

It's Not Supposed To Hurt: Pelvic Floor Soft Tissue Massage And Vaginal Dilator Implementation

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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:

- Lichen sclerosus presents with itchy, whitened areas of the vulvar skin that eventually becomes atrophic with diminished blood flow to the vaginal area.
- Lichen sclerosus is often associated with dyspareunia as well as pelvic floor muscle (PFM) hypertonia and dysfunction.
- The purpose of this case report is to show the effectiveness of pelvic floor manual therapy implemented via the use of internal and external soft tissue massage as well as the use of vaginal dilators.

CASE DESCRIPTION:

Body Structure & Functioning Impairments

- Bilateral limited hamstrings of 40 degrees on the right and 35 degrees on the left
- Bilateral tight piriformis with the inability of the knee to cross midline
- Hypersensitivity to touch of internal vaginal tissues and external perineal tissues
- PFM hypertonia
- Pelvic floor contraction incoordination and weakness

Activity Limitations

- Inability to have sexual intercourse without excruciating pain
- Inability to stand on her feet all day to complete a full workday

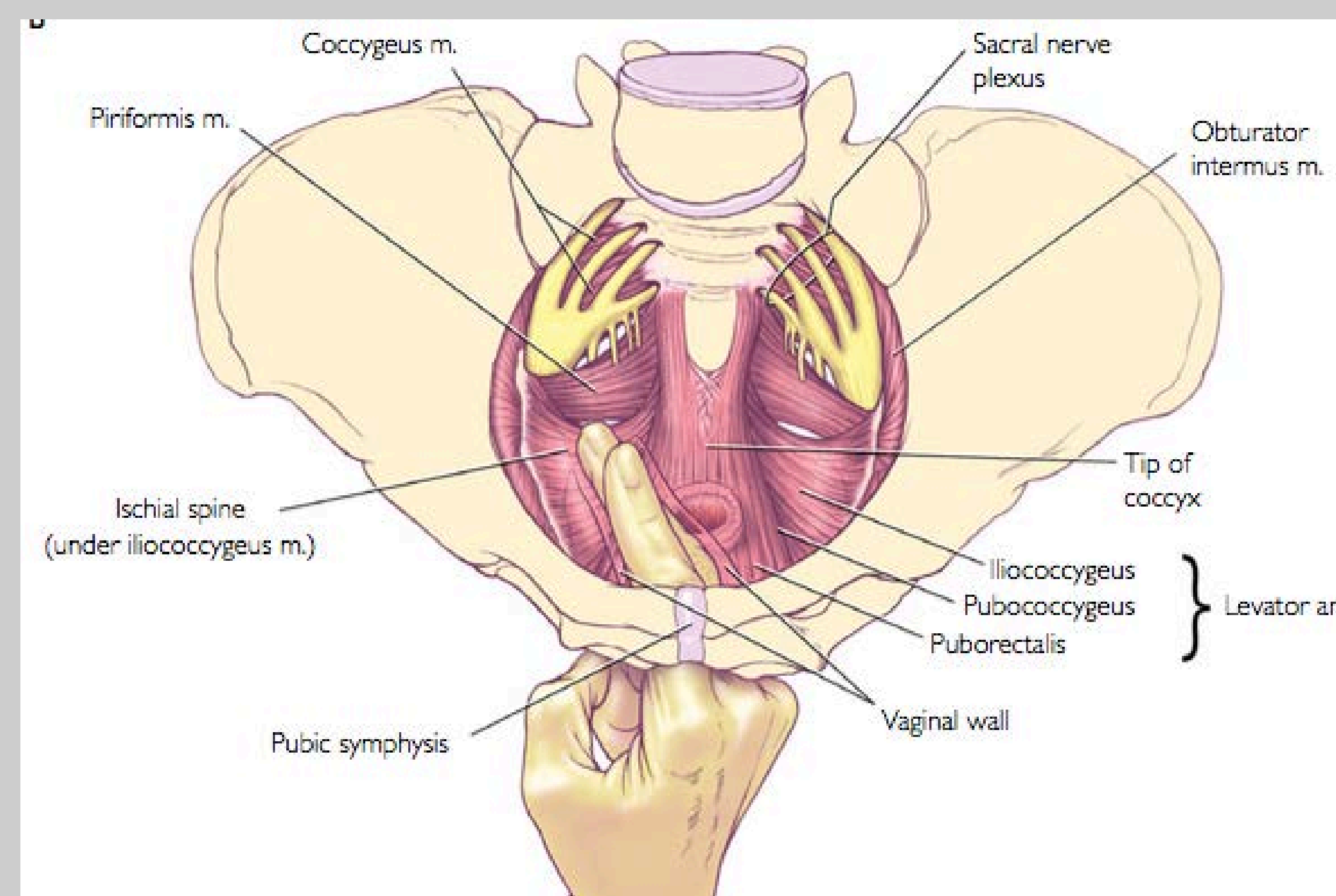
Participation Restrictions

- The possibility of not being able to bear children
- Inability to participate in a pain-free sexual relationship with her partner

METHODS:

The interventions focused primarily on internal pelvic floor soft tissue massage and vaginal dilators, which are both shown in the pictures below. Other interventions that were implemented included:

- Bilateral piriformis and hamstring stretching
- Sciatic nerve glides
- Intravaginal electrical stimulation
- Electromyography biofeedback.



Internal soft tissue massage of the pelvic floor musculature



Vaginal dilators used to stretch the introitus

RESULTS:

Impairments	Initial Evaluation	Discharge
Muscle Length	Hamstring: 40 degrees on left 35 degrees on right Piriformis: Bilateral tightness	Hamstring: WNL Piriformis: WNL
Palpation Depth of Superficial and Deep PFM Tolerance	Superficial to moderate depth	Deep depth
POPDI-6	50% impaired	42% impaired
VQ	39% impaired	18% impaired
Visual Analog Scale	External: 4/10 Internal: 9/10 Sexual Intercourse: 10/10	External: 2/10 Internal: 5/10 Sexual Intercourse: 5/10
PFM MMT	1/5	2+/5

CONCLUSION:

- Through the use of soft tissue massage and vaginal dilators, pelvic floor muscle hypertonia and pain was reduced, even in the presence of lichen sclerosus.
- Future research is needed to develop a more standardized and detailed approach to manage dyspareunia and hypertonia of the PFM due to lichen sclerosus.

References:

