

## E.UR.I.G. (EPIDEMIOLOGY OF URINARY INCONTINENCE IN GREECE) STUDY

### Hypothesis / aims of study

Aim of Eurig study was to assess the prevalence of urinary incontinence (and its subtypes) in Greek women aged from 20 to 80 years old. Secondary aims were: determination of types and results of treatment as well as the impact of urinary incontinence in quality of life and sexual life.

### Study design, materials and methods

The study was conducted by personal interviews, based on a distributed standard questionnaire. In the study participated 2000 women 20-80 years old, covering Athens, Thessalonica, cities, towns and rural regions. The sample was representative of the total population of women 20-80 years old, for each age and region group, based on data of the National Statistical Service of Greece – according which the population in these areas is 4.197.143. The sample was divided:

Total: 2000 women

Age: 20-39: 39%

40-59: 33%

60-79: 28%

Region: Athens: 31%

Thessalonica: 9%

Cities: 10%

Town: 23%

Rural: 28%

### Results

#### 1. Urinary Incontinence

The study showed that the 64% of the study population had urination problems, while the 27% (531 women) suffered from at least one of the following types of urinary incontinence:

- Urge urinary incontinence (loss of urine before reaching the toilet) (23% in study population and 88% between women with incontinence)
- Stress urinary incontinence (loss of urine while activity) (15% in study population and 56% between women with incontinence)
- Loss of urine without reason and/or without sense-mixed type (5% in study population and 19% between women with incontinence)
- Loss of urine while sleep (2% in study population and 8% between women with incontinence)

The prevalence of incontinence is increased in older women (60-80 years old), in those who weight over 66 kg, and have a medical history of +2 pregnancies with duration over 5 months.

#### 2. Urination dysfunctions

50% of the study population reported that they urine every three hours. 25% reported that they urine at least once during the night. 1/3 reported sudden urgency for urination. Other dysfunctions (urination interruption, delay in starting urination, cystic bladder pain, need fro stress to start urination) were reported by the 10% of the study population.

All these were reported as low or moderate bothering. The cystic bladder pain had the higher score in the inconvenience rate (4.9), while the irritation degree of the urinary dysfunctions was reported dependant by the severity of the problem and the extent women can settle with it or not.

The prevalence and the impact of these urination dysfunctions is higher among women suffering from urinary incontinence, in comparison to the continent group.

#### 3. Vaginal Dryness

The prevalence of vaginal dryness is higher in women with urinary incontinence and/or women over 40 years old.

#### 4. Treatment of incontinence

Two to three women with incontinence is not under any treatment against it. One to three women mostly uses pads. Only 2% is receiving medication for their UI. Only 2% had or will have a surgical procedure for UI. The majority of women with UI is not informed about surgical, medication, diet or other kind of treatment for UI and has never visited a doctor for it.

#### 5. Urinary Incontinence and Quality of life

- a. Work: approximately 1/3 of women with UI work. 25% of these women report an involuntary loss of urine during their work. Urinary Incontinence does not seem to affect the working activities. The irritation rate score, though, was higher in working women who reported UI at their work during the last month.
- b. Sexual life: UI does not seem affect the sexual life. Most affected though were women with mixed type of urinary incontinence or during sleep.
- c. Quality of life: urinary Incontinence has a small impact to the quality of life and the mentality of women. The impact is greater in:  
elder women 60-80 years old, suffer from mixed type of UI or report loss of urine during sleep, loose a large amount of urine and/or reported an incident of urinary incontinence at their work during last month.

#### Interpretation of results

Urination problems in general and urinary incontinence affect a significant part of female Greek population with consequences in quality of life. Sexual life and efficacy at work do not seem to be affected by incontinence. It appears that level of patient information about the nature of the problem and possible alternatives of treatment is very low.

#### Concluding message

The prevalence of urinary incontinence in Greek female population seems to be analogous to other European countries (1, 2). Significant effort has to be done in order to improve patient's information about the nature of urinary incontinence its effects on patient's life in the short term and long term as well as about available treatments (conservative and surgical), their efficacy and complications.

#### References

1. Pharmacoconomics 2000;17:71-76).
2. J Clin Epidemiol 2000; 53: 1150-1157).

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**HUMAN SUBJECTS: This study was approved by the ETHICS COMMITTEE OF ARETAEIO HOSPITAL and followed the Declaration of Helsinki Informed consent was obtained from the patients.**