Reviewer's report

Title: Bacterial vaginosis and vaginal flora patterns in patients presenting with vaginal discharge syndrome in The Gambia, West Africa

Version: 1 Date: 31 October 2004

Reviewer: Marleen Temmerman

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. The literature review and references list is outdated: the authors include only 2 references of > the year 2000, while only in 2004 over 20 papers have been published on bacterial vaginosis. The reference list surely needs to be updated.

2. BV has been associated with HIV acquisition and shedding. In this paper, the authors do not mention HIV status, while the HIV prevalence might be high in their population. Please comment.

3. Table 3 reports p values between lactobacilli and genital micro-organisms whereby 3 columns are compared. Do the p values refer to a chi square for trends? or do the authors compare the last column with the first one? please explain the relation between the fischer exact test and the columns.

4. On page 14 the authors state that the reasons for the higher BV rates in African women are not known. There might be indeed no evidence based data, but many authors have reported an association between bv and genital douching. The authors should at least refer to some of these papers and discuss the (lack of) evidence.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

none