Reviewer's report

Title: Identification and characterization of vaginal lactobacilli from South African women

Version: 2 Date: 24 November 2012

Reviewer: Sujatha Srinivasan

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The authors have addressed the majority of comments satisfactorily and the manuscript is much improved from the original version. Addition of Table 1 with study participant characteristics is useful.

Some minor essential clarifications remain.

1. In the results section of the abstract, the authors state that L. crispatus, L. iners, L. jensenii and L. gasseri were the predominant species in South African women. Why was L. vaginalis not included in this list given both L. jensenii and L. vaginalis were present in 5 women each? It would be better to tone down the statement that these were the dominant lactobacilli in South African women given that this is a small sample size.

2. In the conclusion section of the abstract, the word “microbiota” should be changed to “species.” Microbiota typically refers to all bacteria. This comes up later in the manuscript as well.

3. The manuscript will benefit further from editing for language. For example in the Introduction “Some studies report differences in the composition of vaginal microbiota between ethnicity in North America such as a higher…..” This sentence is confusing. There are occasional typos.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.