

## Male circumcision reduces transmission of HPV to female partners

Randomised trials show that male circumcision reduces the prevalence and incidence of high-risk human papillomavirus (HPV) infection in men (1). However, the question was whether it also reduces the prevalence and incidence of high-risk HPV in the female partners of these men. In Rakai, Uganda, two randomised controlled trials of male circumcision were conducted between 2003 and 2006. HIV-negative men and their female partners were enrolled. Men were assigned to undergo circumcision immediately (intervention) or after 24 months (control). HIV-uninfected female partners (648 of men from the intervention group, and 597 of men in the control group) were simultaneously enrolled and provided interview information and self-collected vaginal swabs which were tested for high-risk HPV (2). The high-risk HIV incidence during the study was 20.7 per 100 person-years of follow-up in the intervention group, compared to 26.9

in the control group (incidence rate ratio = 0.77, 95% CI 0.63-0.93). These findings indicate that male circumcision modestly reduces the risk of transmitting high-risk HPV infections in female partners. However, promotion of safe sex practices needs to be continued, as well as provision of vaccines for HPV prevention.

### References:

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2. Wawer MJ, Tobian AA, Kigozi G, et. al. Effect of circumcision of HIV-negative men on transmission of human papillomavirus to HIV-negative women: a randomised trial in Rakai, Uganda. *Lancet*. 2011;377(9761):209-18.