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A SURVEY OF FEMALE URINARY SYMPTOMS IN A GENERAL PRACTICE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

Hypothesis / aims of study

Our aim was to determine the incidence and severity of lower urinary tract symptoms in a typical general practice in the United Kingdom.

Study design, materials and methods

All female patients, over the age of 21 years, from a single general practice in Staffordshire, England were written to and asked to reply to a questionnaire.

This was a postal questionnaire sent to 2600 patients

Results

1420 patients responded.

32% of respondents passed urine more than 8 times a day, 25% had nocturia greater than once a night, 29% had some urgency, 28% had some urge urinary incontinence, 41% suffered some leakage at any time of which 52% said it was a drip, 43% a little & 5% a lot.

49% of respondents that leaked felt it started after childbirth. Of women who leaked 74% had stress urinary incontinence. Only 18% of women with incontinence had sought professional help, the majority to their general practitioner (49%). 16% had their bladder problem for < 1 year, 45% for 1-5 years & 39% > 5 years.

4% felt that their problem affected their quality of life very much, 8% a lot, 32% a bit & 56% hardly at all.

73% of respondents accepted their condition, 15% were embarrassed by it, 8% were unhappy & 4% very unhappy.

Results are compared with the national picture.

Interpretation of results

These results are comparable with national statistics.

Concluding message

Urinary incontinence is common but only significantly affects a small percentage of the general population.

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