



MWCCS Newsletter

Winter 2023

Harbor-UCLA/Lundquist · LA LGBT Center · LAMS Wilshire



A HOLIDAY MESSAGE FROM OUR PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS



Dear MACS Study Participants,

As we enter the holiday season, we find ourselves reflecting on the past year with immense gratitude and appreciation for your unwavering commitment to MWCCS. Your participation continues to be pivotal in advancing our understanding of the impact of chronic health conditions—including heart, lung, blood, and sleep (HLBS) disorders—that affect people living with HIV, and we are deeply grateful for the dedication and passion you have brought to this research endeavor over the past 40+ years.

The holiday season is a time for celebration, reflection, and togetherness. It is also a time to acknowledge the profound impact of collective efforts in making a difference, and your involvement in the MWCCS epitomizes the spirit of collaboration and community.

Your willingness to continue to participate, share your experiences, and contribute to the greater good of research has not only enriched our study but has also contributed to the broader mission of HIV prevention. The insights you have provided are invaluable, and we are inspired by your generosity and commitment to improving the health and well-being of individuals and communities affected by HIV.

As the year draws to a close, we extend our warmest wishes to you and your loved ones. May this holiday season be filled with moments of joy, love, and gratitude. We hope that the upcoming year brings you renewed hope, prosperity, and continued success in all that you seek to accomplish.

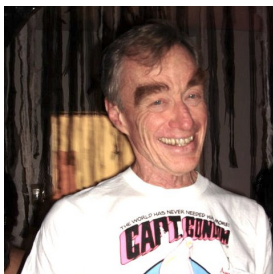
We are truly honored to have you as part of our research community, and we are excited about the journey ahead as we work together to advance our understanding of HIV. Your participation is a testament to the power of collective action in creating positive change, and we are deeply thankful for the opportunity to collaborate with you.

Lastly, we miss our retired staff, especially May. We hope that you will develop a similar connection to the new staff as they get to know you and you get to know them.

Once again, thank you for your significant contributions, and we look forward to continuing our partnership in the pursuit of our shared goals. Wishing you a joyful holiday season and a bright and fulfilling new year.

With heartfelt appreciation and warm regards,

Drs. Roger Detels and Matthew Mimiaga on behalf of the Los Angeles MWCCS Research Team



Our deepest thanks to Dr. Detels, the incredible individual who started the LAMS.



Thank you Dr. Mimiaga for joining the MWCCS and continuing our journey.

Read a recent article of Drs. Detels and Mimiaga discussing the MACS and on learning from outbreaks: [HERE](https://lgbtq.ph.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/outbreaks-2.pdf)
<https://lgbtq.ph.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/outbreaks-2.pdf>

Inside this Issue

Message from Principal Investigators	1
Public Service Announcement	2
MPOX Vaccine and who should get it	2
Where We Are Today	3
What is MWCCS Again?	3
Commemorating MACS Participants	3
Study Publications	4
Biomarkers & HIV	4
Lipid Profiles & HIV	5
PTSD & Longitudinal COVID-19	5
Announcements	6
Team Member Introductions	6
Team Member Farewells	6

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT: MPOX and Vaccines

Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends MPOX vaccines:

1. You had known or suspected exposure to someone with mpox or you had sex with someone with mpox in the past 2 weeks.

2. You are a gay, bisexual, or other man who has sex with men or a transgender, nonbinary, or gender-diverse person who in the past 6 months has had any of the following:

- A new diagnosis of one or more sexually transmitted diseases (e.g., chlamydia, gonorrhea, or syphilis)
- More than one sex partner

3. You have had any of the following in the past 6 months: Sex at a commercial sex venue (like a sex club or bathhouse)

- Sex related to a large commercial event or in a geographic area (city or county for example) where mpox virus transmission is occurring.
- Sex in exchange for money or other items
- You have a sex partner with any of the above risk. You anticipate experiencing any of the above scenarios

4. You have HIV or other causes of immune suppression and have had recent or anticipate future risk of mpox exposure from any of the above scenarios

5. You work in settings where you may be exposed to mpox:

- You work with orthopoxviruses in a laboratory

2020 marked the 40th year anniversary since the first AIDS cases were reported in the U.S in 1980.

We commemorate the nearly 700,000 lives lost during the decades-long pandemic.

Here at the MACS, we honor the legacies of participants who have passed on since 2020.



10012	20176	20393	24082	30508	40255	40280	40410
40559	40739	40900	41011	41123	41134	41143	41293
41417	41480	41823	41855	41866	41869	44005	44516
44609	44668	44670	44671	44906	45006	45325	



How are you doing?

