

## **Employment Opportunity**

**Position: YSMENA Peer Research Associate**

**Application Deadline: December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020**

The **Youth Sexual Health and HIV/STI Prevention in Middle Eastern and North African Communities in Ontario (YSMENA Study)** is looking for 9 peer research associates (PRAs) to facilitate focus group sessions.

**The study:** The YSMENA Study is conducted to learn more about the experiences of youth from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region living in Ontario. We want to better understand how their social environments and relationships at home, at school, and/or in the community shape their intersectional identities, and how their identities influence their sexual health. We also want to learn how we can go about developing effective HIV prevention and sexual health promotion programs for young people. PRAs are a key factor for the success of our study and we are looking for you!

In the YSMENA Study, we are committed to working from an inclusive anti-racist, anti-oppression and multilingual participatory framework in addressing the issue of HIV risk and sexual behaviour in MENA youth residing in Ontario encompassing all the determinants of health caused by gender, gender identity, race, class, violence, sexual orientation, religion, culture, language, disability, immigration status and socio-economic circumstances.

Recently, a team from the Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN), the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP) along with academic and community partners across Ontario, were awarded a Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) grant to work on the **YSMENA Study**.

Our research team is seeking highly motivated, enthusiastic individuals to fulfill the role of PRA. This is a casual temporary position (duration approximately three months), with a possible extension for ad hoc consultation. For the purpose of this study, the term “peer” is defined as a person aged between 16 and 29 who is from or their parents are from the Middle East or North Africa. The successful applicant will be involved in the following study, funded by the CIHR:

- Running 2 to 3 focus groups, which is an exciting opportunity that has the potential for great impact and career growth.

The PRA will work with team member(s) to recruit participants and conduct focus group(s) with the aim of gathering feedback on developing effective HIV prevention and sexual health promotion programs for young people which will later be disseminated to MENA youth living in Ontario.

As a PRA, you are to help in recruiting 6-10 participants who meet the following criteria for each focus group:

- Be 16-29 years of age;
- Identify as youth from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region;
- Live in Ontario; and
- Be willing and able to participate in an audio-recorded focus group conducted in English with up to 10 other participants from MENA youth groups.

### Summary of responsibilities for PRAs, but not limited to:

- Attend a 90-minute orientation session that will be held via Zoom on January 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>.
- Complete an online training on “HIV Basics” and “Preventing The Sexual Transmission of HIV” offered by CATIE (PRAs to email the certificates to the Research Coordinator at [ysmenastudy@gmail.com](mailto:ysmenastudy@gmail.com) once completed). **A \$50 honorarium will be provided for completing the online training.**
- Attend a two-day mandatory training that will be held via Zoom on January 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>. **An honorarium of \$200 will be provided.**
- Participate in a weekly check-in meeting with the Research Coordinator via Zoom.
- Participate in small team Zoom meetings with the core research team.
- Once selected, help recruit focus group participants for 2-3 focus groups across Ontario.
- Assist in planning logistics for facilitating the focus groups (administering consent forms, administering and collecting questionnaires, etc.)
- Facilitate 2-3 focus group sessions with two other PRAs. **An honorarium of \$100/per focus group session will be provided.**
- Maintain a research journal to record and summarize notes from each focus group, and record personal reflections after each focus group. A journal template with suggested dates for completion will be provided
- Complete all administrative work associated with the focus group. This includes but is not limited to meeting for a debrief session with the Research Coordinator after each focus group.
- Additional honorarium of **\$100/week** upon completion of assigned duties (recruiting participants, keeping weekly research journals, participating in Zoom meetings, and other duties as needed).

As a PRA, you are a role model and champion. You will work to identify and integrate safe and ethical best practices into your involvement in the YSMENA Study to foster the delivery of safe and exemplary virtual spaces for participants to comfortably share their opinions and reflect on them.

The responsibilities described above are representative and are not to be construed as all-inclusive.

### Qualifications/Skills:

Preference will be given to those who have previous experience as a PRA and/or with focus group training experience.

- Work/volunteer experience and interest in HIV community-based research and youth health
- Sensitivity towards issues of homophobia, racism, sexism and other forms of stigma and discrimination
- Experience in presentation, communication and time management skills
- Experience in conducting focus groups and interviews
- Experience in event planning
- Ability to follow protocol and procedures, including a commitment to confidentiality
- Ability to travel and flexibility in working hours
- Multilingualism is an asset (Arabic or Farsi)
- Professional behaviour and communication that meets the standards of the professional regulatory college or association, as applicable, and the standards of the University of Toronto’s research ethics board.

This position plays a critical role in acting as an advocate for safety and will demonstrate principles, practices and processes that will optimize a safe environment for all

**Work Schedule:**

- Average 4-5 hours per week from first week of January 2021 to end of March 2021 (or until all interviews are conducted and related duties are completed)
- Possible ad hoc hours until May 2021, as project proceeds

To apply for this exciting opportunity, with future potential for career growth in a dynamic organization, please forward your CV and cover letter (as a single file in Word or PDF formats) with subject line “Peer Research Associate YSMENA” via email to [ysmenastudy@gmail.com](mailto:ysmenastudy@gmail.com)

**Address the cover letter to the attention of:**

Human Resources  
Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention  
120 Carlton street, #315  
Toronto, Ontario M5A 4K3

Posting Date: December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Closing Date: December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020

We are committed to reflecting the diversity of the communities we serve, and we strongly encourage applicants who reflect Ontario’s ethnic and cultural diversity and our priority populations. We welcome and encourage applications from all qualified candidates.

Accommodation will be provided on request.

We thank all applicants for their interest; however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

**This position is non-unionized**