Vulval Paget's Disease

Information for patients
Gynaecology
What is Vulval Paget’s disease?

Vulval Paget’s disease is an abnormal change in the cells which cover the skin (outer layer) of the vulva (outer folds of skin around your vagina). This may occur in patches (lesions) on your vulva.

Is this a common condition?

No, it is very rare. It usually only affects women who have been through the menopause.

What causes Vulval Paget’s disease?

The exact cause of Vulval Paget's disease is unknown.

What are the symptoms of Vulval Paget’s disease?

You may have had symptoms for several years before seeking medical advice. You may experience the following in the affected area:

- Itching (most common symptom), this can be a mild to intense itching of a lesion around your groin and/or skin around your vagina and anal area
- Pain and bleeding may occur from scratching lesions that have been around for a long time
- Thickened plaques (raised patch on the skin) may form that can become red, scaly and crusty. Although they may appear similar to eczema, they fail to clear up with the use of steroid creams.

The following may help with some of the symptoms:

- Avoid scented soap/shower gels that may irritate the skin around your vulva
- Wear cotton underwear
Can there be any complications from Vulval Paget’s disease?

Yes. It is usually associated with an abnormal growth of tissue in the sweat glands in the vulva.

It can also be associated with an underlying cancer, either in the vulval area, or more widespread within the body.

How is Vulval Paget’s disease diagnosed?

Women who have any of the above symptoms will be referred to a gynaecologist. Investigations may include:

**Examination:** Your doctor will carefully examine the affected area.

**Biopsy:** If Vulval Paget's disease is suspected a small sample (biopsy) of the affected skin will be removed using a local anaesthetic during your appointment. The skin sample is sent to the laboratory and examined under a microscope to confirm the diagnosis.

**Imaging:** To search for nearby cancers may also be done.

Can Vulval Paget’s disease be cured?

Vulval Paget's disease can come back, so you will need to attend the clinic on a regular basis.

How is Vulval Paget’s disease treated?

Vulval Paget’s disease can be treated in several ways. The treatment options include:

- **Surgery:** This is the most common treatment. The affected area and a wide margin of clear tissue surrounding the area is removed during the operation (wide local excision).
• **Photodynamic Therapy:** This is a treatment currently being studied. A cream is applied to the skin which makes the Paget’s cells sensitive to light; then a specific wave length of light is applied to the area.

• **Medication:** Cream is applied to the skin.

• **Radiotherapy**

The doctor will discuss the possible treatment options with you and advise a recommended treatment.

**How often will I need to attend clinic?**

You will attend the clinic and be re-examined every 3 months for 2 years after your initial diagnosis. After 2 years, you will be seen yearly. You will be given or sent your appointments to attend the Gynaecology Out Patients Department.

**Who can I contact if I have any questions?**

If you need any further information then please do not hesitate to contact:

• **Vulval Clinic Secretary:** 0114 226 8300