We've heard about many of your struggles during the pandemic, from difficulties with accessing providers to personal losses. We hope to continue supporting you during any challenging times. Please reach out to us for resources or even a chat.



Use your smart phone camera to scan this
QR Code to access the public MWCCS website!



As most of you know, we have merged with the Women's Interagency Health HIV Study in order to form the MACS/WIHS Combined Cohort Study (MWCCS). Our goal at the MWCCS is to understand and reduce the effect that health problems have on people living with HIV, such as heart and lung disease, and use our findings to help in the development and delivery of services to improve people's health and well-being. The MWCCS has already gathered data and published some important outcomes. We hope to continue that trajectory well into the future.

Q: Has the study moved?

No, you will continue participating at the same location. If you have been participating in the former MACS site in San Francisco, please refer to the side bar. ➡

Q: Will we have the same staff?

Yes and No. Some of our staff have retired and we dearly miss them. But, you will be seeing many of the same people and a few new faces too! If you have been participating in the former MACS site in San Francisco, please refer to the side bar. ➡

Q: Will we be seeing cis women participants?

No, the former MACS sites will not be seeing cis women participants.

Q: What to expect when you come in?

Now that the COVID-19 emergency has been lifted and we can resume seeing participants in person, we will collect blood and other specimens, and conduct physical exams in person. Interviews may be conducted in clinic, when possible, or via telephone for those that are unable to come to clinic. You will be asked to take part in additional visits for testing that does not occur every year.

**To our San Francisco
participants:**

Thank you for seeing us at the SF clinic for these many years. Our Los Angeles staff will no longer see you at the SF site. Moving forward, you have the option of seeing us in Los Angeles or participating at the clinic operated by the UC San Francisco WIHS site. This clinic is located near our old clinic location on Sutter Street. We will keep in touch with you regarding these options moving forward. Please feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns.

For more information about the MACS/WIHS Combined Cohort Study, please visit the MWCCS website at:

<https://statepi.jhsph.edu/mwccs/>

Why do we take so much blood?
Here are some published research papers to help answer that question.
A hearty THANK YOU to our participants who make these endeavors possible!

Relationship between serum levels of IL-6, sIL-6R, sgp130, and CD 126 on T-Cell in HIV-1 infected and uninfected men participating in the Los Angeles Multicenter AIDS Cohort Study

Najib Aziz, Roger Shih, Nicole Alexopoulos, Beth D Jamieson, Matthew J Mimiaga, Otoniel Martinez-Maza, Roger Detels.

This study was conducted to understand whether certain biological markers can be used to assess disease progression and staging in HIV infected individuals. Knowledge of biological variation among healthy individuals and individuals experiencing illness, are very important for selection of appropriate tests for stage and progression of disease.

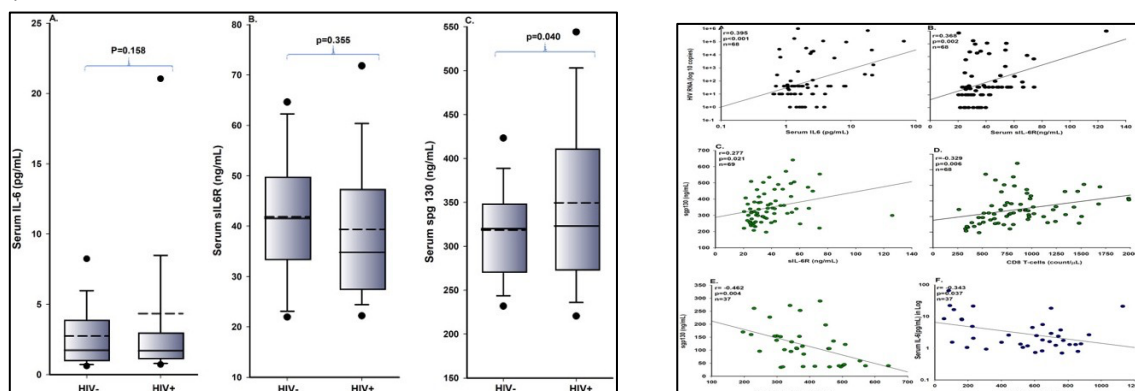
The objective of this study was to investigate associations between various biological markers (IL-6, sIL6R, sgp 130 and CD126) and the T-cells of HIV-1 infected and uninfected men. To do this, blood samples were obtained from 69 HIV-1-infected men on Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART) and 52 HIV-1-uninfected men. All men were participating in the Los Angeles Multi-Center AIDS Cohort Study (MACS).

