

A SURVEY OF INCONTINENCE SYMPTOMS AMONG RADICAL PROSTATECTOMY PATIENTS IN ONTARIO, CANADA.

Hypothesis / aims of study

Post Prostatectomy Incontinence (PPI) prevalence is often underestimated. Studies that are done tend to focus on the outcomes of reference centers with extensive experience. Our aim was to study the prevalence and severity among patients of a number of non-university institutions.

Study design, materials and methods

A total of 300 consecutive patients at 15 non-university urology clinics from across Ontario were asked to complete a questionnaire. Patients had to have had a Radical Prostatectomy (RP). Patients were asked to complete the questionnaire after a regular visit (not necessarily related to the PPI) to their urologist. Patients could either complete the questionnaire in the doctor's office or at home (or mail the questionnaire).

Results

Out of 300 patients, 55 (18%) had their RP less than 12 months ago, 103 (34%) between 1 and 2 years ago and 140 (47%) more than 3 years ago. (2 patients did not respond).

Seventy eight patients (26%) stated that they were not leaking urine, 127 (42%) rarely leaked urine, usually with exercise, 32 (11%) leaked a few times a week, while 61 (20%) leaked urine on a daily basis. Of the respondents 37 (12%) used less than 1 pad per day, 39 (13%) used from 1-2 pads per day and 14 patients (5%) used 3 or more pads per day. Five percent of patients (n=15) considered their condition a big problem, 37% (110 patients) considered it a small problem while 89 patients who leaked considered their condition "no problem". Of the 220 patients who reported some level of incontinence, most (66.8%) had discussed this with their urologist. However, Forty-four percent of patients (n=132) would like to know more about treatment options for their incontinence. The urologist is indicated as the most important source of additional information (by 39% of respondents), while the family doctor (20%), the internet (11%) and leaflets in doctor's offices (8%) are other sources of information indicated.

Interpretation of results

A majority of patients (220/300 or 73%) who have had a radical prostatectomy have some level of incontinence (varying from leakage with exercise to leaking on a daily basis). The incontinence is sufficiently severe for 90 (30%) of these patients to be wearing absorbent pads. While not all patients are bothered by this condition, 132 (44%) would like to know more about treatment options for their incontinence. The urologist is the most used source of information, although a surprising number of patients is likely to discuss with their family doctor or will try to get their information from the internet.

Concluding message

Incidence of PPI is often underestimated. A majority of RP patients will experience some level of symptoms and their urologists should discuss incontinence and potential treatment options with all, rather than with just those patients who are complaining about symptoms. With an increasing number of less invasive treatment options available, more patients can potentially be relieved of their incontinence symptoms.

Specify source of funding or grant	Study made possible through a grant from Uromedica, Inc.
Is this a clinical trial?	No
What were the subjects in the study?	HUMAN
Was this study approved by an ethics committee?	No
This study did not require ethics committee approval because	Voluntary anonymous post-surgical survey. This type of studies is typically exempted from ethics committee approvals
Was the Declaration of Helsinki followed?	No
This study did not follow the Declaration of Helsinki in the sense that	No human experimentation was involved.
Was informed consent obtained from the patients?	No