

# The Northern New Englander

## Clinical Trials Network Newsletter



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## New Additions to the NNE Node Team

■ The Northern New England Node is very pleased to announce the addition of Daniel Squires, Ph.D., M.P.H. to our team as a co-investigator and Node Research Utilization Coordinator (NRUC). He is currently PI/Director for the Addiction Technology Transfer Center of New England (ATTC-NE), [www.attc-ne.org](http://www.attc-ne.org), at the Center for Alcohol & Addiction Studies, and Assistant Professor of Community Health at Brown University.

Dr. Squires' research evaluates comprehensive organizational change and training models for alcohol and other drug treatment organizations and providers. He has authored numerous papers and book chapters related to this topic and received research funding through both NIH and SAMHSA.

Given the new priority placed on dissemination efforts, Dr. Squires adds a very strong foundation to our node in the area of dissemination of evidence-guided practices for the treatment of substance use disorders.

In his capacity as NRUC, Dr. Squires will work locally to develop a cohesive dissemination network between NNE Node members and other stakeholders. An initial dissemination plan has been drafted regarding how this goal will be reached. One of the early steps identified in the plan is to hold a "stakeholder conference". The primary purpose of this conference will be to inform attendees about the benefits of resource-sharing and funding stream linkage for more cohesive regional dissemination. The overall NNE Node dissemination plan is being finalized now, and will be presented by Dr. Squires on an upcoming Executive Committee conference call.

■ INVEST Fellow in 2008: Dr. Amit Chakrabarti has been awarded a NIDA international fellowship under the auspices of the INVEST fellowship training program to spend a year as a research fellow in the McLean Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment Program (ADATP), most likely beginning in July of 2008. INVEST-CTN Fellows will conduct research within the scope of CTN priorities. Fellows will also participate in professional development activities. Dr. Chakrabarti, a very accomplished researcher from India, will be working primarily on the CTN-0030 study, but will be participating in other aspects of the program as well. This should be a terrific experience both for him and for our program.

For more information on the INVEST Drug Abuse Research Fellowship go to:



<http://international.drugabuse.gov/invest.html>

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SPRING 2008

## New Layout

We hope you enjoy the new layout for The Northern New Englander—Clinical Trials Network Newsletter.

## Site News

### AdCare Hospital

- AdCare Hospital held a Counselor Appreciation Day on September 27, 2007 to honor counselors employed in the inpatient and outpatient programs. Counselors were applauded for completion of baccalaureate, enrollment in Masters Degree Programs, certification activities and a general trend to increase competency and skill development.
- AdCare Hospital participated in the Psychiatry Research Day at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester, MA. Dr. Nora Volkow, the director of NIDA, was the keynote speaker at this event. Drs. Monika Kolodziej, Patrice Muchowski, Paula Morrissette, and Dorota Paluha from AdCare Hospital as well as Dr. William Meehan from the University of Massachusetts Medical School presented a poster entitled "Prevalence of Substance Dependence, Psychiatric Disorders, and Chronic Medical Conditions at AdCare Hospital."

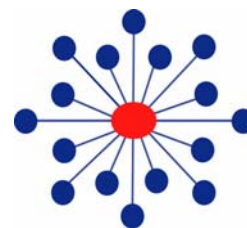
- Dr. Kolodziej has been involved in developing a research-oriented Central Massachusetts Addiction Consortium. The Consortium is led by Dr. Douglas Ziedonis, chair of psychiatry at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and a CTN Northern New England Node collaborator.
- Under the direction of Monika Kolodziej, Ph.D., research activities focused on continued use of the Patient Feedback Survey system to receive feedback from patients in AdCare's outpatient services program and use the feedback to guide the delivery of services. The Patient Feedback Survey was part of the recently completed NIDA-CTN-0016 protocol. Staff from AdCare is preparing the results from their recent study "Patient Feedback Survey at AdCare's Outpatient Services," for submission to the American Psychological Association conference that will take place in Boston next summer.

