

USING THE BRISTOL LOWER URINARY TRACT SYMPTOMS (BFLUTS) QUESTIONNAIRE IN ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF URINARY PROBLEMS ON SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR AND LIFESTYLE AMONGST MALAYSIAN WOMEN

Hypothesis / aims of study

Urinary incontinence and other lower urinary tract symptoms are common amongst elderly women. They have widespread social implications, causing discomfort, shame and loss of confidence, which negatively affect their quality of life. Most prevalence studies are amongst Western countries where women are a lot more forthcoming with their health and sexual problems. Women in Asian country like Malaysia are known to be reserved and much less forthcoming, especially in admitting their health and sexually related problems.

Using the Bristol Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms (BFLUTS) Questionnaire, the aim of this cross-sectional study is to evaluate the impact of urinary problems on sexual behaviour and lifestyle amongst Malaysian women 45 years and above

Study design, materials and methods

Women aged 45 years and above attending general gynaecology and menopause clinics at a large teaching hospital in an urban population were randomly selected. A 2-part self answered questionnaire, consisting of Demographic Data in Part 1 and **Bristol Female Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms (BFLUTS)** Questionnaire in Part 2 were administered to these patients.

Results

A total of 250 women with a mean age of 53.2 years were recruited. 82.4% of them received secondary and tertiary education with 40.8% of them having their own careers. 71.6% were either naturally or surgically menopause, and 64.8% of them were taking hormone replacement therapy.

42.4% (106 women) admitted to having urinary problems. Of these, 56.6% reported that their sexual life is spoilt by urinary symptoms and 54.7% of them perceived this as a problem. 60.4% complained of dry vagina with 49.1% perceiving it as a problem. 67% had dyspareunia and 47.2% had coital incontinence.

40.6% of the women had to restrict their daily activities because of urinary symptoms. 43.4% reported their urinary symptoms affected their physical activities and 41.5% said they affected their social life. 39.6% had to cut down their fluid intake and 42.5% had to avoid places where toilet is far. 67% of them believed that urinary symptoms interfere with their life and 43.4% of them would not be happy to spend the rest of their life with urinary symptoms.

Interpretation of results

The Bristol Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms (BFLUTS) Questionnaire was successfully used to assess lower urinary tract symptomatology amongst Malaysian women above 45 years of age where almost half of them indicated that their sexual as well as their lifestyles were affected by their urinary symptoms

Concluding message

A lower urinary symptoms assessment questionnaire which has been devised in the West is applicable to elicit urinary tract problems affecting sensitive issues in amongst Malaysian women.

References

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