

NEWS RELEASE

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA SCHOOL OF MEDICINE



Public Relations Office
Savitt Medical Sciences Building /356
Reno, Nevada 89557-0046
(702) 784-8059
FAX: (702) 784-6096

Public Relations Office
2040 W. Charleston Blvd., Suite #400
Las Vegas, Nevada 89102-2386
(702) 671-2208
FAX: (702) 671-2277

FOR THE GOOD HEALTH OF NEVADA

Lynne Williams, medical school information
Oct. 14, 1999

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

University of Nevada, Reno, and School of Medicine receive grant awards

Two major research grants totaling more than \$1.3 million were awarded earlier this month, due to collaborative efforts in the departments of Psychology at UNR and Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the School of Medicine. Both research grants address the problem of smoking/ tobacco addiction, which is a major public health problem for the state of Nevada and nationwide.

“Novel acceptance based therapies -- which help the patient accept uncomfortable thoughts and feelings rather than suppress or ignore them -- will be tested for their effectiveness in helping people kick the smoking addiction,” says Dr. Melissa Piasecki, assistant professor and vice chair for psychiatry and behavioral sciences. “Basic science research has shown that trying to suppress thoughts and feelings sometimes leads to intensifying them instead.”

Another aspect to these research projects is examination of the role of “provider social support.” Increased time and better alliances with a provider has been shown to have a positive impact on the quit rates for smokers. According to Barbara Kohlenberg, Ph.D., assistant professor of psychiatry. “We will be applying principles related to social support to those who are trying to stop smoking and to minimize the chance of relapse in the future.”

These therapies will be compared to currently available smoking cessation aids, such as the nicotine patch and medication.

The first grant is from the National Cancer Institute, and Elizabeth Gifford, a graduate student in psychology, is the principal investigator. Other members of the research team include Melissa Piasecki, M.D.; Barbara Kohlenberg, Ph.D.; Steven Hayes, Ph.D.; David Antonuccio, Ph.D.; and Ole Thienhaus, M.D., chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. The NCI grant is for two years; the first year's award is \$70,970.

The National Institute for Drug Abuse, a section of the National Institutes of Health, awarded the second grant. Steven Hayes, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Psychology, is the principle investigator for this project. The research team includes Elizabeth Gifford and William Follette, Ph.D. from psychology, as well as Barbara Kohlenberg, Ph.D. , Melissa Piasecki, M.D., and David Antonuccio, Ph.D., in psychiatry. This is a three-year grant, and the first year's funding is \$533,172.

The research project will begin to seek subjects in the year 2000. For additional information contact Elizabeth Gifford 783-1139.