### SSTAR

- SSTAR celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on September 27 & 28, 2007 by organizing a conference, "Promising Practices from Around the World." The conference was held at the Newport Harbor Hotel in Newport, Rhode Island. Shelly Greenfield, M.D., M.P.H. (CTN Northern New England Node Co-PI) presented a talk at the conference on September 28, 2007 entitled, "The Women's Recovery Group Study: A Stage I Trial of Women-focused WRG Versus Mixed Gender GDC."
- The CTN-0028 national team has recently submitted a preliminary publication plan to the CTN Publication Committee. CTP co-authors are well represented among the planned publications. Included among the co-authors are Drs. William Jaffee and Genie Bailey from the SSTAR program in NNE Node, who are taking the lead in developing a manuscript on recruitment for adolescent clinical trials using CTN-0028 data. Research on methods of recruiting co-morbid adolescents to clinical trials is sorely lacking in the field, which in turn has impeded progress in addressing the significant treatment research gaps in this population. The SSTAR program has "earned its stripes" as the recruitment leader among the eleven CTN-0028 sites and the first to surpass the per-site enrollment target of 30 randomized participants.

### CAB Health & Recovery Services, Inc.

- On October 4, 2007, Michael Levy, Ph.D. presented at a Massachusetts Department of Public Health Conference regarding The Network for the Improvement of Addiction Treatment (NIATx). The DPH received a grant to enlist 40 providers across the state to participate in a study looking at different ways to incorporate quality management into a program.
- Congratulations to Michael Levy, Ph.D. for being elected to the CTN Research Utilization Committee.



## Announcements

### Northern New England Node Involvement on NIDA CTN Committees

- Patrice Muchowski, Sc.D. from AdCare Hospital was recently elected to serve a two to three-year term on the CTN Research Development Committee.

### ATTC-NE

- The ATTC-NE's pilot program to assist providers in preparing to adopt MIA-STEP continues. Forty counselors from a single multi-site provider have participated in on-line and live skill-building training following initial proficiency assessment.

### POATS on CBS Evening News

- On Thursday, Nov 29, 2007 at 6:30 EST, the CBS Evening News with Katie Couric included a story about buprenorphine treatment for prescription opioid dependence and the CTN0030 POATS study. Marc Gourevitch, M.D., site PI at the Bellevue site, was interviewed for this story, as were two research participants from the study. This piece highlighted the problem of prescription opioid dependence and discussed the benefits of treatment as well as publicizing this CTN study. To view the story copy and past into your browser:

[http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/11/29/eveningnews/main3555822.shtml?source=search\\_story](http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/11/29/eveningnews/main3555822.shtml?source=search_story)

### CTN at APA Conference

- The "Women and Substance Abuse Treatment: Exploring Women-Focused Treatments and Services" symposium has been accepted to be presented at the American Psychiatric Association (APA) meeting on Tuesday, May 6, 2008, 2-5 p.m. in Washington, DC. The Chairpersons are Shelly F. Greenfield (Northern New England) and Carmen Rosa (NIDA CCTN). The presenters include Shelly Greenfield (Northern New England), Denise Hien (Long Island), Susan Gordon (Delaware Valley), and Susan Tross (Long Island).

## Of Interest ...

### Clinician Tools

SAMHSA recently released *Substance Abuse Treatment for Persons with Co-Occurring Disorders Inservice Training* based on Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) 42 *Substance Abuse Treatment For Persons With Co-Occurring Disorders*. The manual describes treatment for people with both substance use and mental disorders. Clinical supervisors can use it in inservice training settings. Participants will become familiar with the evidence-based knowledge presented in TIP 42 and learn how to apply that knowledge in their treatment practices. The manual consists of 18 modules and includes presentation instructions, PowerPoint slides (that can be copied onto overhead transparencies), trainer scripts, and participant handouts. The training approach includes presentations, discussion sessions, and practice exercises for participants. The entire manual can be ordered online through SAMHSA's Knowledge Application Program (KAP) website <http://kap.samhsa.gov/products/trainingcurriculums/tip42.htm>

## Levy's Corner

*Dr. Michael Levy is the Director of Clinical Treatment Services at CAB Health & Recovery Services, Inc. in Peabody, MA. He is the author of a syndicated column where he responds to reader's questions about mental health conditions, resources, and problems. In this section of our newsletter, we have reprinted letters from the column.*

