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DEPARTMENT: ANATOMY

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**ASSIGNMENT:**

With the aid of a diagram discuss the gross anatomy of the female external genitalia.

**ANSWER:**

The female reproductive organ can be subdivided into the internal and external genitalia. The internal genitalia are those organs that are within the true pelvis. These include the vagina, the uterus, cervix, uterine tubes and ovaries. The external genitalia lie outside the true pelvis. These include the perineum, mons pubis, clitoris, urethral(urinary) meatus, labia majora and minora, vestibule, greater vestibular(bartholin) glands, skene glands and periurethral area.

**THE FEMALE EXTERNAL GENITALIA**

The female external reproductive structures are referred collectively as the vulva. The mons pubis is a pad of fat that is located at the anterior, over the pubic bone. After puberty, it becomes covered in pubic hair. The labia major (labia=lips;major= larger) are the folds of hair-covered skin that begins just posterior to the mons pubis. The thinner and more pigmented labia minora(labia=lips;minora=smaller) extended medial to the labia majora. Although they naturally vary in shape and size from woman to woman, the labia minora serve to protect the female urethra and the entrance to the female reproductive tract. The superior, anterior portions of the labia minora come together to encircle the clitoris (or glans clitoris) an organ that originates from the same cells as the glans penis and has abundant nerves that makes it important in sexual sensation and orgasm. The hymen is a thin membrane that sometimes partially covers the entrance to the vagina. An intact hymen cannot be used as an indication of virginity even at birth this is only a partial membrane as menstrual fluid and other secretions must be able to exit the body, regardless of penile-vaginal intercourse. The Vaginal opening is located between the opening of the urethra AND THE ANUS. It is flanked by outlets to the Bartholin’s glands.

