

# Exploring the world of protozoology: An overview of protists, their characteristics, and their importance in human health and the environment.

Milton Michel\*

Centre for HIV and STIs, National Institute for Communicable Diseases, Johannesburg, South Africa

## Introduction

Protists are eukaryotic organisms, which means that they have a nucleus and other organelles enclosed in a membrane. They are typically unicellular, but some can form colonies or multicellular structures. Protists are incredibly diverse, with more than 60,000 known species, and they are found in a wide range of environments, including soil, freshwater, saltwater, and even the bodies of other organisms [1].

## Characteristics of Protists

Although protists are a diverse group of organisms, they share some common characteristics, including. Eukaryotic cells: Protists have cells that are more complex than those of bacteria or archaea, with a nucleus and other membrane-bound organelles. Unicellularity: Most protists are unicellular, meaning that they consist of a single cell. Mobility: Many protists are capable of movement, using structures like flagella, cilia, or pseudopodia to move through their environment. Heterotrophic or autotrophic: Protists can be either heterotrophic, meaning that they consume other organisms for food, or autotrophic, meaning that they produce their own food through photosynthesis [2].

**Reproduction:** Protists can reproduce asexually or sexually, depending on the species. Importance of Protists. Protists play important roles in the world around us. Some of their functions include: Food sources: Many protists are important sources of food for other organisms, such as plankton that form the base of marine food webs. Symbiotic relationships: Protists can form symbiotic relationships with other organisms, such as the algae that live within coral reefs and provide them with nutrients. Disease transmission: Some protists can cause diseases in humans, such as malaria, caused by the Plasmodium protist. Environmental indicators: The presence or absence of certain protists can serve as indicators of environmental health, helping scientists monitor the impact of pollution or other environmental stressors [3].

## Causes:

Bacterial Vaginosis (BV) is caused by an imbalance in the bacteria that naturally live in the vagina. Normally, lactobacilli

bacteria predominate and help maintain a healthy acidic environment. However, when there is an overgrowth of other bacteria, such as Gardnerella vaginalis, Atopobium vaginae, or Prevotella species, BV can occur.

Factors that can contribute to this bacterial imbalance include:

**Douching:** This can disrupt the natural pH and bacterial balance in the vagina.

**Sexual activity:** Having a new sexual partner or multiple sexual partners can increase the risk of BV.

**Antibiotics:** Taking antibiotics can kill off the beneficial lactobacilli bacteria in the vagina, allowing other bacteria to grow unchecked.

**Hormonal changes:** Hormonal changes during menstruation or pregnancy can also increase the risk of BV.

## Symptoms:

Many women with BV may not experience any symptoms, but when symptoms do occur, they may include:

Thin, grayish-white vaginal discharge with a strong fishy odor

- Itching or burning in the vaginal area
- Burning during urination
- Vaginal irritation
- Treatment options:

If you suspect you have BV, it is important to see your healthcare provider for diagnosis and treatment. BV is usually treated with antibiotics, which can be prescribed in the form of oral tablets or vaginal creams or gels. Commonly used antibiotics include metronidazole and clindamycin.

It is important to complete the full course of antibiotics as prescribed, even if symptoms improve, to ensure that the infection is fully treated. It is also recommended to avoid sexual activity during treatment to prevent reinfection [4,5].

To help prevent BV from recurring, it is important to maintain good vaginal health practices, such as:

- Avoid douching
- Use condoms during sexual activity

\*Correspondence to: Michel M, Department of Veterinary Pathobiology, University of Illinois, College of Veterinary Medicine, USA, Email: micmilton@uiuc.edu

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- Wear cotton underwear and avoid tight-fitting clothing
- Practice good hygiene
- Eat a healthy diet to support a healthy immune system and vaginal floor

## Conclusion

Protozoology is a fascinating field that explores the diverse and important world of protists. Although they are often overlooked, these small organisms play crucial roles in the environment and in human health. By understanding the characteristics and importance of protists, we can better appreciate the complexity and diversity of life on earth.

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