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**Contact:** NIDA Press Office  
301-443-6245  
[media@nida.nih.gov](mailto:media@nida.nih.gov)

**HIV/AIDS researcher David Ho wins NIDA's 2011 Avant-Garde Award**

*Ho plans to develop a revolutionary, long-acting HIV therapy to improve adherence to treatment*

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), part of the National Institutes of Health, announced today that Dr. David Ho of the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center in New York, NY, has been selected as the 2011 recipient of the NIDA Avant-Garde Award for HIV/AIDS Research. Ho's proposal aims to develop a novel HIV therapy that could be administered monthly; as opposed to the existing daily treatment for HIV. NIDA's annual Avant-Garde award competition, now in its fourth year, is intended to stimulate high-impact research that may lead to groundbreaking opportunities for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS in drug abusers. Awardees receive \$500,000 per year for five years to support their research.

"Dr. Ho is taking a bold step to develop a new, long acting therapy that addresses the challenge of patient adherence with an imaginative solution," said NIDA Director Dr. Nora D. Volkow. "His proposal has the potential to make treatment much less burdensome on HIV patients, and at the same time improve outcomes."

Combination antiretroviral therapy, consisting of orally-administered anti-HIV drugs taken daily, has revolutionized the treatment of HIV/AIDS. However, treatment failures continue to occur in a significant fraction of those treated, often due to incomplete patient adherence to the prescribed regimen. Lack of compliance is particularly severe among drug abusers. Dr. Ho's project aims to develop antibody-like molecules that could be administered monthly for the treatment of HIV. A once-a-month treatment would improve the feasibility of directly observed therapy, an evidence-based adherence intervention.

"Such antibodies are not only well tolerated and have an excellent safety record, but are also administered infrequently because of their long half-life as compared to small molecules," said Ho. "We believe this could be the next generation of medications to treat HIV."

Dr. Ho, [Time Magazine's 1996 Man of the Year](#), was one of many applicants whose proposals reflect diverse scientific disciplines and approaches to HIV/AIDS research. The Avant-Garde Awards are modeled after the NIH Pioneer Awards and are granted to scientists of exceptional creativity who propose high-impact research that could open new avenues for prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS among drug abusers.

Drug abuse and its related behaviors, such as sharing drug injection equipment and/or engaging in risky sexual behavior while intoxicated, have been central to the spread of HIV/AIDS since the pandemic began 30 years ago. [NIDA's HIV/AIDS research program](#) supports a

multidisciplinary portfolio that investigates the role of drug use and its related behaviors in the evolving dynamics of HIV/AIDS epidemiology, natural history, etiology, pathogenesis, treatment, and prevention.

For information about the Avant-Garde award for Innovative HIV/AIDS Research, [click here](#). Information about the 2012 Avant-Garde award will be posted on this site soon.

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The National Institute on Drug Abuse is a component of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIDA supports most of the world's research on the health aspects of drug abuse and addiction. The Institute carries out a large variety of programs to inform policy and improve practice. Fact sheets on the health effects of drugs of abuse and information on NIDA research and other activities can be found on the NIDA home page at [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov). To order publications in English or Spanish, call NIDA's new *DrugPubs* research dissemination center at 1-877-NIDA-NIH or 240-645-0228 (TDD) or fax or email requests to 240-645-0227 or [drugpubs@nida.nih.gov](mailto:drugpubs@nida.nih.gov). Online ordering is available at <http://drugpubs.drugabuse.gov>. NIDA's new media guide can be found at <http://drugabuse.gov/mediaguide/>.

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