

## UC CAR Biannual Bulletin January 2021

Welcome to the first Biannual Bulletin from the Center for Addiction Research! The biannual bulletin contains summaries provided by CAR members about the great work they are doing. Thank you to those who shared stories for our first edition! To have your work included in the next issue, coming in late July, please send a brief summary/story accompanied by pictures or graphics (if available) to Jen Rowe ([roweji@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:roweji@ucmail.uc.edu)) anytime prior to July 15<sup>th</sup>. Thank you!

# CAR Biannual Bulletin

January 2021

## Member Research Updates

### News about the Human Resources and Services Administration (HRS) Funded Project



In 2019, The Human Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) awarded CAR members **Dr. Michael Brubaker** (PI), **Dr. Angela Clark** (Co-I), and **Dr. Shauna Acquavita** (Co-I), a three-year \$1.3 million dollar grant as part of the Opioid Workforce Expansion Program - Professional Track. The Serving At-risk youth Fellowship Experience – specialty Training (SAFE-T) fellowship program develops and expands the behavioral health workforce serving at-risk youth and adults, including in rural and medically underserved areas. The University of Cincinnati (UC), School of Human Services, College of Nursing, and School of Social Work have created a comprehensive program of field and classroom education for SAFE-T. The program places special emphasis on establishing or expanding internships or field placement programs in medication assisted treatment (MAT) programs that include interdisciplinary training for 1) students/interns, 2) faculty, and 3) field supervisors to provide quality behavioral health services to communities in need. Ms. Andrea Barker, LSW, Adjunct Instructor for the School of Social Work and Substance Abuse Program, collaborated with Dr. Brubaker and colleagues to offer a two-credit course on Medication Assisted Treatment. Through interprofessional groups, students shared an ECHO format case presentation and participated in an online live interprofessional simulation in the College of Nursing. Upon completion of the grant, the SAFE-T Fellowship program will have supported 30 master's-level students with \$10,000 stipends and 18 Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner students with \$28,352 stipends each. Through interprofessional groups, students shared an ECHO format case presentation and participated in an online live interprofessional simulation in the College of Nursing. Upon completion of the grant, the SAFE-T Fellowship program will have supported 30 master's-level students with \$10,000 stipends and 18 Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner students with \$28,352 stipends each.

#### 2021 Quarterly Bulletin Release Dates:

- Late April
- Late July
- Late October

#### 2021 Deadlines for Submitting Stories:

- April 15th
- July 15th
- October 15th

## Preparing Students to Work with Individuals with Substance Use Disorders



The Council of Social Work Education (CSWE), the accreditation body for Social Work Education programs, contacted addictions experts in the field of social work to provide talks for their Continuing Education Online Learning Opportunities. **Dr. Shauna P. Acquavita**, PhD, MSW, Associate Professor and Director of the Master of Social Work Program, will be speaking on “Preparing students to work with individuals with Substance Use Disorders.” This online talk will be recorded offered in the coming months at the CSWE website for Continuing Education Units (<https://www.cswe.org/>).

CSWE website for Continuing Education Units: <https://www.cswe.org/>

## Gates Foundation helps UC study sexual health of South African youth. Study shows rural girls look outside modern medicine to prevent HIV/AIDS and pregnancy.



An important new finding by University of Cincinnati researchers could help slow the transmission of HIV/AIDS and reduce pregnancies among adolescent girls in rural South Africa.

“Use a condom” has long been accepted globally as the primary message to prevent pregnancy and the spread of HIV/AIDS, but when it comes to the acceptability of adding an extra method (i.e. birth control pills, injectables and IUDs) to prevent pregnancy, female adolescents in rural South Africa remain unaware of these methods and instead place more emphasis on nonmedical interventions, according to research by the [University of Cincinnati](#). “Our findings are that these young women placed less emphasis on paring a condom with the additional use of highly effective, modern contraceptive methods,” as a dual means of protection for both pregnancy and HIV/AIDS, and more emphasis on peer, parental and environmental factors, says lead author [Jennifer Brown](#), a UC associate professor of psychology and psychiatry.

Currently, South Africa has the highest number of individuals living with HIV in the world, with greater health disparities experienced by Black South Africans. National data points to high rates of sexual activity among South African adolescents, with only an approximate one-third using modern contraceptive methods, heightening the risk for unplanned adolescent pregnancies.

The study, which currently appears in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, was funded by a \$100,000 [grant from Grand Challenges Explorations](#), an initiative of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, in collaboration with UC, Emory University, the University of Houston and South Africa’s University of the Free State.

