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# NIDA NOTES

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## NIDA Urges HIV Counseling, Testing for Research Subjects

Because of the strong link between drug abuse and the transmission of HIV, NIDA-funded researchers are to provide HIV risk-reduction counseling and access to HIV antibody testing to individuals who are part of NIDA-supported study projects. In announcing the policy, NIDA Director Dr. Alan I. Leshner pointed out that risk-reduction interventions have been shown to be effective in reducing drug-abuse-related behaviors that help prevent the spread of HIV.

The policy applies both to NIDA-funded programs for community outreach and intervention and to research in clinics, hospitals, or clinical laboratories that involves ongoing contact with persons at risk for HIV. Individuals considered at risk include injecting drug users, crack cocaine users, and sexually active drug users and their partners.

"Given the tremendous impact of the AIDS epidemic and the significant role of drug abuse in the transmission of HIV, NIDA has developed a policy to help reduce HIV risk behaviors and infection in drug-using populations, their partners, and their children," said Dr. Leshner.

HIV risk-reduction counseling includes education about HIV and AIDS, the behaviors that transmit HIV, and how to reduce the risk of transmission. Counselors also encourage individuals to have their blood tested for HIV.

Current grantees are encouraged to implement the policy as soon as possible. NIDA will use this policy to consider requests for supplemental funding of ongoing projects.

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