

## **AB35 Undiagnosed Genital Infections among women participating in an MDP Pilot study as a result of lack of acknowledgement of abnormal symptoms.**

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### **ABSTRACT TEXT**

#### **Background:**

Sexually Transmitted Infections among women in the rural community still remains a challenge as STI infections are often asymptomatic or unrecognized (D. Wilkenson et.al, 2005). STIs such as Gonorrhoea (GC), Chlamydia (CT) and Trichomonas vaginalis (TV) are often left untreated as these conditions are often asymptomatic. Due to lack of knowledge and myths most women in rural areas consider Vaginal Discharge (VD) as normal, as this is a recurring symptom, and does not affect daily activities.

#### **Methodology:**

Data were collected from 50 women who were enrolled for a MDP Pilot study in preparation for a Phase III Microbicide Trial. Clinical and Physical examination CRFs documented abnormal genital symptoms reported by participants as well as observations by study staff during genital examination. Wet mounts and gram stain assays were done at enrolment and at final visit. Laboratory findings were correlated to reported data from the CRFs.

#### **Results:**

1/50 participant reported genital sores or ulcers; 1/50 reported unusual PVD whilst 1/50 reported other genital symptoms (vaginitis, burning). STI prevalence as per lab results: 2/48 NG positive; 1/48 CT positive and 2/49 TV.

#### **Conclusion:**

Of the 5 STIs identified by lab testing, only one woman reported any symptoms. Women do not consider genital symptoms as abnormal, and hence do not seek clinical care early. Women with untreated STIs are at risk of other complications; (infertility; PID) and ultimately are at risk of HIV transmission.

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