

TREATMENT INFORMATION GROUP
thinking about AIDS drugs

www.tig.org.za • arbrink@iafrica.com • tel / fax +27(0)21 4264513

Postnet Suite 273 Private Bag XI Vloeberg 8018

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Dr Willem Daniel Francois Venter
President: Southern African HIV/AIDS Clinicians Society
Reproductive Health & HIV Research Unit
Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology
9th Floor, Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital
Old Potch Road
Soweto
Johannesburg
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And to cc list

Dear Dr Venter

A QUESTION OF NIPPLES

As undoubtedly our country's most extremely knowledgeable expert working in the field of HIV/AIDS, I wonder if you could advise me on something.

The **Treatment Information Group** is a public interest initiative to promote *research-based* debate of antiretroviral drug policy, alternative non-toxic treatment approaches to AIDS, and HIV testing issues in South Africa. The TIG has entered into a strategic alliance with the **Dr. Rath Health Foundation Africa** to achieve this.

The Terraces, 34 Bree Street, Cape Town
www.dr-rath-foundation.org.za

Since AIDS experts warn that all of a sudden, for the first time in the history of the world, a woman can kill her baby by breastfeeding it, thereby infecting it with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS (so it's better to give babies scientifically-formulated Nestlé powder milk, made in factories and guaranteed virus-free), I was wondering whether licking and sucking the nipples of our girlfriends can kill us too. (You know how we boys enjoy this.)

If so, would it be correct to say that African nipples pose an especially deadly hazard to the public in view of the HSRC's report in December that 24.4% of African women aged between 15 and 49 are infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS – and a really phenomenal 37.9% of them aged between 25 and 29?

What do you say we nip them off at birth as a preventative measure, just as you propose we should routinely slice off most of the erogenous tissue from baby penises to save our country from the AIDS crisis, since it 'decreases the infection rate'?

The TAC's Zackie Achmat immediately agreed with you that cutting off our end section is a fantastic way to fight AIDS. (Didn't help him much though, did it now?!) Even though he describes himself as 'scientifically illiterate', he's been on the World Health Organization's 'HIV Strategic and Technical Committee' since 2004, so you have an internationally recognized AIDS expert behind you in making your outstanding proposal.

Please don't listen to anyone who says that only a mentally deranged person would come up with such a sick and depraved idea. The procedure has a perfectly respectable history in English and American medicine, and well into modern times too:

In their paper 'Immediate Circumcision of the Newborn Male', published in 1953 in the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* (65:1-11), Miller and Snyder wrote that 'Longevity, immunity to nearly all physical and mental illness, increased physical vigor, etc., are all attributed to this practice.' Did you know that it even results in an 'increase in the male libido'?

And as recently as 1970, Volume 2 of *Campbell's Urology*, published by the eminent medical publishing house WB Saunders Company in Philadelphia, noted at page 1836 that 'Malnutrition, epistaxis [*nosebleed*], convulsions, night terrors, chorea [*spastic jerking of the head and limbs*], and epilepsy' are all illnesses that can be avoided by cutting it off.

Never mind the disagreement of the American Academy of Pediatrics the following year concerning this valuable operation: 'There are no valid medical indications for circumcision in the neonatal period.' You know better than anyone that we've got a brand new reason for it now, which they never thought of then, and it's called the AIDS pandemic.

If the half-cocked guys you clip later come back complaining that they do it in black and white instead of 120% finely-hued, lush technicolour, missing about 10 000 uniquely sensitive and densely-packed nerve-endings in the moving part of the deal that you threw into the waste disposal bin, with the slick tip of their remaining gear being converted from a lively internal organ to an external one all dried out and leathery, you can always tell them that it's just the sort of sacrifice we have to make when there's a war to fight against the scourge. It's obviously a price well worth paying to avoid being killed by the virus.

In times like these there's clearly no time to waste pondering the extraordinary complexity and physiological importance of that highly vascularized piece at the end of things, unusually richly supplied with oxygen to keep all those specially coiled nerves keen, and the parcel wrapped beneath soft and silky, in fact the whole marvellous genius of the arrangement, which neurologists and urologists have only begun appreciating and reporting in their specialist journals in the last decade or so. You're absolutely right to recommend that to fight the virus we need to take tough measures with our scissors.

What's more it's good for our moral characters too. This was spelt out in the 12th century by the Jewish scholar Moses Maimonides in his *Guide of the Perplexed*, in which he explained that 'one of the reasons for it is, in my opinion, the wish to bring about a decrease in sexual intercourse and a weakening of the organ in question, so that this activity be diminished and the organ be in as quiet a state as possible. It has been thought that circumcision perfects what is defective congenitally. ... To the totality of purposes of the perfect Law there belong the abandonment, depreciation, and restraint of desires in so far as possible. You know already that most of the lusts and licentiousness of the multitude consist in an appetite for eating, drinking and sexual intercourse. ... To the totality of intentions of the Law there belong gentleness and docility; man should not be hard and rough, but responsive, obedient, acquiescent, and docile.'

I'm sure that as a Christian you'll agree that quietening the bang is still as good a way as ever to inculcate moral values. And the need has never been greater in South Africa since the blacks took over.

Your colleague Jerry Coovadia, Professor of HIV/AIDS Research at the Nelson R Mandela Medical School in Durban, identified the problem precisely in a speech at Wits University on 24 June 2003: it's the 'unbridled sexuality ... of newly independent people ... especially the promiscuity of men', he said, that's causing the fatherland to 'stagger under the massive weight of AIDS ... ripping through millions of our people'. (Of course by 'newly independent people' and 'our people', we all know who he's referring to, and it's certainly not sexually continent whites like us or Indians like him.)

Judge Cameron had exactly the same thoughts in an interview published in the *Daily Dispatch* on 13 November 2001. Talking 'about how promiscuity ... contributed to its spread' (the spread of AIDS), he asked tellingly: 'Do you think sexual practice among African men has contributed?'

So clearly you're onto a good practical way to fight AIDS, since all one has to do is roll up one's sleeves and get chopping.

What I just can't understand is why none of you AIDS experts have thought of cauterizing baby vaginas with hot irons to stop once and for all those unnecessary vaginal secretions where the AIDS virus lurks, just like under male foreskins. I'm referring to that dreadful place that females have which you AIDS experts rightly point out gives babies HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, as they glide through it on their way into the world, and also men dipping in – that septic pit of disease among African women, the HSRC has recently found, but not white women, whose private parts have the virus in them in only 0,6% of cases. And although we white guys like our girls runny in the middle, all the white AIDS experts say that that blacks go for dry sex in any case.

To come back to my main point: it seems to me that removing the nipples of little girls before they're big enough to protest would be another way for you to make money and save lives at the same time!

Of course you're jolly wise picking on babies to do this stuff to, because obviously if you tried pulling this stunt on a guy your own size he'd take your glasses off and crunch them under his heel before smashing your face in with a brick.

Anyway, please let me know if nipples are safe for nibbling with our lips and tongues, particularly African ones, and if not, whether it wouldn't be best to snip them all off at birth as you do the best bit* of little boys' penises.

Just ignore the screaming.

Thanks.

ADV ANTHONY BRINK

*www.cirp.org/library/

Cc: Government, ANC, media, other interested parties and online at ww.tig.org.za