

Testing lifestyle changes to improve health for people with HIV infections

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Between the demands of work, family and friends, many women find health takes a back seat. Women with HIV are no exception.

"Many women with the [HIV](#) face challenges from sleepless nights to little personal time—all activities that can negatively impact [health](#)," says Allison Webel, a clinical research scholar and instructor at the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing at Case Western Reserve University.

Webel received a one-year grant from the Case Western Reserve University/University Hospitals Case Medical Center for AIDS Research to test ways to promote lifestyle changes.

She will work with patients and their families to make and monitor environmental changes in physical and mental wellness habits.

"These women have many roles in addition to having a chronic disease," Webel said.

Webel's previous work found that juggling responsibilities of being mothers, employees and caretakers, coupled with the anxiety and stigma associated with the disease, prohibited them from getting adequate rest.

Also hampering a healthy lifestyle was lack of personal time to reenergize or relax, finding time to exercise and engaging in spiritual activities.

The new grant enables Webel to test the effectiveness of a self-management intervention developed by Shirley Moore, the associate dean of research at the nursing school and the director of the Center for Excellence for Self-Management and Research Translation (SMART Center).

The SMART Center is a National Institute of Nursing Research/National Institutes of Health funded Center of Excellence that studies how self-care, adherence, compliance, health behavior changes, patient education and collaborative care help patients become informed about their health condition and take an active role in their treatment. The intervention targets changes by the individual, family, organization or community.

Webel will include both men and women in the study. She will recruit 40 men and women and their families and work with them over 10 weeks to test an intervention. Each week, the individual will have a 90-minute intervention in which they and their families set and track goals in areas of sleep, exercise, personal time and spirituality.

The participants will wear wrist actigraph monitors for a week to track sleep, and then Dr. Sanjay Patel, assistant professor of medicine at the Case Western Reserve School of Medicine, will analyze the data for sleep patterns.

Each person will have individualized goals and make changes to fit into their personal living situations. Such situations can differ from apartment living in urban areas to single family home in the suburbs.

"We hope to give them the resources to support their efforts to reach their goals," Webel said.

Provided by Case Western Reserve University

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