Cell Phone Soap Opera Helps Fight HIV

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A New Jersey safe-sex campaign aims to prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among women through a series of 20-minute soap operas that they can watch on their cell phones, The Associated Press (AP) reports.

According to the AP, nurse educator Rachel Jones filmed 12 episodes of the soap opera with a grant from Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey and recently received $2 million from the National Institutes of Health to test the campaign's effectiveness. The study will measure the risk-reduction behavior of women who watch the video against a control group that will receive text messages urging condom use, but no video.

The videos feature "nitty-gritty stories of risk and risk reduction" that women can identify with, said Jones, adding that cell phone viewing ensures privacy and allows viewers to watch the episodes as often as they want.

Following the study, all the participants will get a DVD with all the soap opera videos. The soap opera will also be available online.

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