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Association between group A beta-haemolytic streptococci and vulvovaginitis in adult women: a case-control study.

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Guidelines for the management of vaginal discharge mention Candida albicans, Trichomonas vaginalis, bacterial vaginosis, Chlamydia trachomatis and Neisseria gonorrhoeae as causes and do not recommend full microbiological culture. The role of non-group B beta-haemolytic streptococci in vaginal cultures is unclear, except for group A streptococci that are known to cause vulvovaginitis in children. In a case-control study, we investigated the association between non-group B beta-haemolytic streptococci and vulvovaginitis in adult women. Cases were women with recurrent vaginal discharge from whom a sample was cultured. Controls were asymptomatic women who consented to submitting a vaginal swab. Group A streptococci were isolated from 49 (4.9%) of 1,010 cases and not from the 206 controls ($P < 0.01$). Isolation rates of group C, F and G streptococci were low and did not differ statistically between cases and controls. Group A beta-haemolytic streptococci are associated with vaginal discharge in adult women. The other non-group B streptococci require more study. For the adequate management of vaginal discharge, culturing is necessary if initial treatment fails. Guidelines should be amended according to these results.

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