

# PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS THAT MODIFY RESPONSE TO POPULATION-LEVEL CANCER CONTROL STRATEGIES

**May 16-18, 2016 | Montgomery County, Maryland**

Join the National Cancer Institute for a “SANDPIT,” (i.e., ideas lab).

If you would like to transform the future of population-level cancer control strategies, we invite you to apply – irrespective of your research expertise or background. We are most interested in new ideas, underpinned by radical and innovative thinking.

**THREE intensive days:**

begins early morning on May 16  
and ends the evening of May 18

03

**FIVE contexts of interest:**

intrapersonal, interpersonal,  
organizational, community, societal

05

**ONE common goal:**

build capacity for transformative  
research in cancer control

01

**INFINITE possibilities:**

network with experts outside  
of your typical domain

∞

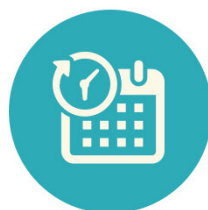
**Apply with CV and cover letter (600 word max) by 3/19/16: [ncidccpsbrpadvances@mail.nih.gov](mailto:ncidccpsbrpadvances@mail.nih.gov)**



Participants will generate  
multidisciplinary  
approaches that aim to  
transform population-  
level cancer control  
strategies



Examples include smokefree  
laws, cigarette taxes, menu  
labeling, zoning laws,  
institutionalized  
vaccinations, and school  
nutrition



Intensive, interactive, and  
free-thinking environment,  
where participants immerse  
themselves in collaborative  
thinking processes



Early and mid-career  
academic, community,  
and industry researchers  
are strongly encouraged  
to apply

## POTENTIAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- In what ways do psychological characteristics shape how people engage with, participate in, and respond to various population-level strategies relevant to cancer control?
- For whom is a given population-level strategy most effective?
- For whom does a given population-level strategy unintentionally promote unhealthy (or healthy) behavior, how might negative unintended consequences be ameliorated, and how might unintended positive consequences be leveraged?

NCI Contact: Rebecca Ferrer, Ph.D. | [rebecca.ferrer@nih.gov](mailto:rebecca.ferrer@nih.gov)  
Deadline to apply: 3/19/16 via [ncidccpsbrpadvances@mail.nih.gov](mailto:ncidccpsbrpadvances@mail.nih.gov)

NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE, DIVISION OF CANCER CONTROL AND POPULATION SCIENCES  
SANDPIT: PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS THAT MODIFY RESPONSE TO  
POPULATION-LEVEL CANCER CONTROL STRATEGIES  
**MAY 16-18, 2016**

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO TRANSFORM THE FUTURE OF POPULATION-LEVEL CANCER CONTROL STRATEGIES, WE INVITE YOU TO APPLY - IRRESPECTIVE OF YOUR RESEARCH EXPERTISE OR BACKGROUND. WE ARE MOST INTERESTED IN NEW IDEAS, UNDERPINNED BY RADICAL AND INNOVATIVE THINKING.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although the goal of most public health strategies is to achieve behavior change at a population level, it is important to understand the individual influences that drive behavioral responses to such strategies. The National Cancer Institute (NCI) is soliciting applications to participate in a “sandpit” (i.e., ideas lab) that will bring together a broad, multidisciplinary group of researchers. This sandpit will highlight new insights into how, for whom, and in what contexts a given population-level cancer control strategy is most effective.

Population-level cancer control strategies include public and private policy, federal or state regulation, and media campaigns that aim to influence modifiable behaviors such as tobacco use, sun safety, diet and exercise, and adherence to medical recommendations such as HPV vaccination and cancer screening guidelines. Examples of such strategies include smokefree laws, cigarette taxes, tanning bed warning labels, institutionalized HPV vaccination, menu labeling, zoning laws, school nutrition guidelines, state laws for physical education in schools, and health care reimbursement mandates. In the sandpit, the participants will be encouraged to generate transformative hypotheses about psychological factors that may predict behavioral response to and effectiveness of population-level cancer control strategies.

The three-day sandpit will take place on **May 16-18, 2016**. We anticipate that participants will help to define challenge areas and generate novel hypotheses and ideas that can be tested experimentally or through analysis of extant data sources. Participants will have the opportunity to:

- Network and form collaborations with researchers outside their typical domain and across academic, industry, and community organizations;
- Form collaborative teams and generate project ideas that could be developed into proposals for NCI funding, and
- Receive NCI programmatic guidance.

