

Breaking the taboo



ADELAIDE PELVIC RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGEON **DR OSEKA ONUMA** EXPLAINS GENITAL SURGERY CAN EASE DISCOMFORT, ENHANCE SELF-ESTEEM AND IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE. CAITLIN BISHOP REPORTS.

The way women are unique in their mental, physical and emotional makeup is celebrated, and often reinforced, in conversations between girlfriends or even with strangers. Yet, when it comes to genital surgery, the differences between women, and any potential concerns, are often shrouded in a blanket of taboo, misunderstanding or unfair generalisations.

For example, vaginal rejuvenation has received a lot of negative coverage in mainstream media under the “designer vagina” banner. Women seeking surgery are often condemned as bowing to the “porn aesthetic”, and receive little support in making a decision that is necessary to ease discomfort or improve self-confidence.

Adelaide pelvic reconstructive surgeon Dr Oseka Onuma explains most patients seeking genital surgery are hoping to alleviate pain and improve quality of life. ‘The number of women patronised by mainstream media and even by some members of the medical community when seeking help is disappointing,’ he says. ‘The majority of my patients seeking vaginal rejuvenation are not motivated by the aesthetic, but a growing dislike of pain during intercourse or discomfort when participating in everyday activities.’

The stigma surrounding genital surgery means few women feel comfortable talking to friends or exploring

their options with doctors or health professionals. For this reason, some women aren’t aware of the possibilities available in correcting potentially embarrassing problems; in fact, there is often a limited understanding of what is “normal” and what is not.

‘Some women live with the discomfort of oversized labia for many years, and often when they come to see me for a labiaplasty they have only recently become aware they can have something done to improve the situation,’ Dr Onuma explains. ‘The only comment that can be made with any certainty about the size and shape of the labia is that they are all very different.’

Indeed, oversized, enlarged or asymmetrical labia minora can cause discomfort during sex and hinder certain activities such as such as bike riding or horse riding. It can also cause irritation and discomfort when wearing certain clothes, for example, swimwear, tights or jeans.

The growing awareness surrounding genital surgery means there is an increased demand for vaginal rejuvenation surgeries. Yet, alongside this growing awareness, Dr Onuma believes there should be an adjustment in how genital surgery is perceived.

‘Genital surgery can increase a woman’s confidence in herself and her relationships,’ Dr Onuma explains.

‘Women may not find it easy to talk to stranger, doctors or friends about a loose vagina, labial discomfort or lack of vaginal sensation but these issues need to be raised and explored in order to provide the options for improving quality of life.’

As is the case in any surgery, the consultation process before genital surgery must be individualised to address the specific concerns, anatomy and expectations of each patient. ‘Each patient will have different motivations, concerns and expectations in seeking genital surgery,’ Dr Onuma explains. ‘It is important to listen to the concerns of the individual patient, assess them with appropriate examinations and offer a series of potential solutions.’

Options in genital surgery

Laser reduction labiaplasty can sculpt the elongated or unequal labial minora as desired. Labiaplasty techniques can also reconstruct conditions that are a result of the ageing process, childbirth trauma or injury.

During labiaplasty, the vulvar structures (including the labia minora, labia majora, mons pubis, perineum, entrance to the vagina and hymen) can be surgically enhanced, both functionally and aesthetically.

Laser vaginal rejuvenation can effectively enhance vaginal muscle tone, strength and control. Laser techniques typically afford greater accuracy and result in rapid healing, less pain and faster recovery.

Options for urinary incontinence

Female stress urinary incontinence is usually caused by an improperly functioning urethra. The surrounding muscles and pelvic tissue are generally weakened, meaning the urethra doesn’t maintain a tight seal during exercise or other movements such as coughing or laughing, and urine invariably escapes.

The tensionless vaginal tape, or TVT sling, is a minimally invasive procedure during which a Prolene tape sling is inserted to correct stress urinary incontinence.

The mesh is inserted through the vagina and positioned underneath the urethra, creating a supportive sling. Notably, this is held in place by surrounding tissues rather than sutured into position. During movement or exercise, the mesh supports the urethra, allowing it to maintain its seal and prevent urine loss.

‘Today, women are less willing to accept changes in genital anatomy resulting from pregnancy, childbirth and ageing,’ Dr Onuma explains. ‘With various surgical and non-surgical techniques, there is a range of options available to address, and hopefully resolve, these problems. Taking action and seeking intervention can help restore self-image, enhance self-esteem and improve overall quality of life.’ **csbm**

Laser Vaginal Rejuvenation™

SPECIALISING IN

- Aesthetic and functional labial surgery
- Curing urinary incontinence
- Restoring pelvic support
- Enhancing sexual gratification
- Resolving menstrual dysfunction

OUR MISSION

To empower women with knowledge, choice and alternatives



Dr Oseka Onuma

BSc MJur MBBS FRCOG
FRANZCOG
Gynaecologist &
Pelvic Reconstructive Surgeon



Laser Vaginal Rejuvenation Institute of Adelaide

Robe Terrace Specialist Centre Suite
4 Robe Terrace, Medindie
South Australia 5081

Phone **08 8344 6085**

Facsimile 08 8344 6087

Email rooms@dronuma.com

www.dronuma.com