



Meeting Challenges & Taking Action

CIRA's multi-faceted community



Taking stock and taking action

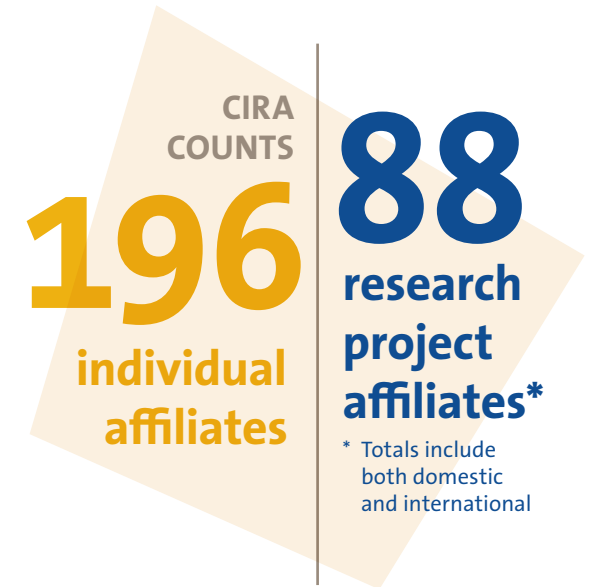


I have been at CIRA for more than 20 years.

I came to CIRA in 2000 as a postdoc, joined as a faculty affiliate in 2002, and then as Directors of the Interdisciplinary Research Methods Core and the Development Core before taking over as the Director in 2020. During this time the nature of the HIV epidemic has changed considerably. For example, over 25 million people living with HIV are on antiretroviral therapy compared to less than 1 million in 2000. HIV prevention has switched from largely behavioral approaches to integrated biomedical and behavioral approaches. Further, HIV disparities have increased since the beginning of CIRA and HIV has been marked and influenced by structural racism, social injustice, and health inequities with higher incidence and prevalence of HIV for communities of color. CIRA has changed considerably, both in focus and structure, adapting to the dynamic changes of the HIV epidemic.

However, during this time CIRA has always remained a place where people dedicated to fighting to prevent and treat HIV can come together to share knowledge, collaborate, and ultimately impact the health and well-being of the communities we serve. As CIRA moves to our next stage, we will continue to adapt and strive to provide resources and space to foster innovation in research and services to prevent HIV and improve the health and well-being of individuals living with HIV. There are numerous challenges that we face in the world and in the field of HIV, but CIRA is dedicated to work with you all to rise, adapt, and meet those challenges.

Dr. Trace Kershaw
CIRA Director



The CIRA approach

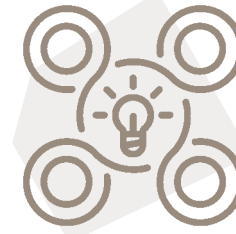
Who CIRA is



Established in 1997 with support from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), CIRA supports innovative, interdisciplinary research focused on the implementation of HIV prevention and treatment and the elimination of HIV disparities.



Catalyze impactful research and innovation



Foster and develop scientists



Advance collaborations to eliminate HIV inequities

What CIRA does



Connecting people



Events and talks



Funding opportunities



Consultation



Training future scientists and diverse scholars

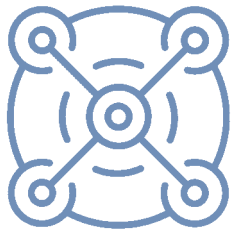


Expanding international research efforts



Disseminating research findings

Connecting people



We facilitate connections between researchers, community-based organizations, service providers, HIV advocates, individuals and government. A 2021 poll conducted with affiliates to determine CIRA's greatest value as an HIV/AIDS research center indicated that 77% considered networking as CIRA's greatest value, followed by 69% stating research training and mentoring opportunities were its most significant benefit.

