

## PREVALENCE OF PELVIC ORGAN PROLAPSE IN WOMEN, ASSOCIATED FACTORS AND IMPACT ON QUALITY OF LIFE IN RURAL PAKISTAN: POPULATION-BASED STUDY.

### Hypothesis / aims of study:

To report the results of large community population based survey investigating prevalence of POP, associated factors and its impact on women's quality of life in rural population of Pakistan.

### Study design, materials and methods:

A population-based, cross-sectional study in a rural community in Sindh province, Pakistan. Randomly selected women aged 15 years or above. A three stage random sampling strategy was applied to select women. Lady Health Workers interviewed women using a structured home based questionnaire to collect symptom data. The entry question to assess POP was; do you experience a feeling of bulging or protrusion coming down from or in the vaginal area? (Yes or no). If the response to question was yes she was asked a question to assess the stage of bulging or protrusion and then other questions based on the objectives of the study. The women who met the criteria for POP symptoms were invited by LHWs to attend the public health facilities where Female gynaecologist expert in pelvic floor disorders then conducted gynaecological examination on women with symptoms of prolapse to verify and grade POP using Baden-Walker method of classification. Outcome measures: Pelvic organ prolapse (POP) confirmed by gynaecological examination.

### Results:

Among the 5064 women interviewed (95.8% response rate), 521 women had confirmed POP, a prevalence of 10.3% of all women (95% confidence interval [95% CI] 9-11%). 37.8% of women with POP had stage III or IV prolapse. The highest rate of POP (25%) was found in women aged 36-40 years and a rate of 42% was found in women of parity with Para 4-6. Among women with POP, 60.8% reported their quality of life as greatly or moderately affected, 44.3% had it for more than 5 years and 78.7% never went to see a doctor.

### Interpretation of results:

High response rate among the eligible women, a robust method of data collection along with clinical verification and applying a well-defined classification system make this an accurate assessment of a population-based study. The prevalence is consistent with national level population based studies conducted in Nepal and in rural Ghana in which the prevalence of POP was 10% and 12.1% respectively. Clinically significant that 37.8% of women with POP had grade III or IV prolapse extended beyond the hymen-generally acceptable landmark found in most of the classifications. Increasing age and parity are identified in this study as risk factors for prolapse also found as the most common risk factors related to the prevalence of POP among women in developing as well as in developed countries. About 61% women with POP bothered by their symptoms moderately or greatly. However, only 111 women (21.3%) with prolapse consulted a medical doctor for their condition.

### Concluding message:

POP is highly prevalent in rural Pakistan and impacts on women's everyday lives, remaining mainly untreated. Measures should be taken to provide health care services provision to reduce this burden of POP among women.

### Disclosures

**Funding:** Funding for this study was provided by the University Grants Commission Aga Khan University Karachi Pakistan.

**Clinical Trial:** No **Subjects:** HUMAN **Ethics Committee:** Ethical approval was given by the Ethics Review Committee Aga Khan University Karachi Pakistan (Vide No 741-CHS/ERC-07, dated 27 June 2007. **Helsinki:** Yes **Informed Consent:** Yes