

December 2021



*We expand, promote, facilitate multidisciplinary activities in HIV/AIDS research!*

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## December 1 is World AIDS Day!

World AIDS Day is an opportunity to unite in the fight against HIV, show support for all people with HIV, and remember those who have died from an HIV-related illness. Our mission continues to be that of expanding, promoting and facilitating collaborative innovative multidisciplinary activities in HIV/AIDS research to bring an end to the epidemic.

### Victories against AIDS have lessons for COVID-19

Anthony Fauci on four decades of progress against HIV, and what's needed for the future.

**"A crucial lesson was that antiretroviral therapy both helps the person living with HIV and reduces their risk of transmitting it."**



## SPOTLIGHT

### The Placental Scientific Working Group

Watch this short video about the Placental SWG!



#### Why study the placenta?

Despite its critical role at the maternal-fetal interface, the placenta is understudied, and many of the mechanisms relating placental growth and function are poorly understood. More research is needed to understand how the placenta functions normally, and what maternal illnesses, medications, and environmental factors may lead to abnormalities that could affect the pregnant person or their baby.

### How is the placenta affected by HIV?

Both HIV infection itself and the antiretroviral therapy (ART) drugs taken to treat HIV can affect the developing placenta and fetus. Abnormal placenta structure and perfusion are more common in placentas exposed to HIV and antiretroviral drugs, which have downstream effects for the fetus which may persist into childhood.

### Why was the Placental SWG started?

Led by co-directors Lisa Bebell (MGH) and Rebecca Zash (BIDMC), the Placental SWG was established in January 2020 to expand cutting-edge placental science for HIV-affected populations. Our goal is to better understand epidemiologic outcomes and pathophysiologic mechanisms related to the placenta to improve outcomes for HIV-exposed, uninfected children.

### What does the Placental SWG do?

We encourage and develop placental science through collaborative efforts of diverse investigators across CFAR and Harvard communities. We have 3 main priorities related to placental science: 1) convene Boston-regional, national, and international experts, 2) mentor junior investigators, and 3) develop collaborative research grant proposals. We also provide placental consultation and training.

### Do you have any research to share?

This December, we are excited to share cutting-edge research carried out by our members in a special supplemental issue of The Journal of Infectious Diseases. Read the Editorial "[Viral infections at the maternal-fetal interface - setting the research agenda.](#)"

### How can I get involved?

Email Lisa [lbebell@mgh.harvard.edu](mailto:lbebell@mgh.harvard.edu) to chat 1:1 about placentas or attend one of our meetings!

## OPPORTUNITIES / EVENTS



### HU CFAR Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Nomination Form

The HU CFAR is seeking nominations, including self-nominations, of Harvard faculty members interested in establishing a working group to address issues

of diversity, equity, and inclusion across the HU CFAR research community. DEI will be considered across multiple areas, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, and ability.

[View and complete the nomination form!](#)



### THE ART OF TALKING SCIENCE

The Harvard University Center for AIDS Research, in collaboration with the Mass General Research Institute, created a two-part event to equip researchers to prepare and present their science in a clear and concise manner to diverse audiences. The series, sponsored by the Harvard University CFAR Adolescence and HIV Scientific Working Group, is a unique opportunity to improve your own presentation skills. [Watch Part 1, a presentation from Dr. Susan Slaughaupt, the Scientific Director of the Mass General Research Institute, here!](#)

Presenting your science to a diverse group of funders and stakeholders is an art form, yet an invaluable skill set. **Join us on December 6th at 1 pm EST** to hear three Early Career Researchers giving presentations geared to the public for their research around adolescents and HIV. A panel will be providing feedback on each presentation. Learn about cutting edge science while seeing the "Art of Presenting Science" in action. **REGISTER NOW!**

[Register to "The Art of Talking Science" Part 2](#)

### Stronger Together: Enhancing UAB-Harvard Collaborations to Fight HIV - Dec 6 (3-5p EST)

This two-hour symposium brings together the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the Harvard University CFARs in

pursuit of one common goal: the fight against HIV. [View the final agenda and register here!](#)





### **Botswana Global Health Program**

The Botswana Global Health Program is dedicated to building healthcare capacity in Botswana through clinical stewardship, medical education, and collaborative quality improvement. The program offers medical residents and fellows from BIDMC and other U.S. training programs the opportunity to contribute to these efforts by working in Botswana alongside local medical students, interns, medical officers, and nursing staff. Learn more about the **Botswana Global Health Program** as well as **elective opportunities and the application process**.

