Detailed description of culture methods: A 0.5 ml aliquot of vaginal washes were collected in BBL Port-a-Cul vials from New Orleans women only. The samples were aseptically aspirated from the vial. Three drops of the wash was placed on the appropriate media for the cultivation of both aerobes (including yeast) and anaerobes, and then struck in four quadrants to estimate semi-quantitatively the concentration of each organism in the specimen. A sub group of specimens were selected to perform ten-fold dilutions to obtain actual colony counts. Aerobic cultures were inoculated on the following media: BBL Columbia Agar w/5% Sheep blood, BBL Chocolate Agar and BBL HBT Medium and incubated at 37°C, 7% CO_2 atmosphere for 2 to 5 days. Yeast cultures were inoculated on BBL Inhibitory Mold Agar and incubated at 37^{o}C for 2 to 5 days. Anaerobic cultures were plated on BBL Brucella Agar with 5% Sheep blood, BBL CDC Anaerobe Blood Agar, BBL CDC Anaerobe Blood with PEA Agar and BBL Brucella Laked Blood with Kanamycin/Vancomycin Agar. Anaerobic cultures were incubated in an anaerobic jar (O_2 less than 5ppm), at 37^{o}C for 2 to 5 days. The organisms in the third and fourth quadrants or that had the highest colony counts were isolated and identified using standard microbiological methods. The following identification kits were used RapID ANA II System (Remel, Inc.,Lenexa,KS) for anaerobes; API 20E (bioMerieux,Inc., Durham, NC) for Enterobacteriacae; Gram stain and growth on IMA was used to identify yeast; Gram stain and beta hemolysis on HBT medium was used to identify Gardnerella; Gram stain , 3% hydrogen peroxide, BBL Staphyloslide Latex Test, BBL Streptocard Acid Latex Test, BBL 6.5% NaCl broth , BBL Bile Esculin slants

and hemolysis on BBL Columbia Agar w/ 5% sheep blood were used to identify aerobic gram positive cocci; lactobacilli were identified by Gram stain. The type *A. vaginae* strain (BAA-55) was obtained from the ATCC and propagated following ATCC instructions.