

TransFem E2 Implants Study

A descriptive study of estradiol levels in transfeminine individuals who received estradiol implants as standard care in Hunter New England (HNE) Health Services

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Introduction

Gender diversity is one facet of human diversity, with an estimated 0.1-2% of the population identifying as transgender or gender diverse.(1) Gender-affirming hormone therapy aims to reduce gender dysphoria and align physical appearance more closely with gender identity,(2) and may be associated with better mental health outcomes.(3-6) Estradiol implants provide one option for feminising therapy,(7) and are preferred by many patients; however, they are not TGA approved and can currently only be sourced from compounding pharmacies.(8)

Implants may provide a lower-risk method of feminising therapy as the subcutaneous route of administration avoids first-pass metabolism, which should confer a lower risk of dyslipidaemia and venous thromboembolism.(9,10)

This study describes results of surveillance of serum estradiol levels for a series of clients who received estradiol implants for feminising hormone therapy as part of standard care. Clients were advised to have monitoring at one month, three months, then every three months following implant insertion.

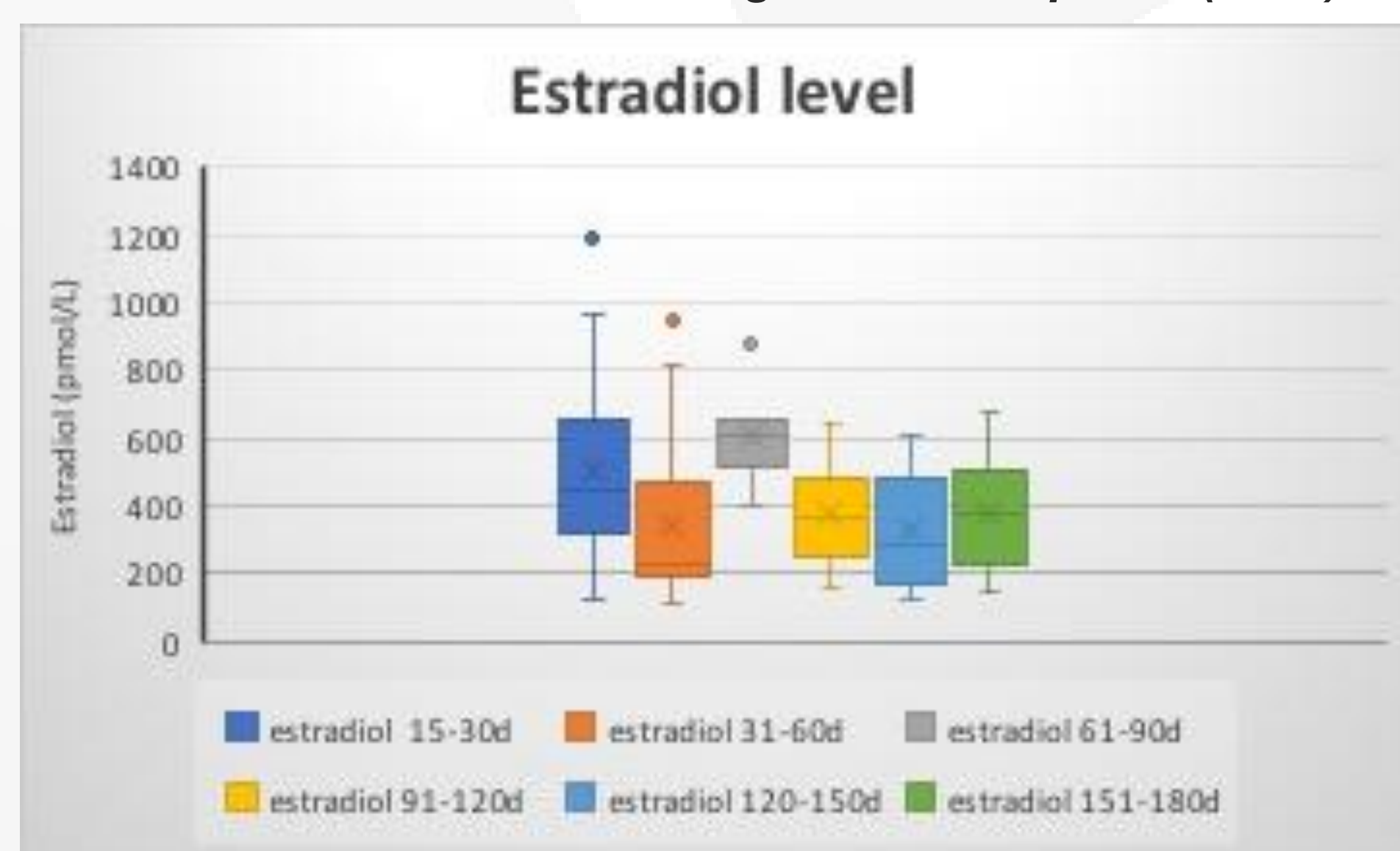
Aim

To assess the proportion of serum estradiol results within the target range of 250-1000pmol/L,(7) to better inform decisions regarding use of implants and provide direction for further research.

