



Fennel Vaginal Cream Improves Atrophy in Postmenopausal Women

Fennel vaginal cream improves the signs and symptoms of vaginal atrophy in postmenopausal women, researchers from Iran report.

“The most exciting results were improving the vaginal maturation index and vaginal atrophy,” Dr. Parvin Abedi from Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences, Ahvaz, told Reuters Health



“Dyspareunia was improved also in participants. Since Iranian postmenopausal women do not accept the hormone therapy because of its potential risk factors, using fennel will be a good alternative for them.”

According to one international survey of more than 4,000 middle-aged women, 39% of postmenopausal women had moderate to severe symptoms of vaginal atrophy, 42% had no information about its treatment, and more than 50% of affected women said their vaginal atrophy negatively affected their quality of life. Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) has been used in traditional Iranian medicine and modern phytotherapy for its antioxidant, estrogenic, anti-inflammatory, and other properties.

Dr. Abedi and colleagues investigated the effects of a 5% fennel cream on vaginal atrophy in a double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled study of 60 postmenopausal women. All 60 women completed the eight-week study.

After eight weeks, the number of superficial cells increased and the number of intermediate and parabasal cells decreased significantly in the fennel group, compared with the placebo group.

Significantly more women in the fennel group than in the placebo group experienced relief of itching (100% vs. 43.3%, respectively), dryness (100% vs. 3.3%), pallor (100% vs. 0%), and dyspareunia (93.3% vs. 0%), the researchers report in *Maturitas*, online November 12.

Before treatment, none of the women had maturation vaginal indices (MVI) in the normal range (65-100). After treatment, all women in the fennel group and none in the placebo group had MVI between 65 and 100. In the placebo group, only 40.7% of women had MVI between 50 and 64, and the rest had MVI between 0 and 49.

“According to results of this study, fennel is an effective therapy for vaginal atrophy in postmenopausal women, which is also devoid of the side effects,” the researchers conclude. “Larger studies are necessary to confirm the positive impacts of fennel on the vaginal symptoms occurring in postmenopausal women.”

Dr. Abedi said “recommendation for using fennel less frequently needs more evidence-based research. However, we think that it will be work if women use it for 8 weeks and then reduce the usage to 2-3 times a week.”

“We are working on other traditional Iranian herbs in the reproductive aged and postmenopausal women,” she added.

SOURCE: <http://bit.ly/1J1SQ7S>
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