Networks, advisory boards, and virtual tours

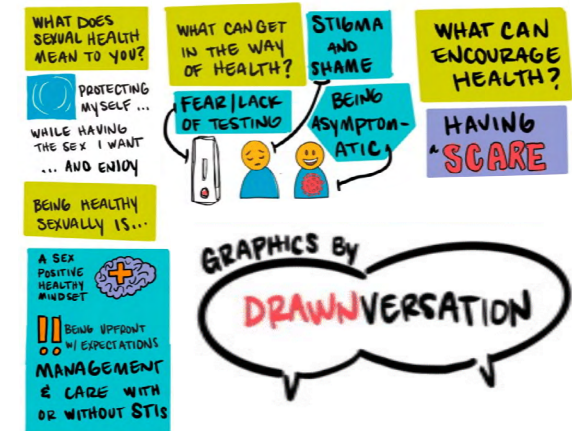
Initiatives include the New England HIV Implementation Science Network, consultations with CIRA's Community Advisory Board, and recently, a series of virtual tours with local HIV/AIDS service provider organizations. These opportunities help to build relationships, foster lasting professional connections, and have led to successful research and evaluation projects.

The strong working relationship among CIRA researchers, the CT Department of Health, and regional service providers helped to produce a funded NIDA R01 in 2020 to *Promote HIV Risk Reduction Among People Who Inject Drugs* led by PI Jennifer Edelman; five sites across CT and MA are participating in implementing and testing the contingency management and PrEP navigation intervention.



Engaging the Community

In 2020 [CIRA partnered with New Haven-based APNH: A Place to Nourish your Health](#) to launch a new community-engaged CDC Demonstration Project called Chat4Change where young MSM of color are promoting PrEP use among their peers, meeting these men where they are, on gay-oriented location-based apps like Grindr.



Events and talks



CIRA organizes symposia, presentations, and provocative conversations to advance research science, best practices, and innovations, and to foster collaborations. Topics of priority and focus areas to be addressed by these activities are informed by CIRA's Community Advisory Board, Executive Committee members, Research Support Team, and affiliates.

Staying connected

In 2021 CIRA hosted nearly 40 events, bringing speakers from across the University and the world to share their work and highlight advances and innovations in HIV science. This included a series of talks on intersectional stigma, an NIH priority area, foregrounding the importance of addressing intersecting forms of stigma when providing HIV services and discussing ways HIV researchers and practitioners can inform each other's work. A panel on telehealth in HIV prevention and care hosted by the New England HIV Implementation Science Network highlighted the creative and flexible ways providers have adapted service provision during the pandemic, followed by an opportunity for attendees to discuss potential research projects in this space.



Funding opportunities



CIRA's annual Pilot Project program stimulates research in reducing HIV inequities by incorporating key health justice constructs and applying innovative implementation science strategies. Pilot awards provide resources for preliminary or feasibility studies that lead to larger projects which expand and disseminate scientific knowledge on the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

CIRA Pilot Project

How CIRA Helped

Resulting NIH-funded Project

[Optimizing PrEP's Potential in Non-Clinical Settings: Development and Evaluation of a PrEP Shared Decision Making Tool for Women Seeking Domestic Violence Services](#)

PI: Jaimie Meyer & Tiara Willie



"The CIRA Pilot project provided support for how PrEP decision aids can be adapted to delivery in domestic violence service settings."

– Jaimie Meyer & Tiara Willie, Co-PI

[R34: Development and Evaluation of a PrEP Decision Aid for Women Seeking Domestic Violence Services in Baltimore](#)

PI: Jaimie Meyer & Tiara Willie

Funder: National Institute of Mental Health



[Adapting an Evidence-based Intervention for Stigma-related Stress, Mental Health, and HIV Risk for MSM of Color in Small Urban Areas](#)

PI: John Pachankis & Krystn Wagner



"Collaborating on this CIRA pilot study not only sparked my interest in intervention research, but also provided me with data that elevated my NIH application."

– Skyler Jackson

[K01: Intersectional Stigma, Mental Health, and HIV Risk Among US Gay and Bisexual Men of Color](#)

PI: Skyler Jackson (part of pilot study research team)

Funder: National Institute of Mental Health



Funding opportunities (continued)

We stimulate and support the development of new and emerging research ideas and community-university research partnerships through pilot funding, the International Visiting Fellow Program, NIH Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) supplement grants, and funding opportunities discussions.



