



# cira

Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS  
at Yale University

## *CIRA Talk: Research in a Time of Physical Distancing*

### ***Facilitators:***

- Trace Kershaw, PhD, Yale School of Public Health
- Donna Spiegelman, ScD, Yale School of Public Health
- Ijeoma Opara, PhD, MSW, MPH, Stony Brook University

### ***Agenda:***

- Pivoting to on-line recruitment and data collection
- Relationships with community partners
- Methodological approaches to impact on research data



**Monday, June 1**

**2:00 pm – 3:30 pm**

***Join us by Zoom:***

**<https://yale.zoom.us/j/91826618991>**

**Contact Daniel Davidson (<mailto:daniel.davidson@yale.edu>) for questions.**

Sponsored by the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS (CIRA).  
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Paul D. Cleary, Ph.D., Principal Investigator.

### ***Talk Description:***

COVID-19 has changed the course of all our work, significantly impacting research activities. Some ongoing studies may be currently halted, while others continue with adapted strategies for recruitment, interviewing, intervention delivery, or participant assessment. HIV service providers and people with HIV face additional challenges, potentially impacting the conduct of community-based research. At the same time, funding announcements call for work addressing the intersection of COVID-19, mental health, and HIV treatment and prevention, both as supplements to ongoing projects and as new awards.

In this session, affiliates will have the opportunity to share challenges they have encountered, strategies they've adopted, and to solicit feedback from peers.

### ***Facilitator Bios:***

**Trace Kershaw, PhD:** Trace Kershaw, PhD, focuses on the social and structural determinants of health (e.g., sexual health, substance use, mental health, reproductive health) among adolescents and emerging adults. His current focus is using innovative technologic methods to understand how social (e.g., how ones friends, partners, and family) and geographic context (e.g., how the places one goes and lives) influences their behaviors and health. Further, he is an expert in developing interventions aimed to improve the health and well being of adolescents and emerging adults.

He is the Chair of the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, the Director of two HIV Training Grants (Yale AIDS Prevention Training, Research Education Institute for Diverse Scholars), and Director of the Development Core for the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS (CIRA). He has twice won Mentor of the Year. He also serves on expert panels for the NIH and CDC and on several journal editorial boards.

**Donna Spiegelman, ScD:** Donna Spiegelman was appointed the Susan Dwight Bliss Professor of Biostatistics at the Yale School of Public Health in 2018. As one of the few people in the world with a joint doctorate in biostatistics and epidemiology, she can freely speak the languages of both disciplines and switch between these two professional cultures, playing the role of interlocutor for either. Her research is motivated by problems which arise in epidemiology and require biostatistical settlement. In particular, but by no means exclusively, she has focused on methods for study design and data analysis which reduce bias in estimation and inference due to measurement error or misclassification in the exposure variable. A particular current interest is risk-based monitoring of multi-center investigations to enhance quality and prevent fraud.

She has extensive experience in troubleshooting and solving methodological issues that arise in longitudinal investigations, in clinical trials, and in large scale public health effectiveness evaluations.

Dr. Spiegelman, formerly at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, had a dynamic role as a professor, mentor, and an expert statistician. She was the recipient of the NIH Director's Pioneer Award and recently the recipient of the CAWF (Committee on the Advancement of Women Faculty) Mentoring Award.

**Ijeoma Opara, PhD, MSW, MPH:** Dr. Opara's current program of research involves using strengths-based approaches to HIV/AIDS, STI, and drug use prevention for adolescent girls of color. Her research highlights the strengths in families of color and promotes cultural and social protective factors for girls and women of color. Dr. Opara is a sought out speaker on the topic of youth substance abuse and using empowerment to achieve health equity. Dr. Opara is also a licensed social worker and has worked as a youth and family therapist for Black and Hispanic families with a special focus on using culturally appropriate and race and

gender specific interventions. Dr. Opara has previously received funding from the Centers of Disease Control & Prevention, National Institute on Drug Abuse, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to support her work on improving health outcomes for adolescents of color. Dr. Opara will use REIDS funding to pilot test a racial and gender specific HIV/AIDS, STI, and drug use prevention intervention for Black urban girls.