INTIMATE HEALTH

Dr Farzana Khan, a Women's Wellness Doctor, discusses her experience with DESIRIAL as a treatment for vaginal dryness and labial remodelling



Despite sexual health being considered a vital part for overall mental and physical wellbeing several barriers prevent women from receiving appropriate medical care for their intimate health needs. Social stigma around female sexuality remains, says Dr Farzana, and as a result, women often avoid or are embarrassed to discuss issues related to their vaginal health with a medical professional. Studies have shown that half of post-menopausal women have symptoms that affect their sexual wellbeing but that only two-thirds of that group will seek medical attention.

Dr Farzana wants to assure women that intimate health issues such as vaginal dryness, pain and discomfort during intercourse are common, with nothing to be ashamed about.

Vaginal dryness

Lack of oestrogen during menopause leads to a reduction in vaginal secretions and thinning of the vaginal walls. Vaginal dryness is characterised by a lack of moisture resulting in symptoms of painful intercourse, vaginal itching and irritation. The vaginal walls loses its natural protection with increased risk of recurrent urinary tract infection. It is important to remember that it is not only menopausal women who experience vaginal dryness and painful intimacy, but women post-childbirth or suffering from breast cancer can also be affected. Women of any age with dry, fragile vaginal tissue are susceptible to injury, tearing, and bleeding during penetration of the vagina and the resulting discomfort can decrease sexual desire or arousal.

The ageing vulva

Ageing of the vulva is similar to the age-related skin changes on the body and face. The decrease of oestrogen during menopause has an effect on fibroblasts and this leads to a progressive loss of elasticity and plumpness in the area of the labia majora. This can result in wrinkled and deflated skin in the vulva with loss of volume, integrity and form says Dr Farzana. As the labia majora become thinner and the skin shrinks in thickness, it can result in irritation. Changes in the labia majora region can lead to both aesthetic and functional concerns for the woman as well as affect her confidence in intimate settings. Studies confirm the relationship between a woman's genital self image and sexual satisfaction.

Hyaluronic acid for vaginal hydration and remodelling

Hyaluronic acid is naturally found in the human body and has the capacity to retain about 100 times its weight in water. VIVACY Laboratories have designed two different hyaluronic acid hydrogels; DESIRIAL and DESIRIAL PLUS for the women's intimate area to allow increased hydration, plumping and remodelling. These two hyaluronic acid products differ in the texture of the gel and are used to treat different types of symptoms in the patient.



DESIRIAL is injected directly into the vaginal mucosa where it strengthens the quality of the tissue and restores hydration, elasticity, tonicity, and sensitivity to the vulvo-vaginal area. "I really love DESIRIAL" says Dr Farzana, "it's an easy and safe way of treating women for vaginal dryness with hydration lasting up to 12 months. It is an excellent vaginal hydration treatment for women who prefer a non-hormonal treatment or for any reason can't be on hormonal treatment."

DESIRIAL PLUS is a more elastic gel which is capable of remodelling the labia majora after volume loss as well as an improvement from an aesthetic point of view. It is important to understand that not only does rejuvenation of the labia majora conceal the labia minora for a more symmetrical and proportional appearance but also improves vaginal dryness.

A patient's perspective

A 42-year-old woman who was treated with DESIRIAL by Dr Farzana describe her experience. "I was struggling with vaginal dryness with a lot of scar tissue from previous surgery. With the onset of peri-menopause my symptoms got a lot worse. I just wanted to ease the discomfort and was really hopeful that I would feel some improvement with DESIRIAL.The use of numbing cream meant that I couldn't really feel any discomfort during the treatment. Doctor Farzana was caring and reassured me throughout really made a difference to being able to relax…bedside manner matters in intimate care. I had no problems with recovery and few weeks after the treatment I cried when I realised what my new normal was going to be like. I wish that I hadn't delayed putting it off as I feel so much more sexually comfortable and confident. The problem is women just suck it up and don't realise there is an option for help and discomfort. I would definitely recommend DESIRIAL and am looking forward to having it repeated with Dr Farzana once the effect of the current treatment starts wearing off".

Final thoughts from Dr Farzana

Vaginal dryness can happen to a woman at any age and has a negative impact on her physical and mental wellbeing. VIVACY Laboratories have designed hyaluronic acid gels specifically for the women's intimate area that can improve hydration in the vulvo-vaginal area and treat volume loss in the labia majora. I believe it is time that we raise awareness, break the taboo and enable women to come forward and not suffer in silence.

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Dr Farzana Khan is a qualified GP with interests in woman's healthcare and dermatology, specialising in vaginal rejuvenation treatment among other aesthetic treatments. She practices at the Yorkshire Skin Centre in Leeds and The Harrogate Clinic.