



AIDS & ANTHROPOLOGY

B U L L E T I N

The Newsletter of the AIDS and Anthropology Research Group

Vol.3 No.4 January-March 1992

AIDS AND ANTHROPOLOGY A MAJOR FOCUS AT CHICAGO MEETING

AIDS sessions played center stage at the American Anthropological Association (AAA) annual meeting in Chicago on November 20-24, 1991. The AIDS and Anthropology Research Group (AARG) held its Steering Committee meeting, business meeting, cash bar reception, and informal roundtable discussion, all chaired by Ralph Bolton (Pomona College). The AAA Task Force on AIDS held a full-day meeting, chaired by Merrill Singer (Hispanic Health Council), for its appointed members.

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ATLANTA CONFERENCE ON AIDS HELD

A two-day invitational conference on "AIDS and Anthropology in the United States" was held at the Swissotel in Atlanta on October 16-17, 1991. The University of Miami sponsored the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) funded conference, and the AIDS and Anthropology Research Group and the AAA Task Force on AIDS were the honorary co-sponsors. It was designed to share state-of-the-art data and perspectives on AIDS and anthropology in the United States among the 30 participating anthropologists, and to communicate these ideas with the 30 CDC staffers who also attended.

Douglas A. Feldman (University of Miami), who organized and chaired the conference, made the opening statements welcoming the participants and clarifying the conference goals. Gary Noble, Deputy

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AARG MEETS IN MEMPHIS

The AIDS and Anthropology Research Group will be holding its semi-annual meetings in conjunction with the Society for Applied Anthropology at the Peabody Hotel in Memphis, Tennessee on March 25-29, 1992. Our listings were inadvertently omitted from their Preliminary Program, but the schedule has now been confirmed as follows: Our Roundtable on AIDS, which is an informal, open-ended discussion, will be held on Friday, March 27th, from 12 noon - 1:30 P.M. Our business meeting will be held from 5:30 - 7:00 P.M. on Saturday, March 28th. Our cash bar reception, which has been quite popular in the past, will be held immediately following the business meeting from 7:00 - 8:00 P.M. on Saturday, March 28th. All AARG members are strongly encouraged to attend these three events. These AARG functions are open to everyone, so please bring along your friends and colleagues. The AARG

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CHICAGO

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Stephen L. Eyre (University of California, San Francisco) chaired an invited session on "Ethnicity, Gender and the Experience of AIDS." Susan C. M. Scrimshaw (University of California, Los Angeles) chaired an invited session on "Addicts, Prostitutes, Teen Mothers: Going Beyond the Social and Biomedical Labels." Nancy L. Nelson (University of New Mexico) chaired a session on "Reciprocity and Poverty: Street Ethnography in the 90s." Michele G. Shedlin (Sociomedical Research Associates) chaired a session on "Drug Use and Abuse in the Age of AIDS." Candice Bradley (Lawrence University) and W. Penn Handwerker (Humboldt State University) co-chaired a session on "The Political Economy of Sexual Behavior, AIDS and Other Sexually Transmitted Diseases." Douglas A. Feldman (University of Miami) chaired a session on "The Social Impacts of AIDS: Current Perspectives." Betty Wolder Levin (Brooklyn College, CUNY) hosted a Society for Medical Anthropology Luncheon Roundtable on "AIDS: Bioethical Issues."

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Director of the CDC and the Assistant Surgeon General of the United States, gave the keynote address, in which he welcomed anthropological research on AIDS and encouraged future collaboration between anthropologists and the HIV/AIDS Program at the CDC. Lynda Doll (CDC), Richard T. Conlon (CDC), Ralph Bolton (Pomona College and 1991 Chair of the AIDS and Anthropology Research Group), and Merrill Singer (Hispanic Health Council and Chair of the AAA Task Force on AIDS) also gave brief talks welcoming the participants.

The conference was organized into seven consecutive panels in which about three brief presentations were given, and discussion by the panelists was facilitated by the co-moderators at each panel. Dr. Singer and Stephen Koester (University of Colorado) co-moderated the panel on "Understanding and Preventing AIDS Among Injecting Drug Users."

