This report presents a histiocytic giant cell with sperm phagocytosis on the Papanicolaou smear of a 55-yr-old woman (gravida, 9; para, 4; abortus, 5; Fig. C-1) with nonspecific inflammation. No epithelial abnormality was detected. Histiocytic giant cells commonly are seen in menopausal smears but those with sperm phagocytosis are not. The leukocytic reaction of the human uterine cervix to spermatozoa is thought to be physiological. Phagocytosis of spermatozoa was reported in the uterine cavity of women using an intrauterine device. This finding may be thought to be associated with infertility but it is not so in our case. Enzymatic digestion of the spermatozoa by the phagocytic cells may occur in such a short time that we may not catch this event on the smears. Because it is hard for a single histiocyte, histiocytic giant cells may form to engulf the spermatozoa easily.

References


Fig. C-1. (A and B) Papanicolaou-stained cervicovaginal smear showing a histiocytic giant cell with sperm phagocytosis (panel A, ×100; panel B, ×400).