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The association of asymptomatic vaginal infections with preterm delivery

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Introduction: Preterm delivery has been associated with asymptomatic maternal vaginal colonization of organisms such *Gardnerella*, *Chlamydia*, Group B streptococci (GBS). The aim of the study was to examine vaginal swabs for the presence of bacterial vaginosis (BV), *Chlamydia*, and GBS and to establish whether a significant difference in prevalence could be observed between preterm (PT) and full term (FT) delivery.

Material and Methods: Vaginal swabs were collected from 301 pregnant women attending 4 antenatal clinics in the Western Cape. They were divided into two groups with 151 having a history of preterm delivery (PTD), and 150 mothers who delivered full term (FTD). After obtaining written informed consent, data was collected by means of a standard structured questionnaire designed to obtain social demographic data and other relevant information. The vaginal swabs were examined for BV, *Chlamydia* and Group B streptococci using culture and PCR. The ethics clearance for this study was obtained from the Ethics and Research Committee of University of the Western Cape.

Results: Although BV and GBS were prevalent in many of the samples, and *Chlamydia* in only 4, statistical analyses revealed no significant differences between the PT group and FT group for any of the variables examined.

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