

Sexual pain disorders

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Dyspareunia (coital pain) is a very sensitive issue for women. Painful intercourse directly impacts sexual intimacy in women's relationships and so affects an emotionally charged aspect of their lives. Talking with patients about sexual pain disorders requires sensitivity, empathy, and a willingness to acknowledge that the pain is rooted in a biological problem. This approach can be the basis of a very rewarding clinician-patient relationship and is the prerequisite for an effective therapeutic alliance. This chapter will describe the different types of sexual pain disorders (including vaginismus) in women and their prevalence, classification, etiology, clinical evaluation, and treatment.

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