

REVIEW

Abnormal uterine bleeding unrelated to structural uterine abnormalities: management in the perimenopausal period

Lorenzo SABBIONI, Isabella ZANETTI, Cinzia ORLANDINI,
Felice PETRAGLIA, Stefano LUISI *

Department of Molecular and Developmental Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Siena, Siena, Italy

*Corresponding author: Stefano Luisi, Department of Molecular and Developmental Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Siena, "Le Scotte" Polyclinic, Viale Bracci, 53100 Siena, Italy. E-mail: stefano.luisi@unisi.it

ABSTRACT

Abnormal uterine bleeding (AUB) is one of the commonest health problems encountered by women and a frequent phenomenon during menopausal transition. The clinical management of AUB must follow a standardized classification system to obtain the better diagnostic pathway and the optimal therapy. The PALM-COEIN classification system has been approved by the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO); it recognizes structural causes of AUB, which can be measured visually with imaging techniques or histopathology, and non-structural entities such as coagulopathies, ovulatory dysfunctions, endometrial and iatrogenic causes and disorders not yet classified. In this review we aim to evaluate the management of nonstructural causes of AUB during the menopausal transition, when commonly women experience changes in menstrual bleeding patterns and unexpected bleedings which affect their quality of life.

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Abnormal uterine bleeding (AUB) is an excessive menstrual blood interfering with the woman's physical, emotional, social and material quality of life. Studies have shown a variable prevalence of AUB, ranging from 10 to 30% depending on the study population and definition of AUB.¹ During reproductive years AUB affects up to 14% of women, impairing their quality of life by creating significant physical, emotional, sexual, social, and financial burdens,² with the woman's perception of her own menstrual loss as a key determinant for her referral.

Because of the general inconsistency in

the nomenclature used to describe AUB, in 2011 the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO), supported by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, proposed a new classification system to better understand and standardize the nomenclature.³ The old term "dysfunctional uterine bleeding" which was previously used as a diagnosis when there was no systemic or locally definable structural cause for AUB, is put aside in this classification system and should be abandoned. The current definition is basically divided into two groups, with the acronyms PALM and COEIN: those related to uter-