J. Raul Magana (AltaMed Health Services Corporation) and Michael D. Quam (Sangamon State University) co-moderated the panel on "AIDS in the African-American and Latin Communities." Vincent E. Gil (Southern California College) and Lee Strunin (Boston University) co-moderated the panel on "AIDS Among Women and Children."

Dr. Bolton and Norris G. Lang (University of Houston) co-moderated the panel on "AIDS in the Gay Community." Elizabeth Randall-David (North Carolina AIDS Control Program) and Robert T. Trotter II (Northern Arizona University) co-moderated the panel on "Anthropological Approaches to AIDS Education and Prevention." Patricia A. Marshall (Loyola University of Chicago) and Moses B. Pounds (Health Resources and Services Administration) co-moderated the panel on "Analyzing Social Processes and Formulating Public Policy." Dr. Feldman moderated the concluding panel on "Future Directions: AIDS and Anthropology in the United States - Where Should We Go From Here?"

Other anthropologists who participated in the conference were Anne Buddenhagen (Hofstra University), Robert G. Carlson (Wright State

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University), Joseph Carrier, Michael Clatts (Narcotic and Drug Research, Inc.), Stephen L. Eyre (University of California, San Francisco), Doug Goldsmith (Narcotic and Drug Research, Inc.), Robert Hahn (CDC), Carole E. Hill (Georgia State University), Eric S. Johnson (CDC), Barbara Koenig (University of California, San Francisco), Melvin Konner (Emory University), Kathleen M. MacQueen (CDC), Juliet Niehaus (Wagner College), Michele G. Shedlin (Sociomedical Resource Associates), Ron Stall (University of California, San Francisco), Claire Sterk-Elifson (Georgia State University), David L. Strug (SUNY Health Science Center at Brooklyn), Linda A. Valleroy (CDC), and Dooley Worth (New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation).

This conference was a first for anthropologists and the CDC, and there was a general consensus during and after the meeting that it was highly productive in bringing the two groups together and in giving anthropologists working on AIDS in the United States a forum to share and develop ideas. Several ideas for anthropological research projects have been suggested by participants to the CDC, and it is possible that some of these may be funded by the CDC. A volume of the conference proceedings is being edited, and should be available in about a year. An effort will be made, if feasible, to hold a follow-up conference in Atlanta in two years.

MEMPHIS

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Steering Committee will meet on Saturday, March 28th from 5:00 - 5:30 P.M.

Other AIDS-related events at the SfAA meeting will include a full-day session on "Anthropological Perspectives on AIDS Research and Interventions Among Drug Injectors," chaired by Doug Goldsmith (Narcotic and Drug Research, Inc.). William L. Leap (American University) will chair a roundtable forum on "Building a Lesbian/Gay Agenda in Applied Anthropology." Robert T.

Trotter II (Northern Arizona University) will chair a session on "Ethnography in the AIDS Epidemic: Prevention Processes and Street Strategies." The AAA Task Force on AIDS will hold its working meeting for its members and a committee meeting. For more information about the SfAA annual meeting, contact Linda A. Bennett (Memphis State University) at (901) 278-8252 or (901) 678-2080/2958.

IS THIS YOUR LAST ISSUE?

This will be your last issue of the *AIDS & Anthropology Bulletin* unless you renew your membership for 1992 in AARG by the March 31st deadline. If you have not sent in your membership renewal form to Moses Pounds, you must send it in with your \$15 check no later than the March 31st deadline to prevent being deleted from the membership list in April, 1992. Membership is free for anthropologists in developing countries, unemployed anthropologists, and anthropology graduate students actively involved with AIDS research or activities. However, even if you qualify for free membership, it is still necessary to complete and return the membership renewal form by the deadline.

