

Dr. Lisa Maslankowski to Continue Microbicide Research

Dr. Lisa Maslankowski is preparing to begin two new Microbicide studies. Dr. Maslankowski completed her first microbicide study, the PRO 2000 study, in October 2000. The PRO 2000 study was a phase I safety study of a new microbicide gel called PRO

2000 that was developed to protect women from sexual transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Phase I safety studies are the first studies done in humans after a product shows

effectiveness and safety in animal studies. Phase I studies do not answer the question of whether a gel will protect a woman from HIV; they just examine if it is safe for a woman to use.

Dr. Maslankowski was looking for adverse events such as genital irritation, and any signs of systemic toxicity (such as effects on the liver or kidneys). The PRO 2000 study also questioned women about the gel to see if they liked it and if they had any suggestions about how to make it easier to use. Fifty women from four sites participated in the PRO 2000 study. The sites were Philadelphia, Providence, Rhode Island, and Durban and Johannesburg, South Africa.

The results of the study showed that there were no serious adverse events and all of the women said that if they needed protection from HIV they would use the product if it was available. The gel is made by Interneuron and a large international effectiveness trial is planned for the coming year.

Dr. Maslankowski's next studies will also be

phase I safety studies. These studies will examine two other vaginal microbicides--PMPA (tenofovir) and a cellulose sulfate gel. The PMPA study will use a gel that is a form of a drug that is being tested as an HIV treatment. This product is very exciting because it has been shown to protect monkeys from transmission of an HIV-like virus. PMPA was put on hold two years ago because of some concerns about toxicity but further studies of the oral medication in humans have shown it to be safe and so the decision was made to go ahead with further PMPA studies.

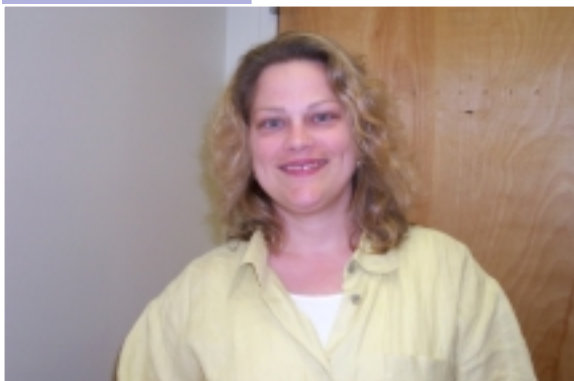
Recruitment for this study is planned for

August and seventy-two women in three sites--Philadelphia, Providence, Rhode Island, and New York City--will participate. HIV negative abstinent women, HIV negative sexually active women, and HIV positive abstinent women will be recruited. The gel is made by Gilead Sciences.

The second study is scheduled to begin recruitment in the fall and will test a cellulose sulfate gel. This gel has already been tested in HIV negative women and shown to be as safe as KY Jelly. Dr. Maslankowski will be testing the gel in HIV positive women and their monogamous HIV positive male partners. Seventy-two to ninety-six women and twenty-four to forty-eight male partners will be recruited. The sites will be the same sites which conduct the PMPA study.

Dr. Maslankowski is very excited about these studies. She says "Women need HIV prevention tools that they can control. The ideal microbicide would be inexpensive, easy to use, effective, and available in contraceptive and non-contraceptive forms. It could be used without a partner's knowledge. Since many women can't negotiate condom use, a microbicide would allow them to protect themselves without the help of their partners."

"Women need HIV prevention tools they can control."



Dr. Lisa Maslankowski



University of Pennsylvania
Project RAP
Raising Awareness About
Public Health

Rasanjali Wickrema, Project RAP Researcher, Looks at Anonymous and Confidential HIV Testing in Philadelphia.

In the city of Philadelphia there are approximately 50 places where publicly funded voluntary HIV counseling and testing (VCT) services are offered. Some of these places are HIV counseling and testing sites, STD clinics, drug treatment centers, family planning centers, prenatal clinics, and public or community health centers.



Rasanjali Wickrema

Although many HIV tests are conducted only some of those tests are completed with people returning for the post-test counseling sessions. The post-test counseling session is when the test result is revealed and risk-reduction counseling and referrals are conducted. For the year 2000, 23,383 tests were conducted in Philadelphia. Only 10,494 (45%) of the tests were followed up with a post-test counseling session. Why doesn't the VCT program attract more test completions? There are no simple or clear answers to this question. Studies are being conducted to learn more about this phenomenon.

