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PHYSIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

GROSS ANATOMY OF PELVIS AND PERINEUM

ANA212

1. Anatomy of the female external genitalia(vulva)

1.0 Introduction

The vulva (pudendum) refers to the external female genitalia.

Functions

- a. The vulva acts as a sensory tissue during sexual intercourse
- b. It assists in micturition by directing the flow of urine
- c. It protects the internal female reproductive tract from infection.

1.1

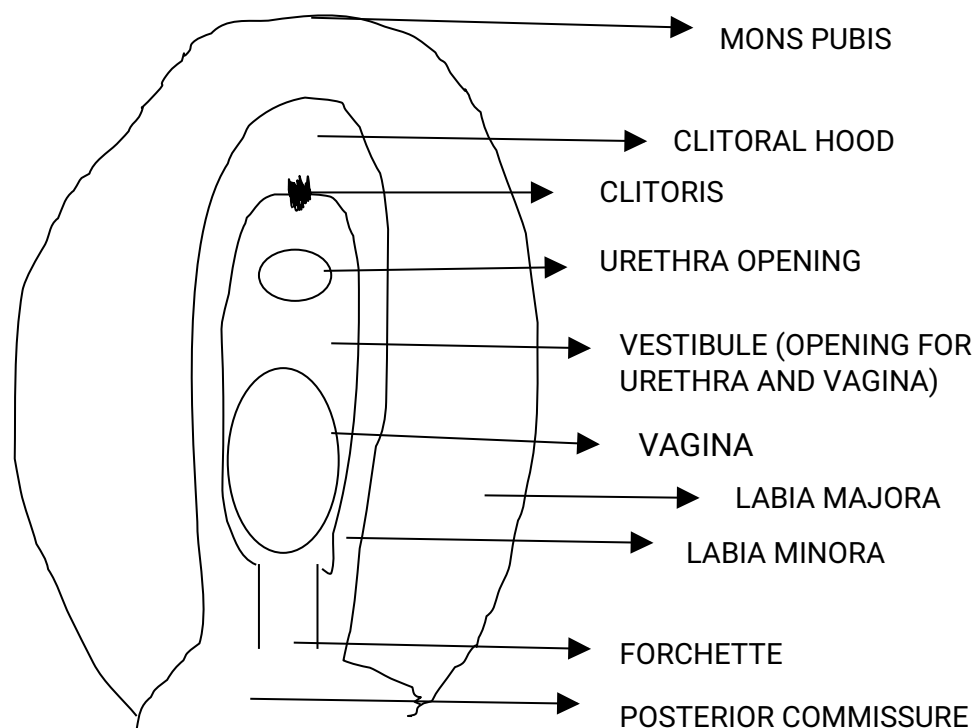


DIAGRAM OF THE VULVA

1.2 Body

a. Mons pubis: is a subcutaneous fat pad located anterior to the pubic symphysis. It is formed from the fusion of the right and left labia majora.

b. Labia majora: two hair-bearing external skin folds (right and left labia majora). They extend from the mons pubis posteriorly to the commissure, which is a depression overlying the perineal body. It is embryologically derived from the labioscrotal swellings.

c. Labia minora: two hairless folds of skin which lie within the labia majora. Anteriorly, they fuse to form the clitoral hood and extend posteriorly either side of vaginal opening. Posteriorly, they merge to create a fold of skin called forchette. It is embryologically derived from urethral folds.

d. Vestibule: this is the area enclosed by the labia minora. It contains the openings of the vagina (external vaginal orifice, vaginal introitus) and urethra.

e. Bartholin's glands: also known as 'the greater vestibular glands.' They are located on either side of the vaginal orifice. They secrete mucus (from small ducts) during sexual arousal.

f. Clitoris: it is located under the clitoral hood. It is formed of erectile cavernosa tissue which becomes engorged with blood during sexual stimulation. Embryologically, it is derived from the genital tubercle.

1.3 Blood supply and lymphatics

Arterial supply of the vulva is from the paired internal and external pudendal arteries, which are branches of the internal iliac artery.

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

Lymph drains to the nearby superficial inguinal lymph node

1.4 Innervation

The vulva receives sensory and parasympathetic nervous supply.

