman, Sarah Krier, Tony Silvestre

• Local Institutions:
  Magee-Womens, UPMC, Veterans Administration, Western Psych: John Blosnich, Ross Cranston, Melanie Gold, Dio Kavalieratos, Mike Marshal, Ian McGowan

• Other Institutions:
  University of California, San Francisco: Chongyi Wei
  University of Malaysia: Howie Lim
Center Students (2014)

- **MPH Students:**
  Patrick Buehler, Leigh Bukowski, Jade Coley, Topher Hoffman, Noah Riley, Rachel Seltman, Orrin Tiberi

- **PhD Students:**
  Robert Coulter, James Egan, Suzanne Kinsky, Jessica White
## NIH, CDC, and Foundation Grants (Active)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-I or PI</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Funder</th>
<th>Project Period</th>
<th>Direct Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark Friedman</td>
<td>Identifying Mediated Pathways of Risk for Substance Use in Sexual Minority girls</td>
<td>NIDA R01</td>
<td>9/13 – 7/16</td>
<td>$55,800</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emergence of Gender Inequitable Practice in Adolescence</td>
<td>NICHD R24</td>
<td>9/13 – 8/15</td>
<td>$11,039</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas Guadamuz</td>
<td>Developing a Community Level Behavioral Intervention for MSM in Thailand</td>
<td>NIMH K01</td>
<td>9/09 – 6/14</td>
<td>$756,675</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Hawk</td>
<td>Positive Health Clinic Evaluation Study</td>
<td>Allegheny-Singer Research Institute</td>
<td>1/14 – 12/14</td>
<td>$67,587</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Open Door Retention in Care Evaluation Project</td>
<td>Open Door, Inc.</td>
<td>2/13 – 1/16</td>
<td>$20,534</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tony Silvestre</td>
<td>Multicenter AIDS Cohort Study</td>
<td>NIAID &amp; NCI</td>
<td>4/93 – 4/14</td>
<td>$2,448,318*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>HIV Prevention and Care Project</td>
<td>PA Department of Health</td>
<td>1/14 – 12/14</td>
<td>$1,163,417</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A demonstration Project for HIV Prevention Intervention Targeting Young African American and Latino Men Who have Sex with Men and Transgender Individuals (PROJECT SILK)</td>
<td>PA Department of Health</td>
<td>1/14 – 12/14</td>
<td>$436,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ron Stall</td>
<td>Understanding Delayed Access to HIV Prevention Services among Black MSM</td>
<td>NINR R01</td>
<td>6/13 – 3/18</td>
<td>$2,143,753</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A Training Program to Address HIV-related Health Disparities in MSM</td>
<td>NIMH T32</td>
<td>7/11 – 6/16</td>
<td>$553,150</td>
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<td>A Training Program for Research among MSM in Developing World Settings</td>
<td>amfAR</td>
<td>9/12 – 9/14</td>
<td>$292,804</td>
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<td>HIV Research among MSM in Developing World Settings</td>
<td>amfAR</td>
<td>9/13 – 8/14</td>
<td>$102,000</td>
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<td>HIV Risk Behavior and Drug Use Over Time: Syndemic Production in High Risk Youth</td>
<td>NIDA R01</td>
<td>4/10 – 1/15</td>
<td>$73,962</td>
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<td>Phase I Assessment of TMC-278 LA</td>
<td>Magee Women's Research Institute</td>
<td>1/12 – 9/14</td>
<td>$77,258</td>
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**Total: ~ $5.7 million**
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robert Coulter</td>
<td>Tobacco and Alcohol Use Trajectories in Sexual-Minority Emerging Adults</td>
<td>NIH</td>
<td>4/14 – 3/17</td>
<td>$172,562</td>
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<td>Mark Friedman</td>
<td>Preventing Youth Violence and Teen Dating Violence (sub-award pending)</td>
<td>CDC / University of Illinois</td>
<td>9/13 – 8/16</td>
<td>$44,164</td>
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<td>Allen Perdew</td>
<td>Understanding Sexual Abuse among Sexual Minority youth for Program Design</td>
<td>NIH</td>
<td>5/14 – 9/14</td>
<td>$9,750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amy Herrick</td>
<td>Syndemic associations of healthcare access and uptake among African American women who have sex with women</td>
<td>Lesbian Health Fund</td>
<td>3/14 – 3/15</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suzanne Kinsky</td>
<td>Discrimination and Lesbian Health: Identifying Mediators of Longitudinal Weight Change</td>
<td>Lesbian Health Fund</td>
<td>3/14 – 3/15</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ron Stall</td>
<td>Understanding Patterns of Healthy Aging Among Men who have Sex with Men</td>
<td>NIH</td>
<td>10/14 – 9/19</td>
<td>$2,936,493</td>
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<td>Ron Stall</td>
<td>Feasibility of Short-term PrEP Uptake for MSM with Episodic High-Risk for HIV</td>
<td>NIH</td>
<td>4/14 – 3/17</td>
<td>$609,468</td>
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<td>Ron Stall</td>
<td>Metropolitan HIV Epidemics &amp; Responses in US Key Populations</td>
<td>NIH / C. Rinaldo – IDM</td>
<td>7/14 – 6/19</td>
<td>$595,553</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ron Stall</td>
<td>University of Pittsburgh Multicenter AIDS cohort Study (MACS)</td>
<td>NIH / C. Rinaldo – IDM</td>
<td>5/14 – 4/19</td>
<td>$406,844</td>
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<td>Ron Stall</td>
<td>Brief Interventions for Men at Risk for HIV Infection</td>
<td>NIH / Nova Southern University</td>
<td>7/14 – 6/19</td>
<td>$96,176</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ron Stall</td>
<td>Disparities in HIV/STD Infections among High-Risk Migrant Men</td>
<td>NIH / UCSF</td>
<td>4/14 – 3/16</td>
<td>$24,044</td>
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Total: ~ $5 million
Publication Record