Dear Dr. Levy:

***Why is there such a stigma towards those who have drug problems? I think these people are still viewed as second class citizens. And what has to happen to change this?***

Those are great and difficult questions to answer. While I may not have the definitive answer, let me offer you my thoughts about this. In this country, there is the underlying belief that people with drug problems are weak people because they succumb to the desire to use drugs compulsively as a way to deal with life's difficulties. It is believed that drug addicts must lack inner strength or fortitude because refraining from drug use is simply viewed as a matter of choice. If they were stronger people, the argument goes that they wouldn't have a drug problem in the first place, or they would simply stop.

I personally do not believe this. Research has clearly demonstrated that there are biological, genetic vulnerabilities

Dear Dr. Levy:

***My wife has been addicted to opiates and she first got involved with these drugs due to chronic back pain. While she has been doing better, she still occasionally relapses and she says that it is due to her pain. I think that this is just an excuse, but she says the pain is real and is truly a reason why she relapses. I am curious what you think. Thanks.***

In truth, a number of people mention chronic pain as a factor in their initial drug use and ongoing difficulties with drugs, and specifically with opiate medication. In a large study that has looked at this issue, it was found that individuals with persistent and moderate to high pain who had recently been detoxified were more likely to relapse than were clients without chronic pain who had also been recently detoxified. Clients with chronic pain were also more likely to drink alcohol more heavily than clients without chronic pain.

to develop drug problems. This is not to minimize the role of psychological and social factors, which are also important. But it is to say that biological factors are very relevant. Also, when a person starts to use drugs, drug use interacts with the brain and changes it in ways which makes simply stopping more difficult. So drug addiction clearly affects the biological make up of the brain. As a result of this research, the National Institute on Drug Abuse notes that drug addiction is truly a brain disease, as opposed to it being reflective of a personal weakness. And again, saying that drug addiction is a brain disease does not mean that psychological and social factors are also involved. In fact, many illnesses have psychological and social components to them, such as hypertension, for example.

I also don't believe this argument because I have seen many people with drug problems who demonstrate personal strength in other areas of their lives, and who become very successful people when they stop their drug use. If drug addiction was a sign of personal weakness, then I don't see how drug addicts could show such determination and success in other areas of their lives. And what about cigarette smokers who struggle with stopping smoking? Are all of these people weak? I don't think so. So for me, the personal weakness argument is flawed logically, though I believe that the stigma originates from that belief.

So chronic pain is a factor in relapse and isn't just an excuse to use. However, that being said, for someone who struggles with addiction, chronic pain is still not a reason to use and the person must learn to cope with their pain in other, more productive ways. One suggestion is for your wife to see a physician who specializes in pain management and obviously, she needs to be open and honest about her history of drug addiction. There are other ways to manage pain that do not include medication with abuse potential, and this is treatment that she could receive.



## Protocol Updates

### **CTN-0028: Treating ADHD in Adolescents with Substance Use Disorders**

#### **Conducted at SSTAR**

How is it that SSTAR continually leads CTN-28 in recruitment? As of December, SSTAR had recruited 132% of their original target. Of the national enrollment of 209 from 11 sites, SSTAR has randomized 37, or nearly 18% of the total.

Theories abound, but the inside view shows that continual attention to multiple referral sources such as their own clinic, schools, and relatives of participants has paid off. The “easy” randomizations, those from newspaper advertising, account for only 13% of referrals. SSTAR continues to show that there is no substitute for regular contact with referral sources when it comes to recruiting adolescents.

The study is scheduled to complete recruitment in the Spring of 2008.

### **CTN-0029: Treating Smokers with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

#### **MGH Pediatric Psychopharmacology Clinic**

This study is being conducted locally at MGH in Cambridge, MA under the direction of Timothy Wilens, M.D. Rob Sawtelle is the study coordinator at MGH. Recruitment efforts for the entire CTN-0029 study are finished as of September 27, 2007. Two hundred and fifty-five participants were randomized into the study across 6 sites, including the MGH site. Thirty-eight participants were randomized at MGH. The site staff continues to treat the remaining participants in the study and track participants for research follow up visits. The MGH team will be well represented on the proposed publications resulting from the study.

