

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OVERACTIVE BLADDER (OAB) AND SEXUAL ACTIVITY IN WOMEN**

### **Hypothesis / aims of study**

Healthy women with overactive bladder (OAB) also report difficulty with sexual function. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the relationship between OAB and sexual activity in women.

### **Study design, materials and methods**

Seventy-eight women diagnosed with OAB self-completed the Urinary Distress Inventory (UDI) and Personal Experiences Questionnaires (PEQ). The UDI questionnaire evaluated the presence and degree of bother associated with symptoms of urge incontinence (UI) and stress incontinence (SI). The PEQ measured sexual function with regard to sexual frequency, arousal, frequency of orgasm, and pain during intercourse. Kendall's tau-b correlation coefficients were computed to describe the relationship between bladder and sexual function.

### **Results**

The occurrence of urinary frequency in 78 women was 74%. Fifty percent of the respondents were married, 14.1 % were single, 12.8% were divorced, and 11.5% were widowed. Eighty-seven percent of respondents were Caucasian and the mean age was  $50 \pm 6$  years. Sixty-five percent of the sample experienced UI and 76% experienced SI. A fair correlation was observed between the presence of UI and sexual frequency (.23,  $p < .05$ ). A fair correlation was also observed between the presence of urinary frequency and sexual frequency (.24,  $p < .05$ ). The degree of bother related to UI exhibited a fair correlation with the ability to enjoy sexual activity (-.27,  $p < .05$ ). The degree of bother related to abdominal or genital pain exhibited fair correlations with the ability to enjoy sexual activity (-.35,  $p < .05$ ) and the frequency of sexual thoughts/fantasies (.36,  $p < .05$ ).

### **Concluding message**

Women who experienced urinary frequency and/or UI were less sexually active. Women who expressed a higher degree of bother as a result of UI were less likely to enjoy sexual activity. Women who expressed a greater degree of bother related to abdominal or genital pain were less likely to enjoy sexual activity but were more likely to experience sexual thoughts/fantasies. Further studies of women with OAB may elicit additional correlative data.