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PREVALENCE OF BLADDER CONTROL PROBLEMS IN A LARGE GERMAN POPULATION SAMPLE

Aims of Study:

The aim of this study was to collect data on symptoms of bladder dysfunction in a large German population sample of patients visiting primary care doctors, urologists or gynecologists for any medical reason. Awareness of the problem in the medical community was investigated by matching patients' symptoms to doctors' diagnoses and looking at treatment habits.

Methods:

During a total study period of approximately 4 months a total of 2662 practices of primary care physicians, urologists and gynecologists asked their visiting patients to fill out a simple questionnaire consisting of 4 questions related to symptoms of bladder dysfunction. The physicians were asked to discuss the answers with their patients during the same visit and to make a diagnosis. Based upon the diagnosis they were asked whether pharmacotherapy would be initiated or the patient would be referred to a specialist.

Results:

TABLE 1: Demographics

	TOTAL		UROLOGISTS		GYNECOLOGISTS		PRIMARY CARE	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
PATIENTS	**211,648**	(100)	**14,711**	(7)	**41,150**	(19.4)	**155,787**	(73 6)
CENTERS	**2,662**	(100)	**165**	(6.1)	**446**	(16.8)	**2,051**	(77.1)
FEMALES	**137,222***	(67 4)	**5,883***	(4 3)	**41,150***	(30)	**90,189***	(65.7)
MALES	**66,433***	(32 6)	**7,994***	(12)	------		**58,439***	(88)
AGE : 40 – 80 years	**74,558***	(84 8)	**13,186***	(92.7)	**20,902***	(52.1)	**140,470***	(92.7)

* Differences due to missing values

Data of 198,230 patients were available for analysis Overall 22.4% reported symptoms attributable to mixed and 8% to stress incontinence; 43.7% had no symptoms of bladder dysfunction. The prevalence of symptoms attributable to overactive bladder was 25.9%, with the most commonly reported symptom being frequency (41.9%), followed by urgency (24.3%) and urge incontinence (20.2%). Doctors awareness of symptoms was rather poor (see Table 2).

TABLE 2: Summary of Results

Number of patients seen by	Symptoms of Overactive Bladder		Symptoms of Mixed incontinence		Symptoms of Stress Incontinence		No Symptoms	
	Reported by patient N (100%)	Diagnosed by doctor N (%)	Reported by patient N (100%)	Diagnosed by doctor N (%)	Reported by patient N (100%)	Diagnosed by doctor N (%)	Reported by patient N (100%)	Diagnosed by doctor N (%)
All doctors	**51,407**	**21,871** (42.5%)	**44,420**	**23,303** (52.5%)	**15,762**	**9,764** (62 0%)	**86,641**	**85594** (98 8%)
Urologists	**5,945**	**2,565** (43 1%)	**2,893**	**1,434** (49 5%)	**719**	**561** (88 0%)	**4,693**	**4,585** (97 7%)
Gynecol.	**6,888**	**2,892** (42 0%)	**7,795**	**3883** (49 8%)	**4,368**	**2845** (65 1%)	**20,153**	**19,933** (98.9%)
Primary care	**38,574**	**16,414** (42.6%)	**33,732**	**17,986** (53 3%)	**10,675**	**6,358** (59 6%)	**61,795**	**61,076** (98.8%)

Drugs for the treatment of the symptoms of overactive bladder were prescribed by about 80% of the urologists; however, only 40 – 45% of the gynecologists and the primary care doctors considered this option.

Conclusions:

Considering the high prevalence of lower urinary tract symptoms in a growing elderly population and the impact on the individual quality of life as well as the social system, further educational efforts seem necessary to increase awareness for this problem in the medical community.

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