

SYMPTOMS AND CLINICAL CONDITION OF ITALIAN WOMEN PRESENTING WITH LUTS IN UROLOGY CENTRES. THE FLOW STUDY

Hypothesis / aims of study

LUTS are associated with a reduced Quality of Life (QoL) both in men and women, and the need for population-based epidemiological data is well recognized.

Therefore the present work focuses on LUTS frequency and their impact on quality of life as assessed by means of W-IPSS questionnaire (International Prostate Symptom Score, adapted for women: the QoL single question refers to urinary symptoms generically, in spite of the specific reference to prostatic disease of the original IPSS). Data were collected during baseline visit of the FLOW (Female LUTS: Observational Study in Women) study, an ongoing 2-year observational study, which is currently evaluating the universe of Italian female patients with LUTS from the perspective of the Urologists

Study design, materials and methods

Patients (age \geq 18 years, negative dipstick) suffering from LUTS not related to Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) since at least 3 months, and regarded to be compliant with questionnaire compilation, were consecutively enrolled in 39 Italian Centres of Urology. They underwent a urological visit according to the routine procedures used at each centre. The only procedure prescribed by the protocol was the self-administration of W-IPSS questionnaire. The present paper reports on data related to 934 patients.

Results

Eighty-five percent of patients complained of LUTS since 6 months or more. Storage symptoms were clearly predominant (96%), with daytime frequency (71%), urgency (68%), urinary incontinence (68%), night time frequency (61%) as the most frequent ones. Among patients suffering from urinary incontinence, 40% of them had stress-, 32% mixed- and 26% urge incontinence. The majority of women suffering from night time frequency (86%) also complained of waking up during the night to void.

Emptying and post micturition symptoms were relatively common (59% and 57% respectively), with feeling of incomplete emptying observed in 51% of cases.

95% of women reported more than one symptom; 56% of patients suffered from daytime frequency and urgency, 51% from daytime frequency and night time frequency and 42% from all of these three symptoms. Moreover, 18% of women had slow stream and straining and 26% complained of feeling of incomplete emptying and post micturition dribble.

Concerning the relationship between LUTS and age, the percentage of patients who suffered from daytime frequency decreased as years go by, while night time frequency, urgency and (mixed) urinary incontinence increased with age.

Regarding the relationship between LUTS and patients' medical history, the prevalence of urinary incontinence is almost the same for absence/presence of previous nocturnal enuresis (68 Vs 71% respectively). When stress incontinence is taken into account a difference is observed: 53% of patients with previous nocturnal enuresis suffered from stress urinary incontinence versus 39% of patients without previous nocturnal enuresis.

Patients with constipation complained of daytime frequency, urgency, night time frequency, feeling of incomplete emptying and mixed urinary incontinence more often than women without it.

The percentage of individuals who suffered from pain during evacuation and urgency, urinary incontinence and feeling of incomplete emptying was higher than those who did not (77 Vs 68; 72 Vs 68; 62 Vs 50).

A large amount of patients (80%) who used diuretics suffered from urinary incontinence, especially mixed and stress.

The mean W-IPSS score was 12.4. If the classical classification of IPSS, used for the assessment of BPH symptoms, is applied to W-IPSS, the frequency of mild (0-7), moderate (8-19) and severe (20-35) LUTS was 29, 52 and 19% respectively. In each of these classes

no relationship with age was observed. As regards QoL, 71% of women declared that they would be dissatisfied/unhappy/ hopelessly to spend the rest of their life with their actual symptoms.

Interpretation of results

The most frequent symptoms were daytime frequency, urgency, urinary incontinence, night time frequency and feeling of incomplete emptying. Storage symptoms were clearly predominant, but voiding and post micturition symptoms were also relatively common.

For some symptoms there seems to be a direct relationship between prevalence and age. In particular, the growing trend of urinary incontinence with age seems to agree with results of previous works [2].

No clear concordance between specific clinical conditions and LUTS was observed; only stress urinary incontinence showed a different frequency in patients with or without previous nocturnal enuresis. Urinary incontinence seems to be associated with a previous or concomitant use of diuretics, which was not observed for the other LUTS.

According to W-IPSS, symptoms' intensity is perceived mostly as moderate to severe.

Concluding message

There are few data on prevalence of different kinds of LUTS in women. Our work reports data on Italian women presenting with non UTI related LUTS in Urology Centres. Although storage symptoms are the most common, as expected, a relevant proportion of patients show also voiding symptoms. The follow-up visits will allow to evaluating the relationship between clinical condition and LUTS modification.

References

⁽¹⁾ *BJU Int.* 2003;92:409-14.

⁽²⁾ *Neurourol Urodyn.* 2000,19:259-271.

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