

Introduction

This module explores four common genito-urinary conditions: vaginismus, vulvodynia, Genitourinary Syndrome of Menopause and lichen sclerosus. It also aims to raise awareness of another important women's health condition: female genital mutilation (FGM).

Genitourinary (GU) health issues are common conditions that can significantly impact the physical, mental and sexual wellbeing of women, including the restriction of daily activities of living (reference 1). However, they are often underdiagnosed and under-reported within primary care: vulvodynia affects women of all ethnicities and has a lifetime prevalence of 8% in women under 70, while atrophic changes of the genital tract are found in 50% of women in the 7–10 years after menstruation stops (reference 2, 3). Symptoms of Genito-urinary Syndrome of Menopause are experienced by between 65 and 84% of post-menopausal women (reference 4).

Despite the high prevalence and impact of these conditions, women can be reluctant to seek medical advice due to stigma and embarrassment. When they do seek help, barriers to effective therapy include inconsistency in assessment and management by health professionals due to a lack of clear diagnostic and management pathways, and variable patient compliance with treatment (reference 4).

Module aims:

- Identify risk factors and evidence-based treatment options for vaginismus.
- Recognise the physical and psychological impact of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and understand the mandatory safeguarding responsibilities for healthcare professionals when addressing FGM risks in children.
- Understand the multifactorial causes and treatment options for females presenting with vulvodynia.
- Examine the pathophysiology and clinical presentations of the Genitourinary Syndrome of Menopause and the benefits of optimal treatment.
- Recognise the clinical presentation, diagnostic features, and the chronic nature of vulval lichen sclerosus, and its association with vulval cancer.

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