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### **Knowledge vs. influence**

The research, comprising 450 participants, bore out a prevailing theme: While young people were aware of condoms, they had a limited awareness of the full range of dual prevention methods and relied more on other influences. For example, adolescents emphasized the importance of focusing on one's future, affiliating with a positive peer group and following the advice of parents or elders as influential to sexual decision-making.

While it's not surprising that adding another measure to condom use might be elusive to youth in any rural environment, Brown says it should be the converse here; because South Africa has experienced disproportionate prevalence of HIV/AIDS and has placed a greater emphasis on educating teenagers regarding prevention. "Youth here are more educationally advanced and open about sexual health than Western nations, but the problem is that education has been singularly focused on HIV/AIDS and less on pregnancy." "In some respects, they are further ahead of us in public health education," but most of the research, she says, has taken place in the big cities where there may be more knowledge about the full array of prevention methods, although there are arguably problems with access across the board on a national level.

### **More research in progress**

The study results, Brown says, highlight factors that could be incorporated into culturally tailored dual protection interventions for rural South African adolescent girls.

Another benefit of the study, she says, is that it led to recognition by the Anna & Harold W. Huffman Foundation, which bestowed an additional \$100,000 grant to continue the study to tailor existing sexual health interventions incorporating additional research with both adolescent male and females.

Brown's research focuses on the following domains: The development of interventions to prevent HIV/AIDS and improve reproductive health outcomes among vulnerable populations, the development of interventions to address the intersection between substance use, hepatitis C and HIV and implementation science approaches to improve substance use, reproductive health and HIV outcomes.

**Learn more about this study in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*:**

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.07.003>

**The story above was written by Angela Koenig for UC News:**

<https://www.uc.edu/news/articles/2020/12/uc-study-on-sexual-health-attitudes-in-south-african-female-youth.html>

## About the Ohio Valley Node



The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) initiated the Clinical Trials Network (CTN) in 1999 to provide a mechanism in which NIDA, treatment researchers, and community-based service providers work toward new treatment options in community-level clinical practice. The Ohio Valley Node (OVN) was established in 2000 at the University of Cincinnati to develop successful partnerships across the Midwest to collaborate on research needed to address public health care crises, including the opioid use epidemic and the recent alarming increase in stimulant use. **CAR members currently active in the OVN include: Theresa Winhusen (PI), Jennifer Brown, Michael Lyons, LaTrice Montgomery, Joel Sprunger, and Christine Wilder.**

## News from the University of Cincinnati Ohio Valley Node



### **CTN0080 – Medication Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder in Expectant Mothers (MOMs): A Pragmatic Randomized Trial Comparing Two Buprenorphine Formulations.**

CAR faculty recently launched a national NIDA-funded clinical trial to evaluate the impact of treating opioid use disorder in pregnant women with extended-release buprenorphine (BUP-XR), compared to sublingual buprenorphine (BUP-SL), on mother and infant outcomes. This multisite study, the first trial to study BUP-XR in pregnant women, is led nationally by Dr. Winhusen. The 11 participating sites include the UC Health Perinatal Addictions Clinic for which Dr. Wilder is the site PI.

### **CTN-0114 – AI to identify medications for cocaine use disorder.**

Dr. Winhusen (co-PI) and her colleague, Rong Xu (PI) from Case Western Reserve University, were recently funded to conduct the study: “*Drug repurposing for cocaine use disorder (CUD) using a combined strategy of artificial intelligence (AI)-based prediction and retrospective clinical corroboration (AI-4-CUD)*”. The goal of the study is to identify and evaluate potential anti-CUD drugs by developing artificial intelligence (AI)-powered drug discovery technologies. This project will produce a list of promising anti-CUD candidates to be evaluated in clinical trials with the goal of obtaining FDA-approval for a CUD treatment indication.

Learn more about CTN protocols: <http://ctndisseminationalibrary.org/protocols.htm>

## Center for Addiction Research (CAR)

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Changing outcomes,  
saving lives through  
work on opioid,  
stimulant, cannabis,  
and alcohol use  
disorders



### CAR Mission

To accelerate scientific progress in the prevention and treatment of substance use disorders and their consequences by fostering research collaborations across:

- UC departments, colleges, and centers including Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center
- Local, regional, and state community and governmental partners
- Other academic institutions and industry

### The CAR includes three research concentrations (cores):

- Addiction Treatment Development and Testing (ATT)
- Perinatal Addiction/Developmental-consequences (PAD)
- Population Health and Health Services (PHHS)

Find out more about the CAR using the website link below: <https://med.uc.edu/institutes/CAR/home>

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