Looking at the data from the City of Philadelphia's Aids Activities Coordinating Office, we see that there were 598 positive tests. Unfortunately, only 66% of the positive tests had post-test counseling sessions.

Another finding is that in the city of Philadelphia more confidential tests (17,665) were conducted than were anonymous tests (5489). Does this mean that people who test in Philadelphia prefer confidential tests to anonymous tests? Data show that when both types of tests were offered at the same site more anonymous tests (2350) were conducted than

confidential tests (882), indicating that given a choice people prefer anonymous tests.

Unfortunately not many sites offer anonymous testing. Compared to confidential tests, which are offered at 42 sites, anonymous testing is offered only at 25 sites. Approximately fifteen sites offer both anonymous and confidential VCT services.

The following sites provide both confidential as well as anonymous counseling and testing services:

Health Federation (On site and off site)
Women's Anonymous Test Site
1211 Chestnut St. 7th. Floor
Phone 215 246 5212

JTU, MATER at JOGA
Jefferson Obstetrics and Gynecological Clinic
841 Chestnut St.
Phone 215 955 3871

Albert Einstein Healthcare Network (on the campus of the former Germantown Hospital)
Two Penn Blvd. Suite 108
Thursday 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Phone 215 844 8570

BEBASHI (on-site testing)
1217 Spring Garden St. (US Realty sign outside the Bldg.) 1st Floor
Mon- Fri 9:00 am – 4:00 pm
Phone 215 769 3561

BEBASHI (off-site testing)
Washington West
1201 Locust St.
Tuesday 6:00 pm – 8:30 pm
Phone 215 769 3561

SEAMAAC
(Languages spoken – Cambodian, Viet, Chinese, Laos, Hmong)
Urban Education Center
4601 Market St.
By Appointment
Phone – 215 476 9640

Positive Effect
(Germantown Store front)
5815 Germantown Ave.
Mon - Fri 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Phone 215 848 6010

Under the Safety Net (English and Spanish)
2819 Kensington Ave.
Mon – Fri 8:00 am – 4:00 pm

“Unfortunately not many sites offer anonymous testing.”

Rasanjali Wickrema

Wali Abdul Salaam Gets Master of Public Health Degree

Wali Abdul Salaam, a student at MCP Hahnemann University, who worked on his community-based master's project with Dr. David Metzger and the RAP Community Advisory Board, received his Master of Public Health degree from Hahnemann this month. Mr. Abdul Salaam's project was titled "Uncovering the Public Health Impacts of Operation Sunrise." Dr. Metzger served as community preceptor (advisor) on Mr. Salaam's thesis committee.

The project began in September after Mr. Abdul Salaam met with Dr. Metzger to discuss the project. He then began his research. Mr. Abdul Salaam chose the subject because it combined his academic work with his interest in community public health. After doing research on official sources of information on Operation Sunrise, such as city documents and news reports, Mr. Abdul Salaam did a content analysis to look for materials related to public health. Mr. Abdul Salaam then had a series of meetings with the Project RAP Community Advisory Board, which functioned as a focus group to get community perceptions about Operation Sunrise.

Mr. Abdul Salaam then analyzed the official goals of Operation Sunrise against community health

impacts. He found that public health interventions were not adequately incorporated and community health impacts. He found that public in Operation Sunrise and officials failed to understand how the program would impact public health. For example he found that despite the sealing of abandoned buildings, sex workers and drug users were still able to enter and use the buildings thereby creating an environment where HIV and other diseases might be transmitted. This was possible because buildings were improperly sealed and there was no follow-up to inspect sealed buildings.

Mr. Abdul Salaam goal was to offer specific alternatives to such programs which can be used to amend current policies and plan for future programs. He recommends that future programs like Operation Sunrise incorporate more public health policies which can serve community health needs and reduce the spread of disease. He recommends that future projects also collect as much quantitative and qualitative data as possible--both before and after the project-- to assess the project's impact on the community.

Now that he has finished his degree Mr. Abdul Salaam will be moving to New York city. His wife will begin law school at Cardoza School of Law and he will look for a job in public health policy.

HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEWS?

YOU
DON'T
KNOW?



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BETTER
ASK
SOMEONE!

IF YOU WERE EVER IN THE
RAP STUDY WE'D LIKE TO SEE YOU
AGAIN.

CALL TO CHECK IT OUT
1-800-528-5527
PASS THE WORD!



Congreso de Latinos Unidos

Serving the Community for 24 Years

Congreso de Latinos Unidos is a leader in providing services for Philadelphia's Latino community.

