

\$4.7M Grant to Combat Smoking and HIV in Black Adults

Researchers will test a mobile app designed to help users quit smoking, reduce stress and improve HIV management.

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Can a mobile health app help Black adults living with [HIV](#) quit [smoking](#) and manage their stress? Scientists from the University of Houston (UH) Health Research Institute are using a \$4.7 million grant to test just such an app, according to [a UH news release](#).

The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities grant will support a randomized control trial with more than 300 Black smokers with HIV to test the benefits of a mobile health app developed to help users quit smoking and better manage their [stress](#) and [chronic diseases](#).

“Our results will fuel the expansion of culturally tailored mobile health interventions, offering innovative, accessible support for those most in need,” said grant recipient Lorra Garey, PhD, a research associate professor in the Department of Psychology and affiliate of the UH Health Research Institute, in the news release.

As of 2022, nearly 105,400 people were living with HIV in Texas, according to AIDSvu.org, an interactive site that maps and visualizes national HIV data. By race, Black folks account for almost 30% of new HIV diagnoses in the state.

Even with good treatment, people living with HIV have higher rates of certain lung diseases, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), according to [to POZ’s Basics on HIV and Your Lungs](#). COPD, including emphysema and chronic bronchitis, causes blockage of airflow and makes breathing more difficult. COPD risk increases with age, and cases are rising among HIV-positive people as they live longer. Chronic inflammation and a higher smoking rate contribute to the elevated risk.

In 2018, about 19.2% of the Texas population smoked cigarettes, and 25% of those smokers were Black, according to a study [published in the National Library of Medicine](#). What’s more, although the smoking rate of Black Americans in Texas is high, they represented only about 18% of the calls to the Texas Tobacco Quitline.

Black smokers with HIV struggle to quit and manage their HIV because of issues pertaining to HIV

stigma, discrimination and racism-related stress, note the UH researchers.

“The combination of smoking and HIV in the Black community amplifies health risks and makes it harder to manage both conditions, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions to address these overlapping health disparities,” Garey said in the release.

According to researchers, people who face significant stress may find it more difficult to cope with challenges such as quitting smoking or managing HIV.

The mobile app was developed to decrease emotional reactivity to stress and offers a coping tool kit and tabs for users to click on for tips for when they are about to slip and have a cigarette or have just slipped.

“If the efficacy is established, it would serve as a low-burden and highly accessible treatment option for smoking cessation, improved mental health and improved HIV care adherence/engagement, which all serve to support successful aging and improved well-being,” said Garey.

Call 800.QUIT.NOW (800.784.8669) to reach the free smoking quit line in your state. You can also visit <http://smokefree.gov> for more tools and advice on how to quit.

To read more, click [#Smoking](#). There, you’ll find headlines such as “[Quit Smoking With Help From Fred Hutch’s Free AI-Powered Chatbot](#),” “[Video-Based Program Helps HIV-Positive Smokers Quit Tobacco](#)” and “[HIV and Smoking](#).”