

HOW BOTHERSOME ARE LUTS DURING PREGNANCY?

Aims of Study

Lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) are in particular common during pregnancy and the prevalence increase with increasing gestation till term. It is largely unknown how much women are bothered by these symptoms during their pregnancy. Therefore, the objective of this study was to report on the prevalence of LUTS during pregnancy and to evaluate the amount of bother women experiences from these LUTS.

Methods

At 12 weeks gestation, 293 nulliparous women were recruited from eight midwifery practices in the Netherlands. They took part in a prospective longitudinal cohort study on the effects of pregnancy on pelvic floor function. The study was approved by the Medical Ethics Committee of the University Medical Center Utrecht. The women signed an informed consent. The women received three self-report questionnaires during pregnancy the first at 12 weeks gestation, the second at 24 weeks gestation and the third at 36 weeks gestation. Urogenital symptoms were measured with the Dutch version of the Urogenital Distress Inventory (UDI). (1,2) This questionnaire contains of 10 questions about micturition symptoms and the experienced level of discomfort of these symptoms. Each item measures if a symptom is present and the amount of bother the woman experiences from that symptom. The LUTS symptoms were assessed according to the recommendations of the ICS, and in concordance with other studies. Bother some LUTS was defined as reporting moderately or greatly bother from the symptom. Women with LUTS who were not at all or slightly bothered by it were regarded as not having bothersome LUTS. The statistical analysis was done in SPSS 10.0 for Windows.

Results

At 12 weeks gestation 263 (90%) of the women had at least one LUTS, at 24 weeks 284 (97 %) and at 36 weeks 281 (96%) of the women had one or more LUTS. The prevalence of LUTS at 12, 24 and 36 weeks gestation is shown in Table 1. Table 2 shows the prevalence of bothersome LUTS at 12,24 and 36 weeks of pregnancy.

Conclusions

Symptoms of LUTS occur in almost all women during pregnancy. Whereas the prevalence of urgency/frequency is stable from 12 weeks gestation on, the prevalence of true incontinence symptoms increases with gestational age. Despite the high prevalence of symptoms the majority of women report not to be bothered by it. Remarkably, symptoms of frequency/urgency are more often regarded as bothersome as compared to true urinary incontinence symptoms.

Table 1 Period prevalence of LUTS during pregnancy

	12 weeks	24 weeks	36 weeks
Frequency	220 (75)	239 (82)	240 (82)
Urgency	181 (62)	193 (66)	200 (69)
Stress incontinence	55 (19)	123 (42)	132 (45)
Urge incontinence	18 (6)	41 (14)	61 (21)
Difficulty emptying bladder	48 (16)	78 (27)	90 (31)
Feeling of incomplete emptying	103 (35)	149 (51)	149 (51)

The values are numbers (percentage)

Table 2 Bothersomeness of LUTS during pregnancy

	12 weeks	24 weeks	36 weeks
Frequency	47/220 (21)	57/239 (24)	67/240(28)
Urgency	40/181 (22)	44/193 (23)	37/200(19)
Stress incontinence	7/55 (13)	19/123 (15)	21/132(16)
Urge incontinence	2/18 (11)	10/41 (24)	12/61 (20)
Difficulty emptying bladder	6/48 (13)	17/78 (22)	21/90 (23)
Feeling of incomplete emptying	9/103 (9)	25/149 (17)	21/149 (14)

The values are numbers (percentage)

References

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