• 50 peer-reviewed publications in 2013

• Published in many leading journals:
  – *American Journal of Public Health* (9 papers)
  – *PLOS ONE* (6 papers)
  – *AIDS and Behavior* (6 papers)
  – *Lancet, Annals of Epidemiology, Social Science and Medicine* and *AIDS* (1 paper each)

• 135 peer reviewed publications since 2008
  – A rate of nearly 2/month over the past 6 years
Publication Record Over Time

- 2008
- 2009
- 2010
- 2011
- 2012
- 2013
High-impact publications (2013)


  *First meta-analysis to show HIV disparities among trans women globally.*


  *First paper of a transgender population in a health system and currently the largest transgender study population in U.S.*
High-impact publications (2013)


  *First study to provide persuasive evidence of substantial under-investment in LGBT health research by the NIH.*

• **Friedman, M.R., Wei, C., Klem, M.L., Silvestre, A.J., Markovic, N., & Stall, R.** (In press). HIV infection and sexual risk among men who have sex with men and women (MSMW): A systematic review and meta-analysis.” *PLOS ONE.*

  *First meta-analysis of HIV, STI, and sexual risk behavior prevalence among bisexually-behaving men in the U.S.*
High-impact publications (2013)


  *RCT that yielded efficacious outcomes to demonstrate lowered HIV risk among African American women.*


  *First formal test of syndemics theory of health disparities among MSM, and produced with support from Pitt Public Health.*
High-impact publications (2013)


  *First evidence to show that naturally occurring resiliencies protect against syndemic production.*


  *Longitudinal evidence from a large national sample to show greater depressive and suicidal trajectories among sexual minority youth.*
High-impact publications (2013)


  *The first analysis of sexual minority health in the South using a representative population sample.*


  *First study to show that while syndemics also occur among heterosexual adolescents, they occur with greater force among young MSM.*
OVERVIEW OF TRAINING EFFORTS
Certificate in LGBT Health and Wellness

• First degree granting program in the world in LGBT health research

• 11 students in the program, 11 graduates

• 15 hours of certificate courses:
  – LGBT health overview, research methods, intervention design

• Teaching evaluations are very positive
Employment of Graduates

• **Academic Positions:**

  - **Pitt Public Health:** Drs. Mack Friedman, Mary Hawk, Amy Herrick
  - **University of California, San Francisco:** Dr. Chongyi Wei
  - **University of Malaysia:** Dr. Howie Lim

• **Public Health Practice**

  - **Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force (PATF):** Aaron Arnold, Dr. Chuck Christen, Jason Herring
Weekly Wednesday AM Lab

• Weekly meeting to serve as the “machine” that supports the scientific creativity of the Center
• Open to doctoral students, post-docs and faculty
• Everything is discussed from “glimmer in the eye” project initiation to challenges of final submission of papers
• Peer review model and open discussion of all projects
Expansion of Wednesday AM Lab to MPH Students

• Meets weekly
• Facilitated by Robert Coulter, James Egan, and Dr. Amy Herrick
• Six MPH students regularly attend
• Students discuss and work on:
  – Coursework
  – Conferences
  – Manuscripts
  – MPH thesis
T32 Training Program:
HIV Prevention Research Among MSM