Methods

Electronic medical records (EMR) were audited retrospectively for a cohort of consecutive clients who received estradiol implants as standard care between 1st June 2019 - 31st January 2022. Data collected included age, BMI, implant dose, any reported adverse events and results of serum estradiol levels measured following implant insertion.

Figure 1. Box plot of serum estradiol levels following subcutaneous insertion of 100mg estradiol implants (n=49).



Results

- 33 individuals had 67 implant insertion procedures during the 32 month time period (1 – 4 insertions/person)

Implant dose:

- 50mg estradiol: 4 (5.9%) implant insertions
- 100mg estradiol: 49 (73.1%) implant insertions
- 150mg estradiol: 8 (11.9%) implant insertions
- 200mg estradiol: 6 (9.0%) implant insertions

Serum estradiol results (n = 136) for all implant insertions:

- Serum estradiol range 137-2009 pmol/L
- 94 (69.1%) results were to target
- 35 (25.7%) results were low (< 250 pmol/L)
- 7 (5.1%) results were high (> 1000 pmol/L)
- 1 very high serum estradiol result of 2009 pmol/L, with no associated symptoms reported

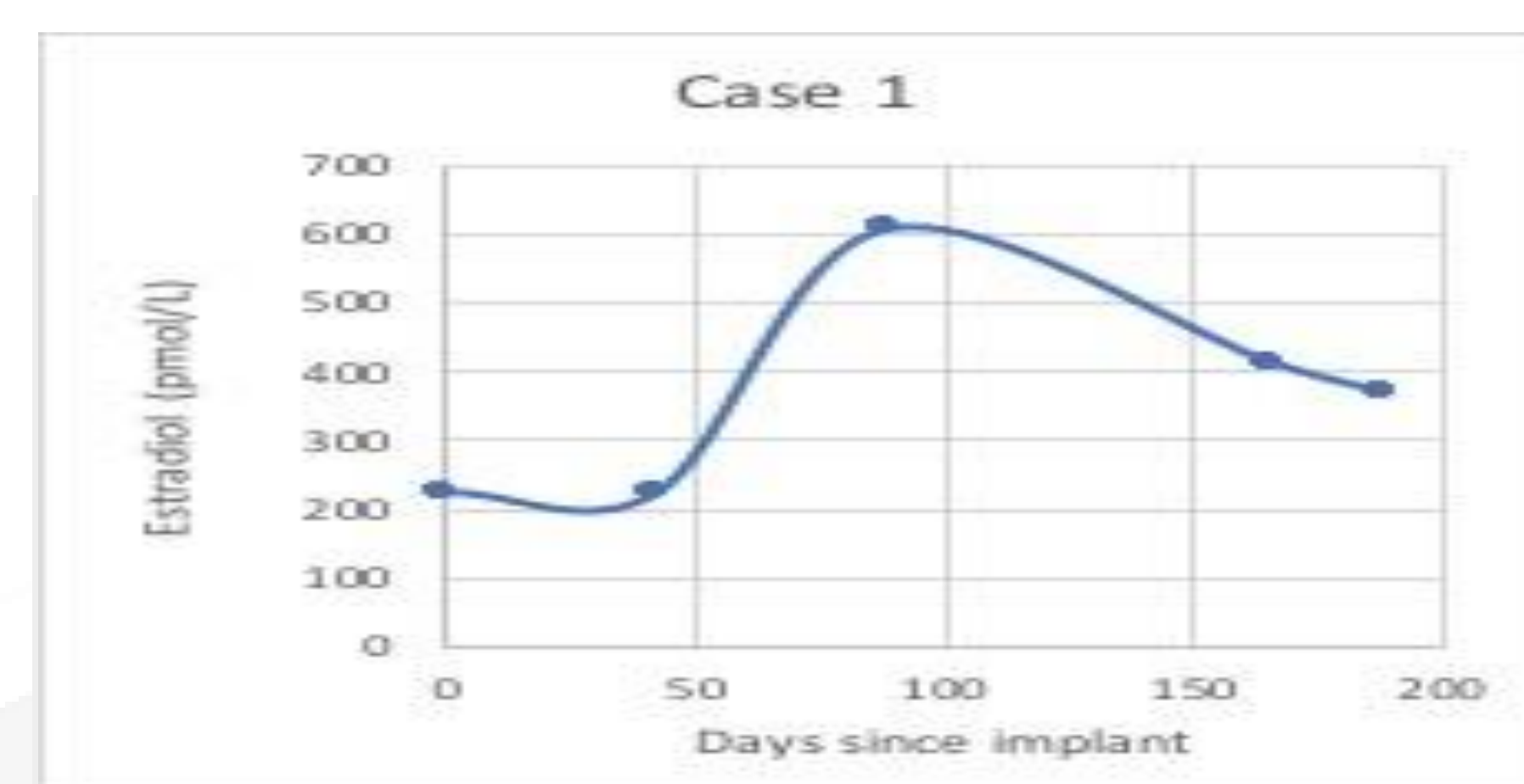
Duration of effect:

- Average interval between implants was 277 days (IQR 173 – 362 days), for 32 cases where there was a subsequent implant, or approximately 9 months.

