

**NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF NURSING RESEARCH**

**Cultural Dynamics in HIV/AIDS Biobehavioral Research Among Young People
September 15-16, 2005
Bethesda Marriott
Bethesda, Maryland**

ABSTRACT

Background: The National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR), the Office of Rare Diseases (ORD), the Office of AIDS Research (OAR) and the Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research (OBSSR) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) convened the workshop, “Cultural Dynamics in HIV/AIDS Biobehavioral Research Among Young People” on September 15-16, 2005 in Bethesda, Maryland. **Purpose:** As of the end of 2003, an estimated 38 million adults and children were living with HIV worldwide. More than half of new infections occur in those aged 24 or younger. This workshop was organized to explore how incorporating an understanding of cultural dynamics can lead to appropriate interventions to prevent transmission of HIV among young people, and improve understanding of the impact of individual and communal beliefs and values upon the quality of life of youth already infected by HIV. **Objectives:** (1) Operationalize the culture concept in regard to HIV/AIDS biobehavioral research among young people. (2) Examine methods for building or adapting theoretical models of health behavior change in light of the cultures of young people affected by HIV/AIDS. (3) Assess innovations in design needed to address cultural dynamics in HIV biobehavioral research. (4) Consider challenges in transferring successful interventions across cultures. **Findings:** Culture includes, at a minimum, beliefs, values, norms and practices held in common among a group of people. It is dynamic, affected by history, and is associated with gender, race, class, and research or professional group. Community members can have meaningful input in research design, data collection and interpretation. **Recommendations:** 1) There is a need for measurement innovation and development, along with community-participatory research. (2) Interventions need to be tested for efficacy and effectiveness in practical conditions such as schools, clinics and community agencies. (3) Attention should be paid to subpopulations. (4) Trials of sustainability are needed. **Conclusion:** Since change is constant among cultures and among individuals, strategies for addressing the needs of young people affected by HIV require frequent modification. However, there is a maturing body of research to support development of interventions for affected young people