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Robert Balster, Director
VCU Institute for Drug and Alcohol Studies

Virginia Youth Tobacco Projects (VYTP)
Overview

- Organization
- The Role of the VCU Core
- Major Initiatives

10 Year Anniversary!
The VYTP Research Coalition includes over 40 faculty from seven of Virginia’s universities:

- The College of William and Mary
- George Mason University
- James Madison University
- University of Virginia
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Virginia Tech
- Virginia State University

VCU-IDAS serves as coordinating center (VCU Core)
Goals of the VYTP

- Build a statewide program of research on the causes and prevention of youth tobacco use
- Create active multi-university collaborations in carrying out the VYTP research program
- Attract new faculty scholars to work on the problems of youth smoking
- Use VFHY funding as a base for attracting additional outside funding for youth tobacco research in Virginia
- Facilitate translation of research findings into improved prevention services and policies
Virginia Youth Tobacco Projects (VYTP)

Tobacco use in the United States results in over 450,000 deaths per year—a greater toll in human life than that exacted by car accidents, suicides, drug and alcohol use, murders, and HIV/AIDS combined. In monetary terms, tobacco use results in over $75 billion in public and private health care costs each year, and reduces the productivity of Americans by $80 billion per year. If current trends go unchecked, American taxpayers will continue to pay on a yearly basis more than $500 per household to finance the social costs of tobacco use, and more than 6 million people now under the age of 18 will die from the effects of tobacco.

In Virginia alone, people spend more than $1.5 billion on tobacco-use-related health care, and over 9,000 people die each year from tobacco-use-related illnesses. Once people become dependent on tobacco, they usually find it extremely difficult to quit, because the nicotine that tobacco delivers to the body is one of the most addictive substances known. To curtail tobacco’s enormous and tragic burden on our public health and welfare, it is essential that we find more reliable ways to help people quit smoking, and more importantly, to prevent young people from becoming tobacco users in the first place.

Fortunately, the Commonwealth of Virginia has wisely Shouldered the responsibility to seek solutions by establishing a formidable base of scientific research and evaluation on tobacco addiction and prevention, and by allocating a portion of its proceeds from the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) with tobacco product manufacturers to tobacco-use prevention initiatives. Funded by the MSA, the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY) sponsors numerous initiatives, including research on the etiology and prevention of youth tobacco use.

With core funding from the VFHY, and a mandate from the VFHY board, the Virginia Youth Tobacco Projects (VYTP) was charged with the responsibility to build a statewide, coordinated program of multi-disciplinary prevention research. In addressing that mandate, the VYTP Research Coalition was established. Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) serves as a coordinating center for the VYTP Research Coalition, and coalition activities to date have included a small grants program, three major statewide research conferences, annual coalition meetings, and targeted funding of multi-
Annual VYTP Meetings

- Principal investigators and other faculty working on VYTP research
- Other Virginia scientists interested in learning more about the VYTP
- Special emphasis on student participation
- Typically have about 50 attendees
- Content consists of research reports and a special workshop
2003: Suzanne Colby, Ph.D., Brown University. *Methodological issues and alternative approaches to measuring youth tobacco use and nicotine addiction*

2004: Jack McArdle, Ph.D., UVA *Using Longitudinal Data to Examine Changes in Behavior*

2008: Eric Donny, Ph.D., University of Pittsburg. *The Art of Research Translation*

2008: Stephen Hecht, Ph.D., University of Minnesota. *Biomarkers for Assessing Nicotine and Tobacco Carcinogen Exposure*

2010: Jeff Jordan, President & Founder, Rescue Social Change Group. *The Development and Evaluation of Social Marketing Campaigns for Youth Tobacco Use*

2011: Robert Balster, Ph.D., VCU. *FDA Regulation of Tobacco: Implications for Youth Tobacco Research*
Focus on presenting research that addresses issues of concern to policy makers and practitioners

Over 100 participants in 2009

- VYTP researchers
- practitioners
- policy makers
- national experts

Next in 2012, Board is invited
Triennial Research Translation Conferences: Variety of Topics

- Reduced Exposure Products
- Tobacco Policy Research
- Prevention Programming: Linking Research, Evaluation and Practice
- Racial/ethnic Differences and Youth Smoking and Nicotine Addiction
- Age/child Development and Youth Smoking and Nicotine Addiction
- Gender Differences and Youth Smoking and Nicotine Addiction
- Developments in Youth Smoking Cessation Interventions
- Tobacco Control Policy and Research in Primary Healthcare
Conferences include National Tobacco Experts

