Using results of the initial local quantitative phase, a draft semi-structured interview guide was refined with the intention of gaining more information about continence products and to evaluate their perception of the utility of this information.  

Results
396 participants met the inclusion criteria for the quantitative phase; 62% were between the ages of 41-70 with a median age of 65. Results indicate that 53% of the women are married. 59% reported leaking urine once or less per week and only 9% had leaked several times a day. Most women leaked drops or a tablespoon of urine each time (34% and 40%, respectively), while 26% of women leak significant amounts each time (half or a full cup or more). 66% of women used bladder products for their incontinence, 24% used reuseable/washable products. Data concerning preferences of different bladder products (n=285) revealed women with light and moderate incontinence preferred small disposable pads during the day and night. Those with heavy incontinence preferred large disposable pads during the day and night. Those with severe heavy incontinence preferred large disposable pads during the day and all-in ones at night.

The most common sources of information (n=364) were stores (45%) and television/radio (43%), followed by health care professionals (24%), online information (23%) and magazines or newspapers (22%). For utility of sources (n=358) the greatest percentage of “useful” or “very useful” responses were for friends/acquaintances (83%) and healthcare professionals (82%). Leaflets available in primary care offices and health or social care advertisements were identified as infrequent sources, but rated as useful. (Figure 1). When asked who participants would like to receive information about continence products from (n=249) 53% identified health care professionals as best placed to give information about continence products.

9 women completed interviews (mean age 70 years). Five themes were identified: existing knowledge, seeking knowledge, reasons for choosing, how incontinence affects life, and perceptions of health care professionals’ roles. When seeking information they were looking for an informative and trustworthy source. This is why women turned to healthcare professionals, but the helpfulness of their experiences with healthcare professionals varied. Product choice was made through a trial and error approach as they drew information from a variety of sources included product labels. Cost was an influential factor in product selection. Women wanted a product that allowed them to feel safe and secure.
Interpretation of results

There was a contrast between how participants received information about continence products and what they believed to be the most useful sources of information. Popular sources such as pharmacies/other stores and television and radio were accessible, but they lacked the ability to give specific information based on the individual needs. Friends/acquaintances and healthcare professionals were highly ranked, but experiences with these sources varied because of the varying knowledge and willingness to discuss incontinence. Women are not receiving information about continence products in a manner that suits their needs reinforcing a trial and error approach to product selection.

Concluding message

Women seek information on continence products from a variety of sources. Health care professionals are a desirable source, but may not have the knowledge to provide when approached. Health care professionals need to incorporate assessment of incontinence in patient encounters, and provide information on options, including products. Providing samples of products may aid women in finding the proper fitting product.

References


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