

Media Contact: LaKisha Ladson
214-648-3404
lakisha.ladson@utsouthwestern.edu

**Can vigorous exercise curb drug abuse?
UT Southwestern researchers want to find out**

DALLAS – Oct. 5, 2010 – Can exercise reduce cravings for drugs? UT Southwestern Medical Center investigators are conducting a research study to find out.

A \$15.7 million award from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) is allowing researchers to see whether consistent exercise will help people abstain from stimulant abuse.

“It’s a scientifically exciting question,” said Dr. Madhukar Trivedi, professor of psychiatry at UT Southwestern and principal investigator of the national study. “Exercise would give people who abuse drugs an alternative ritualistic activity that may help them disengage from their drug-related behaviors while also improving their health and quality of life.”

Exercise helps alleviate conditions as diverse as obesity, anxiety and depression. Evidence from animal studies suggests that exercise leads to improvements in brain function similar to what is seen when a brain recovers from drug abuse, Dr. Trivedi said.

The Stimulant Reduction Intervention using Dosed Exercise, or STRIDE, study will be the largest NIDA-funded trial on the issue to date. More than 300 people from at least 10 clinics throughout the country are expected to participate.

Dr. Trivedi was a principal investigator of the Sequenced Treatment Alternatives to Relieve Depression (STAR*D) study – the largest ever on the treatment of major depressive disorder and considered a benchmark in the field of depression research. The six-year, \$35 million study initially included more than 4,000 patients from clinics across the country.

Dr. Trivedi also has published research on the effects of exercise on depression, with more work on the topic awaiting publication.

The STRIDE trial at UT Southwestern is already under way, but the second wave will begin in November. Each wave will last about 15 months.

Participants are patients in community-based residential treatment facilities, such as the Nexus Recovery Center, for abuse of or dependence on stimulants, such as cocaine, methamphetamines and amphetamines. Participants have been randomized into two groups. One group is receiving usual care – 21 to 30 days of residential treatment followed by outpatient treatment – plus three supervised

(MORE)

STRIDE study – 2

sessions of vigorous treadmill exercise per week for three months. Vigorous exercise is the equivalent of walking 4 mph for 30 minutes three times a week for a person weighing about 175 pounds. The other group is receiving usual care plus time spent getting information on health-related matters.

After three months, exercise will continue for six more months on treadmills or on the ground, and subjects will be monitored through heart rate monitors and step counters.

Researchers will use urine tests to monitor drug abstinence and relapse. In addition to improved drug abstinence and relapse rates, researchers hope that the participants who exercised will have decreased their use of other types of drugs and will experience improvement in sleep, weight, cognitive function, mood, and quality and enjoyment of life.

“If exercise is a successful treatment, then it could drastically change addiction interventions,” said Dr. Trivedi. “Exercise is relatively inexpensive and can be done by an individual without a huge therapeutic setting – people could start running on the streets.”

This trial is affiliated with NIDA’s Clinical Trials Network (CTN) at UT Southwestern. The CTN comprises more than 15 academic centers and surrounding treatment programs nationally that conduct multisite trials to improve the quality of drug abuse treatment in the U.S.

Other UT Southwestern researchers involved in the study are Drs. Tracy Greer, Diane Warden, Chad Rethorst, Robrina Walker, David Morris and Kathy Shores-Wilson, all assistant professors of psychiatry, Bruce Grannemann, faculty associate in psychiatry, and Kolette Ring, clinical data specialist in psychiatry. Dr. Mark Stoutenberg of the University of Miami also is involved.

Visit <http://www.utsouthwestern.org/neuro> to learn more about UT Southwestern’s clinical services in neurosciences, including psychiatry.

###

This news release is available on our World Wide Web home page at
<http://www.utsouthwestern.edu/home/news/index.html>

To automatically receive news releases from UT Southwestern via e-mail,
subscribe at www.utsouthwestern.edu/receiveneews