Identifying Quality Improvement Opportunities in a Vulvar Dermatology Clinic
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**BACKGROUND**

Vulvar concerns are common health concerns for women to be referred to specialist care. In accordance with current literature stating the importance of subspecialized vulvar dermatology clinics and educational gaps in medical training, we have identified a need to further investigate the optimization of efficiency, patient centered care and delivery of Physician education.

**Objective:** Review local vulvar dermatology clinic patient data to identify quality improvement opportunities to further meet the needs of our patients and referring physicians.

**METHODS**

A retrospective chart review of 187 new consultations in the vulvar dermatology clinic from May 2019 to May 2020.

Inclusion criteria: new referral for a vulvar condition, any age, ambulatory health status, female sex, diagnosis of any vulvar condition

**RESULTS**

Areas for Improvement

### Patient

- Quality improvement suggestions provided herein
- Dialogue and interviews with patients

### Referring Health Care Provider

- Vulvar Dermatology Clinic
- Multicenter vulvar clinic studies across Canada

### Areas for Future Research to Improve Vulvar Patient Experience

- Further insight to patient needs

**INTERVENTIONS**

- **Patient**
  - Send information handout regarding gentle vulvar skin care and basic symptom-directed care during referral waiting period
    - May be mailed with appointment package
  - Implement electronic handouts
    - Currently accessible on local dermatology website
    - Requires increased awareness of generalists and non-vulvar dermatology specialists
  - Develop more local patient information handouts
    - Specific to most frequently diagnosed conditions and treatments
    - Currently accessible on local dermatology website
    - Make available electronically or readily available in print

- **Referring Health Care Provider**
  - Virtual physician-to-physician consultation process
    - Minimize patient travel
    - Reduce health care costs
  - Education of referring physicians
    - Give particular attention to common inflammatory conditions and benign vs. malignant lesions
    - Develop electronic learning modules
  - Provide family medicine trainees opportunity to participate in our vulvar dermatology clinic
    - Podcasts or recorded webinars for referring physicians
    - Online resources for increased flexibility
    - Develop modules that provide continuing medical education credit

- **Vulvar Dermatology Clinic**
  - Add more specific questions related to sexual health in standardized history taking template to prompt opportunity for rapport
    - Our data suggests impact on sexual function and quality of life was inadequately explored and/or documented
    - Those who were asked about sexual function reported significant impairment, avoidance, fear of intercourse
    - Access to validated tools such as vulvar quality of life (VLQI), developed by Saunderson et al., may be helpful
  - Further investigation into reasons why patients may not follow up
    - Review past patient appointment list to determine the number of patients that did not follow up, then conduct a survey to determine why these patients may not have followed up

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**Areas for Improvement**

- Patient
- Referring Health Care Provider
- Vulvar Dermatology Clinic

**Areas for Future Research to Improve Vulvar Patient Experience**

- Further insight to patient needs

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