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Clinical trial of HIV gel suspended

WASHINGTON: In a major setback for AIDS prevention research, a clinical trial of a new vaginal gel supposed to reduce HIV infections has been suspended after studies showed it to be ineffective.

Researchers from the Microbicide Trials Network, set up by the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), expressed surprise at the outcome as a previous study on a gel containing the drug tenofovir had shown encouraging results.

Researchers are striving to produce a gel or a pill that protects women against HIV infection but still allows them to get pregnant so it can be used in sub-Saharan Africa and other places where condom use can be a problem. — AFP