Background: Vaginitis and vaginosis (V/V) are among the most common conditions that lead women to seek care. However, there is limited published evidence on patients’ quality of life impact for vaginitis symptoms and management. A hypothesis was made that current management of V/V is insufficient, negatively impacts women’s quality of life significantly, and needs to be improved.

Methods: A systematic review was conducted, using the PubMed and MeSH databases. Three search string results were used after selecting for only human-related, full-text-available studies in English.

Results: 11 articles met inclusion criteria; of the 11, 4 were quantitative, with 2 sharing comparable metrics for comparison, with the remaining being qualitative. The following key themes were summarized from the qualitative results:

1) Many women were dissatisfied with current clinical management of V/V,
2) Poor management leads to negative clinical outcomes,
3) V/V has a negative and significant impact on Health-related Quality of Life (HRQoL), and
4) Clinical and general management of V/V can be improved with better diagnosis and education.

The quantitative results revealed an impact on quality of life via EuroQol-5 dimension (EQ-5D) and Short Form (SF)-36 scores, where women with a type of recurrent vaginal/vaginal candidiasis (RVVC) were more likely to experience poor quality of life and loss of productivity.

Conclusions: The impact of V/V is reported as both significant and negative. Improved diagnosis and management are suggested for improvement in patient satisfaction and quality of life. Clinicians could consider new diagnosis methods with improved accuracy.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Vaginitis and vaginosis (V/V) are among the most common conditions that lead women to seek care. However, there is limited published evidence on patients’ quality of life impact for vaginitis symptoms and management. A systematic literature review was undertaken to help demonstrate the large burden of unmet need for Vaginitis Management. The literature review was specifically conducted to assess Quality of Life (Qol) and patient satisfaction for women with Vaginitis and Vaginosis (V/V) symptoms. Specifically, the hypothesis was that current management is insufficient, negatively impacts women’s quality of life significantly, and needs to be improved.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A systematic literature review for patient satisfaction and quality of life for V/V management was conducted, using the PubMed and MeSH databases. Major search topics included papers with a major topic of Vaginitis, Vaginosis, Candidiasis, or Bacterial Vaginosis that looked at Patient Satisfaction or Quality of Life. There were three search strings used:

- [Patient Satisfaction] [MeSH Major Topic] OR Quality of Life [MeSH Major Topic] AND [Vaginitis Title OR Vaginosis Title OR Candidiasis Title]
- ([Vaginitis [MeSH Major Topic] AND Quality of life [MeSH Terms]] NOT “Istula” NOT “Atrophy”)

The three search string results were cross referenced after selecting for only human related, full-text available studies. Of these, 52 were found to be cross-identified. Analysis of these 52 returned 11 potentially relevant results. Each of these 11 were then checked for associated key words and similar articles, no additional items of relevance were returned. Of the 11, 4 were quantitative, with 2 sharing comparable metrics for comparison, with the remaining being qualitative only. The 11 studies identified spanned multiple countries and continents, covering a timeframe from 1996 to 2016 (see Figures 1, 2).

Figure 1. Diagram of Search

Figure 2. Diversity of Literature Review

RESULTS

The major themes were supportive of the hypothesis around unmet needs in current V/V management. The following table summarizes the qualitative study key themes.

Table 1. Key Themes, Patient Satisfaction and Quality of Life due to V/V

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>ZHU et al. 2016</th>
<th>IRVING et al. 1998</th>
<th>PAYNE et al. 2010</th>
<th>ABALÈA et al. 2013</th>
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<tr>
<td>Unmet Need</td>
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<td>RVVC Management</td>
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<td>Better diagnosis and management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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</table>

CONCLUSION

The impact of V/V is reported as both significant and negative, with improved diagnosis and management being a major suggestion for improvement in patient satisfaction and quality of life. Women complained of severe social and sexual stigma, feelings of being ashamed or unclear, and hesitation to conduct normal daily activities due to the infection. They also reported statistically significant increases in pain, anxiety and depression, and overall quality of life due to V/V. The burden of V/V translates to economic and social costs in addition to standard treatment and health care system costs, and carries mental and physical burden to sufferers. This infection should be taken as seriously and managed as carefully as COPD and asthma, and clinicians who wish to better serve their patients should consider new and improved diagnosis methods, and consider always providing an exam and diagnostic option.

REFERENCES