

# Community-Based Research: Substance Abuse, HIV Interventions, and Treatment Evaluations



RTI International has the skills, expertise, and knowledge to develop, implement and determine the efficacy and effectiveness of interventions with different populations of substance abusers. Since 1994, RTI has led a progression of key studies in community-based research.

## Overview

RTI's researchers conduct high-quality, multi-site, multidisciplinary research to develop, implement, and evaluate evidence-based interventions addressing health risk behaviors. Our work focuses on reducing substance use through the use of behavioral, biomedical, and medication approaches; preventing ongoing sexual violence; and lessening the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and hepatitis C virus. We also assess treatment need and help to improve overall health and well-being. Our research has advanced the fields of substance abuse treatment and HIV prevention.

As applied researchers, we partner with communities to address social problems by

- Working with hard-to-reach populations in community-based settings
- Developing, implementing, and evaluating appropriate interventions with the help of the community
- Disseminating research findings to the community

RTI's Substance Abuse Treatment Evaluations and Interventions (SATEI) research program maintains field sites in North Carolina, USA (Wake and Durham counties), the Republic of Georgia, and South Africa. We employ our scientific expertise in partnerships with community agencies and community advisory boards made up of citizens and professionals dedicated to

improving the lives of substance abusers and other at-risk populations.

## Research Populations

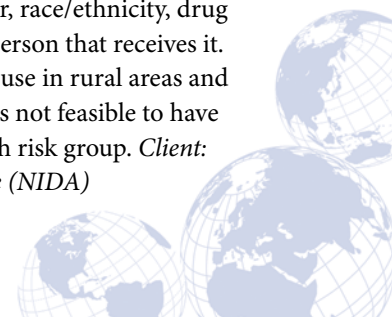
Our research focuses on the prevention of HIV and other STIs among substance users and other high-risk and underserved populations in domestic and international settings:

- Injecting and non-injecting drug users
- At-risk women and adolescents
- Gay and bisexual men
- Racial/ethnic minorities in the United States (African Americans and Hispanics/Latinos) and South Africa.
- Sex workers
- Pregnant women
- Couples
- Rural residents

## Current Projects with Most-At-Risk Populations (MARPs)

### General MARPs

- **Tailored Cue-Card-Driven HIV/STI Intervention for High-Risk Groups:** This 2-year pilot study is developing and testing a computer-assisted, two-session intervention that will be tailored to the gender, race/ethnicity, drug use, and risk behaviors of each person that receives it. The intervention is designed for use in rural areas and resource-poor settings where it is not feasible to have specialized interventions for each risk group. *Client: National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)*



## Injecting Drug Users

- **The Role of Dead Space Syringes in HIV Epidemics Among Intravenous Drug Users (IDUs):** This 2-year study is collecting ecological data on HIV prevalence among IDUs, the types of syringes used, and the presence or absence of potential confounders (e.g., paraphernalia laws, syringe exchange) in cities across Europe and Asia. Findings will provide circumstantial evidence regarding the role of syringe type on HIV epidemics among IDUs. *Client: NIDA*

## Women with Substance Use Disorders

- **Western Cape Women's Health CoOp:** This 5-year study aims to test the effectiveness of combining voluntary counseling and testing with a woman-focused intervention among a sample of Black/African and Coloured women in Cape Town, South Africa. *Client: Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development*
- **Western Cape Couples' Health CoOp:** This 5-year, community-randomized trial is recruiting men in drinking establishments and their main sexual partners to reduce alcohol and other drug use, violence, and sexual risk behaviors among couples and to promote healthy behavior changes. *Client: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism*
- **Young Women's CoOp:** This intervention study targets young African-American women aged 16 to 19 who are sexually active, used alcohol or other drugs recently, and have considered dropping out or have dropped out of school. *Client: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*
- **Understanding and Reducing HIV and Drug Use in Women in the Republic of Georgia:** This study employs a mixed-method approach (e.g., qualitative interviewing and analyses, treatment adaptation, and randomized controlled trial methods and procedures) to develop, implement, and examine an efficacious, comprehensive, woman-centered drug treatment model. *Client: NIDA*
- **Reinforcement-Based Treatment for Pregnant Drug Abusers:** This study compares four levels of intensity of reinforcement-based treatment, a comprehensive drug treatment model addressing drug use, relationships, employment, and housing. Findings will help to determine which doses of treatment are most efficacious and cost-effective for pregnant drug abusers in the area. *Client: NIDA*

## Our Research Methods

RTI conducts epidemiological, intervention, and evaluation studies to inform, develop, and test the impact and effectiveness of interventions for hard-to-reach populations in community-based settings.

Our research approaches include the following:

- Easily accessible field sites located in inner-city and rural communities
- Participant recruitment conducted via snowball sampling, respondent-driven sampling, and outreach workers who are well known in the community
- Quantitative and qualitative data collection using culturally appropriate techniques
- Development of culturally appropriate HIV-prevention interventions tailored to local contexts and based on formative research with community members and other experts
- Randomized controlled trials to determine intervention (behavioral and/or medication) efficacy, effectiveness, and comparative efficacy
- Social epidemiological methods
- Social and sexual network analysis
- HIV counseling and testing and drug testing
- Referrals to community health and social services
- Follow-up assessments to determine long-term intervention effects
- Community advisory boards and local experts in each setting.

## Global Reach

Our researchers are conducting community-based research projects worldwide, including

- North Carolina and Maryland, USA
- Gauteng and Western Cape Provinces, South Africa
- Tbilisi, Gori and Zugdidi, Republic of Georgia

## More Information

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