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Bacterial Infections in low socio-economic women of rural India

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Infectious vaginitis is one of the most common health problem in women of rural India. Bacterial vaginosis (BV), *Candida* species and *Trichomonas vaginalis* are responsible for 90% of infectious vaginitis. The BD Affirm VPIII rapid microbial identification test (Becton, Dickinson, Sparks, MD) is multianalyte, nucleic acid probe based assay system designed to enable the identification and differentiation of organisms associated with vaginitis (*Gardnerella vaginalis*, *Candida* spp and *Trichomonas vaginalis*). The objective of our study was to detect reproductive tract infections (RTIs) such as B. Vaginosis, *Candida* sp, T. Vaginalis, Syphilis in low socio-economic women of rural India. The study was approved by Institutional ethics committee. Total 705 women were screened at camps for RTIs from low socioeconomic group of rural Maharashtra (Raigad, Pune, Thane district). Enrollment of 263 participants in the age group of 18-60 years was done as per eligibility criteria. At each camp site, counseling session was carried out in the form of group discussion and one to one counseling for RTIs and Pap smear, cervical cancer, anemia and contraception. After per speculum examination, vaginal smears with spatula and swab were collected, followed by VIA and bimanual examination. Manual LBC method was used to prepare Pap slides and for staining as per the regular Pap staining procedure. Free Treatment for RTIs was given by the Gynecologist. Out of enrolled cases, 95% of women were never screened for RTIs in their lifetime. 85 women participants had Bacterial Vaginosis. *Candida* was present in 25 participants. *Trichomonas* was present in one case. All participants who had infection were treated. Syphilis card test was positive in 4 participants. All syphilis positive participants were referred to nearby general hospital. We observed that the Affirm VPIII assay (BD) using a DNA hybridization technique was more useful in identifying *G. vaginalis*, *Candida* species, and *T vaginalis*. The Affirm test is a quick tool that can help Gynecologists to diagnose and treat patients with infectious vaginitis as point of care. Additional benefits of this Affirm test are total time-to-results under 45 minutes, the simple, automated procedure can be performed with minimal training, ready to read, the elimination of the need for special microscopy skills.

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