• First program in HIV prevention research among MSM

• Currently supports Robert Coulter, James Egan, and Dr. Derrick Matthews

• Recently expanded to allow for post-doc slots

• Black Pride proposal (R01) will allow for an expansion of training slots for two new scholars interested in HIV risk among Black MSM
2013 Summer Institute
2013 Summer Institute

• We created an outline for a textbook in LGBT health research
• Online component to the book
• Target audience is MPH/Doctoral students in public health, medicine, and nursing as well as international scholars
• We are on the verge of getting a book contract from Johns Hopkins Press and are looking for support to bring the book to publication.
PROJECTS OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE
Positive Health Clinic Evaluation

The Positive Health Clinic is an HIV clinic in Pittsburgh that serves a large number of patients with multiple, co-occurring needs (substance abuse, homelessness, mental illness, etc.). This evaluation will assess the extent to which the Positive Health Clinic is successful in supporting patients to adhere to HIV treatment and achieve undetectable viral load.
The PHC believes that they are helping very high risk clients achieve undetectable HIV viral loads at rates that are well beyond the usual experience in working with these populations.

**How do they do it?**

**Specific Aims**
1. Describe system-level facilitators and barriers to HIV care
2. Explore patient-level characteristics associated with retention in care

**Self-funded by PHC**
Positive Health Clinic Evaluation

Mixed methods evaluation, combining:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
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<tr>
<td>Staff interviews</td>
<td>Patient survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient interviews</td>
<td>Electronic medical record review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinic observation</td>
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Expected results

- Assessment of PHC’s success to-date and recommendations for improvement
- Potential pilot data for future research proposals
Project Silk

• Project Silk is an HIV prevention services demonstration project funded by the CDC in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

• Located in downtown Pittsburgh and open from 3pm-9:30pm every Wednesday-Saturday.

• The safe space functions as a place for service uptake, social support, and recreational activity and HIV prevention services. For more information, please go to www.projectsilk.org.
Project Silk: Goals

• The primary goal of Project Silk is to **promote HIV prevention and care among young Black MSM and transgender people.**

• **Funded by CDC PS12-1201, Category C:** $1.31 million/3 years, via PA DOH collaborative

• **Specific aims include:**
  – Building resilience: social support, social capital
  – Service uptake: safe space, HIV testing and linkage
  – Novel HIV prevention: work with local and national House and Ball communities
  – Dissemination and diffusion to other HBC
Project Silk: Focus Areas

• Piloting structural and behavioral interventions for African American young MSM and young TG

• Innovative HIV/STI counseling, testing, and referral services

• Enhanced linkage to care and retention in care
Project Silk: Methods

• Multifaceted HIV prevention demonstration project
  – Safe space, open 4 nights/week
  – HIV/STI testing available on- and off-site
  – Ancillary services (housing, employment, etc.) with CHS
  – Future Selves: performance-based intervention
Project Silk: Expected Results

• Community-level reach: >15% of local YMSM population utilizes services (currently exceeding goal)
• HIV/STI testing: >5% sero-prevalence rate; >90% linkage (currently exceeding goals)
• Feasibility and acceptability of intervention >80% (currently exceeding goals)
• Pilot outcome data of Future Selves intervention: R34 application (currently being evaluated)
  – Increases in social support, capital, network breadth and density
  – Decreases in HIV risk behavior and correlates
Acceptance Journeys

- Acceptance Journeys Pittsburgh is a social marketing intervention funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and operated by the University of Pittsburgh’s HIV Prevention and Care Project.
- Taking its title and purpose from Diverse and Resilient, a community-based organization in Milwaukee, Acceptance Journeys Pittsburgh works with local communities of color and social service agencies to reduce stigma, marginalization, and discrimination experienced by LGBT youth of color.
Objectives:

• Increase acceptance of LGBT people in African-American communities-at-large in Pittsburgh

• Decrease HIV incidence and HIV risk behavior of African-American GBT people in Pittsburgh by reducing the amount of perceived and endured anti-GBT stigma they are facing
Acceptance Journeys Pittsburgh

- To raise awareness of how homophobia impacts the community through developing, implementing and evaluating a culturally-appropriate social marketing campaign

- **Target group**: Young African American MSM and transgender women (18-29)

- **Intervention Population**: African American heterosexual population

- Partnering with Diverse and Resilient, Inc., CDC and the Pennsylvania Department of Health
Acceptance Journeys: Methods