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### **HU CFAR GRAND ROUNDS : Webinar Series**

The **virtual HU CFAR Grand Rounds webinar series** is an opportunity for Harvard-affiliated HIV researchers and their collaborators to present high impact, cutting-edge research to the HU CFAR community. If you're interested in presenting at a future webinar, suggest a topic, or learn more about it, please contact Mark Ingaciola at [mark\\_ingaciola@harvard.edu](mailto:mark_ingaciola@harvard.edu).

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### **HIV WORKING GROUP 2021 - 2022 / Department of Biostatistics | Dec 3 (1-1:50 pm ET) Network Methods and Infectious Disease Control (Victor De Gruttola, ScD ('86))**

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Center for AIDS Prevention Studies  
Prevention Research Center  
Division of Prevention Science

### **Apply now for Research Training at UCSF**

The Center for AIDS Prevention Studies in collaboration with the UCSF-Bay Area Center for AIDS Research (CFAR) is now accepting

applications for the Visiting Professor Program. We anticipate a return to an in-person program hosted in San Francisco from Monday, June 13 through Friday, July 22, 2022.

This year we have **three tracks** to offer to program participants, **including a new track funded by NIAID**. With the support from multiple institutes, we are prepared to offer the program to scientists from a broad range of research interests.

**The deadline to apply is Wednesday, January 19, 2022 at 8:00 am Pacific Time.**

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**The NIA-funded Emory Roybal Center** will support two or more innovative projects; \$75,000-\$115,000/year. Projects with an HIV focus will be highly competitive.

**LOI Due: 12/03/2021 [Click here for LOI form](#)  
Full Proposals Due: 02/04/2022**



**The UAB Center for Addiction and Pain Prevention and Intervention (CAPPI) is seeking applications** for a 2 to 3-year fellowship under the supervision of Dr. Ellen Eaton who specializes in infectious complications of addiction.

**Deadline:** Applications will be reviewed until the position is filled.

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## **IN THE NEWS**

• **BREAKING** GOVERNOR CHARLIE BAKER WILL NOT SEEK REELECTION

BREAKING: GOVERNOR CHARLIE BAKER WILL NOT SEEK REELECTION

## Harvard scientists identify second HIV patient whose body appears to have rid itself of the virus

By **Megan Molteni** STAT, Updated November 15, 2021, 5:00 p.m.



Dr. Xu Yu poses for a portrait inside her office at the Ragon Institute of MGH, MIT and Harvard in Cambridge. Yu is senior author of a new report on a second person to be "naturally" cured of HIV. JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF

One evening in March 2020, a doctor walked out of a hospital in the Argentine city of Esperanza cradling a styrofoam cooler. He handed it to a young man who'd been waiting

## How a Harvard-affiliated lab in Botswana became the first to identify the Omicron variant

By **Felice J. Freyer** Globe Staff, Updated November 29, 2021, 8:13 p.m.



The main building of the Harvard-Botswana partnership is in Gaborone, Botswana. BOTSWANA HARVARD AIDS INSTITUTE PARTNERSHIP

As the rows of multicolored letters lit up his computer screen at the Botswana-Harvard AIDS Institute Partnership, Sikhulile Moyo looked on in surprise. The letters represented the genetic codes from thousands of coronavirus samples. But one line stuck out: It looked like a swath of multiple mutations.

[https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/11/29/metro/how-harvard-affiliated-lab-botswana-became-first-identify-omicron-variant/?\\_campaign=botstonglobe...](https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/11/29/metro/how-harvard-affiliated-lab-botswana-became-first-identify-omicron-variant/?_campaign=botstonglobe...) 1/5

### Harvard scientists identify second HIV patient whose body appears to have rid itself of the virus

"This gives us hope that the human immune system is powerful enough to control HIV and eliminate all the functional virus," said Dr. Xu Yu, an immunologist at the Ragon Institute of Mass General, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Harvard and senior author on the new report. "Time will tell, but we believe she has reached a sterilizing cure."

[Download the pdf here!](#)

### How a Harvard-affiliated lab in Botswana became the first to identify the Omicron variant

While other Harvard affiliates, including the Broad Institute and the major Boston hospitals, have seized the limelight in coping with COVID-19, the Botswana-Harvard AIDS Institute Partnership has also played a critical role in fighting the pandemic.