R3EDI & STEER Team (Clockwise): Donna Spiegelman, ScD; Debbie Humphries, PhD; Raul U. Hernandez-Ramirez, PhD; Christine Simon, PhD

CIRA identifies opportunities and facilitates researcher achievement in securing funds for EHE supplement awards:

R3EDI - Rigorous, Rapid, & Relevant Evidence aDaptation & Implementation to EHE; PI: Donna Spiegelman

- Provides technical assistance, coaching, training, consultative services to EHE project teams and HIV researchers.

St. Louis Enhancing Engagement and Retention in HIV/AIDS Care (STEER); PI: Debbie Humphries

This two-year planning grant aims to:

- Assess the multilevel intersectional barriers to engagement and retention in HIV care among hard-to-reach populations in St. Louis.
- Adapt and identify implementation strategies for a multilevel Community Health Worker (CHW) intervention to increase engagement in HIV care.
- Prepare a hybrid implementation and effectiveness proposal to assess the adapted CHW model's impact on engagement and retention.

A Study of Assisted HIV Self-Testing and Linkage to Care among Partners of People Living with HIV (PLHIV) in San Juan, Puerto Rico; PI: Trace Kershaw

Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Key Groups about the Undetectable=Untransmissible Message (KAP on U=U); PI: Trace Kershaw, UPR PI: Carmen Zorrilla

Researchers at CIRA, YSPH, and University of Puerto Rico are conducting two projects to combat Puerto Rico's pressing problems with HIV as part of the federal government's EHE initiative. The study teams aim to:

- Gauge the feasibility of providing self-test kits to people whose partners are living with HIV in order to increase treatment rates.
- Study how to adapt and disseminate education materials for the "Undetectable = untransmittable," also known as U=U campaign, which promotes messaging that individuals with an undetectable viral load cannot infect their partner.

