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Vulvo-vaginal atrophy: A new treatment modality using thermo-ablative fractional CO_2 laser

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Abstract

Objective

To evaluate the efficacy and feasibility of thermo-ablative fractional CO_2 laser for the treatment of symptoms related to vulvo-vaginal atrophy (VVA) in post-menopausal women.

Methods

From April 2013 to December 2013, post-menopausal patients who complained of one or more VVA-related symptoms and who underwent vaginal treatment with fractional CO_2 laser were enrolled in the study. At baseline (T0) and 30 days post-treatment (T1), vaginal status of the women was evaluated using the Vaginal Health Index (VHI), and subjective intensity of VVA symptoms was evaluated using a visual analog scale (VAS). At T1, treatment satisfaction was evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale.

Results

During the study period, a total of 48 patients were enrolled. Data indicated a significant improvement in VVA symptoms (vaginal dryness, burning, itching and dyspareunia) ($P < 0.0001$) in patients who had undergone 3 sessions of vaginal fractional CO_2 laser treatment. Moreover, VHI scores were significantly higher at T1 ($P < 0.0001$). Overall, 91.7% of patients were satisfied or very satisfied with the procedure and experienced considerable improvement in quality of life (QoL). No adverse events due to fractional CO_2 laser treatment occurred.

Conclusions

Thermo-ablative fractional CO_2 laser could be a safe, effective and feasible option for the treatment of VVA symptoms in post-menopausal women.