

# **PC15 Acceptability of using a vaginal gel before sex in Umkanyakude District of KwaZulu Natal**

**Mitzy Gafos, Misiwe Mzimela**

## **ABSTRACT TEXT**

### Background:

A pilot study was conducted in the Umkanykude district, KwaZulu Natal to assess barriers to gel use (placebo) in preparation for the Microbicides Development Programme (MDP) phase III microbicide trial.

### Methodology:

Women were recruited from local family planning clinics, and asked to vaginally insert a placebo gel before each sex act. After 4 weeks of gel use a questionnaire on the acceptability of gel use was administered during an interview with a counsellor. 50 women and 7 of their male partners participated in in-depth interviews about their experiences of the gel.

### Results:

50 of 51 women enrolled attended the 4 week follow-up. 35 of the 50 reported always using the gel, and only 1 woman never used it. Only 2 found the gel difficult to insert and 1 further woman reported that it was inconvenient to do so. 27 women said the gel affected sex, and 26 of these reported that it made sex more enjoyable. When asked what they most liked about the gel 33 stated the lubrication as this increased sexual pleasure. 33 women told their male partners they were using the gel, and of these males, 14 told their partners that they liked gel, 15 were indifferent and only 4 did not like gel as it was too wet. 48 women said they would be willing to use the gel for a longer period of time.

### Conclusion:

There were no substantial barriers to gel use in this population expressed by women or their male partners, and it is planned to start enrolling to the Phase III trial early in 2006.

**Ms Mitzy Gafos** - Microbicide Study Project Leader: Africa Centre For Health And Population Studies, [mgafos@africacentre.ac.za](mailto:mgafos@africacentre.ac.za), tel +27 35 550 7500, fax +27 35 550 7565, PO Box 198, Mtubatuba 3935, KWAZULU NATAL, 3935, SOUTH AFRICA