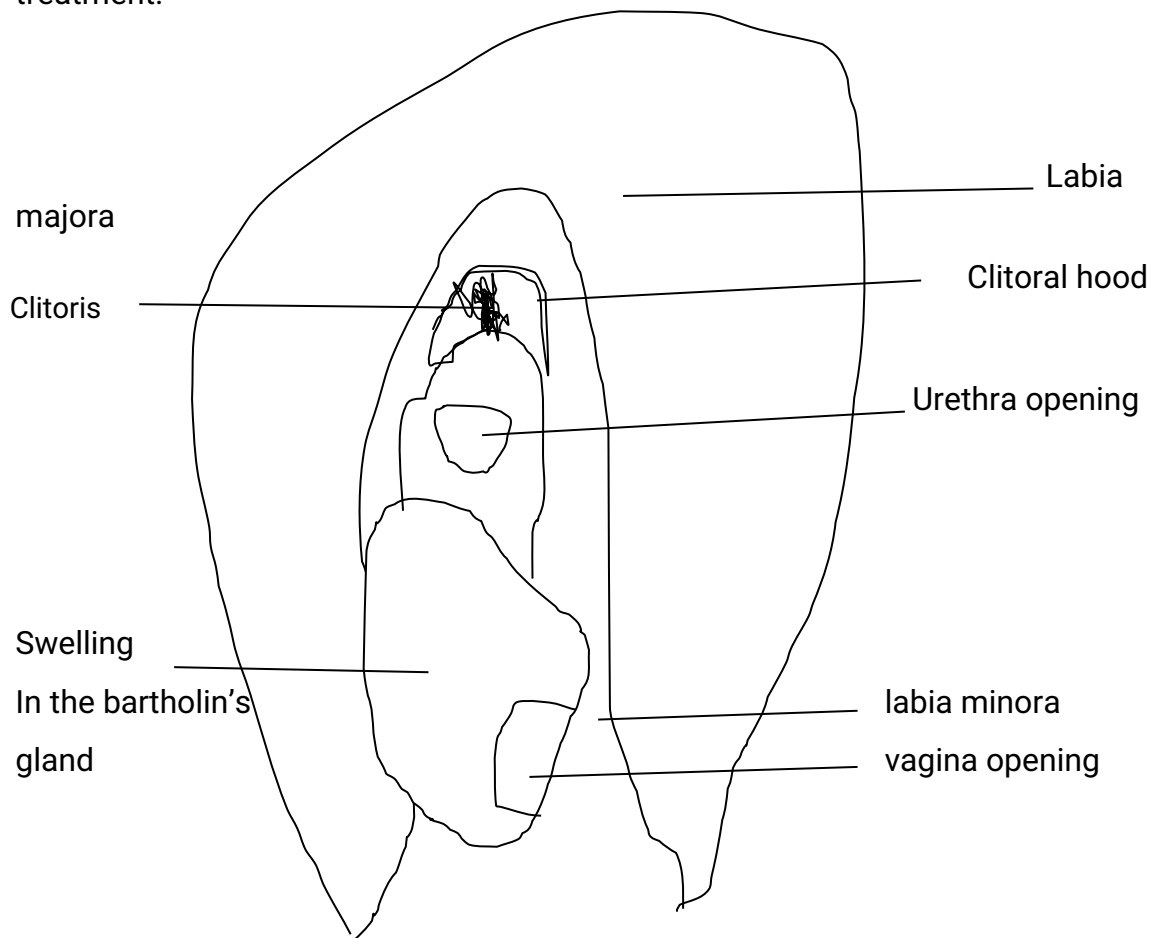
Sensory nervous supply is divided into two.

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

The clitoris and vestibule also receive parasympathetic innervations from the cavernous nerves-derived from the urogenital plexus.

1.5 clinical anatomy

I. Bartholinitis: this is when the bartholin's gland becomes infected and inflamed. The initial means of treatment is the use of antibiotics, but can become complicated when a cyst or abscess forms. In that case, a surgical drainage is the only effective treatment.



II. Genital warts/ vulval warts: these are benign growths of the epithelium caused by certain HPV types, such as 6&11. They are highly infectious and easily transmitted between sexual partners through sexual or physical contacts. These warts do not lead to cancerous lesions. The most commonly high-risked type of this human papiloma virus (HPV), are types 16&18. These types predispose affected individuals to dysplastic changes in the cervix, vagina or/and anus, which can lead to carcinoma. Recently, HPV vaccines are safe and efficient in preventing high-risk HPV infections.