

Abstract

The laboratory components of a *Chlamydia trachomatis* disease control programme for a developing country are reviewed. Early diagnosis of chlamydial infections is the most cost effective means of preventing the long term sequelae of trachoma, pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancy and infertility, which are now a major public health burden to the health care system in developing countries. Public health strategies are required to establish both a co-ordinated limited system of laboratory services, and to promote the diagnosis and treatment of disease syndromes in the absence of laboratory support. Laboratory tests for the specific diagnoses of chlamydial infections requiring different levels of expertise and equipment can be instituted within settings appropriate to the resources and technical expertise available. Emphasis is given to appropriate cost effective utilization of laboratory testing.