

GYNAECOLOGY & OBSTETRICS UPDATE

GP Issue 52– PN Issue 7

October, 2006

Author

T.M.Malak
Consultant
Obstetrician
Gynaecologist &
Urogynaecologist

Co-author

Dr Umasankar
Consultant
Medical Microbiologist

Web address

For Professionals
MarkMalak.com

For Patients
MrMalak.com

Finalist

**HOSPITAL
DOCTOR**

**AWARD
2005**

Reference:
Diagnosis of
Chlamydia,
Health Protection
Agency,
April 2006

Chlamydia Screening and Diagnosis: When and Which test?

Genital Chlamydia trachomatis is the *commonest* Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) in England. Genital chlamydial infection is an important reproductive health problem. 10-30% of infected women develop pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). A significant proportion of cases (70%) are asymptomatic and so, are liable to remain undetected, putting women at risk of developing PID. Treatment as well as screening of genital Chlamydia infection may reduce PID and ectopic pregnancy. A plan to implement a national screening programme for Chlamydia (NCSP) was started in 2002 and now 25% of PCTs in England are included (map).



Diagnosis of Chlamydia among symptomatic women

When?

In women (particularly those <25 yrs) with symptoms and signs which may be attributed to *Chlamydia*

- * purulent vaginal discharge
- * post coital/intermenstrual bleeding
- * mucopurulent cervicitis
- * inflamed/friable cervix (which may bleed on contact)
- * urethritis
- * pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)
- * lower abdominal pain in the sexually active
- * reactive arthritis in the sexually active.

Which test?

If a swab is needed the specimen should be an **endocervical** +/- **urethral swab**. Chlamydia are intracellular bacteria so specimens should contain columnar epithelial cells from the endocervix rather than discharge. Use sample collection kit from Eastbourne DGH. Remove excess mucopus before inserting swab inside the cervical os and firmly rotating against the endocervix. These samples (endocervical/urethral swabs should be sent to Eastbourne DGH.

Screening asymptomatic women for Chlamydia

When?

If the screening is available in your practice

- * sexually active women <25 years attending general practice, with a new sexual partner in the last 12 months
- * women <25 yrs having their first cervical smear.

Which test?

self-taken vaginal swab may be submitted if molecular techniques using nucleic acid amplification (NAAT test) are available. This is only applicable if surgeries are participating in the National Chlamydia Screening Programme and uses the “Big Screen” kit.

