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## PREVALENCE OF OVERACTIVE URINARY BLADDER AMONG PATIENTS SEEN BY GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

### **Aims of Study**

The prevalence of overactive urinary bladder is suggested to be much higher than the number patients who seek treatment for it. As a result, we aimed to study what is its prevalence among patients as seen by general practitioners (GP) in their daily practice.

### **Methods**

Altogether 51 GPs in an area with a population of 1.2 million people participated with the study. Each of GPs aimed to recruit 50 consecutive adult patients they saw in their daily practice to the study. Emergency cases were excluded. Patients were asked to fill a questionnaire on voiding symptoms and after that they underwent physical examination. Based on these examinations the GP decided whether the patient had any abnormality in his voiding and, if there was any, it was also categorized. As criteria for overactive bladder were increased frequency (>8 per day) and urgency with or without urge incontinence, when other reasons were excluded. The patient was considered to have nocturia if he voided more often than once a night. In addition, the treatment started was recorded.

### **Results**

Altogether 2221 patients (894 men and 1327 women) participated. The mean age of females was 61 years (range 24-96) and that of males 58 (range 25 – 95). Of men 220 (24%) and of women 295 (22%) suffered from increased frequency (>8 per day), 195 (22%) and 360 (27%) from nocturia, 235 (26%) and 359 (27%) from urgency, and 70 (8%) and 247 (19%) from urge incontinence, respectively. Urgency had lasted less than 6 months in 11% of males and 13 % females, 6 months to 5 years in 67% and 63%, and more than 5 years in 25 % and 24 %, respectively. Altogether 250 (28%) of males and 556 (57%) of females had some abnormality in voiding history. The most common primary diagnoses in males were benign prostatic enlargement (BPE) (160/64%) and overactive urinary bladder (55/22%), and in females stress incontinence (309/56%), overactive urinary bladder (114/21%) and mixed incontinence (97/17%). UTI was found in 2 men and 10 women, and were treated with antibiotics. 164 females were referred to physiotherapy, 35 started oestrogen treatment and 87 anticholinergic medication. 65 men were started medical treatment for BPE ( $\alpha$ -men blocker or finasteride) and 8 anticholinergic medication. 31 men and 5 women were referred to urologists and 57 women to gynecologists.

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### **Conclusions**

When actively asked micturition disorders were found commonly among patients who went to see their GP for any reason. Every fifth man and woman suffered from overactive urinary bladder. In most patients urgency had lasted longer than half a year and in one fourth longer than 5 years. In a significant part of patients some kind of treatment was started. For females anticholinergic medication was started more actively than for males, which is probably due to the difficulties GPs have in differential diagnostics between lower urinary tract symptoms caused by BPE and bladder overactivity alone.

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