

THEART OF RESEARCH



A Genital Inflammation Test (GIFT) for HIV prevention

The rapid point-of-care test can contribute to STI and BV management.

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HIV prevalence in South African women aged 15 to 49 years is 25,8%. These women are disproportionately affected when compared with men of the same age group, where prevalence is only 15%.

One of the biggest drivers of HIV risk in young women is genital inflammation, which increases acquisition risk by up to threefold. Important, but treatable, contributors to female genital tract inflammation are sexually transmitted infections and bacterial vaginosis.

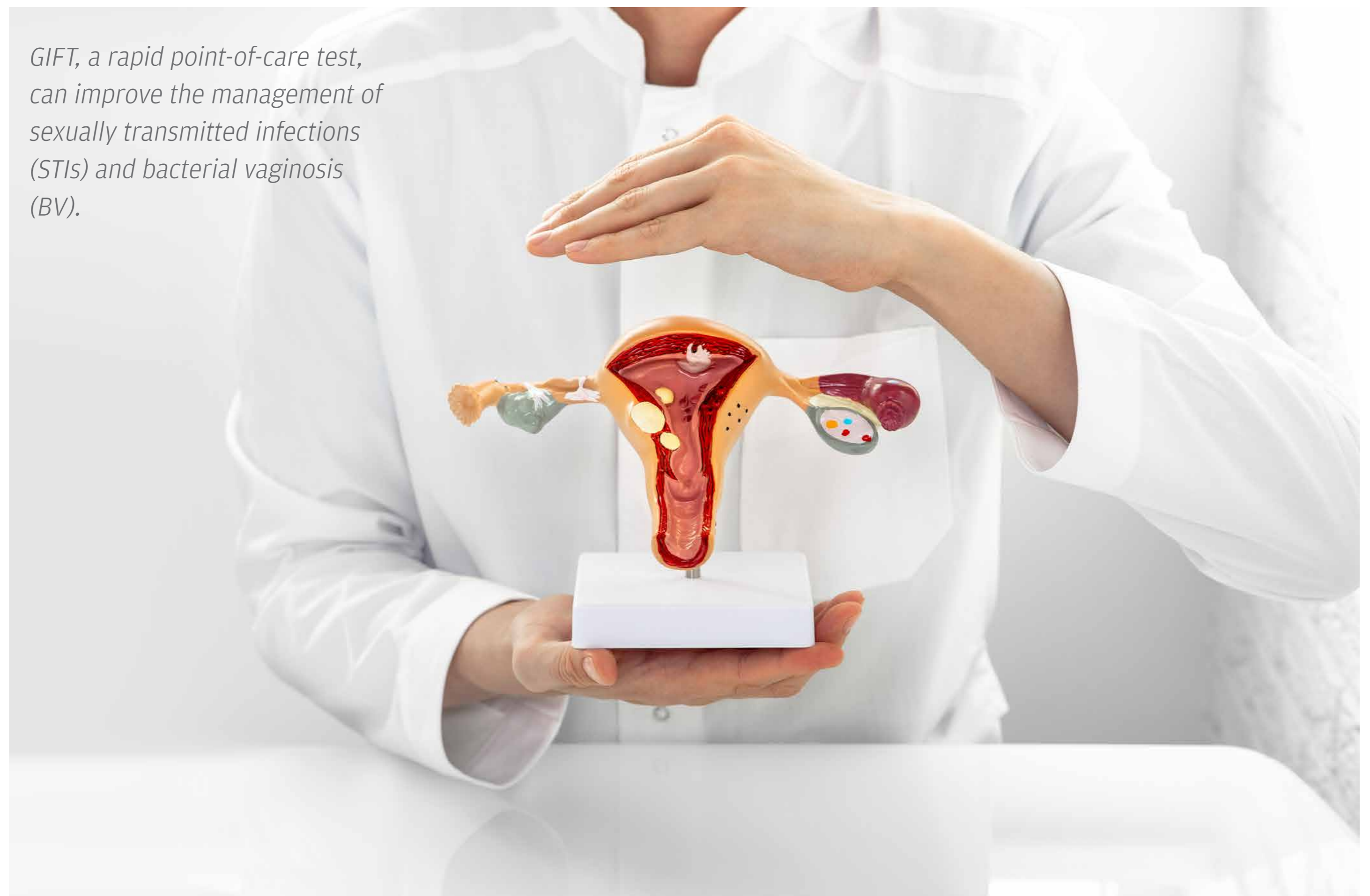
If left untreated, sexually transmitted infections and bacterial vaginosis can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease, fallopian tube injury, scarring of the upper reproductive tract and even infertility.

Syndromic management used in South African communities is believed to be ineffective for the diagnosis of sexually transmitted infections and bacterial vaginosis, as active cases are often missed or not treated, highlighting the need for improved intervention strategies. GIFT (Genital Inflammation Test),

a rapid point-of-care test, will be developed to improve management of sexually transmitted infections and bacterial vaginosis in a quick, affordable and non-invasive way. This equipment-free screening device identifies biomarkers of genital inflammation caused by such infections.

Overall, reducing the number of HIV infections and reproductive complications associated with undetected sexually transmitted infections and bacterial vaginosis would have a huge and positive economic and social impact.

GIFT, a rapid point-of-care test, can improve the management of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and bacterial vaginosis (BV).



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