An European observational study on vulvo-vaginal atrophy prevalence and its impact on QoL and Sexual life: The EVEs (European Vulvo-vaginal Epidemiological Study) design

Vulvovaginal atrophy (VVA) is a chronic and progressive condition caused mainly by decreased estrogen levels. Symptoms include dryness, irritation, soreness, and dyspareunia. Sexual pain secondary to VVA is an important contributor to female sexual dysfunction. In addition to the impact on sexuality and intercourse, VVA may impact urinary function with a significant impairment on daily living activities. Such effects have been shown to cause significant emotional distress and reduced quality of life in postmenopausal women. Therefore, we designed the EVEs (European Vulvo-vaginal Epidemiological Study) study to identify prevalence of VVA, in a population of women attending specialized menopause clinics, its determinants, and its impact on QoL and sexual life in European post-menopausal women. This is a cross-sectional study, observational and multinational (Italy, Germany and Spain). Approximately 3,500 women attending 60 specialized centres will be screened for VVA symptoms in the age range of 45-75 years. The primary endpoint is the prevalence of VVA confirmed by an objective Ob/Gyn clinical assessment, including a Vaginal and a Vulva Health index assessment, among postmenopausal women reporting at least 1 VVA symptom. Secondary endpoints are the prevalence of postmenopausal women reporting at least 1 VVA symptom among all women attending a menopause centre, characterization of the VVA population and impact of VVA on physical status, quality of life and sexual life. The study includes patient's questionnaires with subjective questions on VVA, menopause and sexual life and specific questionnaires on vaginal health (DIVA Questionnaire), QoL (EQ-5D) and sexual function (FSFI and FSDS questionnaires).

The issue of vaginal health at midlife and beyond is often overlooked for many reasons, mostly related to the lack of understanding on how much VVA may impact both sexual health and quality of life of women and their partners. Further information on physical signs of VVA and its potential determinants could improve the diagnosis rate of this underestimate condition.