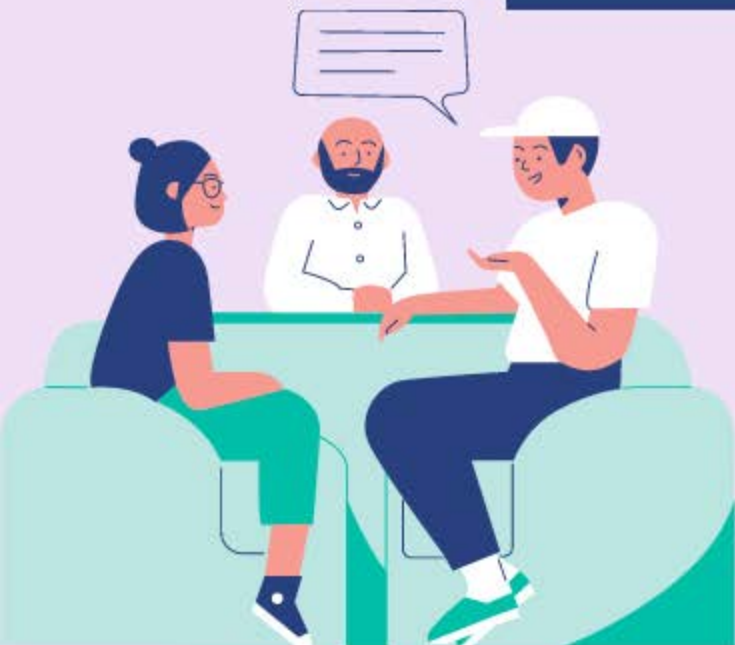


COGNITIVE-BEHAVIOURAL COUPLE THERAPY

More improvements for women who have **pain during sex** relative to a common medical treatment

**NEW
PUBLICATION!**



*Scroll to the next
slide, we'll break
down the findings!*



What is provoked vestibulodynia (PVD)?

PVD is a type of chronic pain that occurs around the vaginal opening in response to touch or pressure. It is the most common cause of pain during sex, affecting up to 10% of people with vulvas.

HOW DOES COUPLE THERAPY COMPARE TO A MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR PVD?

We wanted to know how cognitive-behavioural couple therapy (**CBCT**) compared to a commonly used medical treatment for PVD—5% lidocaine ointment applied to the entrance of the vagina overnight.

WHAT DID WE DO?

We recruited **108** women with PVD and their partners for a randomized clinical trial.

We randomly assigned couples to one of the two treatments



**12 weeks
of CBCT**

**Topical
lidocaine**

Women with PVD reported on their **pain experience during intercourse** and both members of each couple reported on their sexuality, treatment satisfaction, and impressions of improvements in pain and sexuality **before treatment, immediately after treatment, and 6 months later.**

WHAT DID WE FIND?



CBCT and **lidocaine** both improved women's ratings of **pain intensity**, but **pain unpleasantness** (emotional part of experiencing pain) improved more following CBCT.

Women who received **CBCT** had more improvements in pain-related outcomes related to **anxiety and worry about the pain**. Women who received CBCT also had a bigger drop in **sexual distress**.

Partners benefited from both treatments, but couples who received **CBCT** reported being **more satisfied with treatment**.



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

CBCT is as effective as a commonly prescribed medical treatment for PVD and should be recommended as an option for couples.

CBCT was even more beneficial than topical lidocaine for reducing other negative impacts of the pain on couples' lives.

These findings add to growing evidence that **when sex hurts, psychological treatments can help** individuals and couples!



This is a summary of our published article:

Bergeron, S., Vaillancourt-Morel, M.-P., Corsini-Munt, S., Steben, M., Delisle, I., Mayrand, M.-H., & Rosen, N. O. (2021). Cognitive-behavioral couple therapy versus lidocaine for provoked vestibulodynia: A randomized clinical trial. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 89*, 316-326.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/ccp0000631>

