

S. Africa halts rollout of circumcision device

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(AP) -- The South African government has halted the rollout of a controversial male circumcision device, health department spokesman Fidel Hadebe said Wednesday.

Hadebe said more research was needed into the plastic device, known as Tara Klamps, which has been used in the circumcisions of 9,000 South African men since April as part of an initiative to stop the spread of Aids.

Treatment Action Campaign, a Cape Town-based advocacy group for people with HIV, welcomed the government's decision, calling the device dangerous and painful.

South Africa has more people living with [HIV](#) than anywhere else in the world, with 5.7 million of 50 million people infected.

Circumcision, in conjunction with using condoms and remaining faithful to one partner, has been shown to cut the risk of contracting the AIDS virus by as much as 60 percent.

While circumcision reduces the risk of [HIV transmission](#), the devices cause excessive swelling and [severe pain](#), said Lihle Dlamini, the deputy secretary general of Treatment Action Campaign.

The director of KwaZulu-Natal's male medical circumcision division, however, said they will continue to purchase the circumcision device. In October, the KwaZulu-Natal government bought 22,500 devices,

director Sandile Tshabalala said.

He said the clamp "is as good as any other method."

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