



## WOMEN'S HEALTH IN WOMEN'S HANDS COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

### RESEARCH PROJECT OVERVIEW

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Title:	<b>EXAMINING THE ABILITY OF HSV2 THERAPY TO REDUCE HIV TARGET CELL NUMBERS IN THE CERVIX OF HSV2 INFECTED WOMEN</b>
Principal Investigator(s):	Dr. Rupert Kaul
Co-Investigator(s):	Wangari Tharao
Project Duration/ Funding:	Funder: CIHR, Emerging Team Grants Duration: 2008 - 2013

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#### Project Summary:

Research shows that infection by Herpes simplex virus type 2 (HSV2), the most common cause of genital herpes, increases a woman's risk of HIV acquisition from 3-6 fold; recent work has demonstrated that HSV2-infected women have increased numbers of HIV "target cells" (CD4 T cells and dendritic cells) in the cervical mucosa, even in the absence of HSV2 reactivation. However, a recent clinical trial showed no impact on HIV acquisition rates of HSV2 suppression with valacyclovir, a safe and well-tolerated oral medication that is Health Canada approved for herpes suppression. The reasons for this negative result are being actively debated in the HIV research community, and we hypothesize that it may have been due to a failure of valacyclovir treatment to reverse HSV2-associated mucosal immune changes.

This study will examine the effect of valacyclovir treatment on cervical immunology.