

Evidence Update

HIV/AIDS Series

October 2004

If women use the microbicide nonoxynol-9 during vaginal sex with men, does it protect them from HIV?

Nonoxynol-9 does not protect women from HIV infection, and also causes genital lesions.

Inclusion criteria

Studies:

Randomized controlled trials.

Participants:

Women in any setting or country.

Intervention:

Nonoxynol-9 (N-9) containing vaginal microbicides.

Outcomes:

New infections with HIV; genital lesions.

Results

- Five trials were included in the review, and four contributed to a meta-analysis; two trials were adequately concealed.
- Combined data from four trials (n=3454) shows the risk of HIV infection was not reduced among women using N-9 (relative risk 1.12, 95% confidence interval 0.88 to 1.42).
- Data from three trials (n=1795) showed the risk of genital lesions was statistically significantly greater among women using N-9 (relative risk 1.18, 95% confidence interval 1.02 to 1.36).

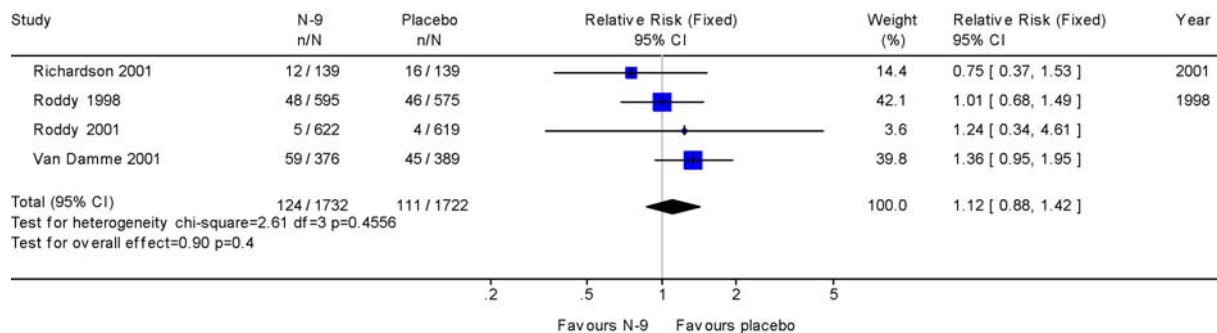


DFID Department for
International
Development

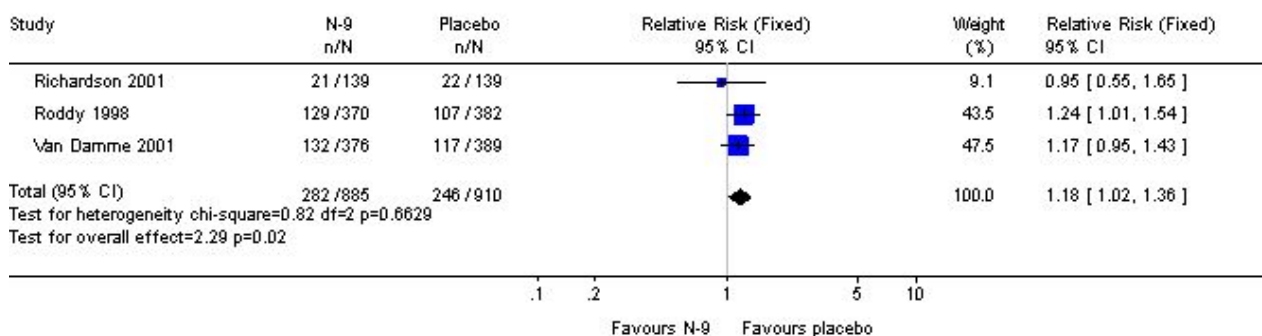
Adapted from Wilkinson D, Ramjee G, Tholandi M, Rutherford G. Nonoxynol-9 for preventing vaginal acquisition of HIV infection by women from men (Cochrane Review). In: *The Cochrane Library*, Issue 3, 2004. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Produced by the Effective Health Care Alliance Programme (<http://www.liv.ac.uk/evidence>), Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, supported by the Department for International Development UK.

Review: Nonoxynol-9 for preventing vaginal acquisition of HIV infection by women from men
 Comparison: 01 N-9 vs placebo
 Outcome: 01 HIV infection



Review: Nonoxynol-9 for preventing vaginal acquisition of HIV infection by women from men
 Comparison: 01 N-9 vs placebo
 Outcome: 02 Genital lesion



Authors' conclusions

Implications for practice:

Nonoxynol-9 does not reduce the risk of women acquiring HIV infection from men, and its use is associated with a higher risk of genital lesions in women.

Implications for research:

Given the risk of harm to women, no further trials of N-9 as prophylaxis against HIV are warranted.