

Cervico -vaginal infections: colposcopic and wet mount microscopic features

G.Miniello

Consultant of Obstetrics and Gynecology 4th Dept. of Gynecology and Obstetrics, University of Bari, Italy.

E-mail: g.miniello@tiscalinet.it

Cervico-vaginal infections are the most common cause of presenting complaints

in gynecological consultation. Usually isolation of the infecting organisms by cultures is considered as the clearest method of establishing aetiology. This however is not the only way in which investigators can contribute to an understanding of the infectious process.

In our daily office practice, colposcopy and phase contrast (Ph) microscopy are usually performed as an extension of the routine gynecological check-up, in order to obtain more reliable information during the examination; this technically supported workup may give very satisfactory results which are not difficult to be reached with daily application of such equipment.

Phase contrast or wet mount microscopy makes living microorganisms or specific cell changes induced by them, immediately and clearly visible, without laboratory artefacts due to fixation and staining.

Despite the great variability of colposcopic findings in genital infections, integrated colposcopy and wet mount microscopy can strongly suggest the causative agents or may indicate further specific investigation.

In consideration of the common occurrence of cervico-vaginal infections, of their possible dangerous complications and, in some cases of their oncologic potential, a rapid diagnosis by the two integrated diagnostic tools confirmed to be extremely useful in daily office practice and in the field of research.