

Menopause – Epub 2019 Apr 15
Letter to the editor

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Excerpt

To the editor:

We read with interest the article, "Rethinking the techno vagina: a case series of patient complications following vaginal laser treatment for atrophy," by Gordon et al, published in Volume 26, Number 4 of Menopause. We agree that laser treatment for genitourinary syndrome of menopause (GSM) is a relatively new use of this technology and should be scrutinized in regards to potential efficacy and complications and that more long-term data on this technology would be welcome. We have, however, concerns regarding how the authors define a complication.

The cases described patients who presented with symptoms of GSM, had a series of laser treatments, and then continued to experience the same or perceived worsening of the same symptoms. To brand these outcomes as complications of the laser treatments is arguably an incorrect usage of the term, complication. As GSM is a clinical diagnosis where treatments have patient-derived outcomes, a lack of objective data exists to support their assumption that persistent symptoms were a direct result of the laser. We do not consider persistent urinary incontinence a complication of midurethral sling, rather it is a potential outcome. Likewise, persistent dyspareunia after vaginal laser treatment should be classified as the latter and the patients who experience persistent symptoms are either nonresponders or were not appropriate candidates to begin with. The authors had no information regarding pretreatment examinations or how the laser treatments were delivered.

Since 2014, our center has utilized a fractional CO₂ laser (SmartXide Touch; DEKA, Florence, Italy) on hundreds of patients with GSM, and has published results on treatment of approximately 200 patients on research protocols. Our experience indicates that in appropriately selected patients the treatment is very safe and produces subjective success rates in the 85% range, defining success as the patient stating she was happy with the outcome and felt the out-of-pocket costs were worth the results she achieved. Furthermore, persistence of positive outcomes at 1 year has been reported. To date, there are 37 peer-reviewed publications noting favorable outcomes with minimal adverse events. [...]