

Headline	New vaginal ring borrows from birth control concept in fight against AIDS	Language	English
Date	14 Jun 2010	Page No	C10
MediaTitle	Borneo Post (KK)	Article Size	168 cm²
Section	Leisure	Color	Black/white
Journalist	N/A	ADValue	967
Frequency	Daily (EM)	PRValue	2,902
Circ / Read	83,120 / 166,173		



New vaginal ring borrows from birth control concept in fight against AIDS

WASHINGTON: A non-profit that develops drugs against HIV/AIDS said it is launching the first study in Africa of a groundbreaking device to fight AIDS: a vaginal ring with a difference.

Where most vaginal rings deliver contraceptive hormones, the one developed by the International Partnership for Microbicides (IPM) discreetly releases antiretrovirals to women who use it.

IPM will launch double-blind randomised, placebo-

controlled studies of the ring containing 25 milligrams of the new antiretroviral drug dapivirine at research centres in southern and eastern Africa, where the AIDS epidemic is hitting hardest.

Recent data released by the World Health Organisation (WHO) show HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death globally in women 15 to 44 years old.

In Africa, HIV/AIDS is the single most important cause of disease for a wider range of women, aged 15-59.

For the trials of IPM's vaginal ring, some 280 healthy, sexually-active, HIV-negative women will be given either the dapivirine ring or a placebo ring, which they will have to replace every month during the three-month study.

They will also be given condoms and counselling on how to prevent AIDS.

The studies will measure the acceptability of the vaginal ring and whether the women can and will correctly use the once-monthly product.

"You have to make sure that a product is acceptable

before you test its efficacy, because if people don't like the product, what's the point?" Pamela Norick, a spokeswoman for IPM, told AFP at the Women Deliver health conference in Washington.

Women are already being enrolled for several studies of the ring in South Africa, and IPM has "been working in many other countries in eastern and southern Africa where we are waiting for regulatory approval before we begin studies there," Zeda Rosenberg, CEO of IPM, told AFP.