

P.E.A.R.L.S. Practical Evidence About Real Life Situations



Local oestrogen for vaginal atrophy in postmenopausal women.

Clinical Question	Should I prescribe local oestrogen for postmenopausal women with vaginal atrophy?
Bottom Line	Compared to placebo and non-hormonal gel, oestrogen creams, pessaries, tablets and the oestradiol vaginal ring are equally effective for relieving the symptoms of vaginal atrophy. However women seem to favour the oestradiol vaginal ring for ease of use, comfort and overall satisfaction.
Context	Vaginal atrophy is a common condition in postmenopausal women, causing vaginal dryness, itching, discomfort and dyspareunia. Systemic treatment in the form of oral hormone replacement therapy is not always necessary – several local oestrogen preparations are available.
Caveat	Conjugated equine oestrogen cream is more likely than oestradiol tablets to cause uterine bleeding, breast pain and perineal pain (NNH = 10). Compared to the oestradiol ring this cream was also more likely to cause endometrial overstimulation (NNH = 14). The review found that all methods of delivering oestrogen relieved the symptoms. However, some creams may cause adverse effects and women preferred vaginal rings compared with vaginal creams
Reference	Suckling J et al. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, 2006, Issue 4. This review contains 19 trials and 4162 participants.
Date (Author)	February 2007 (BMcA)

NNT = numbers needed to treat to benefit one person

NNH = numbers needed to harm one person

Both NNT and NNH are only reported if the studies or pooling of studies is statistically significant

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