

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LOWER URINARY TRACT SYMPTOMS AND QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG A SAMPLE OF WOMEN 40 TO 60 YEARS OF AGE.

Hypothesis / aims of study

Lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) have widespread human and social implications and cause physical discomfort, shame and loss of self-confidence that negatively affect women's quality of life (QoL). Studies about the impact of LUTS on QoL were limited. Most studies focused on the impact resulting from urinary incontinence (UI) or overactive bladder. This study aimed on estimating the prevalence of LUTS and comparing the QoL for women with and without LUTS among a sample of women 40 to 60 years of age.

Study design, materials and methods

This study was a cross-sectional study conducted at two obstetric/gynaecologic outpatient departments in two hospitals in Taipei. Two hundred and ninety women were interviewed by a research assistant using a self-developed survey and the Utian Quality of Life Scale. UI, increased daytime urinary frequency, urgency, nocturia, intermittent stream, hesitancy, incomplete emptying and weak urinary stream were the LUTS under investigation. The Utian Quality of Life Scale was used to measure women's total QoL as well as the QoL at 4 aspects (occupational, health, emotional and sexual QoL). Student's *t* test was used to compare the QoL for women with and without LUTS.

Results

Of the 290 women, 235 (81.0%) experienced at least one type of LUTS: 146 (50.3%) reported UI; 124 (42.8%) experienced increased daytime urinary frequency; 45 (15.5%) experienced urgency; 73 (25.2%) got up two or more times at night to urinate (nocturia); 44 (15.2%) experienced intermittent stream; 21 (7.3%) experienced hesitancy; 95 (32.9%) experienced incomplete emptying and 88 (30.4%) experienced weak urinary stream during the preceding 12 months. Women with any LUTS, increased daytime urinary frequency, urgency, incomplete emptying and weak urinary stream reported poorer health QoL ($p < .05$), emotional QoL ($p < .05$) and total QoL ($p < .05$) than women without these conditions. Women with nocturia reported poorer health QoL ($p < .05$), sexual QoL ($p < .05$) and total QoL ($p < .05$) than women without nocturia.

Interpretation of results

Comparing to the previous epidemiological or community studies, LUTS were common in this group. High prevalence rate of LUTS leads to a concern that age and menopause may affect LUTS. In this study, LUTS had a negative impact on women's QoL especially on their health QoL and emotional QoL.

Concluding message

This study contributes to knowledge about LUTS among women in Asia and increases the awareness of these health concerns. Health care providers need to devote more efforts on providing well-researched behavioral strategies to manage LUTS which will further improve women's QoL.

References

Incontinence; Paris, France. Health Publication Ltd., 2005.
Menopause (2002) 9; 402-410.

<i>Specify source of funding or grant</i>	National Science Council at Taiwan
<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>	Taipei Medical University, Chang-Gung Memorial Hospital, and Taipei Veterans General Hospital
<i>Was the Declaration of Helsinki followed?</i>	Yes
<i>Was informed consent obtained from the patients?</i>	Yes