



Menopause -Vol.25, No.2, 2018

Response to letter to editor

Sokol ER

Stanford University, Stanford, CA - USA.

Excerpt

In Reply:

[...] Although a full discussion of the mechanism of action, safety, and efficacy of FCL for the treatment of GSM is beyond the scope of this response, the authors of this letter rightly raise some important issues surrounding this emerging therapy. I agree that FCL is being heavily marketed and patients often do not have accurate information with which to base a decision regarding proceeding with treatment. Unfortunately, FCL is not covered by insurance, so patients have to pay out of pocket. I hope this changes in the future. I agree that many physicians and health practitioners are beginning to offer this treatment, with minimal experience regarding the technical aspects of the therapy as well as a lack of understanding of mechanism of action and scientific validity of effectiveness. We are indeed in the hype cycle and quickly approaching the "peak of inflated expectation" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hype_cycle), with numerous other energy sources now being marketed with minimal to no data. As the proverbial saying goes, the only way to go is down from here.

So what is the best way forward? We will get to that. But first, a brief response to the three reported cases highlighting possible "severe" adverse side effects to FCL in this article:

Case 1: A 53-year-old woman reported intense itching after a second FCL treatment for vaginal atrophy, but was found to have a vaginal infection, which was treated with antibiotics. She carries a diagnosis of interstitial cystitis and had undergone chemotherapy for breast cancer.

Although it is very possible that her itching is related to the FCL treatment, she has some confounding factors that may have contributed to her symptomatology including progressive atrophy, possible adverse reaction to a medication she may have been taking, and a vaginal infection. This case highlights the importance of proper patient selection for FCL therapy. In our studies, we did not see any major adverse events (including itching), but patients were carefully screened to ensure they were appropriate candidates and did not have confounding health conditions. [...]