

Researchers lead search for better drug-addiction treatments

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UT Southwestern Medical Center psychiatry researchers are leading the Texas arm of a national network that conducts clinical trials aimed at finding effective treatments for drug addiction.

More than 100 community treatment providers and academic medical centers throughout the country are funded in part through the National Institute on Drug Abuse's Clinical Trials Network (CTN). The Texas component includes partnerships between academic and community treatment providers in Dallas, El Paso, Austin and Houston. It is led by Dr. Madhukar Trivedi, professor of psychiatry at UT Southwestern.

"The effects of drugs on the brain are very clear, but we still need long-term answers that cure people who abuse drugs and prevent them from relapse," Dr. Trivedi said. "I applaud NIDA for funding the infrastructure at academic institutions to research therapies in real-world treatment centers that will lead to ready-to-launch cures. Drug abuse affects not just the person, but families and society as a whole."

Each CTN study is conducted in multiple community treatment provider sites across the country, led by a CTN substance abuse researcher and supported by the researchers in the CTN academic institutions affiliated with each participating site.

"It is critical to find new treatments in the substance abuse field where current treatments result in only modest improvements. Finding effective interventions really requires larger, multicenter treatment trials

like those occurring in the CTN," Dr. Trivedi said.

One such national study within the CTN is the Stimulant Reduction Intervention Using Dose Exercise (STRIDE), led by Dr. Trivedi. It is a groundbreaking study that tests the short and longer term effectiveness of adding either exercise or health education to treatment as usual in adults who abuse stimulants such as cocaine or [methamphetamine](#). Sites participating in this study in Texas include Nexus Recovery Center and Memorial Hermann Prevention and Recovery Center as well as multiple other sites across the country.

Other studies being conducted in the CTN in Texas include a trial that tests whether an interactive web-based therapy added to usual treatment improves abstinence from drug use, and a trial that examines whether medication, counseling, and incentives to quit smoking added to usual treatment improve abstinence from drug use.

Dr. Trivedi recently received a renewal of the National Institute on Drug Abuse's grant to continue contributions to improve the treatment of addiction for several additional years and said he expects to receive nearly \$4 million over the next year.

A national CTN goal for the next few years is to engage other types of medical doctors and treatment settings who treat people addicted to drugs, in research, including primary care, internal medicine and emergency-room physicians. "We will be expanding our reach," Dr. Trivedi said.

Provided by UT Southwestern Medical Center

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