



# TTURC

TRANSDISCIPLINARY TOBACCO USE RESEARCH CENTER

INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

## TRANSDISCIPLINARY TOBACCO USE RESEARCH CENTER

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Jennifer Unger  
Dowell Myers  
Traci Newman  
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### Project Leaders

C. Anderson Johnson,  
*Preventing Tobacco Use Across Cultures*  
Jennifer Unger,  
*The role of Cultural Values in Adolescent Smoking*  
Xinguang Chen,  
*Smoking Progression Among Culturally Diverse Youth*  
Tess Boley-Cruz,  
*Countering Tobacco Advertising in Diverse Populations*  
Stephanie London,  
*Collaborative Intramural Project NIEHS*  
Ellie Nezami,  
*Psychosocial Predictors of Smoking Across Cultures*  
Lourdes Baezconde Garbanati,  
*Social Resources Among Latino Adolescents*

### Core Projects

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*Population Dynamics*  
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*Statistics*  
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*Measurement*  
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*Community Outreach/Education*  
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## TRANSDISCIPLINARITY ACROSS CULTURES

Dr. C. Anderson Johnson, Director of The Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Research (IPR), is also the Director of The Transdisciplinary Tobacco Use Research Center (TTURC) at The University of Southern California (USC). Together with a large group of investigators from various disciplines, USC's TTURC seeks to understand the factors that influence smoking among youth of diverse cultures, and determine effective school-based interventions to reduce health risks associated with smoking. A series of studies are now being conducted on how culture and adaptation to the American lifestyle affect smoking among Asian, Pacific Islander, and Latino youth; ETS exposure; psychosocial factors; and the relationship between exposure and childhood respiratory illnesses. USC's TTURC is one of seven centers in the country to conduct transdisciplinary research on tobacco use. Other centers are located at: Brown University, Georgetown University, University of California at Irvine, University of Minnesota, University of Wisconsin, and Yale University. TTURCs are funded by the National Cancer Institute, in a joint venture with The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJ). The TTURC at USC is the only center in the nation to specifically target adolescent Asian, Pacific Islander and Latino issues. This is important because "Tobacco-related diseases are a worldwide problem, affecting people from many cultures", says Dr. Johnson. For this reason the center at USC is in a unique position to use the highly diverse culture of Los Angeles as a laboratory. In addition, this work is combined with findings from other studies on tobacco use, such as work from the Integrated Research Program, funded by The California Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program (TRDRP), and other work conducted at an international level. This will provide the most comprehensive

picture of adolescent Latino/Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander tobacco use developed to date.

According to Dr. Johnson, Latino, Pacific Islander, and Asian populations are growing at incredible rates in southern California and have made the adaptation of an effective prevention program a target that is continuously changing. For this reason the effectiveness of California's school-based smoking prevention programs depend on their ability to address the individual cultures and experiences of immigrant teenagers.

Drawing from a wide array of disciplines, USC has united researchers from multiple



fields in an effort to uncover the effects of mixed cultures, acculturation, media and social networks among teenagers in a transdisciplinary framework. By documenting population characteristics in California researchers are assessing new methods to discourage tobacco use. The results will be used to design culturally specific prevention strategies and as a source of information for policymakers designing new tobacco related laws, and researchers exploring new areas of tobacco use.

Lourdes Baezconde-Garbanati, Ph.D., M.P.H., leads the community outreach effort. She works on assessing the research that would improve anti-smoking efforts and disseminates the information to the community. According to Dr. Baezconde-Garbanati "Understanding how best to communicate tobacco prevention information, especially in various cultural groups, will help us develop effective prevention programs and school-based curricula that can better prevent tobacco use uptake or progression to addiction among those adolescents already smoking."

Cultural individuality is embedded through all facets of the TTURC, and is captured through research and prevention programs that are school-based and involve parents and peers. An example are focus groups within Latino and

gather information to develop culturally tailored surveys that utilize the language and cultural expression of specific ethnic groups.

USC has also developed a worldwide network through various investigators including Dr. C. Anderson Johnson, Ed Avol, Ph.D., Stan Azen, Ph.D., Lourdes Baezcondi Garbanati, Ph.D., Tess Boley-Cruz, Ph.D., Xinguang Chen, Ph.D., Chih-Ping Chou, Ph.D., Dowell Myers, Ph.D., Ellie Nezami, Ph.D., Paula Palmer, Ph.D., Mary Ann Pentz, Ph.D., Luanne Rohrbach, Ph.D., Jennifer Unger, Ph.D., among others. Research in China, Iran, and the United States is compared on a variety of tobacco issues.

