Vaginal Ring May Prevent HIV and Pregnancy for 90 Days

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Early research suggests that the future of both HIV and pregnancy prevention among women may be in an intravaginal ring that works for 90 days. Researchers prevented their findings of laboratory and animal studies of the ring, which emits the antiretroviral tenofovir and the contraceptive levonorgestrel, at the 2013 American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS) Annual Meeting and Exposition in San Antonio.

The investigators created reservoirs in the rings that deliver dosages of the drugs over time. Comparing the rings to a tenofovir gel, they tested how well the rings released the drugs in vitro (in a laboratory setting) as well as in three-month pharmacokinetic (PK) studies in rabbits and sheep. (A PK test examines how a drug is metabolized.)

The PK research showed that the tenofovir that was emitted from the ring was similar or higher than the levels of the drug after applying the gel. Also, the ring released the contraceptive agent at levels that previous studies had shown to prevent pregnancy.

“We saw the urgent need to make this dual-protection intravaginal ring because a majority of the world’s unintended pregnancies occur within resource-poor regions where the HIV/AIDS pandemic is most prevalent, such as sub-Saharan Africa,” Meredith Clark, PhD, of CONRAD, a reproductive health research organization, who helped develop the technology, said in a release. “[Multipurpose prevention technologies] are a relatively new reproductive health technology that we expect will have a good deal of support from potential users, donors and public health organizations, particularly in the developing world. We anticipate a lot of excitement for this product, as it is the first dual-protection ring to be evaluated clinically.”

The researchers anticipate beginning Phase I human trials in women in early 2014.

To read the release, click here.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/vaginal-ring-24836-5668