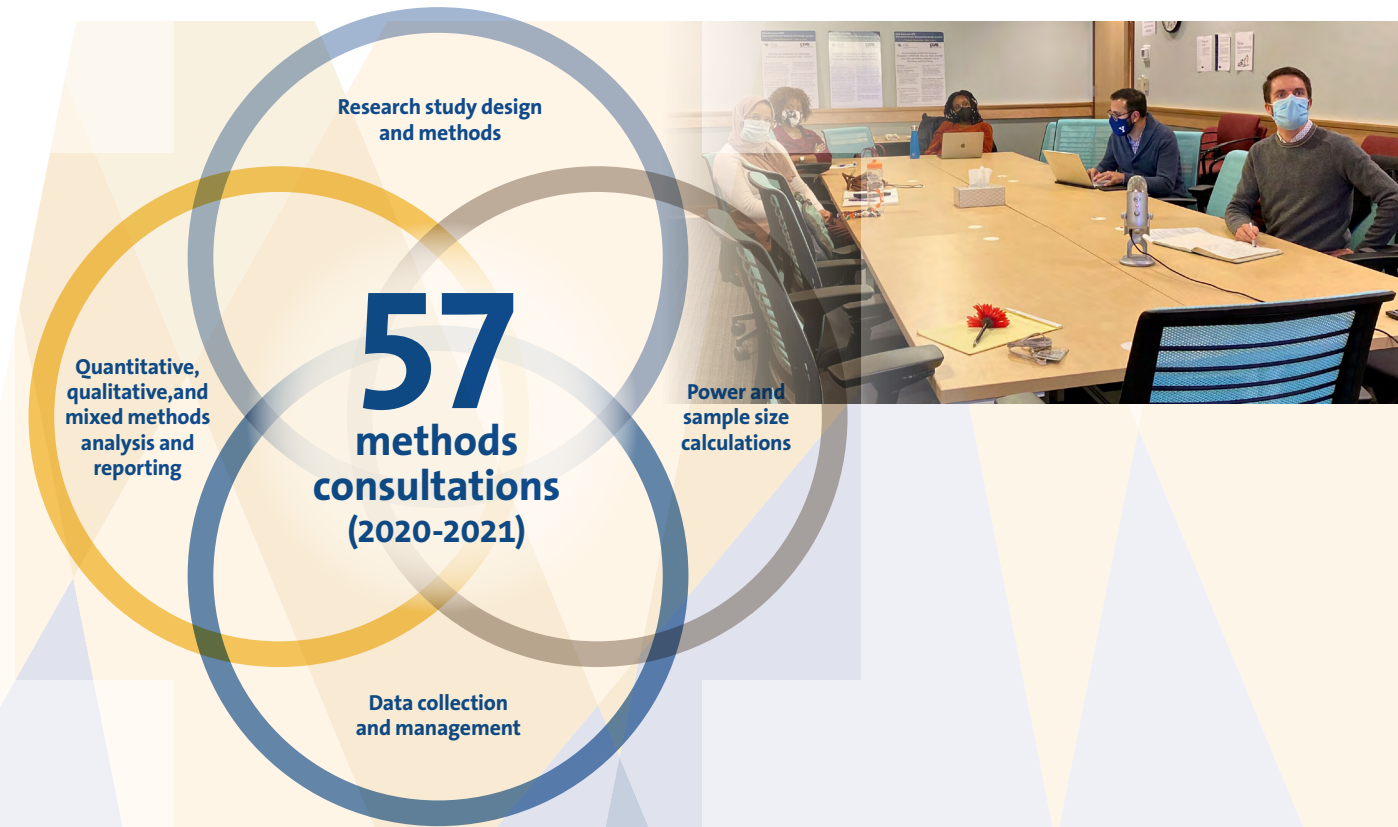
Consultation



We provide expert advice and technical assistance in all aspects of research, from planning, peer review, implementation, and evaluation, with particular focus on implementation science, prevention and treatment of HIV and its comorbidities, and interdisciplinary research methods, on a project and program level.

Methods Core Consultations

All of CIRA's research cores are available for consultation; the Interdisciplinary Research Methods (IRM) Core is particularly active. From 2020 to 2021, the IRM core provided 57 consultations on methods, design, and analysis, emphasizing implementation science, to CIRA affiliates, including researchers and students at Yale and beyond. Several consultations led to grant applications, funded projects, and publications. CIRA's R3EDI Hub (Rigorous, Rapid, & Relevant Evidence aDaptation & Implementation to Ending the HIV Epidemic), provides additional consultations on IS for a cohort of projects across the U.S. funded through the Ending the HIV Epidemic initiative.



Consultation (continued)

Peer Review

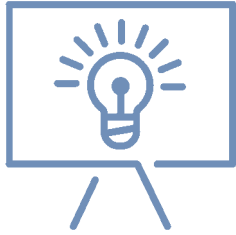
Peer review is another key service utilized by affiliates. CIRA coordinates a multidisciplinary, constructive, and collegial feedback process to enhance the quality of research products, provide opportunities for professional development, and foster future collaborations.



CIRA COUNTS



Training future scientists and diverse scholars



CIRA is the hub for two highly productive training programs that are grounded in social justice principles and focused on professional development and mentorship: the Yale AIDS Prevention Training (Y-APT) Program and the Research Education Institute for Diverse Scholars (REIDS). Since 2011, our fellows have published over 2000 scientific papers and were awarded more than 250 grants

Y-APT is an NIMH-funded T32 fellowship with a unique focus on vulnerable and underserved populations, a strong foundation of training in community-based research and implementation science, and opportunities for professional networking. **Over the past 20 years, we have successfully trained 71 Postdoctoral and 19 Predoctoral Fellows.**

Highlights of our Fellows' achievements:




NIH K01 Awards
Skyler Jackson and Jillian Scheer



CIRA Pilot Grants
DeAnne Turner and Gamji Abubakari



NSF Graduate Research Fellowship
Tony Maiolatesi
RW Johnson Health Policy Research Scholar
Shannon Whittaker



F31 Predoctoral Individual National Research Service Awards
Dan Bromberg and Adam Viera

Training future scientists and diverse scholars (continued)

The NIMH-funded R25 Research Education Institute for Diverse Scholars (REIDS) is successfully increasing the number and impact of racial and ethnic minority researchers dedicated to reducing HIV inequities in communities of color. **Since 2010, 41 Postdoctoral researchers and Assistant Professors were trained at CIRA and 77% are from and/or work in Ending the HIV Epidemic areas.**

