The association between vulvovaginal atrophy (VVA) symptoms and quality of life among post-menopausal women in the United States and Western Europe

Marco DiBonaVentura, PhD; Juemei Luo, PhD; Maggie Moffatt, MPH; Andrew G. Bushmakin, MS; Maya Kumar, MPH; Joel Bobula, MA

1Kantar Health, New York, NY; 2Pfizer Inc., Groton, CT; 3Pfizer Inc., New York, NY; 4Pfizer Inc., Collegeville, PA

Presented at the North American Menopause Society 32nd Annual Meeting
October 18-21, 2014; Washington DC

ABSTRACT

Background: Vulvovaginal atrophy (VVA) represents vaginal and vulval atrophy due to decrease in estrogens that occur in post-menopausal women. This study aimed to determine the prevalence and severity of VVA symptoms, as well as the general health status of middle-aged to older women in the United States, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the UK.

Methods: Between 2001 and 2008, 7,068 middle-aged to older women provided health-related quality of life (HRQoL) data in the United States, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the UK. VVA symptoms were assessed using the Menopause Rating Scale. HRQoL was assessed using the EuroQoL-5D.

Results: To assess the prevalence of VVA symptoms, we used the Menopause Rating Scale (MRS). VVA symptoms were assessed using the MRS. The prevalence of VVA symptoms among post-menopausal women varied slightly across countries; however, no research to our knowledge has explored the relationship between VVA symptoms and other chronic conditions.

Conclusions: VVA symptoms are common among post-menopausal women and have a significant impact on their quality of life. However, no research to our knowledge has explored the relationship between VVA symptoms and other chronic conditions. These results suggest that the patient may be similarly chronic and warrants attention from the clinical community.

BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

- Vulvovaginal atrophy (VVA) is a condition associated with decreased re-innervation of the vaginal tissue which can result in infection, inflammation, and deterioration of the vaginal and uterine health.
- Three physiological changes are most often experienced: a) vaginal dryness, b) pain with sexual intercourse (dyspareunia), and c) change in sexual desire.
- Several studies have shown that VVA symptoms may be associated with chronic conditions such as depression, fibromyalgia, IBS, and other chronic conditions.
- The objective of this analysis was to quantify the association between VVA symptom severity and quality of life among middle-aged to older women in the United States, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the UK.

METHODS

Data Source

All respondents provided demographic information with respect to their age, income, and education. Body mass index (BMI) categories were also calculated from respondent-provided height and weight.

Study Measures

- VVA symptoms: Defined using the Menopause Rating Scale (MRS) item asking the respondent to rate the level of severity of “Dryness of vagina (sensation of dryness or burning in the vagina, difficulty with sexual intercourse)”. As done in past research, both “severe” and “extremely severe” were combined to represent a single category of “severe”.
- Other chronic conditions: All respondents provided demographic information with respect to their age, income, and education. For each condition included in the study, chronic in nature, symptomatic, and common in post-menopausal women were included in the analysis.

Results

The prevalence of VVA symptoms among post-menopausal women in each country varied slightly; however, no research to our knowledge has explored the relationship between VVA symptoms and other chronic conditions. These results suggest that the patient may be similarly chronic and warrants attention from the clinical community.

Conclusions

- VVA symptoms are common among post-menopausal women and have a significant impact on their quality of life.
- However, no research to our knowledge has explored the relationship between VVA symptoms and other chronic conditions.
- These results suggest that the patient may be similarly chronic and warrants attention from the clinical community.

REFERENCES


RESULTS

The prevalence of VVA symptoms among post-menopausal women varied slightly across countries; however, no research to our knowledge has explored the relationship between VVA symptoms and other chronic conditions. These results suggest that the patient may be similarly chronic and warrants attention from the clinical community.

After adjusting for demographics and health status and pooling all countries together, each incremental level of VVA symptom severity was associated with a significant decrement in health utilities (p<.05; see Figure 2). Figure 2. Summary of adjusted effects of VVA symptom severity on EQ-5D health utilities by country after adjusting for demographics and health history and pooling all countries together. Each incremental level of VVA symptom severity was associated with a significant decrement in health utilities (p<.05). The observed quality of life burden for VVA symptoms was then put in context by comparing the burden with other chronic conditions (see Figure 3). After adjusting for demographics and health status and pooling all countries together, each incremental level of VVA symptom severity was associated with a significant decrement in health utilities (p<.05). The observed quality of life burden for VVA symptoms was then put in context by comparing the burden with other chronic conditions (see Figure 3).

CONCLUSIONS

- Consistent with prior research, we found that the prevalence of VVA symptoms was significantly associated with post-menopausal women. This is similar to past research, we found that approximately half of women with VVA symptoms reported them as moderate or severe.

LIMITATIONS

- Even after controlling for socio-economic and marital status, we found a significant and clinically relevant association between VVA symptom severity and quality of life on the EQ-5D. These effects were generally similar across countries; however, the relationship between VVA symptom severity and quality of life varied significantly by country, with the highest quality of life observed in the United States, France, and Spain.

This study was sponsored by Pfizer, Inc.