

A standardized definition of toileting is needed to improve clarity in practice and research.

Background

“Toileting” is widely used in clinical and research contexts in continence care, yet there is no consensus definition, and it does not currently feature in the International Continence Society (ICS) glossary. Existing literature and clinical practice vary in how toileting is conceptualized, encompassing different physical, cognitive, and functional components. This lack of clarity may affect assessment, documentation, and communication across disciplines.

Methods

An international cross-sectional online survey was distributed to multidisciplinary healthcare professionals and continence experts. The survey included open-ended questions, Yes/No questions on 11 components of toileting, and Likert-scale rating on four published conceptualizations. Quantitative data were summarized descriptively, and open-text responses underwent thematic analysis.



949
Invited

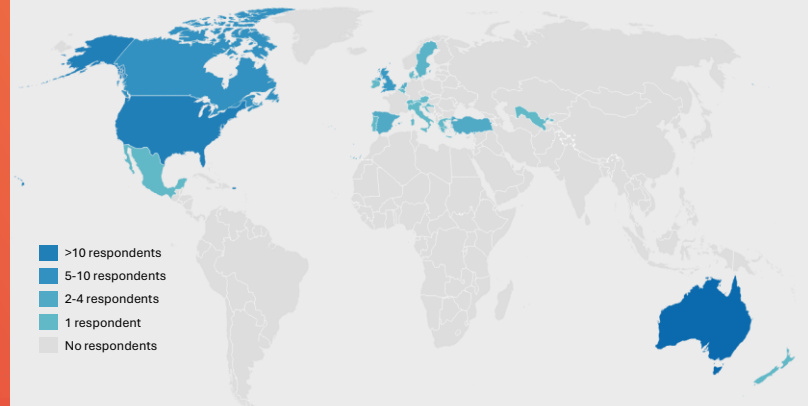


68
Respondents

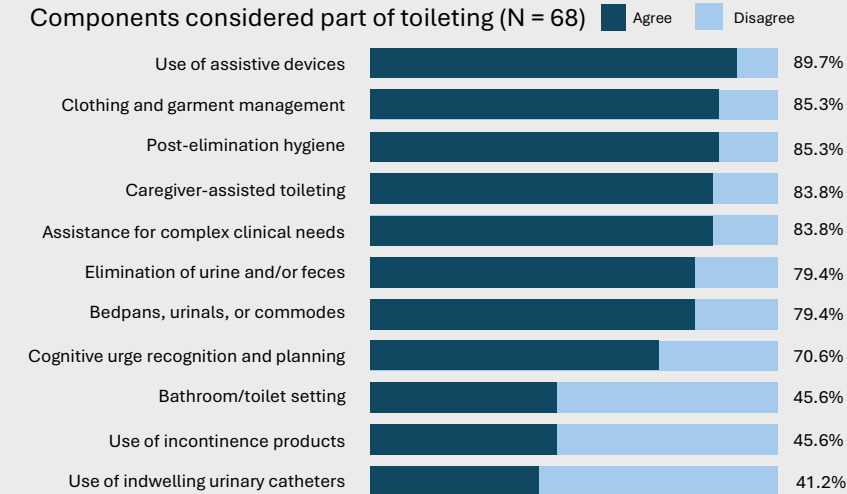


20
Countries

Respondents from 20 countries



Results



What did experts describe as toileting?

Experts commonly described toileting as a multi-step process, including:



Elimination
(voiding and
defecation)



Preparation
(positioning)



Clothing/
garment
management



Post-
elimination
hygiene



Use of toileting
aids (assistive
devices)

Implications and next steps



- Broad agreement was demonstrated around core elements of toileting, but several components were interpreted inconsistently



- Use survey findings to inform a Delphi consensus process to develop a standardized definition
- Disseminate findings to support clinical practice, research, and education

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