

## SEARCH OF MEDICAL CARE BY CLIMACTERIC NORTHEASTERN BRAZILIAN WOMEN WITH STRESS URINARY INCONTINENCE

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**Objectives:** To assess the percentage of climacteric (45-60 years old) women with stress urinary incontinence (SUI) who sought for medical treatment, to identify sociodemographic factors possibly associated with the decision of visiting the physician and the reasons for not doing so.

**Background:** There is scarce information in developing countries about the proportion of women with SUI that look for medical assistance due to this complaint.

**Methodology:** A secondary analysis of a population-based survey on climacterium in women living in the city of São Luís, Maranhão state, was carried out through a descriptive, exploratory and cross-sectional population study. A total of 1,209 women between 45 and 60 years of age were selected through a sampling process. The age at menopause and its associated factors were evaluated, as well as the prevalence of climacteric symptoms, the use of medical care, self-perception of their health status, and sociodemographic characteristics. Stress urinary incontinence (SUI) complaints and the search for medical help due to the presence of symptoms were explored in 181 patients. Data were collected through home interviews, using a structured, adapted and previously tested questionnaire provided by the International Menopause Society and the North American Menopause Society. Statistical analysis was performed using Fisher's exact test. Significance level was established at 5%.

**Results:** Almost one quarter (15.34%) of the interviewees reported constant or intermittent SUI, although only 43.43% of the patients with the complaint sought for medical help with this purpose. The main reasons for SUI patients not seeking for medical assistance were: the absence of time (40.48%), the lack of idea that this symptom did not deserve for medical attention (19.05%) and the fear about going to the physician (7.14%). There were no sociodemographic factors (social status, scholarship, age, menopausal status) statistically associated with SUI.

**Conclusion:** Regretably, the majority of women who presented SUI did not complain about it to the physician if they were not questioned objectively.

<i>Specify source of funding or grant</i>	None
<i>Is this a clinical trial?</i>	No
<i>What were the subjects in the study?</i>	HUMAN
<i>Was this study approved by an ethics committee?</i>	Yes
<i>Specify Name of Ethics Committee</i>	COMITÊ DE ÉTICA EM PESQUISA DO HOSPITAL UNIVERSITÁRIO DA UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO MARANHÃO
<i>Was the Declaration of Helsinki followed?</i>	Yes
<i>Was informed consent obtained from the patients?</i>	Yes