A NEW THERAPEUTIC APPROACH TO VULVODYNIA: PULSED RADIOFREQUENCY OF THE IMPAR GANGLION CAN ALLIEVIATE CHRONIC PELVIC PAIN; A CASE SERIES

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Background

- **Vulvodynia** is a common, chronic, disabling condition causing significant morbidity and is detrimental to the patients' quality of life¹
- Pain is a primary factor in this morbidity
- There is no agreed approach to pain management in idiopathic, neuropathic vulvodynia

New
therapeutic use
for PRF?

- **Pulsed Radiofrequency** is a recent method of pain treatment, with growing therapeutic use²
- Its effectiveness in controlling pain associated with vulvodynia is unknown

Case series

- We present two cases in which detrimental vulvodynia was successfully treated with Pulsed Radiofrequency
- Both patients had had previous unsuccessful dermatological treatment, including lidocaine patches
- Both had previously had unsuccessful pudendal nerve block

The Treatment

- Pulsed Radiofrequency (PRF) to Impar Ganglion
- One six minute session of PRF, at 45V and 5Hz

PRF of the Impar Ganglion

Case 1

45 year old woman
18 month history of vulvodynia
Unsuccessful treatment pharmacologically
Multiple emergency department attendances

8/10 on VAS score, preventing intercourse

One PRF intervention to the Impar Ganglion.

After treatment: VAS score of 0. Stopped all analgesia,

Pain free 12 months later

Case 2

65 year old woman
4 year history of vulvodynia
Unsuccessful treatment pharmacologically
Extremely disabling for patient

10/10 on VAS score, preventing day to day activities including walking

One PRF intervention to the Impar Ganglion.

After treatment: VAS score of 2. Reduction in all pharmacological analgesia.

Discussion

- Vulvodynia can be difficult to manage, and can lead to significant morbidity for the person suffering
- We have shown the successful use of PRF in the management of this chronic pelvic pain, allowing significant reduction in the pharmacological therapy, and improvement in the quality of life of these two women
- Only one six minute PRF session was needed to achieve this symptom relief
- Importantly, PRF is well tolerated intervention, with a minimal side effect profile, already in use in a wide range of patients around the world
- This novel analgesic approach gives clinicians and patients a new analgesic option in treating the disabling pain of vulvodynia

Learning Point

This case demonstrates Pulsed Radiofrequency to the Impar Ganglion to be a new approach to managing vulvodynia when conventional management has failed

References:
1. A review of the available clinical therapies for vulvodynia management and new data implicating proinflammatory mediators in pain elicitation, Falsetta et al. BJOG 124, 210–218. 10.1111/1471-0528.14157.
2. Vanneste T, Lantschoot AV, Van Boxem K, Van Zundert J. Pulsed radiofrequency in chronic pain. Curr Opin Anaesthesiol. 2017;30(5):577–582.