

Breakthrough of the Year

A UNC-led team has identified a protocol that prevents the transmission of HIV, the AIDS-causing virus—a feat once considered an impossible dream.

In a National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases-funded study of 2,000 couples, epidemiology professor Dr. Myron Cohen and colleagues found starting antiretroviral therapy in infected partners with relatively healthy immune systems reduced HIV transmission by 96 percent. The one identified transmission likely occurred close to the time of study enrollment.

The findings were lauded as *Science* magazine’s “Breakthrough of the Year” in December 2011 (<http://tinyurl.com/cohen-breakthrough>).

“As researchers in labs, we can discover pills to improve individual health, but it’s different to develop a strategy that touches public health,” Cohen says. “This work is an unbelievable example of bench to bedside to public health.”

In April, Cohen’s research won top honor in the Clinical Research Forum’s inaugural Top 10 Clinical Research Achievement Awards. The forum is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing national leadership in clinical research and is comprised of the nation’s most prestigious academic medical centers and health systems.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/UNC-spotlight>.

—Whitney L.J. Howell

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