• Community Readiness Assessment

• Survey of target population
  – baseline & follow-up

• Message development
  – focus groups & individual interviews

• Community engagement
  – Dissemination of campaign materials
  – Discussion groups
  – Social media development
    • Photoshoots
The Girlfriends Project

• The Girlfriends Project is a community-developed intervention designed to reduce HIV risk among African American women by using house parties as venues to provide HIV testing and behavioral skills building. A quasi-experimental evaluation of the intervention was conducted in community settings to assess program effect. Statistically significant findings included increases in condom use during vaginal and anal sex, in communication with sex partners about STI risk, and in access to HIV testing.
The Girlfriends Project

- HIV risk reduction intervention designed by African American women for African American women

- Provides risk reduction skills building and on-site HIV testing and counseling via house parties

- Study Aims:
  - Assess feasibility of recruitment approach
  - Evaluate changes in perceptions of risk, risk behavior, intentions for change, sexual risk communication, and motivation to share information within social networks.
The Girlfriends Project: Methods & Results

• Mixed-methods dissertation research:
  – Recruited 149 AA women to a wait-list study
  – Quantitative surveys: self report
  – In-depth qualitative interviews

• Statistically-significant trial outcomes:
  – Increased frequency of condom use during vaginal and anal sex
  – Increases in HIV risk knowledge
  – Increases in HIV risk communication with sexual partners and within social networks
  – 87% of participants received HIV tests with a 100% return rate for results
The Girlfriends Project: Current Status

- Locally funded at the Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force
- Being evaluated for inclusion on CDC’s compendium of effective behavioral interventions
- Being used as a recruitment vehicle for other interventions
- Spinoff: GirlTalk
The Open Door

• The Open Door is a harm reduction housing model that seeks to improve clinical outcomes for chronically homeless people living HIV/AIDS. A recent study determined that 69% of residents achieved undetectable viral load status within three months of moving into the program. Future research will explore opportunities to replicate this model.
The Open Door Evaluation Study

- Harm reduction housing program designed to improve clinical outcomes for chronically homeless people living with HIV
  - Lean Administration
  - Peer Staff Interventionists
  - Housing First & Harm Reduction

- Previous study: **69%** of residents achieved **undetectable viral loads** within 3 months

- Three year grant from AIDS United & MAC AIDS Fund to develop best practices and replication
The Open Door: Deliverables

- Johns Hopkins – National Outcomes Measures
- Formative research to expand Representative Payee services for homeless and unstably housed individuals PLWHA
- Assess changes in adherence among unstably housed PLWHA
- Develop H² Toolkit (Housing is Healthcare)
- Provide sub-grants and coaching to establish two new start-up agencies
The Open Door: Next Steps

- Multi-site investigation of **Representative Payee** services
- Mixed methods research to understand **changes in drug use** patterns
- **Operationalizing harm reduction** and client-centeredness
PROJECTS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE
Bullying and Syndemic Production

• Center faculty have been leaders in showing the connections between bullying of LGB youth, syndemic production and adverse health disparities among sexual minorities in adulthood. This work continues in several different forms, among these a study to test whether it would be possible to attempt a school-based intervention to lower bullying rates, and so improve the health of LGBT adolescents and future adults.
Preventing Bullying of LGB Youth (CDC)

Problem:
1. Bullying, sexual abuse, parental maltreatment much higher among LGB than heterosexual youth.
2. Negative impact of early abuse on long-term health and behavioral outcomes.

Primary goal of study:
Determine if changing gender inequitable behaviors and attitudes among middle school students reduces their overall bullying perpetration and bullying of LGB youth.

Funding:
CDC (Dorothy Espelage PI, $300,000, two year project)
Preventing Bullying: Goals

• RCT of 6th and 7th grade students in 28 Illinois middle schools

• N=5,600
  – 55% African American, 22% Hispanic

• Compare impact of gender-enhanced program versus regular program on:
  • Attitudes
  • Bystander intervention
  • Prevalence of bullying
  • Sexual harassment
  • Teen dating violence
  • Abuse of LGB youth
Black Pride Project

• HIV infection rates are very high among Black MSM and have been an unaddressed issue in the national HIV epidemic for 30 years.
• Cutting edge analyses suggest that one of the reasons for the growing epidemic among Black MSM is lack of knowledge of positive HIV status and delayed access to HIV treatment among men who are positive. This study is designed to identify barriers to HIV testing and care among Black MSM
The Black Pride Project (R01)

- Primary goal is to understand delayed use of HIV testing among African American MSM
- Funded by NIH ($3.5M, 5 year project, 4th percentile)
- The study design will be to sample of African American MSM to:
  - understand barriers to HIV testing
  - characterize unknown positives and
  - characterize HIV+ men who are out of treatment
Black Pride: Goals

• Sample 2000 men/year for three years in the 6 largest Black Pride Events; total n=6,000

• Administer an anonymous behavioral questionnaire to understand barriers to HIV testing, knowledge of current test results and access to care.