### **CTN-0030: Prescription Opiate Addiction Treatment Study (POATS)**

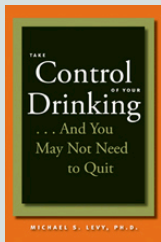
All CTN-0030 sites continue to successfully recruit and enroll participants across the country. The team at McLean Hospital has randomized 55 participants into Phase 1 of the study and is at 100% of their recruitment goal. The team owes their boost in recruitment to two radio advertisements which ran on a local sports radio station. These ads yielded approximately 170 calls, 70 of which were eligible for screening. The team is confident that the number of randomizations will remain steady over the final months of recruitment.

With the recent boost in recruitment, the team has begun to focus on strategies for increasing retention, particularly in the follow-up period of the study. One strategy involves rewarding participants who have perfect attendance at follow-up with a bonus gift of either a \$20 gift card or 4 movie tickets.

This strategy has been very well-received by current study participants. The team at McLean is confident their special focus on retention will help to increase attendance rates at all study visits.



## Recent Publications



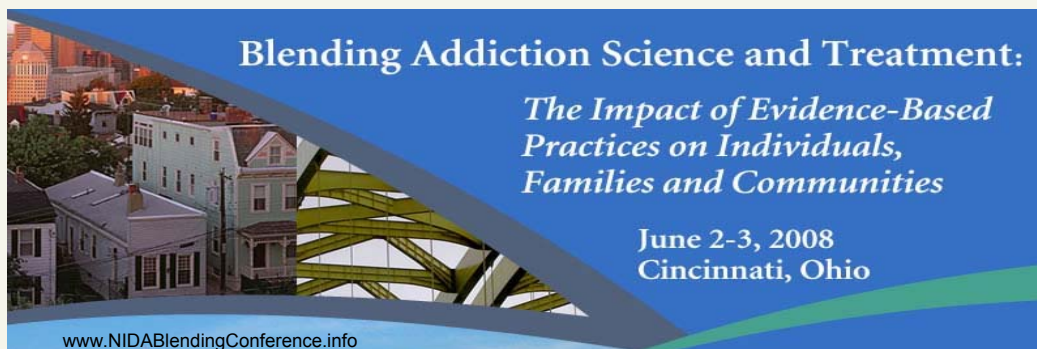
Michael Levy, Ph.D., the director of Clinical Treatment Services at CAB Health & Recovery Services, Inc. recently had a book published by Johns Hopkins University Press entitled "Take Control of Your Drinking...And You May Not Need to Quit." Dr. Levy examines the causes of problem drinking, why it is so difficult to change drinking habits, and provides practical strategies for people to take control of their alcohol problems. The book is available in hardcover or paperback and can be ordered through Johns Hopkins University Press.

### **New Publication from CTN-0008 protocol**

McCarty D, Fuller B, Kaskutas LA, Wendt WW, Nunes EV, Miller M, Forman R, Magruder KM, Arfken C, **Copersino M**, Floyd A, Sindelar J, Edmundson E. Treatment programs in the National Drug Abuse Treatment Clinical Trials Network. Drug Alcohol Depend. 2007 Sep 15; [Epub ahead of print]

## Upcoming Events

**NIDA Blending Conference:** The next NIDA Blending Conference will be held June 2-3, 2008 in Cincinnati, OH.



**Steering Committee Meetings:** The next CTN Steering Committee Meeting will be held February 25-28, 2008 in Bethesda, MD. The June CTN Steering Committee Meeting will follow the NIDA Blending Conference from June 4-6, 2008 in Cincinnati, OH.

### **Continuing Education Events**

The annual Harvard Medical School Department of Continuing Education "Treating the Addictions Conference," offered by the Department of Psychiatry/Cambridge Health Alliance Physicians Organizations is scheduled for February 29 – March 1, 2008 at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel. Course information and registration instructions are available online at:

<http://cme.hms.harvard.edu/index.asp?SECTION=CLASSES &ID=00282398&SO=N>

