

A surgical strike against AIDS

Circumcision is an, ahem, uncomfortable topic. The traditional Jewish bris calls this medical procedure a sign of blessing on the newcomer. Ten out of 10 male infants seem to disagree.

During World War II, American soldiers were often circumcised to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. From the 1950s to the mid-1970s, the circumcision of American newborn boys became increasingly common. Then a minor backlash set in, and circumcision rates declined for a time. Today, the American Academy of Pediatrics has a hands-off policy, leaving the decision up to parents. But suddenly, Uncle Irving seems pretty wise. Studies in Uganda, Kenya and South Africa indicate that circumcision halves the risk of adult males contracting HIV through heterosexual intercourse...

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