Practical aspects of vaginal vibrators and dilators

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What is the purpose of vaginal dilation/vibrator use?

• Lack of stenosis, scarring and pain after cancer
• Self stimulation and self exploration?
• With partnered sex?

• Treatment or pleasure? It may be very different from women with cancer to women with sexual dysfunction
• May be difficult for women who need treatment
Practical aspects – not a lot of evidence

• How to introduce the use
  • Medical rehabilitation or for pleasure?

• How to overcome resistance
  • Embarresment
  • Retraumatisation
  • Include partner?
  • Expecations of pain leading to fear
  • Nothing joyfull

• Type of dilators – a dilator/vibrator is not a dilator/vibrator
  • Where to purchase them
TABLE 3. Sexual History and Lifetime Vibrator Use (Weighted), by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent sexual partner history (30 days)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sexually active with a partner</td>
<td>791</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>319</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexually active with a single partner</td>
<td>1,203</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>684</td>
<td>65.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexually active with more than one partner</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibrator use (solo)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1,087</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>856</td>
<td>83.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or more times</td>
<td>937</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>170</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibrator use (partnered)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1,156</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>601</td>
<td>59.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or more times</td>
<td>845</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>418</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than half of women (52.50%, \(n = 1,060\)) and slightly less than half of men (44.80%, \(n = 457\)) reported vibrator use in their lifetime (see Table 3).
Attitudes towards vibrator use

• Women with positive beliefs to vibrators had higher FSFI scores

• Women’s partners and men in particular might feel intimidated or threatened by women’s use of dilators

• Women may have more concerns about partner reaction than their male partner actually do have

• Some women who use vibrators do not tell their partner because of concerns of offending or intimidating him

• Need to bring in the couple in the treatment with vibrators

Herbenick et al 2009
Herbenick et al sex Marital Ther.2011,
From “Sex Toy” to Intrusive Imposition: A Qualitative Examination of Women’s Experiences with Vaginal Dilator Use Following Treatment for Gynecological Cancer

Kimberley Cullen, BSc, BA, MA,* Karen Fergus, PhD, C. Psych,*† Tracey DasGupta, RN, BScN, MN, CON(C),‡ Marg Fitch, RN, PhD,†§ Catherine Doyle, RN, BScN,§ and Lauran Adams, RN, BScN†

Resistance

• Embarrassing
  • A sex toy
  • Shaped as a dildo
  • Bought in a sex shop – how to get it, enter a sex shop
  • Owing a dilator
  • What will people think?
  • Fear of being judged
  • Traditional view of sex – sex toy is a taboo

• Treatment is an invasion
  • Reminds of the cancer
  • Try to reject that part of the body
  • Reliving the trauma

Cullen et al. JSM 2012:9;1162
Resistance

- Aversive "hands on" experience
  - Use is not joyable
  - Fear of the dilator
  - Nervous of using it
  - Looks like "pain"
  - Expect pain from use
  - Will it hurt the vagina
  - Experienced pain and discomfort at use
  - If never used a dilator before the psychological barrier is larger
  - Feeling stuck
  - "no compelling reason to use it"

Cullen et al. JSM 2012:9;1162
What made it easier?

• Clinician should give light and straightforward information
• Using a combination of humor and "matter of fact" approach when presenting it
• Desexualize the dilator?
• Buy it from the hospital
• Explain it as a part of the treatment
• Fear of not using it – what is the consequence?
Resistance

• A person intent to perform a particular behavior is determined by the persons attitude toward the behavior, perceived social norms and perceived ease.

• Women who felt embarrassed by or uncomfortable with dilator use, worried by the judge of others and expected pain were more likely to express resistance to use of dilator.

• The clinician should assess the woman's attitude to use and if necessary address negative beliefs.

Cullen et al. JSM 2012:9;1162.
A VIBRATOR/ DILATOR IS NOT JUST A VIBRATOR/DILATOR
Vibrators/ Dilators

• Types
  • Outled powered
  • Battery powered
  • Remote controlled

• Specific stimulation
  • G-spot
  • Clitoris
  • Anal
  • Combinations

• Design
• Size
• Material
• Cleaning
Vibrators and Dildos

Rabbits

Vaginal

G-spot

Medical line

Glass

Clitoral
http://www.purepassion.dk/
Information to the woman is important

- Where to buy
  - Internet
  - Stores
- In clinic presentation
- Prize
- What is the purpose of use?
- Adress resistance
- Follow up
- Include partner