

# Prevalence of cervical infection by Chlamydia trachomatis among Chilean women living in the Metropolitan Región Prevalencia de infección cervical por Chlamydia trachomatis en mujeres de la Región Metropolitana

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**Background:** Chlamydia trachomatis is the most common bacterial sexually transmitted infection (STI) worldwide. In women, chlamydia infections are 75% asymptomatic and can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, and ectopic pregnancy. Infants exposed to the microorganism at birth also have a high risk to develop conjunctivitis and pneumonía. **Aim:** To determine the prevalence of C trachomatis in women in the Metropolitan área of Santiago (Chile). **Patients and methods:** Cervical specimens were collected from 403 women attending three gynecological outpatient settings from April 2003 to June 2005. These included one public hospital (n =100), a private medical center (n =268), and a clinic for adolescents (n =35). Mean ages of each group of patients were  $35.6\pm 8.2$ ,  $33.4\pm 8.1$  and  $16.9\pm 4.2$  years, respectively. The diagnosis of C trachomatis was performed by the amplification by PCR of a 517-base pair segment of the cryptic plasmid on specimens extracted by a commercial procedure. Positive s