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Institution City Country	Leicestershire MRC Incontinence Study. Leicester University, Leicester, UK.
Title (type in CAPITAL LETTERS)	THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN REPRODUCTIVE FACTORS AND INCONTINENCE: A COMMUNITY SURVEY OF 5,791 WOMEN.

**Aims of Study:**  
To investigate the association between obstetric and gynaecological history and faecal and urinary incontinence in community dwelling women aged over 40.

**Methods:**  
A random sample of 9,719 community dwelling women over the age of 40 was selected from the Leicestershire Health Authority general practice register in October 1998. Each woman was sent a postal questionnaire asking about urinary and bowel symptoms, socio-demographic variables, medical factors and lifestyle factors. They are part of a baseline sample for a prospective cohort study investigating the incidence and remission of incontinence in the community.  
Each woman was asked about gynaecological and obstetric factors including: menstrual status, previous hysterectomy, usage of hormone replacement therapy (HRT), parity, history of delivery by caesarian section or forceps and delivery of a baby over 9 lb (4 kg).

**Results:**  
There were 5,791 returned questionnaires (60% of sample). The prevalence of reproductive factors was as follows: premenopausal 30%, postmenopausal 50%, using HRT 15%, had hysterectomy 15%, had forceps delivery 20%, had caesarian section 5%, had large baby 13%. Parity in the sample was no children 13%, one 13%, two 37%, three 20%, four 9%, five or more 7%.  
There were associations between urinary incontinence and hysterectomy, parity or having delivered a baby over 4 kg. Associations between other urinary and faecal symptoms and reproductive factors were noted and are undergoing further analysis.

**Conclusions:**  
Reproductive factors have important associations with incontinence in the female community. The data however are cross-sectional and prospective work is necessary to establish a more causal relationship. This is being undertaken within this center.