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ABOUT THE COVER

HPV infection is very common in sexually active women, and the infecting HPVs can usually be spontaneously eliminated from individuals within 6 to 18 months. Only a small proportion of infected women retain the virus, and this could lead to the development of cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN) and cervical carcinoma. The mechanism by which some individuals develop a persistent HPV infection that goes on to develop into clinically significant disease, however, remains largely unclear. Emerging evidence shows that the cervicovaginal microbiota play a substantial role in the infection and clearance of HPV in the reproductive tract and constitute a new biomarker reservoir to predict the persistence or regression of HPV.

The cover shows the cervical communities of cytologically normal women from Beijing, China were classified into 5 community state types (CST) in hierarchical clustering analyses based on the Jensen–Shannon distance matrix and Ward linkage. Each point represents a sample. The CST1 (in red) is dominated by Lactobacillus iners; CST2 (in yellow) by Lactobacillus crispatus; CST3 (in green) by Lactobacillus crispatus, Gardnerella ADEV_s, and a variety of Pseudomonas spp.; CST4 (in blue) by Gardnerella ADEV_s, Aestreus sphygaea, and Lactobacillus iners; and CST5 (in purple) by Salmonella enterica, a variety of Lactobacillus spp., Pseudomonas spp,Prevotella spp, and Streptococcus spp., respectively.

See the article by Ritu et al. (beginning on page 43) for more information.