POST-DOCTORAL TRAINING PROGRAM

Emory University School of Public Health is seeking applications from sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, and related disciplines for a two year post-doctoral program funded by the National Institute of Mental Health and the Centers for Disease Control. The second cohort of six trainees will begin on July 1, 1992, with CDC's three week Epidemic Intelligence Service Course. Trainees will then be enrolled approximately half-time in Emory's School of Public Health earning the MPH degree, while working half-time with interdisciplinary groups at CDC on aspects of AIDS/HIV. Stipends range from \$18,600-32,300. To apply, send as soon as possible a letter indicating how this program will further your professional career, a current c.v., samples of written or published work, and the names and addresses of three persons who could write supporting letters to: Richard Levinson, Ph.D., Program Director, Emory University School of Public Health, 1599 Clifton Rd. N.E., Atlanta, GA 30329 USA; phone: (404) 727-8742; fax: (404) 727-8744. Equal Opportunity Employer.

CHAPTERS WANTED

Chapters for an edited volume on The Ethnography of Risk-Taking: Transmission of HIV are being sought by Merrill Singer and Stephen Eyre. The volume will describe a diverse set of populations at risk for HIV inside and outside the USA, and will describe ethnographic methodologies used by anthropologists to study risk behavior and design interventions in these populations. Ethnography is defined broadly as any method which involves sustained interaction with informants and the settings they inhabit. Use of quantitative methods in association with ethnography is also a suitable topic. Contributors should describe a population, the behaviors which place members at risk, obstacles to intervention, major attempts at intervention, the success or failure of these attempts, and their own methods. Send chapter outlines as soon as possible to Merrill Singer, Hispanic Health Council, 96-98 Cedar Street - 3A, Hartford, CT 06106 USA.

AARG SUPPORT GROUP

A support group is being planned for AARG members beginning with the American Anthropological Association meeting in San Francisco in December, 1992. The co-facilitators are Michele G. Shedlin and Norris G. Lang. At the AARG business meeting in Chicago last November, Ralph Bolton (1991 AARG Chair) raised the issue of the need for a mechanism to provide psychological support for HIV/AIDS researchers. Many of the members present at the meeting confirmed this need and mentioned the difficulties they experienced with the illness and death of key informants, clients, colleagues, and loved ones. A number of members expressed a willingness to be available as supports, and made suggestions such as a telephone network and an informal session at the AAA and SFAA. If interested, contact: Michele G. Shedlin, President, Sociomedical Resource Associates, 181 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06880 USA.

BIBLIOGRAPHY SUPPLEMENT

The AIDS and Anthropology Bibliography update, prepared by Ralph Bolton and Gail Orazco (Pomona College), is included as a supplement with this issue of AAB.

OBITUARY

FRAISER McCONNELL, 40, of Papua New Guinea National Library Service, died of AIDS in San Francisco, April 22, 1991. McConnell had an MLS from North Texas State University and an MA in anthropology from San Francisco State University. He went to Papua New Guinea in 1980 to help establish the National Library Service and to train PNG citizens in library sciences, remaining there for nine years. He worked for the repatriation of research reports to PNG, revised the classification of PNG languages for library use, compiled and annotated Papua New Guinea (World Bibliographic Series 90), and wrote other articles and monographs on PNG languages and librarianship. His last presentation was on the ethics of displaying tribal artifacts, given at the Association of Art Librarians in March, 1991. (Reported by Luis S. Kemnitzer). (Adaptation reprinted with permission from the Anthropology Newsletter).

AARG AND POLICY

At the AARG meetings in Chicago last November, many members voiced support for having the AARG issue statements on AIDS policy. Any member who wishes to have AARG issue a policy statement on a specific AIDS-related matter should proceed as follows: The member should write a proposed statement and submit it to the AARG Chair who will then disseminate the proposal to all AARG Steering Committee members for a vote. If there is no unanimity, it will be brought before the membership at the next AARG business meeting. The AARG Chair must receive such statements by March 20th to be considered by the Steering Committee which meets on March 28th.

