

Gafos, M. J. (2008). Encouraging men to initiate discussion about microbicide trial participation with their partners. Experiences of a football tournament hosted by the mdp301 clinical trial in the umkhanyakude district of northern kwazulu natal. Microbicides 2008. Delhi.

Background: The debate as to whether microbicides should be marketed as 'female-controlled' or 'female-used' continues. Experiences at the site demonstrate that male partner involvement in microbicide research greatly increases adherence and acceptability of gel use. The task of informing and directly involving men in microbicide research is often left up to female participants. In order to share this burden, we investigated ways of encouraging men to be the conduit of information about microbicide research to their female partners and other men. Methods: The site team hosted an MDP football tournament, and then conducted focus group discussions with 5 football teams, and a community participatory workshop with the winning team. The data from these sessions was analysed using grounded theory to assess male views and perceptions of their role in microbicide research. Result: The majority of the young men in the football teams had a good understanding of HIV, but little knowledge about microbicides. Those with information had heard about microbicides at the football tournament, at community events or from female family members. The majority liked the idea of microbicides mainly for the inverse reasons to why they claimed men don't use condoms: the potential of a non-contraceptive microbicide, the lack of a physical barrier during sex, female-used, and the convenience of a gel. The men perceived themselves as having an important role in microbicide research, and about 80% said that they would like their female partners to join the microbicide trial. Conclusions: Football is another effective way of engaging young men in microbicide research and in encouraging men to take ownership of their role in microbicides. Encouraging men to be the instigators of microbicide trial participation could support women who want to join the trials by sharing the burden of explanation and initiation between men and women.