

## **My assignment**

**Name: Adesina Benita tomisin**

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## **Answers**

### **GROSS ANATOMY OF THE FEMALE EXTERNAL GENITALIA**

The female genitalia includes internal and external structures. The internal genitalia includes the ovaries, Fallopian tubes, uterus, cervix, and vagina while the female external genitalia are the vulva and the clitoris.

#### **The female external genitalia**

The female external genitalia is composed of two main structures. The vulva(pudendum) and the clitoris

#### **\_\_\_\_\_ The vulva (pudendum)**

\_The vulva is also known as the pudendum. The vulva has three main functions which are,

1. To act as a sensory tissue during sexual intercourse
2. To assist in micturition by directing the flow of urine
3. To protect the internal female reproductive tract from infections.

#### **STRUCTURES OF THE VULVA**

The vulva comprises of different structures which are:

1. Mons pubis
2. Labia majora
3. Labia minora
4. Vestibule
5. Bartholin's glands
6. Clitoris.

#### **The mons pubis**

This is a subcutaneous fat pad located anterior to the pubic symphysis. It formed by the fusion of the labia majora.

### **The labia majora**

These are structures two hair-bearing external skin folds that extend from the mons pubis posteriorly to the posterior commissure ( a depression overlying the perimeal body).

### **The labia minora**

these are two hairless folds of skin, which lie within the labia majora. They fuse anteriorly to form the hood of the clitoris and extend posteriorly either side of the vaginal opening. They also merge posteriorly forming the a skin there called fourchette .

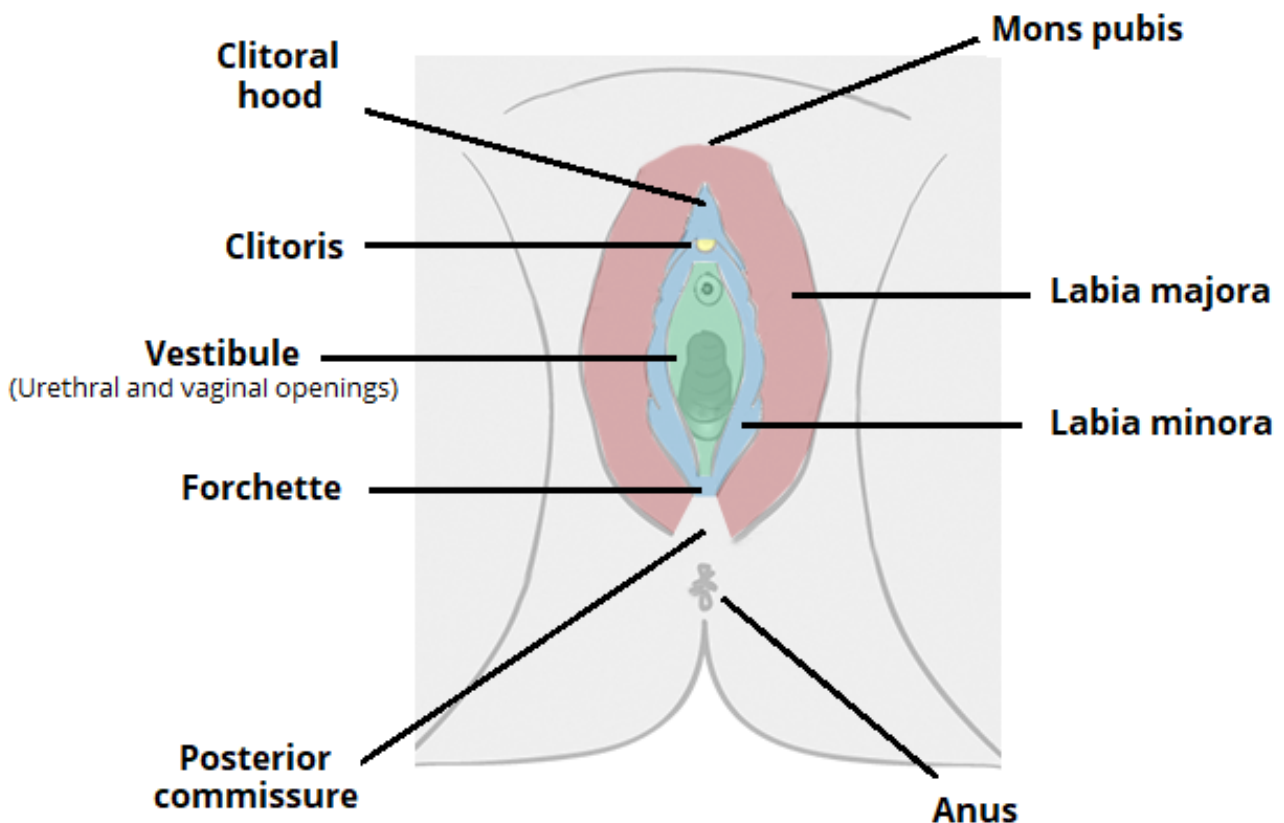
### **The vestibule**

The vestibule is the area enclosed by the labia minora. It contains the openings of the vagina (external vaginal orifice, vaginal introitus) and urethra

### **The Bartholin's glands**

This is the structure in the vulva that secrete lubricating mucus from small ducts during sexual arousal. They are located either side of the vaginal orifice.

### **The clitoris**



The clitoris is the structure located under the clitoral hood. It is formed of erectile corpora cavernosa tissue, which becomes engorged with blood during sexual stimulation. Embryologically derived from the genital tubercle

## **Vascular Supply and Lymphatics**

The arterial supply to the vulva is from the paired internal and external pudendal arteries (branches of the internal iliac).

Venous drainage is achieved via the pudendal veins with smaller labial veins contributing as tributaries.

Lymph drains to the nearby superficial inguinal lymph nodes.

## **Innervation**

The vulva receives sensory and parasympathetic nervous supply.

To describe the sensory distribution, the vulva can be divided into anterior and posterior sections:

- **Anterior** – ilioinguinal nerve, genital branch of the genitofemoral nerve
- **Posterior** – pudendal nerve, posterior cutaneous nerve of the thigh.

The clitoris and the vestibule also receive parasympathetic innervation from the **cavernous nerves** – derived from the uterovaginal plexus.

## **Clinical relevance**

### **1.Vulval Warts**

**Genital warts** are benign growths of epithelium caused by certain HPV types, such as 6 & 11. They are highly infectious and are easily transmitted between sexual partners through sexual or even physical contact.

However they do NOT evolve into cancerous lesions. Other strains of HPV (most commonly high-risk types **16 & 18**) may predispose affected individuals to dysplastic changes in the cervix, vagina and/or anus which can potentially lead to carcinoma.

Recently developed **HPV vaccines** are safe and efficient in preventing high-risk HPV infections.

### **2.Infection of Bartholin's Glands**

The Bartholin's glands (also known as the greater vestibular glands) can become infected and inflamed – known as **bartholinitis**.

This is initially treated with antibiotics, but occasionally can be complicated by the formation of a cyst or abscess. In case of an infected cyst or abscess, the only effective treatment is **surgical drainage** or excision of the lesion.

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