Congreso was founded 24 years ago as a health services organization and has evolved into a multi-service organization that provides education, employment, and family services in addition to its medical services. Congreso's main office is located at 719 West Girard

Avenue, and it also has an Education and Training Center at 813 West Lehigh Avenue.

Congreso's original health program has expanded into a wide range of services to meet the needs of a diverse community. Congreso provides outpatient drug and alcohol treatment for Latinos in the North Philadelphia area. This includes case management, drug and alcohol assessments, detox and rehabilitation referrals, and access to medical and psychiatric evaluations and treatment.

Congreso also provides family planning services provided by the Family Planning Council of South-eastern Pennsylvania. The services offered include gynecological exams, pregnancy tests, sexually transmitted disease (STD) screenings, birth control, and family planning counseling.

A wide range of HIV/AIDS services are also available. Congreso provides HIV/AIDS case management for people living with AIDS, transportation assistance, housing assistance, referrals, nutritional services, and support groups. Congreso also provides HIV prevention, counseling and testing services including workshops, presentations and street outreach. There is also a HIV risk reduction program for women and children called the Mujer es Salud Project.

Congreso also sponsors a managed care consumer education and advocacy project to help community members navigate the managed care medical system and gain culturally and linguistically competent health care.

Congreso also offers many services for women and children. There is a special program called "Mommy Cares" that provides services for low-income women and children. There are after school programs, teen leadership development and teen pregnancy and parenting programs. The Latina Domestic Violence Program provides comprehensive services to women and children who are or have been the victims of domestic violence. Congreso also provides help to women struggling to gain economic independence. There are welfare-to-work services for substance using mothers, a woman's community center, and a TANF compliance program. The TANF program is cospon-

sored by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. This program offers bilingual and culturally appropriate support and services to members of the Latino community to ensure that they understand current welfare reform requirements and are able to get the benefits they need.

Education and employment services are a large part of Congreso's mission, and they address the special

needs of the bilingual Latino community. The English as a Second Language program, run out of the Community Learning Center, provides instruction in English to students whose primary language is Spanish. There is also a Family Literacy Program that helps adults improve their English reading and writing skills, and a GED program taught at Community College of Philadelphia. Among Congreso's employment programs is a 22-week training program that offers occupational training for customer service jobs including help with communication skills, computer skills, and resume development. Job placement services and internships are available.

For more information about Congreso de Latinos Unidos call (215) 763-8870.

Source: Congreso de Latinos Unidos Website
www.congreso.net



The Congreso Team at the AIDS Walk

“Education and employment services are a large part of Congreso's mission.”



Put Your Thoughts and Feelings Into Writing!! Contribute to CAB News!!

The Newsletter of the University of Pennsylvania Project RAP Community Advisory Board is seeking input from the CAB and the community. CAB News is looking for articles, poems, stories, and artwork from CAB Members and the community. CAB News strives to be the voice of the CAB and community, but without your help we can't meet this important goal. Let your voice be heard!

If you or someone you know would like to contribute to CAB News please contact:
Roseanne Scotti at (215) 823-4228

or send submissions to Roseanne at:
University of Pennsylvania/VA Medical Center
University and Woodland Aves.
Building 3
Phila., PA 19104

You can also drop off submissions to Sheryl Foster at the RAP Office at 521 W. Girard Avenue.

Spotlight on JoAnn Williams: RAP CAB

JoAnn Williams was born in New York City on April 20th 1945. She has lived in Philadelphia since 1966, when she became one of the first female barbers in the city. JoAnn originally wanted to become a school teacher, but changed career paths, working for Bell Telephone, and going on to barbering.

Ms. Williams became involved with the Project RAP Community Advisory Board in 1994. She is currently Sergeant at Arms, and rarely misses a meeting. She says, "I have had some wonderful experiences being part of the RAP Community Advisory Board. For one, I have gone places and met people that I know I probably would never have met. I have learned that people from other countries share the same problems, such as drugs and HIV, that we do in America. Also being part of the CAB I've become more aware of different projects and studies that the University of Pennsylvania has sponsored to combat the spread of AIDS."

Ms. Williams takes great pride in the Community

Advisory Board and says, "I especially feel proud to be a part of our CAB because Dr. David Metzger, a great guy, says that our CAB is one of the best. Most of us have been there, done that, and can relate to most of the things that the CAB is about."

