

INCONTINENCE OR OTHER LOWER URINARY TRACT SYMPTOMS: WHICH IS MOST BOTHERSOME?

Hypothesis / aims of study

Although lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) are known to be bothersome and affect daily activities, the threshold above which LUTS become bothersome is not well described. There are also few studies of the relative bother caused by incontinence compared to other LUTS. Our aims were to determine patient reported level of bother with urinary incontinence (UI) and other LUTS, and to explore thresholds above which frequent LUTS became bothersome and affected daily activities.

Study design, materials and methods

A 5-site cross-sectional study enrolled 301 community dwelling incontinent women ≥ 40 years of age. We compared the most bothersome symptom among women with stress vs. urge UI. Women also reported the frequency and level of bother (none, slightly, moderately, quite a bit, or extremely) of LUTS: strong urgency, nocturia, and daytime frequency. Participants also reported whether LUTS affected their daily activities (not at all, slightly, moderately, quite a bit, or extremely). Descriptive statistics of very bothersome (quite a bit /extremely) LUTS by frequency, and effects on daily activities are reported here.

Results

Women were mean age 56 ± 11 years and range of UI severity was broad (5% slight, 58% moderate, 36% severe/very severe). UI was the most bothersome symptom for the majority of women with either stress or urge UI (Table 1). Women with Urge UI vs. Stress UI, rated strong urgency and nocturia as the most bothersome symptom ($p < 0.001$).

Table 1: Most bothersome symptom by type of UI

Type of UI	Daytime frequency	Nocturia	Strong urgency	UI	P value
Urge UI	6%	19%	20%	55%	<0.001
Stress UI	9%	11%	4%	74%	

Very bothersome LUTS increased with increasing LUTS frequency and differed by symptom (Table 2). Very bothersome symptoms were reported by almost 90% of women who had strong urgency associated with 1/2 to 3/4 of voids and over 50% of women with nocturia (3 per night). At all levels of frequency, the fewest women reported daytime voiding frequency as very bothersome.

Table 2 LUTS frequency by type and percent reporting very bothersome LUTS ('quite a bit' or 'extremely')

Symptom	Symptom Frequency		
	Low*	Medium**	High***
Strong Urgency	18%	88%	87%
Nocturia	15%	53%	80%
Daytime frequency	13%	21%	49%

*Low= Strong Urgency: \leq Quarter of voids; Nocturia: 1 to 2 per night; Diurnal voids: \geq q3hours;

**Medium= Strong Urgency: 1/2 to 3/4 of voids; Nocturia: 3 per night; Diurnal voids: q2 hours;

***High = Strong Urgency: Almost Always; Nocturia: \geq 4 per night; Diurnal voids: \leq q1 hour;

A significant effect on daily activities ('quite a bit' or 'extremely') increased with increasing frequency of LUTS, and differed by symptom (Table 3).

Table 3 LUTS frequency by type and percent reporting effect on daily activities ('quite a bit' or 'extremely')

Symptom	Symptom Frequency		
	Low*	Medium**	High***
Strong Urgency	5%	66%	68%
Nocturia	11%	29%	75%
Daytime frequency	10%	17%	37%

Interpretation of results

Women with UI are more bothered by their incontinence than by other lower urinary tract symptoms. Nocturia and especially strong urgency were more bothersome and affected daily activities more than daytime frequency.

Concluding message

In this sample of incontinent women, urinary urgency and nocturia were more bothersome and affected daily activities more than daytime frequency.

FUNDING:

Yamanouchi

Pharmaceutical