NEW STUDY SHOWS HIV-POSITIVE WOMEN CAN SAFELY USE IUDS

In contrast to current guidelines from the World Health Organization, a new study has found that HIV-positive women can "safely use the intrauterine device (IUD) for contraception, provided they see a doctor regularly," Reuters Health reports.

Researchers at Family Health International (FHI) inserted the device in 636 women in Nairobi, Kenya - 156 of whom were infected with HIV - and examined any complications at one, four and 24 months after insertion. There was little difference in any side effects between HIV-positive women and HIV-negative women. The study, published in the August issue of the British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, also showed that HIV-positive women did not shed more HIV from their cervix four months after IUD insertion, compared to HIV-negative women. Previous studies have shown that increased viral shedding occurs with the use of oral contraceptives and Depo-Provera, an injectable contraceptive.

The study, however, did find that women with gonorrhea or chlamydia were more likely to develop IUD complications, a conclusion on par with guidelines recommending that women with STDs besides HIV avoid IUDs. The researchers concluded, "What this study suggests is that you need to avoid IUD use in women with a cervical infection but not women with HIV infection. Women with cervical infections are at increased risk of complications; women with HIV infection are not"


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