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CAPRISA provides ground-breaking evidence that the use of an antiretroviral drug (Tenofovir) in the form of a vaginal gel can prevent HIV infections in women.

London, July 20, 2009. The MDP partners congratulate the trial team and study participants on successfully completing the CAPRISA 004 trial of the 1% tenofovir microbicide gel, and are delighted to see proof for the concept of microbicides.

CAPRISA 004 was a phase IIb trial conducted in South Africa involving 889 HIV negative women. The trial assessed the effectiveness and safety of a vaginal gel containing the antiretroviral drug tenofovir, for the prevention of vaginally acquired HIV infection. The trial demonstrated that after 30 months of gel use, women who used 1% tenofovir gel had 39 percent fewer HIV infections compared to women who used the placebo gel during sex acts.

This is a major scientific breakthrough for microbicide research, and for antiretroviral prophylaxis. “Excited – yes! Ready to roll out – not quite” said Dr Sheena McCormack, MDP 301 Chief Investigator. Drug development is a long process and additional evidence from further trials in more diverse populations will be required to confirm the CAPRISA result before tenofovir gel could be made widely available as a HIV prevention option. “Caprisa 004 is a step in the right direction and MDP is ready to get on that path!'” added Dr McCormack.

The MDP looks forward to the results of the VOICE (Vagina and Oral Interventions to Control the Epidemic) trial which is evaluating the same candidate microbicide used every day, and the trials of oral antiretroviral prophylaxis such as iPrEx and FemPrep.

There continues to be an urgent need for additional HIV prevention options for women and men, and this exciting result will provide momentum to the search for safe, effective and acceptable microbicides. The MDP is ready to play its part in the future trials required.

For more information on the CAPRISA study visit http://www.caprisa.org

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