

ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN PERSONAL HABITS AND URINARY INCONTINENCE AMONG A SAMPLE OF WOMEN 40 TO 60 YEARS OF AGE.

Hypothesis / aims of study

Urinary incontinence (UI) is a health concern of particular relevance to women because the prevalence rate is higher than the rate for men. It is a symptom with widespread human and social implications, causing physical discomfort, shame and loss of self-confidence that negatively affects women's quality of life. Understanding the factors related to UI is helpful for identifying women at risk. Studies that had been conducted to identify associated factors related to UI in the United States and Europe are abundant. However, associations between women's personal habits and UI had seldom been investigated. The major aims of this study were to estimate the incidence of UI and to identify possible personal habits related to UI among a sample of women 40 to 60 years of age.

Study design, materials and methods

This study was a cross-sectional study conducted at two obstetric/gynecologic outpatient departments in two hospitals in Taipei. Two hundred and ninety-nine women were interviewed by a research assistant using a self-developed survey. Women who had surgical menopause, bilateral oophorectomy, menopause related to chemotherapy or radiation were excluded from this study. Other exclusion criteria included currently using oral contraceptive, pregnant, or breastfeeding. Chi-Square test was used to examine the possible personal habits related to UI.

Results

Of the 299 women, 152 (50.8%) experienced UI during the past 12 months. Women in this study were more likely to experience UI than women in previous epidemiological or community studies. Women who kept poor bladder habits ($p < .05$) or who frequently reduced daily fluid consumption ($p < .01$) were more likely to report UI than women who did not have these habits.

Interpretation of results

Comparing to the previous epidemiological or community studies, UI was common in this group. High prevalence rate of UI leads to a concern that age and menopause may affect UI. The adjustment of personal habits for women in this study might result in a negative effect on their bladder health.

Concluding message

Identification of these modifiable factors may lead to appropriate interventions and strategies to manage female UI. Educational programs for improving women's symptoms and strategies for prevention and treatment could be implemented.

References

Incontinence; Paris, France. Health Publication Ltd., 2005.

<i>Specify source of funding or grant</i>	National Science Council at Taiwan
<i>Is this a clinical trial?</i>	No
<i>What were the subjects in the study?</i>	HUMAN
<i>Was this study approved by an ethics committee?</i>	Yes
<i>Specify Name of Ethics Committee</i>	Taipei Medical University, Taipei Veterans General Hospital, and Chang-Gung Memorial Hospital.
<i>Was the Declaration of Helsinki followed?</i>	Yes
<i>Was informed consent obtained from the patients?</i>	Yes