

Genital lymphoedema: diagnostic and management considerations

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Genital lymphoedema occurs as a result of damage to the lymphatic nodes and/or vessels responsible for draining the inguinal and genital tissues (secondary lymphoedema). Whilst the commonest worldwide cause of genital lymphoedema is filariasis, other causes include malignancy and its treatment, recurrent genital cellulitis, and anogenital granulomatosis. Alternatively, genital lymphoedema may develop as a result of primary lymphoedema.

This presentation provides an overview of the different causes of genital lymphoedema. It is vital to differentiate between the various forms, in order to create a bespoke management plan. In addition to standard decongestive lymphatic therapy, patients may require other treatments dependent upon the underlying cause e.g. antibiotics, systemic immunosuppression, and surgery can be offered in many cases for symptom control and debulking of debilitating lymphoedematous tissue.