• Expected Results: largest sample ever recruited of:
  • AA MSM
  • Known and unknown HIV+ AA MSM
  • AA MSM out of treatment
  • Important subpopulations
    – Rural men
    – heterosexually-identified MSM
    – bisexual men
    – trans women

- Themed discussion
- Poster presentation
- Young Investigator Award
Heart failure risk was highest among HIV+ Veterans with major depressive disorder (MDD).

Among HIV+ Veterans, MDD remained a significant risk factor for HF after adjusting for ART, CD4 count, and viral load.

Next: Assess biomarkers for depression & CVD.
PROJECTS OF INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE
First Malaysian to get IAS grant

RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP:
Researcher gets RM240,000 to study spread of HIV among men

HANA NAZ HARUN
AND EMILA GAZALI
KUALA LUMPUR
newsgrist.com.my

Dr. Howie Lim Sin How of Universiti Malaya’s Centre of Excellence for Research in AIDS (Ceria) has become the first Malaysian to be granted the prestigious IAS-NIDA research fellowship.

The research fellowship is co-sponsored by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (Nida), part of the United States’ National Institutes of Health and the International AIDS Society (IAS).

Dr. Howie Lim Sin How with a copy of his research fellowship. Pic by Izhar Ariffin

The grant was presented to Lim, 36, by IAS president and Nobel laureate for the co-discovery of the HIV virus, Françoise Barré-Sinoussi, at the 7th IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention, at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, yesterday. It awarded Lim US$75,000 (RM240,000) to pursue his research project.

Since 2009, the research fellowship has been awarded to junior scientists for 18 months of post-doctoral training and to well-established HIV or drug use researchers for eight months of professional development training.

This year, the research fellowship grant will also be awarded to two Vietnamese and an Ugandan researchers.

Lim’s project employs innovative technology to collect behavioural data to better understand the rapport between substance use and sexual risk behaviours.

The winning research, titled “Concurrency of substance use and sexual risk behaviours among men who have sex with men (MSM) in Malaysia” will see him undergo a six-month mentorship programme with Yale University in the US.

Lim said he was happy and honoured to receive the grant.

“I am still overwhelmed. This is a huge breakthrough for my research and I hope this will inspire others to do more,” he said.

Lim, who has a PhD in Epidemiology from the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is among the few local experts on MSM and its risks.

“I will use this opportunity to further understand the factors contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS infection among men, who are at higher risk of being carriers of the virus.

“The scope of my study will focus on the transmission of HIV/AIDS through MSM where there are higher probabilities of them contracting the virus, aside from looking at the development of the relationship.”

Lim’s previous research was also published in the British Medical Journal two weeks ago.
Dr. Lim’s Recent Grants

• Fogarty Global Health Fellows Training Program, Mentor Chris Beyrer
  “Preventing HIV Infection among Malay MSM in Malaysia: Socio-cultural adaptation of a proven behavioral risk-reduction intervention”

• IAS-NIDA Post-Doctoral Training Fellowship, Mentor Rick Altice,
  “Concurrency of substance use and sexual risk behaviors among MSM: Behavioral data collection using mobile health technology”
Dr. Thomas Guadamuz K01 Award

- To develop an HIV prevention campaign, based on the successful Mpowerment model, to help HIV positive MSM access treatment and care in Thailand.

- Funded by NIMH, 5\textsuperscript{th} year of the project

- Dr. Guadamuz is in Thailand to field the pilot test of the project.
amfAR Training Program in HIV Research among MSM in the Developing World

- MSM suffer pronounced HIV disparities in the developing world that rival or even exceed the well-documented disparities in the industrialized world.

- There is little support to conduct HIV prevention and care research among MSM in developing world settings.

- HIV prevention among MSM often must operate under profoundly adverse settings.
The amfAR/Pitt training program provides -- for the first time -- support to help scholars from the developing world design, field and analyze data from original research projects conducted in their home countries with MSM.

Support to write grant applications to amfAR, review of applications for possible funding by amfAR, support for data analysis and paper publication

Program functions to support emerging national leaders in home countries

4 scholars/year selected from ~85 applicants world-wide
QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION