



VASCULAR DISEASE, VASCULITIS

## CONSERVATIVE TREATMENT OF LIPEDEMA IN AN OUTPATIENT SERVICE IN BELGRADE, SERBIA

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**Introduction:** Lipedema is a chronic progressive condition in women, often misdiagnosed as obesity or lymphedema. It is a bilateral progressive accumulation of subcutaneous fat in the lower trunk, legs (predominantly, without involvement of feet) and arms, associated with edema and pain.

**Objective:** To evaluate effectiveness of conservative treatment such compression therapy and physical therapy.

**Materials and Methods:** A prospective study involved 75 women with lipedema who visited the Department for Prevention and Treatment Peripheral Vascular Disease an outpatient service in Belgrade between July 2017 to December 2018. Patients were classified into the 3 clinical stages: I - orange-peel skin with a finely nodular surface, II - "mattress skin" with a coarsely nodular skin surface and III - large skin flaps with deformity. Demographic and clinical data were obtained by physical examinations and standardized interview.

**Results** The median age was 52 years (ranged 27-72). The most patients 76% had stage II, 17.3% had stage I and 6.7% had stage III. The mean BMI was 31.4 kg/m<sup>2</sup> (23.9-42.5). If BMI was more than 25 a reducing diet was advised. Compression therapy, bandages or stockings, was recommended to all patients. The women with stage I reported satisfaction with significant pain relief shortly after wearing compression garments. The women with stage II and III underwent 10 sessions of physical therapy, such ultrasound therapy and lymphatic manual drainage. The values of VAS pain scale showed significant reduction after physical therapy (3.2 points) with a significant reduction of leg measurements in women with stage II.

**Conclusions:** The compression therapy with additional physical therapy can improve condition, reduces pain and edema, stop progression of the disease and consequently,





improve the quality of life. Also, women do not consider lipedema as merely an esthetic problem but rather as a disease.

