

ABSTRACT

Background

Two decades of research on topical microbicides for prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) have had limited success. However, new microbicide randomised controlled trial (RCT) data have recently been published; but these have not yet been the subject of a systematic review.

Objectives

To determine the effects of topical microbicides for prevention of the acquisition of STIs, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, by women from men and by men who have sex with men (MSM).

Search methods

In July 2011 we searched the Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (CENTRAL), PubMed, EMBASE, Web of Science, NLM Gateway, CLIB, AIDS Education Global Information System, ClinicalTrials.gov and the World Health Organization (WHO) International Clinical Trials Registry Platform; handsearched reference lists of relevant articles and contacted relevant organisations and experts.

Selection criteria

RCTs of topical microbicides (except Nonoxynol-9) in sexually active, HIV-negative women or MSM. We excluded Nonoxynol-9 because previous systematic reviews showed that it does not have a significant effect on HIV or STIs.

Data collection and analysis

We assessed study eligibility, extracted data and assessed risk of bias in duplicate; resolving differences by discussion and consensus. We then conducted fixed-effect meta-analysis, stratified by type of microbicide.