Applicants from across a range of academic, industry, and community sectors are welcome. Sandpit participants will be expected to engage constructively with each other, the event facilitators, and the director and mentors in order to develop collaborative research ideas. We particularly welcome applications from early- and mid-career researchers interested in contributing their expertise and novel thinking to generate transformative hypotheses and project ideas.

NCI invites prospective participants to apply for attendance with a cover letter (not to exceed 600 words) detailing primary areas of expertise and research interest in cancer prevention and control and CV. **Materials must be received by 3/19/16 via email to: [ncidccpsbrpadvances@mail.nih.gov](mailto:ncidccpsbrpadvances@mail.nih.gov).** The sandpit is an intensive residential event and participants must attend all three days of the event. By submitting an application, you are confirming that you are available for the full three days of the sandpit.

FIGURE: SANDPIT APPLICATION, EVENT, AND RESEARCH APPLICATION PROCESS



## RESEARCH CHALLENGE

Through an intensive, interactive, and collaborative experience, the sandpit will build capacity for research projects that identify individual influences on the effectiveness of population-level strategies that target cancer-related behaviors. Population-level public health strategies are often effective in targeting behavior to prevent and control cancer via public and private policy, federal or state regulation, and media campaigns. Examples of such policies include smokefree laws, cigarette taxes, tanning bed warning labels, institutionalized HPV vaccination, menu labeling, zoning laws, school nutrition guidelines, state laws for physical education in schools, and health care reimbursement mandates. Although the goal of most public health approaches is to achieve the intended behavior change at a population level, it is important to understand the individual influences that drive behavioral response to such strategies to maximize effectiveness.<sup>1,2</sup>

A nascent but growing literature has examined individual influences on behavioral response to population-level cancer control strategies.<sup>3-6</sup> For example, it is well-established that cigarette taxation is an excellent strategy to reduce the prevalence of smoking.<sup>7</sup> However, continued smoking among subsets of the population suggests this strategy is not universally effective.<sup>8</sup> Emerging evidence suggests individual differences in responses to stress may shape smoking behavior within the context of state tobacco taxes, predicting up to a 10 percent differential in quit rates in response to taxes.<sup>3,5</sup> This highlights the opportunity to intervene on those who respond to stress with reinforced smoking behaviors under high cigarette taxation. This might be accomplished by augmenting tobacco taxes with population-level strategies that may better motivate smoking cessation among those with low stress-management resources.<sup>9</sup>

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. In what ways do psychological characteristics shape how people engage with, participate in, and respond to various population-level strategies relevant to cancer control?
2. For whom is a given population-level strategy most effective?
3. For whom does a given population-level strategy unintentionally promote unhealthy (or healthy) behavior, how might negative unintended consequences be ameliorated, and how might unintended positive consequences be leveraged?

## SANDPIT GOAL

The goal of this sandpit is to build capacity for transformative research that examines individual influences on the effectiveness of population-level strategies that target cancer-related behaviors. We seek to encourage multidisciplinary collaborations among scientists with expertise in areas such as (but not limited to): psychological science; policy (e.g., public policy, health policy, environmental policy); legislative and regulatory science; public health; environmental sciences; public/urban planning; neuroscience; decision science; consumer behavior and marketing; organizational behavior; behavioral economics; sociology; cultural anthropology; linguistics; statistics, methodology, and data science; medicine and clinical practice.

## SANDPIT STAGES

The sandpit begins on Monday morning (May 16) and finishes on Wednesday evening (May 18). The process can be broken down into several stages:

- Defining the scope of the challenge
- Sharing understandings of the challenge and expertise brought to the sandpit by participants
- Adopting common languages and terminologies with people from a diverse range of backgrounds and disciplines
- Breaking down preconceptions of researchers and stakeholders
- Taking part in breakout sessions focused on challenges, using creative-thinking techniques
- Capturing outputs in the form of highly innovative feasibility study proposals
- Forming research teams to continue to develop proposals post-sandpit

## SANDPIT COMMISSIONING PROCESS

The sandpit is an intensive, interactive, and free-thinking environment, where a diverse group of 25-30 participants from a range of disciplines and backgrounds get together for three days – away from their everyday worlds. Participants will immerse themselves in a collaborative thinking process in order to construct innovative multidisciplinary approaches. There will be a highly interdisciplinary mix of participants – including active researchers and other potential users of research outcomes – to drive lateral thinking and radical approaches to address research challenges.

