



\$1.3 Million Grant to Develop Interventions for Black Smokers With HIV

Cigarette smoking negatively impacts HIV management and treatment.

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The National Institute on Drug Abuse awarded University of Houston (UH) researchers a nearly \$1.3 million grant by to develop intervention methods for Black American [smokers](#) with HIV.

[Cigarette](#) smoking negatively impacts HIV treatment and management, and people with HIV are more likely to smoke compared with the general population, according to a [UH news release](#).

About 13% of Black Americans with [HIV](#) do not know their status, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. What's more, Blacks and Latinos are less likely to have an undetectable viral load compared to adults with HIV of other races.

UH's Research on Emotion, Substance Treatment Outcomes, and Racial Equity (RESTORE) Lab researcher Lorra Garey, PhD, and her team received the grant as a supplement to continue work under an existing grant for the HEALTH Center for Addictions and Cancer Prevention.

"Chronic and stigmatized diseases, such as HIV, are associated with a lot of different life stressors. Within communities of color, these stressors are on top of daily life stressors experienced because of being a person of color, including microaggressions, [racism](#) and discrimination," Garey said in the UH news release. "The combination of these things makes disease and stress management more challenging within these groups, which, in part, is likely to lead to substance use to cope."

The RESTORE team, along with collaborators St. Hope Foundation and Thomas Street, will recruit 72 people with HIV and build upon existing research materials from the Mobile Anxiety Sensitivity Program for smoking (MASP) smoking cessation app, which also provides motivational messages and real-time interventions to help manage HIV symptoms.

Garey said, "It is so important that we start moving more toward an individualistic approach to understand health and intervention. It is more of a precision medicine perspective."

The team will modify materials from the MASP app to "incorporate psychoeducation about HIV,

being a smoker and how it affects mood, the risks of poor health outcomes and considering these complicated interconnected factors,” according to Garey.

“Folks who are dealing with a chronic disease, such as HIV, deserve specialized care, attention and ‘to be seen.’ I am excited to be an advocate for this work, be involved in it and try to help the community as best as I can,” Garey said.

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