Results:

- Mean serum concentrations of the biomarkers (IL-6, sIL6R) in HIV-1-infected and uninfected men were not significantly different.
- There was a positive correlation (levels rise and fall together) between plasma HIV-1 RNA and the levels of IL-6 and sIL6R
- There was no correlation between plasma HIV-1 RNA and the biomarker sgp 130
- There was a negative correlation (as one level rises, the other falls) between serum levels of IL-6 and T-Helper cells
- There was a positive correlation between biomarkers sgp130 and sIL-6R in the serum of HIV-1-infected men.

Conclusion:

Our data suggest no correlation among IL-6, and sIL-R6, in the treated phase of HIV-1 infection. The action and blood level of IL-6 and its receptors may be different at each stage of a disease progression.



<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0290702>

Recent Published Articles**Long-term intra- and inter-individual biological variation of serum lipid of HIV-infected and uninfected men participating in the Los Angeles Multi-Center AIDS Cohort Study (MACS)**

Aziz, N., David W Gjertson, Matthew J Mimiaga, Chantel D Azarkman, Rey Soto, Nicole Alexopoulos, Roger Detels. (2022)

Participant blood was analyzed every six months over 17 years for total cholesterol (TC), triglycerides (TGs), high-density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL-C) and low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C) in 140 HIV-uninfected (38-66 years old) and 90 HIV-treated infected (48-64 years old) Caucasian men to examine variations within (CVI) and between (CVG) these groups, and the effect of cholesterol lowering drugs (CLDs) on lipid levels, and estimated changes per year of biomarkers.

Conclusion:

Significant differences in lipid profiles were observed within and between groups of HIV infected and uninfected men. Hence these biomarkers will be useful for monitoring antiviral therapy side effects on lipid profiles in HIV-infected men.

<https://lipidworld.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12944-022-01668-0>

Association of PTSD With Longitudinal COVID-19 Burden in a Mixed-Serostatus Cohort of Men and Women: Weathering the Storm

Deborah L Jones et al.

This study of people with HIV (PWH) and those without HIV conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States in 2020 examines the impact of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) on COVID-19 burden, defined as pandemic-related disruptions.

Conclusion:

This study builds on emerging literature demonstrating the impact of mental health on the burden and disruption associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, providing context specific to PWH. The ongoing pandemic requires structural and social interventions to decrease disruption to resources and health resource needs among these vulnerable populations.

https://journals.lww.com/jaids/fulltext/2022/08150/association_of_ptsd_with_longitudinal_covid_19.13.asp_x

Again, thank you for your time and allowing us to draw your blood. Your sacrifice makes a difference.

If you were not contacted recently and still would like to remain as participants in our study, please reach out to us. We most likely did not have your most recent contact information.

For more MWCCS articles, please visit: <https://statepi.jhsph.edu/mwccs/news-publications/>

TEAM MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS

New Interviewer: Eric Trigg

We would like to welcome Eric Trigg our newest interviewer! Eric comes to us with a strong clinical background and has been a phlebotomist for over 20 years. Additionally, he is charismatic, kind and a wonderful communicator. Eric is excited to meet our participants and is already so pleased to be partnering with you all to make an impactful contribution to our team! WELCOME ERIC!



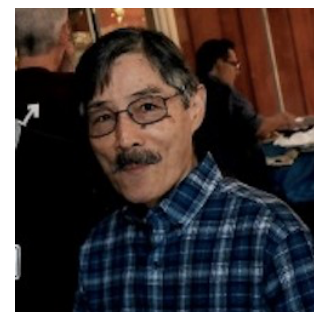
New Medical Director: Gilda Noori, MD MPH



Gilda Noori is a trained physician with passion for Public Health. Prior to joining the MWCCS, Dr. Noori worked with the World Health Organization and UNAIDS. Dr. Noori serves as the Co-Chair of the California Department of Public Health's Community Prevention and Population Health Task Force. She is thrilled to be back at UCLA, joining the MWCCS and she looks forward to meeting you all!

Special Thank You:

John Oishi has served as the project director for the MWCCS for nearly 30 years. This year, he has decided to retire and begin the next chapter of his life with a renewed focus on family. There are no words to describe the deep appreciation we have for John and though we congratulate his retirement, we reserve the right to call his cell and make use of the encyclopedic knowledge he has of this project.



Andre Nguyen joined our team in July 2022 as a new interviewer. Since his time with us, he has been inspired to pursue his second master's degree in public health. We wish him well on all his future endeavors.

Thank you for your continued participation in the study.

For general inquiries about the LA Men's Study, you can contact us at:

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