The sandpit is an intensive process; however, opportunities for relaxation, reflection, and networking will be built into the agenda. The sandpit will be directed by an esteemed researcher with support from research mentors and the NCI scientific planning committee. Several subject matter experts will participate in the sandpit to provide different perspectives that may help participants develop new questions or novel approaches for potential feasibility studies. More information about the sandpit will be emailed in April 2016 to applicants selected for participation.

## ELIGIBILITY

Participants are selected for the sandpit via a short application. The range of participants selected is intentionally diverse, and it is intended that a wide range of disciplines, including those from private, public, third-sector organizations, and community groups will be represented.

*If you would like to transform the future of population-level cancer control strategies, we invite you to apply – irrespective of your research expertise or background. We are most interested in new ideas, underpinned by radical and innovative thinking.*

We particularly welcome applications from early- and mid-career researchers from U.S.-based research organizations (large or small) that will contribute new expertise and new thinking for cancer prevention and control. We regret that, on this occasion, **pre-doctoral students and applicants based overseas are not eligible to participate in the sandpit.**

Due to the interactive, intensive, and collaborative nature of the sandpit, applicants must have the personal attributes of creativity, openness, and the ability to work effectively as part of a team. A willingness to engage with policymakers, community organizations, government agencies, businesses, and other key stakeholders is essential.

The sandpit is an intensive residential event and **participants must attend all three days of the event.** By submitting an application, you are confirming your availability to participate in the sandpit for three days through adjournment of the event.

NCI intends to support standard-class travel and accommodation costs (as per NIH Travel Policy) for applicants selected to participate and committed to attend the full three days of the sandpit.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

NCI is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with a disability.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

To express interest in participating, please send your CV, names of two professional references, and a cover letter that outlines your relevant research interests. The cover letter should not exceed 600 words, and it should include: your background, interests, and expertise, particularly as they relate to this sandpit topic; a description of how you would explain your research to non-experts; your approach to working in a team; and your experience with or interest in stepping outside your area of expertise to think creatively and innovatively to develop novel approaches with individuals you may not know. Applicants should demonstrate the skills, expertise, and capacity for successful collaboration in this intensive, interactive, and fast-paced event. It is strongly advised that applicants do not merely list their achievements (e.g., publications, research experience, funding track record), but rather, use them to demonstrate innovative and collaborative thinking. No other documentation will be accepted or considered.

## PARTICIPATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE

**The submission deadline for completed applications is noon on March 19, 2016.** Applications should be emailed to [ncidccpsbrpadvances@mail.nih.gov](mailto:ncidccpsbrpadvances@mail.nih.gov). Applications will not be considered after this deadline. Application receipt will be acknowledged via email within two business days; should you not receive acknowledgement, please send an email inquiry to be sure your application was received.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

All applications received by the deadline will be reviewed by the NCI scientific programming committee to ensure a mix of disciplines, skills, and experience. *(Pre-doctoral students and applicants based outside the U.S. are not eligible to participate in the sandpit.)*

The successful applicant will be:

- Curious and willing to explore new or different aspects of a research challenge
- Open to new ideas and new ways of thinking and working
- Intrigued by creative problem-solving approaches to research challenges
- Willing to engage in, and trust, an intense, interactive, rapid-paced, and dynamic scientific and social process
- Capable of contributing constructively and collaboratively with others prior to, during, and after the sandpit
- Able to connect quickly with new people from different disciplinary perspectives, participate in teams, and solve problems together
- Experienced in the relevant research areas

## PSYCHOLOGY AND POPULATION-LEVEL CANCER CONTROL STRATEGIES

NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE, DIVISION OF CANCER CONTROL AND POPULATION SCIENCES



Successful candidates will be notified by email in April. We regret that we will not be able to provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates.

#### NCI POINT OF CONTACT

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Rebecca Ferrer, Ph.D., at [rebecca.ferrer@nih.gov](mailto:rebecca.ferrer@nih.gov).

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