- Richard J. Bonnie, University of Virginia
- Cheryl Healton, American Legacy Foundation
- Gilbert J. Botvin, Weill Medical College of Cornell University
- Steve Sussman, University of Southern California
- Robin J. Mermelstein, University of Illinois at Chicago
- Geri Anne Dino, West Virginia University
- Suzanne Colby, Brown University
- Kenneth Tercyak, Georgetown University
- Jack Hollis, Kaiser Permanente
- Dana Best, Children’s Nat’l Medical Center, Washington, DC
- Lois Biener, University of Massachusetts
- Jonathan Foulds, University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey
Special Topic Reports

- A. Breland, J.R. Koch, R. Balster. (2008) *Summary and Integration of VTSF Funded Research*

All available at: www.vcu.edu/idas/vytp/reports.html
Research
Large grants (directly from VFHY):

- VCU (Balster, Koch): Core
- VCU (Dowdy, Danish): School-Based Prevention Trial
- VCU and JMU (Koch, Breland, Irons): Tobacco Treatment and Prevention in CSBs
- VCU and UVA (Brunzell, Lynch): Exercise as Prevention, Animal Studies
- GMU (Smith): Developmental Effects
- UVA (O’Loughlen, Hollen): Prevention/Cessation in Asthma Patients
- UVA (Meszaros, Kulbok): Prevention in Rural Youth
Small grants (funded via VYTP):

- VCU (Damaj): Early Nicotine Exposure and Vulnerability to Drug Abuse
- Fryxell (GMU): Signaling Pathways that Drive Nicotine Preference in Adolescent Mice
- Kaestle (VA Tech): Media Literacy Tobacco Prevention for Youth in Virginia
- Keyser-Marcus (VCU): Computerized Screening and Brief Intervention for Teen Smoking
- McDonald (GMU): An Electrophysiological Study of Neurocognitive Functioning in Adolescent Smokers
- Nasim (VCU): Cigarillos, Youth & YouTube: A Content Analysis of Smoking Videograms
Key Findings
Nicotine has long lasting effects on prenatal and adolescent brain

Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to tobacco initiation and dependence

Vulnerability to tobacco use and dependence is inherited and specific genes are being identified

Groups differ in their vulnerability (e.g., females more vulnerable/sensitive)

Prevention programs may be less available in low socioeconomic status neighborhoods

Large gaps exist in training medical students about tobacco treatment

Youth may be learning about tobacco via social media (such as youtube)
Key Findings

- Environmental factors may moderate genetic effects (risk and protective factors)
- Youth can be trained to become better at interpreting tobacco company advertising
- Some types of anti-tobacco advertising can decrease intention to smoke
- Exercise may decrease nicotine self-administration
- Researchers and community members can effectively collaborate to design a drug use prevention program
VYTP is one component of a much larger youth tobacco control effort.
Grant Applications to Organizations Other than VFHY

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<td>2010</td>
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Examples of Other Tobacco Research Projects in Virginia Universities

- Developmental genetic epidemiology of smoking (NIH $304K/yr for 4 yrs)
  - Hermine Maes at VCU
- Genetics of nicotine and other abused substance (NIH $168k/yr for 5 yrs)
  - Sam Chen at VCU (with Ken Kendler)
- Culturally enriched prevention services (SAMHSA)
  - Faye Belgrave at VCU
- A computer-assisted brief motivational intervention for smoking during pregnancy (NIH $275k)
  - Dace Svikis at VCU
- Protective factors for tobacco nonsmoking in adolescent females in Rural Virginia
  - Pamela Kulbock at UVA and Peggy Meszaros at Virginia Tech
Examples of Other Tobacco Research Projects in Virginia Universities

- **Novel drugs to modify nicotine preference (Abbott Laboratories)**
  - Imad Damaj at VCU

- **Nicotinic cholinergic subunit contributions to nicotine dependence (NIH)**
  - Darlene Brunzell, VCU

- **Waterpipe tobacco smoking** (2 projects; NCI and NIH Fogarty Center, $100k/yr)
  - Thomas Eissenberg, VCU

- **Bar and restaurant workers’ exposure to secondhand smoke (NIH)**
  - Linda Haddad, VCU

- **An intervention to improve tobacco cessation counseling in medical students**
  - Scott Strayer, UVA
## Publications

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And, thank you for not smoking!

Thank you