

CANADIAN URINARY BLADDER SURVEY: POPULATION-BASED STUDY OF SYMPTOMS AND INCONTINENCE

Aims of Study

There have been very few epidemiologic studies to ascertain the prevalence of urinary incontinence in Canada and the reported rate has been lower than that seen in studies from other countries (1). Furthermore there has never been a survey that measures the impact severity and rate of treatment seeking behaviour in individuals affected with the condition. A cross Canada telephone survey was therefore undertaken to ascertain the prevalence of incontinence and related lower tract symptoms and treatment in adult men and women.

Methods

A standardized survey was created to elicit information about prevalence, duration, severity of incontinence and other urinary symptoms as well as treatment sought and obtained from healthcare providers. The population studied was non-institutionalized and non-medical-practiced based. Canadian Ipsos-Reid, a research company with a national network of over 600 Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) stations, was commissioned to conduct the surveys. A 2-part urinary tract questionnaire was administered to 2 cohorts of 1000 adults during 2 separate weeks in October 2002. Each sample was stratified to reflect the population with regard to gender and distribution according to the 2001 national census. Data analysis was done with standard statistical software including SPSS and SAS. The major form of analysis on the data was cross-tabulation.

Results

Data were collected and analyzed from 2000 respondents. The answers to the common first questions in both questionnaires, regarding prevalence of symptoms, were similar as were the results in the 6 geographic regions across the country. While only 8% of all respondents initially acknowledged having a bladder problem (Males 5%; Females 12%), 52% answered 'yes' to having one or more bladder symptoms. With these respondents the commonest symptoms were nocturia (38%), urgency (16%), frequency (14%), stress incontinence (13%), and urge incontinence (7%). Mean duration of bladder symptoms was 9.1 years. Table 1 shows the breakdown by gender and age.

Table 1: Prevalence of urinary symptoms by gender and age

	Gender		Age (y)		
	Male	Female	18-40	41-64	>=65
Number of respondents	958	1042	836	900	236
Any symptom	45%	58%	41%	59%	67%
Nocturia	34%	43%	29%	43%	58%
Urgency	17%	16%	13%	18%	22%
Frequency	12%	16%	12%	15%	20%
Stress Incontinence	3%	23%	7%	18%	18%
Urge Incontinence	4%	10%	3%	9%	16%

The overall prevalence of any degree of urinary incontinence symptoms was 21.8% with one quarter of these respondents having a moderate to large degree of leakage and moderate to severe interference with everyday life. Table 2 shows the percentage of males and females with any degree of incontinence stratified by age.

Table 2: Prevalence of incontinence by gender and age

	Age (y)		
	18-40	41-64	>=65
Males	10%	16%	30%

Females	16%	33%	55%
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Overall only 26% of those with any bladder problem have seen a doctor or other health care professional for it and of those 67% received treatment including exercises, medication, and/or surgery.

Conclusions

This is the first survey of this type done in Canada to ascertain prevalence in the general population. Urinary incontinence had a higher prevalence in this study than the 7% previously reported (1) and is similar to that in other national studies (2). The prevalence similarly increases in women and older age groups. Despite the prevalence many of those with troublesome symptoms have not sought nor have received treatment for the problem. This suggests the need for more effective strategies to provide continence care.

References

1. Urinary Incontinence. In: Promoting a Collaborative Approach to Continence Care in Canada, Canadian Continence Foundation, July 2001, pp 1-9.
2. Hunskaar S et al. Int Urogynecol J, 2000; 11:302-309.