

# AIDS research reveals a lack of family-planning programs in Uganda

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University of Alberta graduate student Jennifer Heys wants to make her message clear: there needs to be more education in Ugandan communities about contraception.

Heys' research, on HIV-positive individuals and their desire to bear more children, was read by experts from all over the world who gathered last week at the International Conference on [Family Planning](#) in Kampala, Uganda.

Heys, who studied at the School of Public Health, spent six months interviewing 421 people who lived in rural and semi-urban communities in Uganda. Of that group 199 were [HIV](#) positive.

Heys' study was to find out if there was a difference between HIV-positive and HIV-negative individuals in regard to their desire to have more children. She found that those who were HIV positive were more likely to want to stop having children.

"The odds of wanting to stop child bearing were 6.25 times greater compared to those who were HIV negative."

While she was encouraged by these results, Heys says the problem is a lack of education about contraception as most of the people she spoke with were not using what is called "dual protection." This is done by using two [contraceptives](#), like condoms and Depo-Provera, a hormone injection that prevents pregnancy and needs to be administered every

three months.

Heys says of the 421 people, only eight were using two contraceptives and many others relied only on condoms. Heys says this is problematic because, while condoms are important for reducing [HIV transmission](#), she found that when used alone, the condoms were often used incorrectly and, therefore, not a highly effective method of contraception. Some of the interview subjects were not using any [contraception](#) at all.

Heys believes the root of the problem is a lack of knowledge about dual protection. She also says there are a lot of misconceptions.

"Some people thought condoms or oral contraceptives could cause cancer. They also had this idea that if you took pills, oral contraceptives, you wouldn't be able to work in your field as you would be very weak and very tired."

Heys' research was published this month in a special supplement of the journal, *AIDS*.

Source: University of Alberta ([news](#) : [web](#))

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