[Download the pdf here!](#)

## HU CFAR SERIES

### FIRST WEDNESDAYS: Research in Development | Dec 1 (4-5 pm ET)

*Preliminary work in examining HIV risk perception accuracy to determine distinct prevention profiles (Tiffany Glynn, MS)*

### HIV RESEARCH IN PROGRESS | Dec 10 (8-9 am ET)

*Testing for sexually transmitted infections in community-based venues in South Africa (Jana Jarolimova, MD, MPH)*

### HIV ONLINE PROVIDER EDUCATION (HOPE) Physicians Conference | Dec 7 (7-8 am ET)

*Instructive Cases in People with HIV from New York City (Eric A. Meyerowitz, MD)*

### HIV ONLINE PROVIDER EDUCATION (HOPE) Nurses Conference | Dec 15 (8-9 am ET)

*Menopause in Women with HIV: State of the Science and Opportunities for Research & Clinical Practice (Dr. Sara E. Looby)*

## PUBLICATIONS HIGHLIGHTS

### Age and Year of HIV Diagnosis are Associated with Perceptions of Discrimination and Internalized Stigma Among Sexual Minority Men Who Use Substances

(HU CFAR Developmental awardee **Abigail W Batchelder et al.**)

### The Bacterial and Viral Complexity of Postinfectious Hydrocephalus in Uganda

(HU CFAR developmental awardee **Lisa M. Bebell et al.**)



**HIV-1 Subtype C Drug Resistance Mutations in Heavily Treated Patients Failing Integrase Strand Transfer Inhibitor-Based Regimens in Botswana †**  
(HU CFAR developmental awardee **Kaelo K. Seatla et al.**)

**Skipped Over: Tuning Natural Killer Cells Toward HIV Through Alternative Splicing**  
(HU CFAR developmental awardee **Daniel R. Ram et al.**)

**Disparities in SARS-CoV-2 Testing in Massachusetts During the COVID-19 Pandemic**  
(HU CFAR developmental awardee **Gustavo E. Velásquez et al.**)

## **CURRENT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **CFAR Funding Opportunities**

#### **Pilot funding for HIV & Aging Research**

Deadline for concept proposals is **December 3, 2021**

### **NIH Funding Opportunities**

**High Priority HIV and Substance Use Research** (R01 Clinical Trial Optional)

- [RFA-DA-22-040](#)

**AIDS-Science Track Award for Research Transition** (R03 Clinical Trial Optional)

- [PAS-21-270](#)

**The role of Epstein Barr virus (EBV) infection in Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma (NHL) and Hodgkin disease (HD) development with or without an underlying HIV infection** (U01 Clinical Trial Optional)

- [PAR-21-348](#)

**Interventions for Stigma Reduction to Improve HIV/AIDS Prevention, Treatment and Care in Low- and Middle- Income Countries** (R01 Clinical Trial Optional)

- [PAR-21-344](#)

**The Emerging Global Leader Award(s)** (K43) have been reissued. The Emerging Global Leader Award is a global health research career development award for LMIC early career researchers based at LMIC institutions. Please share these funding opportunities with your networks:

- [Emerging Global Leader Award \(K43 Independent Clinical Trial Required\) - PAR-21-251](#) (AIDS Application Due Date(s): December 9)
- [Emerging Global Leader Award \(K43 Independent Clinical Trial Not Allowed\) - PAR-21-252](#) (AIDS Application Due Date(s): December 9)

The **Maximizing Opportunities for Scientific and Academic Independent Careers (MOSAIC)** program supports individual postdoctoral career transition awards and institutionally-focused research education cooperative agreements:

- [MOSAIC Program Funding Opportunities Promote Diversity](#)

#### **Be AWARE of New Initiative To Study HIV Prevention in Women**

Are you capable of positively impacting the HIV epidemic among women living in the United States? Do you have novel ideas about how to use digital technology to reach women, gather insights through epidemiologic methods, and harness data science approaches to better understand HIV prevention, transmission, and early care-cascade points focused on women? If so, apply for research project funding through the:

- [American Women: Assessing Risk Epidemiologically \(AWARE\) \(R01, Clinical Trial Optional\)](#) (AIDS Application Due Date(s): December 9)

#### **NOSI: Funding Opportunity To Detect and Report HIV-1 Drug Resistance Mutations**

If you have the expertise to develop or optimize next-generation methodologies to detect HIV-1 drug resistance (DR) mutations and rapidly disseminate the information, consider applying for a grant through the:

- [Notice of Special Interest: HIV DR Assays and Actionable Data Dissemination Strategies](#)

**NOSI: Evaluation of sex differences on HIV-associated comorbidities in the context of stimulant use** (R01 Clinical Trial Optional)

- [NOT-DA-21-020](#)

**NOSI: Resilience and Vulnerability following Acute Heart, Lung, Blood, and Sleep Insults in People with HIV** (R01 Clinical Trial Not Allowed)

- [NOT-HL-22-002](#)

- [View all Fogarty funding opportunities](#)
- [Search all NIH funding opportunities and notices](#)

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[VIEW MORE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES HERE!](#)

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To learn more about core services available to the Harvard HIV research community and for information about the HU CFAR, please visit <https://cfar.globalhealth.harvard.edu/>

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**Harvard University Center for AIDS Research**