NEW LEADERSHIP AT THE AARG

The ballots have been counted and Ralph Bolton (Pomona College and 1991 AARG Chair) announced at the AARG business meeting the results of our annual election. In 1992, the new Chair is Douglas A. Feldman (University of Miami). Dr. Feldman previously served as founding AARG Chair and Co-Chair from 1986-89. Norris G. Lang (University of Houston)

is the new Chair-Elect. Dr. Lang previously served as Co-Chair from 1989-90. Janet McGrath (Case Western Reserve University) continues as AARG Secretary and Moses B. Pounds (Health Resources and Services Administration) continues as AARG Treasurer.

The newly elected members of the Steering Committee are Michael Clatts (Narcotic and Drug Research, Inc.) and Betsy Randall-David (North Carolina AIDS Control Program). Merrill Singer (Hispanic Health Council) was re-elected to a three year term on the Steering Committee. Continuing Steering Committee members for 1992 are Dr. Bolton, Lucia Cargill (Harvard School of Public Health), Paul Farmer (Harvard Medical School), Dr. Feldman, Dr. Lang, Dr. McGrath, and Dr. Pounds.

On behalf of AARG, Dr. Feldman would like to thank Dr. Bolton for having served so splendidly as Chair in 1991 and Co-Chair in 1990. He will continue to serve on the Steering Committee this year. Dr. Feldman would also like to thank retiring Steering Committee member Susanna Hoffman for her dedication to AARG from 1987-91.

Please check your listing for accuracy in the new membership list.

WOMEN AND HIV: THE IMPERATIVE FOR
ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Patricia Antonietello (Brooklyn College, CUNY)

It comes as no surprise that the mistakes of the first decade of the AIDS epidemic are being repeated in the second. Just as the exigencies of the gay community were misinterpreted and misunderstood, so are the needs of women infected with HIV. Many women first learn of AIDS because of their own infection with HIV disease rather than through a well orchestrated prevention program. The concerns of both policy makers and medical practitioners about women and HIV emphasizes the necessity of the prevention of transmission to sexual partners and offspring, skewing the focus away from women themselves and their health care needs. The group of women who are the objects of the most deleterious misrepresentations are women who use intravenous drugs. In general, women are being neglected as individuals needing specialized care for a terminal disease. Instead, the focus of attention paid to women in this epidemic is only as mothers or as sexual actors who can spread the infection.

Women represent a growing number of reported cases of AIDS in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control, in 1988-89 women accounted for 11% of all adult cases. Since then, the proportion has grown dramatically: an 18% increase for men, but a 29% increase for women (MMWR 1990). In some parts of the country, HIV disease has already become the leading cause of death for women in certain age categories. For example, in New York City, AIDS is the primary cause of death for women ages 25 to 34 years (Summary of Vital Statistics 1988).

Yet, there has not been an emphasis on providing medical care for women. Rather, policy makers consistently promote measures to prevent women from passing the virus to others, such as the recommendation to postpone or avoid pregnancy in order to control perinatal transmission. In addition, many medical care providers offer inaccurate information, suggesting that women have a greater chance of having an infected baby than the 14-40% probability shown by most

perinatal transmission studies. Some pediatricians have begun to encourage the testing of newborns to promote early prophylactic treatment for Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia (PCP), which can be fatal in infants. This testing of newborns would necessitate an evaluation of maternal antibodies which, in effect, identifies the serostatus of the mother. Again, women would be tested with no provision made for medical care services. Ethical questions have also been raised about reproductive rights. One bioethicist has asked whether a maternally transmitted lethal infection will abridge the privacy of choice in reproductive decisions.

The focus of my research has been to evaluate the reproductive health status of women in the context of the social, political, and economic concerns that affect their lives. I have collected social and reproductive histories of women who are intravenous drug users and clients of a methadone maintenance treatment program in the Bronx. The mean age is 32, and about half are HIV positive. Although it has been assumed that knowledge of positive HIV serostatus would affect pregnancy decision making, most studies have not been able to verify this position. My

initial research shows that for women who are seropositive, knowledge of their HIV serostatus does not cause them to make decisions that are significantly different from their past patterns. In terms of their numbers of children, numbers of abortions, difficulty in obtaining contraception, and inconsistent access to health care, these women were no different than other poor women.