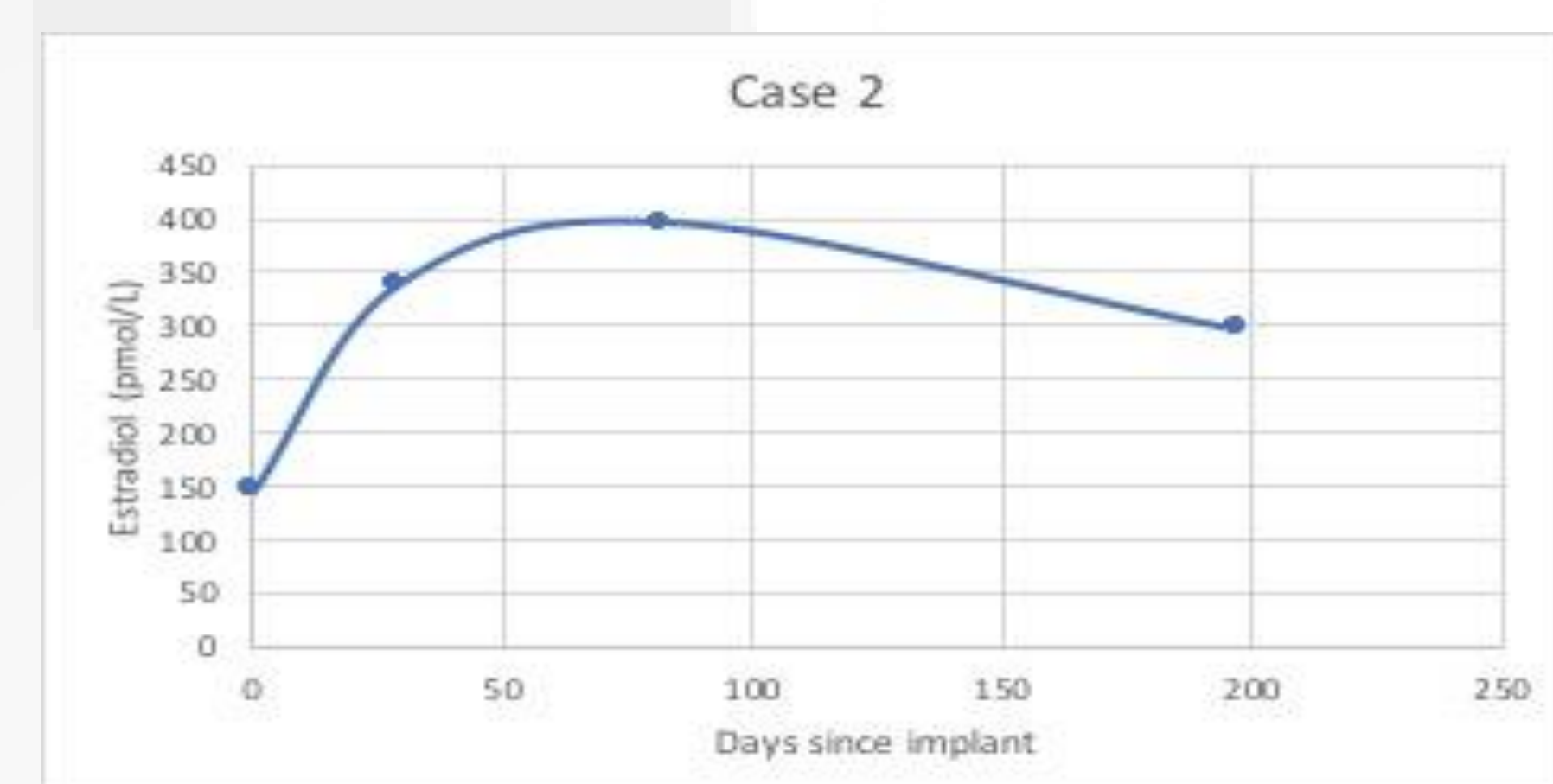
Adverse events:

- 1 vasovagal episode
- 1 report of insertion site pain, resolved without treatment

Figure 1 and Table 1 refer to serum estradiol levels measured during the six months following insertion of 100mg implants (n=49 implant insertions).



Case 1 and Case 2 are representative examples of serum estradiol levels over time, following insertion of 100mg estradiol implants in two transfeminine individuals.



References

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	15-30 days	31-61 days	61-90 days	91-120 days	120-150 days	151-180 days
Mean	465	307	610	380	327	377
Median	450	221	608	349	283	383
Inter Quartile Range	324-532	193-397	511-654	264-476	188-448	228-496

Table 1. Serum estradiol levels in pmol/L following subcutaneous insertion of 100mg estradiol implant (excluding outliers).