

Interview with Aina Kristin Pham, Pharmacist, Norway:

Which antimycotics are used for treating *C. albicans* infections and which one are only available on prescription?

- Ekonazol (pevaryl®), klotrimazol (for instance canesten®), flukonazol (Diflucan®), nystatin (for instance nystimex®, mycostatin®). There are many other antimycotics which can be used to treat yeast infections, but these are the most common ones when dealing with localized infections.

Which antimycotics that are used for *Candida albicans* infections are only available on prescription, which ones are sold over-the-counter?

- Ekonazol, klotrimazol and flukonazol are available OTC. Flukonazol can also be on prescription. Nystatin is only available through a prescription.

How often do you sell antimycotics against *C. albicans* infections to women that were not at a physician before going to the pharmacy store?

- I only sell to customers who have been to their general practitioner or have been diagnosed with *C. albicans* infections previously and can therefore recognize the symptoms.

How often do women buy prescription antimycotics for treating *C. albicans* infections?

- Seldom. I have had one elderly patient buy flukonazol on prescription (oral tablets, as the OTC one is contraindicated for women above 50 years of age). Younger women tend to buy the vaginal creams and pessaries that are non-prescription. I have also had some patients buy nystatin due to an oral candida infection.

What do you think about the fact, that there is an increase of antimycotic resistance?

- Women should refer to their general practitioner for a first-time diagnosis. Since the symptoms are easily recognized, I do not think it is necessary to check with the doctor every single time, though it would probably be handy if there was some kind of device for the patients to test at home to be absolutely sure whether they have a yeast infection or not (of course it depends on the quality of such device). Pharmacists should also be better at informing their customers about the correct use of OTC antimycotics.

Which tests do you know/ do you sell in your pharmacy store for fast detection of vaginal *C. albicans* infections?

- I don't know. I don't think pharmacy stores are selling them.

Are these test kits sold often?

- No.

What do you as an experienced pharmacist think about a fast detection kit for pathogenic *Candida albicans* infections/overgrowth of *Candida albicans* that can be executed at home? The test will show a quantitative result, namely if there is an overgrowth of *Candida albicans* and if yes, how intense the infection is.

- That would be great if the kit is reliable. But it might also lead to over-treatment of simple yeast infections, and hence increase antimycotic resistance. It all depends on the sensitivity of these kits

Do you experience that women are well informed about the commensal microorganisms in the vaginal flora (in matters of bacterial vs. fungal infection)? Are women well informed about hygiene of the genital area and with it a possible prevention of overgrowth of bacteria/fungi by too intense hygiene (washing genital area with a lot of shower gel)?

- No, from my experience women are not well informed on the subject matter