Mast cells and their role in sexual pain disorders

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Understanding the role of mast cells in the pathophysiology of local inflammation is critical if physicians hope to move from symptomatic, late interventions in conditions such as provoked vestibulodynia (PVD) to etiologically based multimodal treatments. Mast cells play a significant role as the sophisticated directors of the immune and inflammatory response; they can influence a positive or negative outcome, according to genetic, local, and contextual factors.
Physicians can change the natural history of many inflammatory conditions that lead to chronic and aggressive pain disorders if they consider the critical role of mast cells and intervene in two ways:
1) by reducing agonist stimuli that cause mast cell up-regulation and damaging degranulation;
2) by testing/using drugs that may act as antagonist modulators of mast cells, thereby reducing the release of inflammatory and neurotrophic substances.

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