Ms. Williams is also involved with Prevention Point Philadelphia (PPP), the city's syringe exchange program. She became involved with Prevention Point in 1993 when she was introduced to the program by Ms. Kathy Rigby. At the time she was using intravenous drugs, but as time went on she began to feel that she wanted to end her drug use and change her path. Ms. Williams has not used heroin since 1997.

Ms. Williams strongly supports harm reduction and still works with Prevention Point. She has been on the Board of Directors since 1997. She credits syringe exchange for keeping her safe from HIV and other blood borne diseases while she was still using drugs. She says, "I am able to say I am still HIV negative, and suggest that anyone still using take advantage of the wonderful help that Prevention Point can give. Through Prevention Point I met Helen Navaline (Research Coordinator with Project RAP) one of the finest women I know. And through her I became involved with Project RAP."

"Ms. Williams strongly supports harm reduction and still works with PPP."

RAP Community Advisory Board Votes on New Member Chenita Johnson Frierson

The Project RAP Community Advisory Board voted to admit a new member last month. Chenita Johnson Frierson, a counselor at the Goldman Clinic became the CAB's newest member. Ms. Johnson Frierson will be spotlighted in the next issue of CAB News.



JoAnn Williams



In The News

New Hepatitis C Threat

Hepatitis C virus (HCV) is posing a new threat to people with HIV/AIDS. Before the advent of the powerful HIV combination drug therapies, which contain protease inhibitors, many people with HIV/AIDS didn't live long enough to be diagnosed with HCV. Since symptoms of HCV can take up to twenty years to become apparent, many people never knew that they had HCV. Now that people with HIV/AIDS are living much longer, many of them are finding out that they have HCV. In many HIV clinics live damage from HCV is becoming a major cause of death for those with HIV. The problem is particularly acute because antiretroviral drugs used for HIV put a great strain on the liver, which metabolizes the drugs. Some people who have HIV and HCV have a hard time tolerating the drugs because of their impaired liver function.

Doctors are struggling to find ways to treat patients with both diseases. Doctors who specialize in treating HIV are working with doctors who specialize in HCV to coordinate treatments for patients and increase the flow of information about the two diseases. In some cities with high rates of HIV and HCV there is a growing specialty in treating the two diseases. Doctors are also looking into the feasibility of liver transplants for people with both diseases. In the past people with HIV were routinely refused liver transplants.

Source: The New York Time

President Bush Nominates new Drug Czar.

President George W. Bush has nominated John Walters as the nation's new Drug Czar. The nomination immediately drew criticism from the harm reduction commu-

nity because of Mr. Walters' views on drug abuse. Walters, who worked under former Drug Czar William Bennett, is a strong supporter of criminal penalties for drug use. He has advocated stronger sentences for marijuana possession, supported the sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine, and opposed federal money for needle exchange programs.

Community Resources

Meals and Food Resources

Mary Jane Enrichment Center
1622 Ridge Avenue 684-2847
Everyday except Monday. Breakfast 8:30AM-10:00 AM, Lunch 12:20 PM-2:00 PM, Dinner 4:30-6:00

Church of the Advocate
18th and Diamond Streets 236-0568
Weekdays 1:00 PM-3:00 PM

Mars Hill Baptist Church
9th and Lehigh 223-6674
Tuesdays 11:00 AM--12:00 PM

BM Oakley Memorial Temple Church
1535 N. 7th Street 769-5777
Tuesday and Thursday 12:00 PM-2:00 PM

Childs Memorial Church
10th and Girard 232-3900
Wednesday 11:30-1:30 PM

Thankful Baptist
17th and Allegheny 229-5024
Wednesday 12:00 PM-1:00 PM

New Life Community Center
4727 N. Broad St. 457-2322
Wednesday 4:00 PM

Baptist Women's Center
1428 W. Poplar St. 235-8070
Tuesday 12:00 PM-1:00 PM

Second Pilgrim
854 N. 15th Street 763-5821
Thursday 5:00 PM-6:00 PM

Faith Temple Church
3213 W. Cumberland Ave. 226-2128
Friday 11:00 AM-1:00 PM

East Bethel Baptist Church
1329 W. Erie Ave. 226-6738
Saturday 11:00 AM-1:00 PM

Saint Francis Inn
2441 Kensington Avenue 423-5845
M, T, W, Th. 4:30-6:00
Fri., Sat., Sun. 11:30-1:00

Quote of the Month.

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."

Mahatma Gandhi



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CAB News

**To Contact Project RAP
Call Toll Free:
1-800-528-5527**