

Skene's gland

Skene's Gland

Human female internal reproductive anatomy.

In human anatomy, the Skene's glands (also known as the lesser vestibular, periurethral glands, or paraurethral glands) are glands located on the upper wall of the vagina, around the lower end of the urethra. They drain into the urethra and near the urethral opening. These glands are surrounded by a tissue, which includes the part of the clitoris that reaches up inside the vagina and it swells with blood during sexual arousal.

There is some evidence that nerves in the area produce an orgasm different to one produced by clitoral stimulation.

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Homology and possible functions

The location of the Skene's gland is the general area of the urethral sponge. The Skene's glands are homologous with the prostate gland in males.

Some believe that the Skene's glands are the source of female ejaculation. In 2002, Emanuele Jannini of L'Aquila University in Italy showed that there may be an explanation both for the phenomenon and for the frequent denials of its existence. Skene's glands have highly variable anatomy, and in some extreme cases they appear to be missing entirely. If Skene's glands are the cause of female ejaculation and G-spot-orgasms, this may explain the observed absence of these phenomena in many women.

The fluid that emerges during female ejaculation has a composition similar to the fluid generated in males by the prostate gland, containing biochemical markers of sexual function like Human Protein 1 and the enzyme PDE5. When examined with electron microscopy, both glands show similar secretory structures, and both act similar in terms of prostate-specific antigen and prostate-specific acid phosphatase studies. Because they are increasingly perceived as merely different versions of the same gland, some researchers are moving away from the name "Skene's gland" and referring to it instead as the "female prostate."

Eponym

The glands were named after the physician who described them first, Alexander Skene