Reviewer’s report

Title: Chlamydia and gonorrhoea in pregnant Botswana women: Time to discard the syndromic approach?

Version: 1 Date: 11 December 2006

Reviewer: Inger Johanne Bakken

Reviewer’s report:

General

This paper describes a study from Botswana where pregnant women have been tested for C trachomatis, N gonorrheae, T vaginalis, bacterial vaginosis, and Candida species. Infected women received appropriate treatment. The objective of the study was to evaluate the “syndromic approach” which is currently used for management of cervicitis in developing countries. The prevalence of infection was high in this study.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
- In this study, women are tested for a variety of infections, but the main focus is on Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea (Background, Results and Discussion). The Abstract should be written accordingly.
- Abstract, results, first sentence. “The prevalence of cervical infection was 10%” is not sufficiently specific. Should state the prevalence of Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea separately.
- State clearly in the Background that the women in the study were actually tested for infections in the present study.
- How was the “convenient sample of the attendees” selected (p 5)? What was the proportion of women included to the study?

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
- p 3 Background, first paragraph: “…major causes of morbidity” – What kind of morbidity?
- p 4 “However, the new recommendations…” Citation needed.
- p 4 “RTI” not defined. Is this abbreviation necessary?
- p 4 “As the nurses will not ignore…” – seems unnecessary. Could be removed, start sentence at “Asymptomatic women…”
- p 5 “all antenatal care attendees who attended” – should be rewritten
- p 7 “multiple logistic regression”, multivariate is used later on
- Results p 7, how many women had more than one infection?
- Results p 7, complaints by positivity should be stated
- P 8 “These women are most likely to present symptoms…”, redundant
- Rearrange citations p 9, lines 4 and 5 from below (Two sentences, starting with “In our study…”)
- Table 1. I would prefer to see the N for the Infected and Uninfected groups, not only the percentages. The column with the heading N could accordingly be removed

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
- The Background section could improve by restructuring. For instance, the “Syndromic approach” might be explained earlier in the section. Also, on p 3, the sentence “This case management… neither sensitive nor specific” is a strong statement. Isn’t this part of the research question in the present study? Perhaps this statement could be toned down a bit or transferred to the Discussion?
- The authors discuss the benefit rapid on-site tests would have in their study setting for diagnosis of sexually transmitted infections. Are rapid tests also important to ensure proper treatment of infected women? Or is the proportion of women returning for their test results and treatment adequate in this antenatal care setting?

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests