

New concepts in contraception

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Latest research into dual-purpose contraceptives and non-hormonal contraception will be presented tomorrow at a major scientific conference in Melbourne.

Laureate Professor John Aitken from the University of Newcastle and Dr Eva Dimitriadis from Prince Henry's Institute of Medical Research will address the annual scientific conference of the Society for Reproductive Biology (SRB).

Professor Aitken, a world-leader in reproductive biology, will discuss the need to develop novel, safe, effective, dual-purpose contraceptive agents that combine the prevention of pregnancy with protection against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

His research has explored the development of a contraceptive agent that immobilises – but does not kill – sperm. The agent also possesses microbicidal activity simultaneously reducing the risk of infection with sexually transmitted diseases, such as Chlamydia.

At the meeting Dr Eva Dimitriadis, Senior Research Officer at Prince Henry's Institute (PHI), will be presenting a novel approach for new non-hormonal contraceptives for women.

Her work builds upon the need and community interest to widen the choice of available female contraceptive methods and in developing approaches that do not rely upon a woman taking potent hormones each day.

Dr Eva Dimitriadis and her colleagues in the Uterine Biology Group at PHI have identified several "pregnancy blocking" molecules that keep the uterus in a state that prevents pregnancy. Her findings in mice provide proof of principle of this alternative contraception approach and further development is planned.

Since a fertile woman's uterus is only receptive to a pregnancy for a few days each month a further potential advantage is that the approach would only need to be timed during this key period.

Source: Research Australia

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