Highlights of our Scholars' achievements:

National Institutes of Health Director's Early Independence Award
Ijeoma Opara

NIMHD RO1 — Reducing Racial Disparities in Severe Maternal Mortality (SMM) Post COVID19: Assessing the Integration of Maternal Safety Bundles and Community Based Doulas to Improve Outcomes for Black Women
Ndiamaka Amutah-Onukagha

SAMHSA grant — Project NaviGate: Connecting Georgia to Substance Use and HIV Prevention
Isha Metzger

Linda Saltzman New Investigator Award
Nkiru Nnawulezi

National Minority Quality Forum 40 under 40 Health Leaders Award
Sierra Carter and Dennis Flores

National Minority Quality Forum 40 under 40 Health Leaders Award
Keosha Bond

Appointed the Richard and Marianne Kreider Endowed Professor in Nursing for Vulnerable Populations at Villanova University
Bridgette Brawner

Expanding international research efforts



CIRA promotes initiatives to advance and disseminate the work of affiliates in global settings, facilitate international research synergy, and stimulate collaboration in low-resource, highly-affected regions and populations. Our programs support international HIV/AIDS research that integrates evidence-based interventions, practices, and policies into real-world settings.

There are 39 active CIRA-affiliated projects with **international components**.

CIRA-affiliated international projects

- ▶ China (2)
- ▶ Ghana (3)
- ▶ India
- ▶ Indonesia (2)
- ▶ Kazakhstan
- ▶ Kenya
- ▶ Kyrgyzstan (2)
- ▶ Lebanon
- ▶ Malawi
- ▶ Malaysia (8)
- ▶ Romania (2)
- ▶ South Africa (3)
- ▶ Uganda (4)
- ▶ Ukraine (3)
- ▶ Multi-site* (6)

* "Multi-site" means that the same research procedures (i.e., protocol) are being conducted at one or more sites.



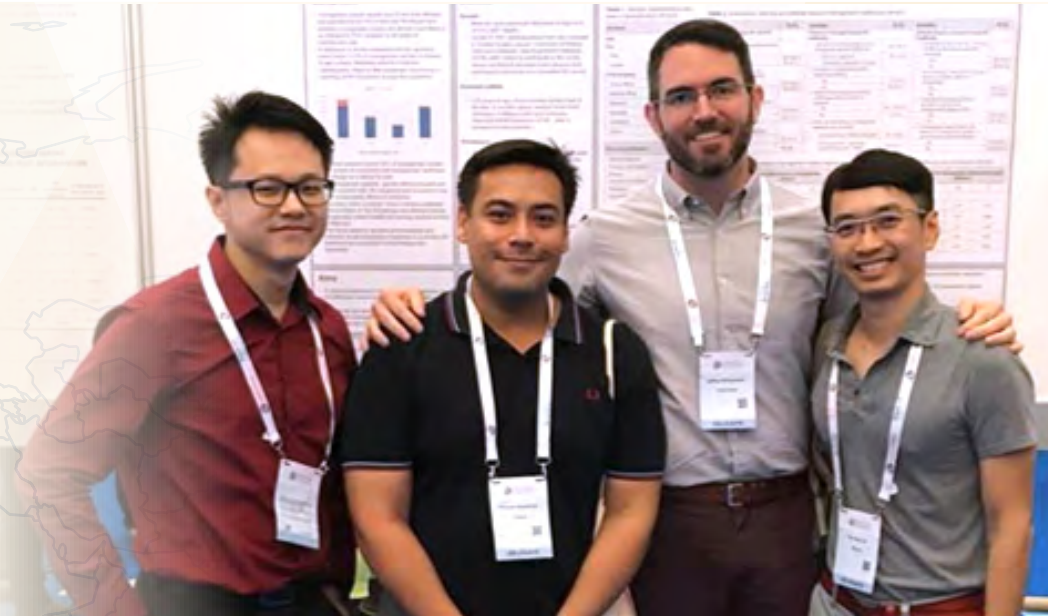
Expanding international research efforts (continued)

Promoting international collaborations

CIRA's International Visiting Fellow Program promotes international collaborations by bringing scholars from countries with the highest burden of HIV/AIDS to visit CIRA and Yale. Held annually since 2016, the program has sponsored 13 international scholars from 11 countries nominated by 11 CIRA scientists. Evaluation of the 2019 cohort revealed that the program has resulted in 3 published papers, 6 manuscripts in preparation, 3 NIH grant proposals, and 2 ongoing research projects. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the International Fellow Program was suspended in 2020 and 2021.

