



## **Prevalence of vaginal dryness in trying to conceive couples Pacific Coast Reproductive Society Annual Meeting**

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Dyspareunia, primarily due to vaginal dryness, has been reported to occur “sometimes” or “more often”, in at least 46% of all reproductive age women. However, it is currently not known if vaginal dryness is increased in trying-to-conceive (TTC) couples. Additionally, it is not known how trying to conceive couples are managing symptoms of vaginal dryness, given numerous reports on the sperm-toxic nature of most personal lubricants and even saliva. This study was done to determine the prevalence of vaginal dryness among trying to conceive couples, and their level of understanding of appropriate interventions for such dryness. An opt-in internet survey of 900 TTC couples was conducted over 5 months. Thirty questions regarding fertility and vaginal dryness were asked of each participant. Summary statistics for the group were compiled and analyzed.

Average TTC time for the group was 7 months, with 33% TTC 1 year or more. Medical care for their fertility issues included: 23% no doctor, 13% PCP, 43% ObGyn, 16% Fertility Specialist, 4% Urologist. Most couples (78%) had no definitive diagnosis for cause of fertility problems. Most (69%) routinely used some ovulation prediction method. Only 16% were currently taking “fertility medications”.

While TTC, vaginal dryness negatively affected sexual intimacy for most couples: 11% always, 35% often, 42% sometimes, 9% rarely, 3% never. Vaginal dryness episodes also increased while TTC: 19% a lot, 57% some, 23% not at all. Although 30% knew not to use a lubricant while TTC, another 26% often or always used such products. Use by this later group included mostly that of KY (40%) and Astroglide (19%). Only 20% of couples had ever discussed their dryness problem with a doctor. Of those that had, 75% of the doctors reiterated the sperm-toxic effects of lubricants.

Rates of vaginal dryness in TTC couples appears to be as much as twice that seen in the general population. Patients are not discussing this problem with their care providers adequately. Fully one-quarter of TTC couples are utilizing personal lubricant products which reportedly are as toxic to sperm as are contraceptive jellies. Products designed specifically to relieve vaginal dryness without harming sperm, such as Pre~Seed, are needed for use by TTC couples.