

IMPLEMENTATION OF A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR PRIMARY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS CONCERNING THE CONSERVATIVE MANAGEMENT OF FEMALE URINARY INCONTINENCE IN CRETE. (PRELIMINARY REPORT)

Aims of Study

Urinary incontinence is a common problem for women living in the community that affects negatively their quality of life^{1,2}. A pilot study in Crete showed that 27.5% of women in rural areas of Crete experience symptoms of involuntary urine leakage, and among them only 15.9% had previously contacted the health services about their problem³. In Greece there are not specialized uro-therapists. The aim of the study was the education of primary health care (PHC) professionals (midwives and nurses) and the development of a rehabilitation program for the management of female urinary incontinence⁴⁻⁷. This program will contribute to the development of continence services in primary health care centres of Crete and to the implementation of lower urinary tract (LUT) rehabilitation techniques.

Methods

Six midwives and 2 nurses from 5 primary health care centres in Crete attended a training program for urinary incontinence. This program was divided in four seminars:

1stseminar: LUT anatomy and physiology, types of incontinence

2ndseminar: pelvic floor (PF) muscle testing, pad-weighting test, voiding diary

3rdseminar: LUT rehabilitation techniques (PF training, behavioural modification, biofeedback, electrical stimulation)

4thseminar: practice in a specific PF rehabilitation program. This program included: a.voiding diary, b.relaxation techniques with deep breathing, c.the use of a perineometer and a mirror, d.maximal effort PF exercises, e.quick repetitive PF exercises.

The program's total duration was 18 hours. Educators were a doctor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation with special interest in neuropathic bladder and pelvic floor dysfunction and a nurse with university training and special interest in pelvic floor dysfunction. The grade of changing in the educational level of the participants was evaluated with a questionnaire administered before and after the educational program.

Results

From the evaluation of the questionnaires it is concluded that participants improved their level of Knowledge on urinary incontinence with statistical significance ($p < 0.005$) by the end of the training process. This effort contributed also to the collection of educational material for the development of a patients' booklet for the management of female urinary incontinence.

Conclusions

This is the first training program for PHC professionals about urinary incontinence in Greece. It seems that there is a deficiency in PHC professional's educational level about urinary incontinence, although they express a great interest in their contribution for the development of continence services. Due to the above, further implementation of training programs in other primary care districts of Greece are considered of essential importance in order to promote LUT rehabilitation techniques.

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