Like Butt-ah

A smear a year will ease fear

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A swab up the butt may be the next hot ticket as PWAs live longer and face gnarly new foes. Dr. Joel Palefsky, professor at the University of California, San Francisco, reports that a whopping one-third of all HIV positive men nationwide have cell dysplasia, or abnormal growth, in their bums. These lesions are caused by the human papilloma virus, which is acquired through anal penetration and can take up to 10 years to develop into cancer. “We’ve been trying to get a handle on these lesions, which may progress to anal cancer,” Palefsy said. “But we haven’t proved that they do progress to anal cancer. Nobody can do that study.” The reason? Such nasties, when detected, are removed pronto, so research into their long-term plans is impossible. But Palefsky said that anal cancer is definitely on the rise and that more cases in PWAs haven’t been reported because AIDS deaths are typically caused by other conditions. Low-grade lesions, which apparently develop faster in immunocompromised people, should be checked every three to six months, but even people with squeaky clean butts should get a smear once a year.

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