

Professor develops videos for computers to reduce HIV sexual risk behavior

A Rutgers College of Nursing faculty member, Rachel Jones, is conducting a pilot study to develop video vignettes for hand-held computers to reduce HIV sexual risk behavior in young women living in urban areas.

Jones, assistant professor at the College of Nursing at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, received a two-year \$155,500 grant from the National Institute of Nursing Research, National Institutes of Health to study the effectiveness of computerized tailored video health promotion messages as another approach to reduce HIV risk behavior.

Researchers will conduct several focus groups with women, 18-to-25 years old, and two with men, in public housing developments and other locations in Newark and Jersey City. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 68 percent of the women in this age group with HIV were infected through heterosexual contact.

"An important aspect of this work is understanding, interpreting, and communicating the wisdom of the majority of women and men in the community who know how to reduce HIV risk," said Jones. "Another is the important role of undergraduate nursing students who will assist with moderating the focus groups and communicating this wisdom in health promotion messages."

After analyzing the information from the focus groups, a series of digital video vignettes concerning trust, sexual pressure and high-risk sexual behavior will be developed. Working with Alan Roth, an independent documentary filmmaker, and Robert Nahory, a digital application developer at the Rutgers Newark Dana Library, researchers will develop storyboards and produce 20 video vignettes performed by actors that will include people in the community and Rutgers students.

"We are going to develop a battery of short videos on HIV prevention," said Jones. "In the current phase, we will develop the videos for women and play them on hand held computers. Then as part of a pilot study, we will ask women in the community what they think about the videos, the stories, the characters, and using hand held computers. We will also find out if the videos have changed their views or attitudes." Jones continued, "In a future study, we will evaluate the effectiveness in changing high risk behavior."

From its headquarters at Rutgers-Newark, Rutgers College of Nursing offers a broad range of academic programs on all three Rutgers campuses. The college offers a master's program with unique practitioner clinical specialties, and the only doctoral (Ph.D) nursing degree in New Jersey.

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