Society for Academic Emergency Medicine

MEDIA RELEASE
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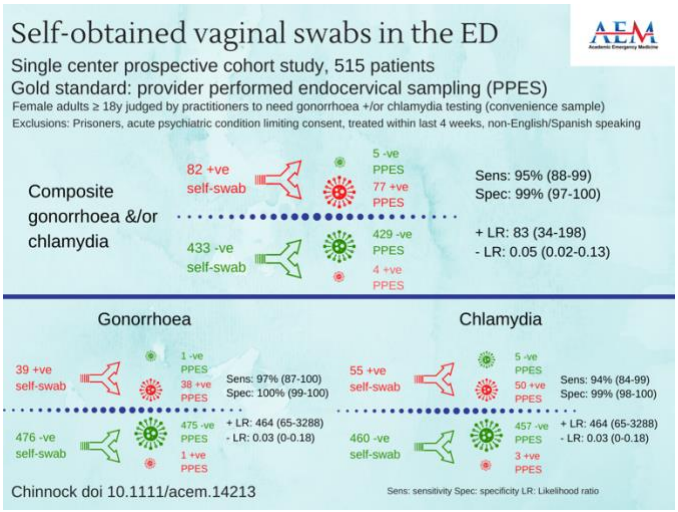
# Self-obtained Vaginal Swabs Are Not Inferior to Provider-performed Sampling for Emergency Department Diagnosis of STIs

*Self-swabs may be more comfortable for patients and more efficient for hospitals and clinics*

Des Plaines, IL – Self-obtained vaginal swabs (SOVS) were not found to be inferior to provider-performed endocervical sampling for the diagnosis of neisseria gonorrhoeae/chlamydia trachomatis using a rapid nucleic acid amplification test in the emergency department (ED). This is the conclusion of a study titled, Self-obtained vaginal swabs are not inferior to provider-performed endocervical sampling for Emergency Department diagnosis of Neisseria gonorrhoeae and Chlamydia, to be published in the June issue of *Academic Emergency Medicine (AEM)* journal, the peer-reviewed journal of the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine (SAEM).




CREDIT: KIRSTY CHALLEN, BSC, MBCHB, MRES, PHD, LANCASHIRE TEACHING HOSPITALS, UK

The findings of the study offer an important emergency department diagnostic alternative to provider-performed endocervical sampling in patients for whom a pelvic examination is declined or not possible. There are multiple individual factors leading to a patient declining a pelvic examination, such as request for/availability of female providers, wait times for pelvic examination rooms, and patient discomfort with pelvic examinations. Furthermore, the additive clinical value of pelvic examination may be limited in certain low acuity patients.

Although SOVS has the potential to provide a highly reliable option for STI diagnosis without pelvic examination, it should be emphasized that SOVS is not being proposed as a means to eliminate all pelvic examinations performed in the ED. This study provides a foundation for future emergency department implementation research to determine if early self-obtained vaginal swabs with a rapid

nucleic acid amplification test can decrease under- and overtreatment rates of neisseria gonorrhoeae/chlamydia trachomatis.

The lead author of the study is Brian Chinnock, MD, professor and research director in the Department of Emergency Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco–Fresno Medical Education Program in Fresno, California.

Study details and results are discussed with Dr. Simpson in a recent AEM podcast, Sisters Are Doin' It for Themselves… Self-obtained Vaginal Swabs for STIs.

Commenting on the study is Anne Messman, MD, MPHE. Dr. Messman is the vice chair of medical education and medical education fellowship director for the Department of Emergency Medicine at the Wayne State University School of Medicine (WSUSOM). She also serves as the associate dean of graduate medical education and designated institutional official at the WSUSOM.

"This paper is so important to emergency medicine to lay to rest, in some cases, the polarizing debate as to whether a female patient requires a pelvic examination for routine STI testing. Although a self-obtained swab will not be appropriate in all patients or in all situations, it is a valuable testing modality to offer to our patients who need or request STI testing but do not otherwise require a complete pelvic examination."

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## ABOUT ACADEMIC EMERGENCY MEDICINE

*Academic Emergency Medicine*, the monthly journal of Society for Academic Emergency Medicine, features the best in peer-reviewed, cutting-edge original research relevant to the practice and investigation of emergency care. The above study is published open access and can be downloaded by following the DOI link: 10.1111/aecm/14213. Journalists wishing to interview the authors may contact Tami Craig at tcraig@saem.org.

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