

Lessons from the Real World: Long-term Efficacy and Safety of Vaginal Erbium Laser (VEL®), the Second Generation Thermotherapy for the Genitourinary Syndrome of Menopause

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Objective: The aim of this study was to evaluate the long-term efficacy and safety of Vaginal Erbium Laser (VEL) for the treatment of genitourinary syndrome of menopause (GSM) and stress urinary incontinence (SUI)

Methods: The study was performed on an outpatient basis using an erbium laser (XS Fotona Smooth™, Fotona, Ljubljana, Slovenia) in postmenopausal women (PMW, n= 205) treated with 3 laser applications every 30 days. Symptoms were assessed before and after 1, 3, 6, 12, 18 and 24 months using the visual analogue scale (VAS) and the vaginal health index score (VHIS). In addition, SUI was evaluated with the International Consultation on Incontinence Questionnaire-Urinary Incontinence Short Form (ICIQ-UI SF).

Results: VEL treatment significantly improved VHIS, as well as vaginal dryness and dyspareunia scores ($p < 0.01$) up to 12 months after the last VEL treatment, while the values were similar to the baseline after 18 and 24 months. In 114 PMW suffering from mild-moderate SUI, the VEL treatment significantly ($p < 0.01$) improved ICIQ-SF scores over the 12 months of observation. VEL was well tolerated with less than 3% of patients discontinuing treatment due to adverse events. During our observation period, 174 PMW (84.9%) asked to repeat the VEL procedure for GSM, and 96 patients (69.6%) asked to repeat procedure for SUI.

Discussion: The presented results suggest that VEL is effective, safe and well accepted for the treatment of GSM and SUI. The major concern is that

our large longitudinal study is not controlled by a placebo (sham procedure) group. However, the Italian National Health Care System and the vast majority of Insurance Companies do not cover VEL at the moment, so patients must pay on their own. Arguably, the out-of-pocket expenses may compel the patients to avoid repeating procedures which are potentially ineffective. The high percentage of patients voluntarily repeating the VEL procedure can thus be taken as indirect evidence of its efficacy.

Comparison of Fotona SMOOTH® Laser Treatment and Other Energy-based Device Therapies in the Treatment of VRS and GSM

Midori Mitsuyuki

Midori Beauty Clinic- Hiroo

Along with the growing interest in aesthetic gynecology, many approaches and technologies for VRS (vaginal relaxation) and GSM (genitourinary syndrome of menopause) have been developed all over the world every day.

In my clinic, we offer non-surgical treatment of vaginal symptoms with the following four kinds of systems:

- k) Viveve, Geneveve: Radio Frequency
- l) ThermiVA, ThermiGen: Radio Frequency
- m) Ultra Vera, Hironic: HIFU (High Intensity Focused Ultrasound)
- n) Fotona SMOOTH®, Fotona: E:YAG Laser

We use different machines independently or in combination, depending on the patient's conditions and symptoms.

I shall report on a comparison of the efficiency and other aspects of each device and the treatment results of combination therapies.

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