



National Institute on Drug Abuse  
<http://www.drugabuse.gov/>

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### **NIDA Looks at Non-Injection Drug Use and Spread of HIV/AIDS**

CDC estimates 250,000 Americans Unaware they are HIV-Positive

More than 500 scientists, clinicians and public health specialists met today at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to discuss the latest research on drug abuse and the evolving epidemic of HIV/AIDS. This is the first-ever two-day public meeting at NIH to include a focus on non-injection drug use and HIV transmission. The meeting was being held in collaboration with the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), the National Institute on Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

“Approximately one million people in the United States are living with HIV/AIDS, which disproportionately afflicts minority populations—particularly African Americans.,” said NIDA Director Nora D. Volkow, who gave opening remarks at the meeting. “To address this significant public health threat, research at NIH is examining every aspect of HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, and addiction, including the risk behaviors associated with both injection and non-injection drug abuse, and how drugs of abuse can alter brain function and impair decision making.”

Participants today heard from leading scientists about how substance abuse affects HIV/AIDS risk in diverse populations, and of the importance of designing interventions that address their specific needs. Today’s session also looked at neuroeconomics—combining brain imaging and economically-based theories to better explain and predict decision making; and neuroimaging to predict relapse to methamphetamine in treated drug abusers. Also discussed were the importance of combining behavioral therapies, and medication in drug abuse treatment to reduce HIV risk behaviors as well as drug abuse.

The Tuesday afternoon session covered the risky behavior related to commonly abused substances like alcohol and marijuana. Scientists have long recognized that alcohol use is associated with behavior that places people at risk for sexually transmitted infections, and similar studies on marijuana use will also be presented. These studies show that not only is marijuana use associated with risky sexual behavior, but is also associated with poor medical appointment-keeping among infected women.

Wednesday's session--which concludes at noon, will look at the problem of HIV/AIDS within the Nation's criminal justice system, including prisons and jails. The large-scale incarceration of drug users has resulted in a disproportionate rate of infection and burden of HIV/AIDS among the prison population, and correctional facilities have emerged as critical settings for interventions to prevent, diagnose, and treat HIV and other infectious diseases. The last session of the conference will examine the challenges of HIV screening, testing and counseling, and prevention strategies for inmates who are reentering society, given concerns about confidentiality, stigma, and limited government resources.

A full agenda and speaker list is available at:

<http://conferences.masimax.com/riskybehaviors/index.cfm>

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The National Institute on Drug Abuse is a component of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIDA supports most of the world's research on the health aspects of drug abuse and addiction. The Institute carries out a large variety of programs to ensure the rapid dissemination of research information and its implementation in policy and practice. Fact sheets on the health effects of drugs of abuse and further information on NIDA research can be found on the NIDA web site at <http://www.drugabuse.gov>.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) - The Nation's Medical Research Agency - includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is the primary Federal agency for conducting and supporting basic, clinical and translational medical research, and it investigates the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)