

# SWISS STUDY SUGGESTS CONDOM USE NOT NECESSARY FOR SOME HIV-POSITIVE PATIENTS

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The United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organization (WHO) issued a joint statement on 1 February regarding the use of condoms as a measure of protection against the AIDS virus [1]. The statement followed an article by Switzerland's Federal AIDS Commission, which reviewed a large body of literature to conclude that certain HIV-positive people may be able to have sexual intercourse with their seronegative partners without risk of transmitting the virus. The authors of the Swiss article specified three prerequisites for this conclusion: that the HIV-positive individuals have had undetectable viral load in the blood for at least six months; have adhered strictly to their anti-retroviral treatment; and are free of other sexually transmitted infections. The authors stressed that their conclusion was targeted only at those fulfilling these criteria, and that the decision on whether or not to have sexual intercourse without the protection of a condom should always be that of the seronegative partner.

The UNAIDS/WHO statement reiterated that the two organisations had not changed their guidance that HIV prevention should take a comprehensive approach, including the correct and consistent use of condoms. The statement also underlined that although research cited in the article has shown that an undetectable viral load in blood significantly reduces the risk of transmitting HIV, it has yet to be proven that it completely eliminates that risk.

### References

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2. Vernazza P, Hirschel B, Bernasconi E, Flepp M. Les personnes séropositives ne souffrant d'aucune autre MST et suivant un traitement antirétroviral efficace ne transmettent pas le VIH par voie sexuelle [In French]. *Bull Med Suisses*. 2008(05):165-169. Available from: <http://www.saez.ch>

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