The diverse research methods and disciplines included at USC will allow the researchers to identify the messages that youth respond to and understand how those messages should be conveyed. More importantly, this research will increase our understanding of how tobacco use begins and how to effectively prevent it, as well as how multiple disciplines can better work together within a transdisciplinary framework to advance the science in tobacco prevention. *Reprinted as a summary from an article that appeared in USC Health Summer 2000.*

### FLAVOR AND CHIPS ~ TOBACCO PREVENTION CURRICULA FOR 6TH GRADERS

Two curriculum development teams, jointly funded by TRDRP and the USC TTURC, have created two smoking prevention curricula to be implemented in middle schools in California and Hawaii over the next several years. Over 6,000 students will take part in this research.

FLAVOR (Fun Learning About Vitality Origin, and Respect), developed by Kara Lichtman, Project Manager, and her team including Josephine Biley Andron, Danielle Manalo, Anamara Ritt-Olson, and Michelle Moutappa is a culturally tailored program that promotes tobacco prevention among ethnically diverse adolescents. Project CHIPS (Choosing Healthy Influences for Positive Situations), headed by Kriya Kaping, is an updated version of the successful Project SMART. Both programs are set for final pilot testing in February.

Guided by input from focus groups, parent interviews, ethnographic studies, and input from cultural, community, and educational experts, the curriculum teams have developed two unique curricula, both influenced by self-determination and social influences theory.

The California trial will begin in April, and the Hawaii trial is scheduled to start this fall. C. Anderson Johnson, Ph.D., with over twenty years of experience in school-based smoking prevention research and curriculum development, is the director of both programs. For further information about FLAVOR, please contact Kara Lichtman at [lichtman@hsc.usc.edu](mailto:lichtman@hsc.usc.edu). For additional information about Project CHIPS, please contact Kriya Kaping at [kaping@usc.edu](mailto:kaping@usc.edu).

### TTURC DEVELOPS NEW ACCULTURATION SCALE AIMED AT ADOLESCENTS

Understanding how culture relates to smoking and measuring the effectiveness of the pro- and anti-tobacco programs among adolescents in a multicultural population requires a unique acculturation scale. Dr. Jennifer Unger has been investigating this issue among various population groups and is spearheading TTURC efforts to create a scale that captures the different facets of acculturation. The scale is bi-dimensional in that it taps into aspects of American, Hispanic, Asian, and Pacific Islander cultures, thus providing a picture of the many influences impacting youth. To ensure that the scale is relevant to the lives of adolescents, it includes questions about TV shows, music, family life, school, and leisure time. Its multicultural nature makes the scale applicable to youth of various ethnic backgrounds. The scale is one of a kind in that it assesses the associations between acculturation and adolescent smoking. For more information on the scale, please contact Dr. Jennifer Unger at [unger@hsc.usc.edu](mailto:unger@hsc.usc.edu).

### TOWARD A GROUNDED THEORY OF TRANSDISCIPLINARY SCIENTIFIC COLLABORATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY USC AND UCI TTURCS

Researchers in the School of Social Ecology at the University of California, Irvine (UCI) are conducting a participant-observation study examining the situational circumstances that facilitate or hinder collaboration among interdisciplinary teams comprised of social science researchers, animal lab scientists, economists and other scholars who are collaborating to better understand adolescent susceptibility to and use of nicotine. Led by the Dr. Daniel Stokols, the Transdisciplinary Core of the UCI TTURC is developing a grounded theory that delineates the antecedents, processes, and outcomes of transdisciplinary scientific collaboration. In her dissertation research, Juliana Fuqua is extending the study to include the USC TTURC. In her comparative analysis, Ms. Fuqua uses qualitative and quantitative methods and instruments developed for the study. Interviews, surveys, and behavioral observations of TTURC members, staff and administrators are currently being conducted. From the ground-breaking work, new theories, hypotheses, and interventions can be developed regarding key factors that facilitate or impair collaboration among researchers, particularly tobacco researchers. For additional information Juliana may be contacted at [jfuqua@uci.edu](mailto:jfuqua@uci.edu) or (949) 824-5047.

#### WEBSITE

[www.usc.edu/hsc/medicine/prevention\\_med/ipr/tturc/](http://www.usc.edu/hsc/medicine/prevention_med/ipr/tturc/)

The USC TTURC website functions as a forum that is easily accessible while its interactive nature allows visitors to post abstracts they wish to have reviewed for feedback. Information regarding all the projects is available and everyone is welcomed to post their own work. The Institute of Prevention Research forum also lists projects of faculty and graduate students. General information about seminars, upcoming events, and job openings can also be found. Even a humor section is included for those seeking a break from their hectic schedule. New links on the website are under construction.

For more information please contact Dr. Ping Sun at [sping@usc.edu](mailto:sping@usc.edu) or (626) 457-4128.

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