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*Candida* and its dual lifestyle as a commensal and a pathogen

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1 For publication

2 ***Candida* and its dual lifestyle as a commensal and a pathogen**

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14  
15 **Abstract**

16 *Candida* spp. are part of the normal vaginal microflora in 20-30 % of healthy  
17 women. However, if the balance between these yeasts and the host is disturbed, *Candida*  
18 spp. can cause vulvovaginal candidiasis (VVC), with *C. albicans* being the major causative  
19 agent. Different studies have been performed in order to better understand *Candida*'s dual  
20 lifestyle in the vagina. The potential of *C. albicans* to switch from the yeast cell morphology  
21 to its hyphal form is considered a key element in VVC pathogenesis. *Candida* spp. also  
22 express other virulence factors, such as hydrolytic extracellular enzymes and heat shock  
23 proteins and can form biofilms.

24 *Keywords:* Candida, Candidiasis, Vulvovaginal

25  
26 **1. *Candida* spp.: a commensal of the vaginal econiche and interaction with vaginal**  
27 ***Lactobacilli* spp.**

28 *Candida* spp., in particular *C. albicans*, can be isolated from the vaginal tracts in 20-30%  
29 of healthy asymptomatic women at any single point in time and in up to 70% of women over  
30 a longer period [1, 2]. Consequently, *C. albicans* can be considered as a commensal

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