Humanitarian Crises in Focus

CIRA launched a new initiative in fall 2020 to coordinate a series of symposia and research activities focused on **HIV/AIDS in humanitarian crises**. Supported by a faculty grant awarded by the Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies, the initiative aims to foster multidisciplinary collaborations and identify research questions related to the well-being of people with HIV or at risk for HIV and affected by humanitarian crises. The **first virtual symposium** was held in December 2020 and well-attended. Planning for convening the second symposium and a research workshop in early 2022 is under way.



Thomas Guadamuz (second from the left) and Jeffrey Wickersham (third from the left). Thomas Guadamuz was a 2019-2021 CIRA visiting fellow whose CIRA faculty host is Jeffrey Wickersham.

Disseminating research findings



We strategically distribute scientific research findings with practice and policy implications through our website, biweekly email newsletter, social media platforms, and hosted events with opportunities to share feedback and experiences. CIRA also provides assistance with dissemination of research to university and community partners.

CIRA's [website](#) provides easy access to information about affiliated individuals, projects, news, new initiatives, key programs such as peer review, pilot projects, international research, and Network resources and activities.

CIRA disseminates a biweekly email [newsletter](#) to 1300+ subscribers highlighting Center services and events, funding opportunities, newly funded HIV research grants awarded to CIRA affiliates, publications, job postings, and announcements on specific CIRA Core activities and projects.

CIRA's [Twitter](#) feed usually earns around 10K impressions quarterly, or 116 impressions per day while Facebook posts reach about 50 unique individuals per month. CIRA's [YouTube](#) channel provides a great resource for sharing recorded talks with our community. In the past year, CIRA has uploaded 13 recordings each complete with closed captioning.

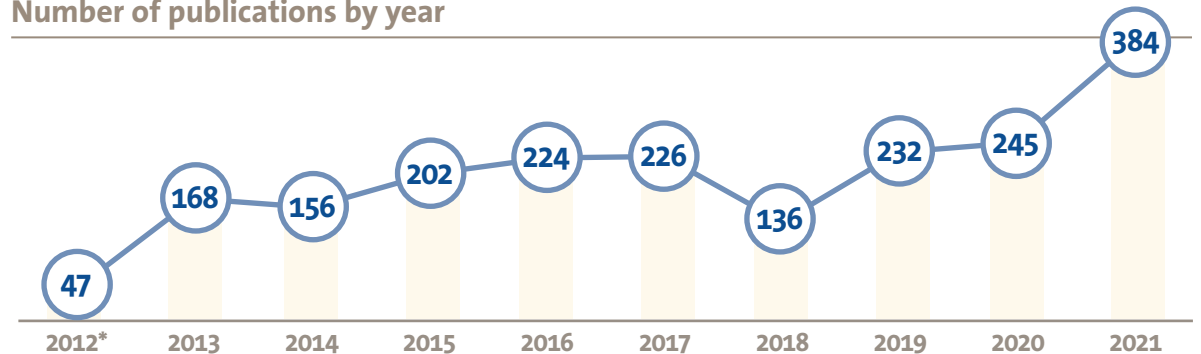


Twitter

A Review and Highlights of Publications by CIRA Affiliates

CIRA periodically compiles a [bibliography](#) of published research conducted by CIRA affiliates that addresses the HIV care continuum and pertinent areas of interest, characterizing research expertise and activities in the U.S. and globally. Since 2012, over 2000 papers comprising original research, reviews, letters, and editorials have authored by CIRA affiliates. An [online library](#) of these publications are available to the CIRA community and the public.

Number of publications by year



*data reflect the number of papers published in July through December 2012