

## CONTINENCE STATUS FIVE YEARS AFTER CESSATION OF ORGANISED PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLE TRAINING

### Hypothesis / aims of study

To assess the continence status in a group of women five years after cessation of 6 months organised pelvic floor muscle training (1).

### Study design, materials and methods

The present study was a five year follow up study of a single blind, randomised controlled trial assessing the effect of pelvic floor muscle training with and without biofeedback in women with urodynamic stress incontinence (1). The training program of the original study consisted of six months of pelvic floor muscle training comprising three sets of 10 contractions three times per day. All participants met a physiotherapist for individual training sessions, motivation and monitoring of pelvic floor muscle strength, once per week during the first month, and every second week during the next 4 months. The primary outcome measure at five year follow up was self report of urinary incontinence. Women reporting urinary leakage once weekly or more were classified as incontinent.

### Results

All women who had participated in the randomised controlled trial and a previous one year follow up study (2) were invited to take part in the five year follow up study. Across the time of the study, several physical and social constraints resulted in some women being unable to meet for the follow up assessment. Five years after cessation of the training program 62 of 94 women in the original study agreed to attend the assessments. Mean age (range) at five year follow up was 53 (35-75) years, and mean (range) duration of symptoms at inclusion in the original study was 10 (1-25) years. No specific characteristics of the group of withdrawals were found. At the five-year follow up 44% of the women were classified as continent. Eight women had in the meantime had surgery due to their incontinence problem, and four women conservative treatment. Pelvic floor muscle exercises was still conducted weekly or more by 26% of the women. Fifty-eight percent reported that the problems related to their urinary incontinence was lower at the five year follow up than before treatment, 26% that the problems was unchanged, and 16% that the problems was worse.

### Interpretation of results

The effect of a six months training program to treat stress urinary incontinence was still present in a majority of the participants of the study at a five year follow up. However, the percentage of continent women at the five year follow up was slightly reduced compared to immediately after cessation of the pelvic floor muscle training program and at the one year follow up. Only a minority of the women was still training their pelvic floor muscles regularly, indicating that the need for a longer period of follow up of the training can be discussed.

### Concluding message

Five years after cessation of the six months pelvic floor muscle training program 44% of the women were still continent, and nearly 60% reported improvement compared to before the training period. This long term results state the reason for offering women with stress urinary incontinence pelvic floor training with close follow up to treat their incontinence.

1. Effect of Adding Biofeedback to Pelvic Floor Muscle Training to Treat Urodynamic stress Incontinence. *Obstet Gynecol* 2002;100:730-9.
2. Continence status one year after cessation of organised pelvic floor muscle training. International Continence Society 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting. Florence 5/9 October 2003, Italy.

**FUNDING: NONE**  
**DISCLOSURES: NONE**

**CLINICAL TRIAL REGISTRATION:** This clinical trial has not yet been registered in a public clinical trials registry.

**HUMAN SUBJECTS:** This study was approved by the Regional ethical committee, Midt-Norge (Middle part of Norway) and followed the Declaration of Helsinki. Informed consent was obtained from the patients.