

## P3

# LACTATIONAL ATROPHIC VAGINITIS - A CASE REPORT AND CONSIDERATION OF THE EVIDENCE

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Lactational atrophic vaginitis (LAV) is a condition specific to breastfeeding women and is characterised by vaginal atrophy, caused by hypoestrogenism during lactation. Lev Sagie et al (2020) reports a high prevalence of urogenital atrophy in breastfeeding women but a search of the literature reveals a lack of good quality evidence highlighting this condition or providing guidance for clinicians on how to treat symptoms.

A 25 year old woman presented to the Perineal Review Clinic following a referral from her GP. She gave a history of a vaginal birth of twins three months ago, assisted by an episiotomy, following an uneventful pregnancy. She was breastfeeding on demand and amenorrhoeic. Her primary complaints were of irritated skin on her labia and vaginal fourchette; dryness, with discomfort as it rubbed on her underwear; and dyspareunia that she described as a burning sensation. All differentials were ruled out and she was prescribed oestriol cream 0.01%, one applicator full in the vagina, once a day before bed for two weeks, equating to a daily dose of 0.5mg of oestriol in 5ml of the cream. Oestrogen is excreted into milk in small enough quantities that it is not considered harmful. It is recommended oestriol not be commenced until after breastfeeding is established due to the small risk of affecting milk production. Improvement of symptoms was observed after 4 weeks.

In the absence of any local or national guidance for the treatment for LAV, NICE guidance for the management of menopause is followed (NICE 2021) due to the similarities of the clinical syndromes, and is used to support the clinician's own knowledge and experience. Further research is required to determine a prevalence of LAV, the extent to which it affects quality of life and optimal treatments designed to empower women to make informed choices about their care.

### Reference:

Lev-Sagie A, Amsalem H, Gutman Y, Esh-Broder E, and Daum H. Prevalence and Characteristics of Postpartum Vulvovaginal Atrophy and Lack of Association With Postpartum Dyspareunia. *Journal of Lower Genital Tract Disease* • Volume 24, Number 4, October 2020. NICE <https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/menopause/diagnosis/diagnosis-of-menopause-perimenopause>