

THE ROLE OF PHYSIOTHERAPY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF URINARY INCONTINENCE; AN AUDIT ON THE EXPERIENCE FROM THE UROGYNAECOLOGY DEPARTMENT OF A UK HOSPITAL

Hypothesis / aims of study

The Urogynaecology team of our hospital selectively refers patients presenting with urinary incontinence symptoms for physiotherapy assessment and treatment, preferentially before offering surgical intervention. We are auditing the efficacy of physiotherapy in reducing the severity of symptoms, improving the quality of life and altering the course of management. We also aimed to study any correlation with co-factors such as age, parity and delivery modes in the development of urinary incontinence. The purpose of this audit is to primarily identify areas for improvement in the function within the multidisciplinary setting and urinary incontinence treatment at our hospital.

Study design, materials and methods

We used the International Consultation on Incontinence Questionnaire (ICIQ)¹ for our patients to record their urinary incontinence symptoms and their impact on their quality of life, at their initial consultation and after completion of physiotherapy treatment. The questionnaire comprises three scored areas for comparison based on the frequency of symptoms and perceived causes for exacerbation. All correctly completed questionnaires were included in our analysis, without any exclusion criteria. A sample of 200 questionnaires from compliant patients were collected for the purpose of our audit. Additional data from each patient's medical records were collected and recorded on a separate data collection sheet. All the patients were consented for the conduction of the above audit.

Results

The data analysis demonstrates a marked improvement in the ICIQ score for 79% of the patients. An improvement of the severity of symptoms was reported for 63% of the participants. 72% of the participants noted less interference of their condition with their everyday life. There was also an 8% of patients whose symptoms completely resolved following their physiotherapy.

Interpretation of results

In our sample, the successful completion of a course of physiotherapy seems to have a marked impact on all aspects of urinary incontinence symptoms and perception of quality of life. Compliance to the advice and guidance provided by the specialist and duration of physiotherapy follow up itself are also responsible for the outcome. The potential benefit is clearly related to the individual's self-management and self-awareness and participants with an obvious organic aetiology for their presentation are less likely to experience an improvement.

Concluding message

The role of physiotherapy as part of the conservative management of urinary incontinence problems, whether stress or urge or mixed urinary incontinence is crucial to organising individualised patient care. For those patients where physiotherapy is a feasible approach, there is a considerable benefit in the overall management.

References

1. Avery K, Donovan J, Peters T, Shaw C, Gotoh M, Abrams P. ICIQ: A Brief and Robust Measure for Evaluating the Symptoms and Impact of Urinary Incontinence. *Neurourology and Urodynamics*. 2004;23(4):322-30

<i>Specify source of funding or grant</i>	None
<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>	No
<i>This study did not require ethics committee approval because</i>	None needed. Consent obtained from patients during initial consultation.
<i>Was the Declaration of Helsinki followed?</i>	Yes
<i>Was informed consent obtained from the patients?</i>	Yes