If the reproductive patterns of intravenous drug using women are consistent with other poor women, then we must question other assumptions about these women with HIV disease. The imperative for anthropological research is to provide evidence for an accurate appraisal of the lives of women who are currently affected by this epidemic. As anthropologists, we must continue to expose the myths about women with HIV disease and not contribute to the sensationalization of drug-related activities. It is urgent for anthropologists to provide the grounds to assess the process through which the entire approach to women and AIDS is embedded in the social, political, and economic conflicts that affect women.

References Cited:

MMWR (1990) "AIDS in Women - United States," Centers for Disease Control, November 30, 39(47).

Summary of Vital Statistics (1988) New York City Department of Health, Bureau of Health Statistics and Analysis.

CONFERENCES

February 26 - March 1, 1992: Society for Cross-Cultural Research - 21st Annual Meeting, Santa Fe, NM, USA; contact: Ralph Bolton, Department of Anthropology, Pomona College, Claremont, CA 91711 USA; (714) 621-8000 x2228, fax: (714) 621-8403.

March 25-29, 1992: Society for Applied Anthropology - Annual Meeting, Memphis, TN, USA; see story on page 1; contact: Linda Bennett, Department of Anthropology, Memphis State University, Memphis, TN 38152 USA.

March 30 - April 4, 1992: American Association of Physical Anthropologists - 61st Annual Meeting, Las Vegas, NV, USA; contact: Lorna Moore, Department of Anthropology, University of Colorado, P.O. Box 173364, Denver, CO 80217-3364; (303) 556-3555.

July 19-24, 1992: VIII International Conference on AIDS/III STD World Congress, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; contact: CONGREX Holland BV, P.O. Box 302, 1000 AH Amsterdam, The Netherlands; phone: (31)-20-626-1372.

November 12-15, 1992: Society for the Scientific Study of Sex - Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA, USA; contact: Howard J. Ruppel, Jr., M.A., Executive Director, SSSS, P.O. Box 208, Mount Vernon, IA 52314 USA; (319) 895-8407.

December 2-6, 1992: American Anthropological Association - 91st Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA USA; contact: Martha C. Ward, AAA Program Chair, Department of Anthropology, University of New Orleans, LA 70148 USA; (504) 286-6294.

Is this your last issue? Don't let it happen. Renew your AARG membership by March 31st! Mail back your dues and membership form. See story on page 3.

AIDS AND ANTHROPOLOGY RESEARCH GROUP

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AARG is a Special Committee of the Society for Medical Anthropology, a unit of the American Anthropological Association. AAB is published quarterly and is the official newsletter of AARG. To contact the Chair of AARG or the Editor of AAB, write: Douglas A. Feldman, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University of Miami School of Medicine, R-669, P.O. Box 016069, Miami, FL 33101 USA; (305) 547-6559. To become a member of AARG and receive AAB, write: Moses B. Pounds, 5224 Even Star Place, Columbia, MD 21044-1832 USA; (301) 328-8334. Membership for 1992 is \$15 payable to AARG. Membership is free to anthropologists in developing countries, unemployed anthropologists, and anthropology graduate students actively involved in AIDS research or activities.

Free issues of AAB are mailed to selected policy makers and the media to keep them informed of the AIDS-related activities of anthropologists.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

A memorial service at an outdoor grove for those who have lost a loved one or friend to AIDS is being planned in conjunction with the AAA meeting in San Francisco next December. For more information, contact: Barbara Joans, Director, Merritt Museum of Anthropology, Merritt College, 12500 Campus Drive, Oakland, CA 94619 USA; (415) 436-2607.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Merrill Singer and Stephen L. Eyre are seeking papers for an AAA session on "The Ethnography of Risk-Taking: Transmission of HIV." (See related story on page 4). Contact Dr. Eyre at (415) 864-6406.

KEEP US INFORMED!

Send us your hot-off-the-press research reports (300-500 words), your brilliant think pieces (200-400 words), your announcements, requests for cooperation, employment opportunities, positions wanted, and startling discoveries! Our next deadline is March 31st.