

Seaweed Gel May Prevent Transmission; 165 Women Taking Part in

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A new study of a seaweed gel that researchers hope will prevent the sexual transmission of HIV involves 165 women in Chiang Rai, Thailand. Dr. Khanchit Limpkanjanawat, the co-director of the HIV/AIDS Collaboration, which is being conducted with the Population Council, said the study will assess the safety of "carraguard," which is also known as lambda-carrageenan or PC-515. While the gel would not destroy HIV, the researchers hope it will keep the virus from entering blood cells. Speaking at a press conference to mark a decade of collaboration between the Thai Health Ministry and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. Khanchit said the participants were married women over the age of 18 with low HIV risk and whose husbands do not have any sexually transmitted diseases. Half of the women will receive the seaweed gel, while the other half will be given a comparative product. Thus far, no side effects have been reported. According to the CDC's Dr. Helene Gayle, if the product works, it will be necessary to work out an agreement with the various partners involved to make sure the gel is available at a reasonable price in all nations.

[See the topic on aegis.org](http://www.aegis.org)