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URETHRAL CARUNCLES - OESTROGEN BEFORE SURGERY EVERY TIME

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Objective:

To review a case series of patients with large urethral caruncles, evaluating both the reason for their referral to gynaecology and patient outcomes following treatment with topical oestrogens. Design: This was a retrospective review of patients diagnosed with symptomatic urethral caruncles in our unit. Urethral caruncles are the most common benign lesions of the female urethra and symptoms include bleeding, discomfort or a lump. Large urethral caruncles can be pedunculated, swollen or necrotic and as such can be mistaken for urethral or vulval malignancy.

Method:

We reviewed a case series of 6 patients with urethral caruncles diagnosed within our department over 12 months from October 2021 to 2022. Data was collected from patient letters and from photographs taken by medical illustration both at first presentation and at subsequent follow up.

Results:

All of the patients in our series were post-menopausal women with a median age of 72 years (range 58-94). 75% were referred via the 2 week-wait suspected cancer pathway from the GP and all were removed from the pathway at their first appointment. 83% underwent conservative management with topical oestrogen alone. 1 patient chose to have surgical excision of the caruncle with an excellent outcome, the technique of which we document on our poster. At a mean follow up of 8 months (range 3-14), all patients reported subjective improvement from treatment. There was objective improvement demonstrated both on examination by the clinician and documented in medical photographs for the majority of patients.

Conclusions:

In the majority of cases even large urethral caruncles can be managed conservatively with topical oestrogens, with excellent long term outcomes and high patient satisfaction. Education with the aid of medical photographs, may help to improve the diagnosis of urethral caruncles and reduce the mistaken concern for cancer.