Overview of Use of Vaginal Dilators

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Vaginal dilators can be used effectively by patients and their partners to address various medical diagnoses, treatment sequelae, and psycho-emotional situations. Women can use them to help with relaxation of vaginal muscles and/or to gradually stretch vaginal tissue.

I. Dilators can be useful to address:
   a. Vaginal stenosis
   b. Agglutination
   c. Scar tissue
   d. Tissue change due to LS or LP
   e. Vaginoplasty
   f. Vaginal creation due to agenesis
   g. Muscle tightening due to anticipatory anxiety re penetration
   h. Pain with penetration/ dypareunea
   i. Fear of self exploration and self touch

II. Benefits: physical, psychological and relational
   a. Non surgical enlargement and lengthening
   b. Allows gradual, self-paced change
   c. Gives control to patient, promotes self efficacy
   d. Visual feedback of progress
   e. Without complexity of interpersonal expectation (partner or medical practitioner)
   f. Partner inclusion as desired
   g. Nonsexual
   h. Partner learning/ couple exploration

III. Drawbacks
   a. Patient resistance
   b. Cost
   c. Rare but possible tissue damage if used incorrectly

IV. Instructions
   a. Find 10-20 minutes of privacy
   b. Body scan - relaxation > focal tightening /relaxation of vaginal muscles
   c. Apply lubricant to introitus and to dilator
   d. Gently push smallest dilator into vagina with circular motion
   e. Bear down if initial resistance
   f. Leave dilator in vaginal for 10 minutes
   g. Wash dilator with soap and water for storage
   h. Repeat 3-5 times per week
   i. Involve partner if desired only after patient is comfortable with process
V. Dilators should be used with lubricant
   a. Lubricants made specifically for vaginal use may be water based or silicone based
   b. Silicone based lubricants are more slipper, will not dry up and become tacky- but
      do not rinse away easily
   c. Note: silicone based lubricants should never be used with silicone dilators

VI. Dilators may be made of hard plastic or flexible silicone. Some have handles, and some
    vibrate. Some are sold in a set and some can be purchased individually.
    a. Amielle/Vaginismus.com - set of 5 hard plastic tapered dilators with handle/ $44.95 for set 
       https://www.vaginismus.com/products/dilator_set
    b. Soul Sources Silicone tapered- 8 sizes/ avail individually or in groups for varied
    c. FEMMAX dilators- set of 4, hard plastic, tapered, forms handle. Avail in pink, brown and beige- Approx $125 w/shipping from the UK- www.mdti.co.uk
    d. Berman Center Intimate Basics – hard plastic vibrating wand dilator with 3
       additional graduated size attachments plus silicone sleeve/ $29 (at drugstore .com)- 
    e. Pure Romance - set of 6 silicone tapered dilators/ $89 for set 
       https://www.pureromance.com
    g. Milex- Cooper Surgical- silicone available in quantity to medical personnel 
       http://www.coopersurgical.com/Products/Detail/Milex-Vaginal-Rectal-Silicone-Dilators
    h. Syracuse Medical Dilator Set- set of 7/ $ 77.50 
    i. Various other types available online

VII. Reading
    a. Macey, K., Gregory, A., Nunns, D., das Nair, R. Women's experiences of
       using vaginal trainers (dilators) to treat vaginal penetration difficulties diagnosed 
    b. Spadt, K. S., Iorio, J., Fariello, J. Y., Whitmore, K.E. Vaginal dilation: when it's 
       indicated, and tips on teaching it. OBG Management. 2012 Vol 24:12. Available at:
a&id=GALE|A324980385&v=2.1&it=r&userGroup=lom_umichanna
    c. Murina, F., Bernorio, R., Palmiotto, R. The Use of Amielle Vaginal Trainers as
       Adjuvant in the Treatment of Vestibulodynia: An Observational Multicentric Study. 