1. Objective
The objective of the project is to evaluate the feasibility of conducting a double blind 2-arm controlled trial and to collect pilot data in preparation for a large scale study to fully test the hypothesis that adding relaxation response to acupuncture will have an enhanced effect in HIV+ patients.

2. Research Design
A two-arm double blind randomized trial will be conducted. Patients will be told that the purpose of the study is to evaluate the effect of a non-drug approach in helping them manage their health problems. Patients will be given earphones to listen to tapes of different contents while receiving acupuncture treatment. The intervention group will listen to a tape that contains the instructions to elicit relaxation response on one side and the soft music, routinely played in the clinic, on the other side of the tape. To eliminate the possible effects associated with patients' expectations for improvement from participating in the intervention, the control group will be given earphones to listen to a tape that contains soft music only, on both sides of the tape. For the purpose of blinding, the content of the tapes will neither be revealed to the patients nor the acupuncturists. And the use of earphones will make the blinding possible.

3. Methodology
The trial will be conducted at the AIDS Care Project (ACP), which is an acupuncture clinic providing treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS and is a non-profit public health care organization. The study population will mirror ACP's clients in that HIV+ patients with both genders, different race/ethnicities, first-time and long-time acupuncture users, at any of the HIV/AIDS disease stages, recently defined by the CDC as HIV-positive not AIDS, HIV+ and AIDS status unknown, and CDS defined AIDS, who are receiving acupuncture treatment at the acupuncture clinic will be recruited. HIV/AIDS patients are eligible if they have at least one of the following symptoms which are highly prevalent among HIV/AIDS patients: sinus problem, headache, dental pain/sore or bleeding gums, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, muscle aches, joint pain, neuropathy, weakness, depression, anxiety, and insomnia.

100 patients will be recruited in total, in a 12-month period, with 50 patients assigned to each of the two study groups. A block randomization method with a block size of 4, stratified by gender will be used to assign patients to the two groups. The study measures will include 2 symptom instrument, 3 QoL scales, one social support survey and patients' evaluation of the study. The measures will be assessed at baseline, 4 weeks, 8 weeks, and upon completion of the intervention at 12 weeks.

Ultimately, the qualitative analysis of patients' study evaluation as well as the longitudinal regression analysis results that compare the outcomes between the intervention and control group will be used to help design a future large-scale of the relaxation response intervention among HIV+ patients treated with acupuncture.

4. Findings
The project is in the patient recruitment stage. As of 5/16/04, 93 patients have been enrolled in the study, and 42 finished the 12-week study