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Title: INVOLUNTARY URINE LOSS: A COMMON PROBLEM IN DUTCH WOMEN?

Aim of Study:

To determine the prevalence of urinary incontinence in women by new criteria and to delineate the effect on quality of life.

Design:

An international postal questionnaire survey. The European Institute of Oncology set up this study in South Korea (Seoul), United Kingdom (Birmingham), France (Auxerre) and the Netherlands (Boxmeer) known as the Urepik-study (Urological Epidemiology in Europe and Korea).

Methods:

Within the framework of the Urepik-study 1771 men of the city of Boxmeer were approached by means of an age-stratified random sample. This study aimed at the occurrence of benign urological disorders and the effect on the quality of life. Parallel with these men, their spouses (n=1460) received a general and disease-specific questionnaire.

Results:

1071 women, mean age 56,9 years (range: 29-79), returned the questionnaires (response rate: 73%). On the basis of answers on 4 incontinence specific questions, the women were classified into 3 groups: group A: incontinent (18%), group B: minimal incontinent (12%) or group C: not incontinent (70%). Besides this 40% of the women affirmed the question: "Have you ever experienced urine loss?" (Group D). Quality of life was lower for women from group A in comparison with women from group C ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion:

From this study it appears that 30 percent of the adult female population experiences some degree of urinary incontinence. Urine loss has significant impact on emotional and physical functioning.

Table 1: criteria used for classifying incontinence

	Group A: Incontinent	Group B: Minimal incontinent	Group C: Not incontinent
Urine loss	More than once a week a small amount or drops every day	Drops but not daily or a small amount, less than once a week	No or less than once a week some drops
Pads	Required	Occasionally	Not required
Urine loss with coughing/sneezing	A least a small amount	Drops	No

Table 2: Quality of life score of 1071 women

	Prevalence (%)	SF-12: Mental component	SF-12: Physical component
Group A	18	49.6	46.0
Group B	12	51.0	48.3
Group C	70	52.1	49.9
Group D	40	50.5	48.1

*Group A: incontinent; group B: minimal incontinent; group C: not incontinent; group D: affirmative on the question: "Have you ever experienced urine loss?"