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NEWSLETTER: Sexually Transmitted Infections Group

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Message from the Co-Editors

THE NEED FOR SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS OF DIAGNOSTIC TESTS IN SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS AND INFECTIONS OF THE GENITAL TRACT.

Early diagnosis of sexually transmitted infections (STI) is a cornerstone in the management of genital tract infections both individual and as a public health problem. At the individual level, the use of laboratory diagnostic tests is essential for the detection of asymptomatic subjects, especially those caused by *C trachomatis* and *N gonorrhoeae* or those enrolled in latent phase, which can be transmitted vertically from mother to fetus. From a population standpoint, the diagnostic allows to stop the transmission chain and reduce its incidence and prevalence.

The laboratory diagnosis of STI has several limitations which affect more people living in resource-limited settings such as: the need for a support structure for adequate testing, the direct costs of the tests, the need a second visit to deliver the results to the patients, its applicability as a public health intervention and the selective risk perceived by the provider based on the presence of symptoms. In order to counteract the non-attendance of patients at the second control (which can be as high as 50%), rapid tests have been developed to be applied at the point of care. These tests are based on molecular biology techniques and produce results almost immediately which would ensure that the patients are treated in the same doctor's appointment, reducing false negatives, false positives and lost to follow up. The World Health Organization, through the Sexually Transmitted Diseases Diagnostics Initiative (SDI), has developed the ASSURED criteria that evaluate if a rapid test complies with the requirements according to the following: affordable, sensitive, specific, user-friendly, rapid and robust, equipment-free and deliverable to end-user. The literature regarding its operative characteristics is inconsistent and varies depending on the type of bacteria, the context where it was made, the producer and the type of test among others.

On the other hand, new technologies are being developed to be applied not only in STI but also in the genital tract endogenous infections. These tests could become the gold standard of the future or could be applied at home as rapid tests or reading tests at the point of care. These advantages would increase the rate of adherence and could be applied as a population diagnostic intervention. All these applications require an unbiased assessment to establish its real value not only in terms of its accuracy, but also their effectiveness and safety.

Systematic reviews of diagnostic test accuracy are, in the field of genital tract infections and STIs, an opportunity to summarize the evidence and deliver it in a friendly manner to decision makers, clinicians and patients in order to intervene in a positive way the public health problem caused by these infections, especially to vulnerable populations such as pregnant women, adolescents and women of childbearing age. The review group of STI with the support of the Diagnostic Test Accuracy Working Group accepts this challenge with the hope to contribute in the reduction of the disease burden of these infections.

Best wishes

Professor Cindy Farquhar

Professor Hernando Gaitán



Fernando Botero sculpture, Medellín, Colombia

Vacant titles

We are offering the following vacant titles:

- **Male circumcision for preventing STI.**
- **Effectiveness of antimicrobials for antibiotic-resistant *Neisseria gonorrhoeae***
- **Economical interventions for prevention of STI**
- **Treatment for chancroide**
- **Treatment for epididymitis**
- **Treatment for granuloma inguinale (donovanosis)**
- **Treatment for neurosyphilis**
- **Vaginal douching for preventing sexually transmitted infections.**
- **Nifuratel-Nystatin combination for the treatment of trichomonal vaginitis, vulvovaginal candidiasis and bacterial vaginosis.**

New published protocols

Imiquimod for anogenital warts in non-immunocompromised adults.

Grillo-Ardila CF, Gaitán HG, Angel-Müller E, Ruiz-Parra AI, Lethaby A. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2013, Issue 2. Art. No.: CD010389. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD010389.

STI Specialized Register

A specialized register has been created in 2008 to help reviewers in their research. The register systematically includes Randomized Controlled Trials and Controlled Clinical Trials, from 1944 to 2008, located through electronic searching and handsearching. The electronic databases searched for the register are MEDLINE, EMBASE and CENTRAL. By March 2013, the register contains 543 records and 400 full text articles.



Bogotá, Colombia.

Upcoming Events

20 years of the Cochrane Collaboration

The Cochrane Collaboration is celebrating twenty years of its existence throughout 2013. As part of a series of events to mark this anniversary, a series of videos has been commissioned focusing on the ideas, achievements and people that have contributed to its growth since 1993.

<http://anniversary.cochrane.org/>



XII Iberoamerican Reunion of the Cochrane Network

This year the Mexican Cochrane Center will host the XII Iberoamerican Reunion on May. This meeting will be focus on Knowledge transference, Guidelines and systematic reviews, Health technology assessment, Economic evaluations and Education.

<http://cochrane.mx/monterrey2013>

2013 Cochrane Colloquium, Quebec City. September 19-23.

The Colloquium 2013 will take place on Quebec, City, Canada. Abstracts for oral and poster presentations are invited in areas relevant to the work of The Cochrane Collaboration, systematic reviews methods, evidence-based health care and knowledge translation. Abstracts must be submitted by Thursday 4 April 2013

<http://colloquium.cochrane.org>



Methods for Evaluating Medical Tests & Biomarkers 15th & 16th July 2013

This Symposium will be held at the University of Birmingham, UK and attracts researchers actively involved in the development, evaluation or regulation of biomarkers, diagnostic modalities or other medical tests.

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/mds/projects/HaPS/PHEB/diagnostic-research/conferences/symposium-2013.aspx>

Contact

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