



VULVAL APHTHOUS ULCERATION FOLLOWING COVID PFIZER-BIONTECH VACCINATION

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CASE SUMMARY

We present the case of a 75 year old woman who developed painful vulval ulceration in the three days following her Pfizer-BioNTech booster vaccination (Figure 1 and 2 below).



The patient was initially managed conservatively with topical anaesthetic gel. After worsening pain including discomfort during urination and defecation, she was prescribed five days of systemic corticosteroid therapy after which she made a full recovery.

DISCUSSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen the rapid development of novel vaccines where the side effect profile is being discovered alongside its administration and vulval ulceration is an excellent example of this.

While there have been numerous reports of ulceration following infection with COVID itself, this case represents one of the first associations between Pfizer-BioNTech vaccination and vulval ulceration.

The use of topical steroids in this case is consistent with Australian guidelines endorsed by the RACGP suggesting that topical corticosteroids are the mainstay of treatment of aphthous ulceration. A literature review of other cases involving COVID-19 and mucosal ulceration is consistent with this.

LEARNING POINTS

- Awareness of vulval ulceration as a rare but potential side effect of Pfizer COVID vaccination is very important as it has both significant physical and emotional side effects.
- While the discomfort associated with vulval ulcers is severe, the emotional toll is also substantial and should also be considered.
- Therefore increasing awareness of this emerging potential side effect is of great importance.