

Urinary Incontinence in Korean Women : Analysis of the Symptoms and Quality of Life

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1. Purpose

The Purpose of this study was to describe the symptoms and the impact of urinary incontinence on the lives of Korean women.

2. Methods

This was a cross-sectional descriptive study among 52 Korean women. The women were recruited at a health clinic using a convenience sampling method. The instruments included: (a) eight socio-demographic questions, (b) Bristol Female Urinary Symptoms Questionnaire by Jackson(1996). The descriptive statistical analysis including the mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentage, and range was performed using the statistical Package for Social Sciences Program Version 12.0.

3. Results

The average age of participants was 52.44(SD=4.93). 65.4% were in a normal weight range, and 9.6% were in an overweight range of BMI. Their mean parity was 2.51(SD=0.71), and 75% had had two or more children. The modes of delivery were 71.2% of normal vaginal delivery, and 3.8% of Caesarean section. 55.7% had experience of abortion. 53.8% were menopausal status, and 21.4% of menopausal women were receiving Hormone Replacement Therapy. 71.2% were housewives and only 5.8% reported that they were employed. The common symptoms of urinary incontinence were stress incontinence (84.6%), urgency (63.5%), volume of leakage (51.9%), incomplete emptying (44.2%), and urge incontinence (42.3%). They considered stress incontinence (67.3%), and frequency (50.0%), nocturia (44.2%), urgency (40.4%), urge incontinence (40.4%), incomplete emptying (32.7%), and bladder pain (30.7%) to be problematic. In relation to sexual function, 53.8% felt dry vagina, and 28.8% experienced pain during intercourse. 17.3% felt that their sexual life was spoiled by their urinary symptoms, and only 13.5% reported leakage during intercourse. They thought dry vagina (50.0%), pain during intercourse (32.7%), sex life spoiled (25%), and leakage during intercourse (13.4%) to be problematic. Relation to quality of life, three-fourths of women felt that their symptoms interfered with life overall. More than half of women were bothered about symptoms for

more than one year, and had mixed feelings or worse about living with no change as they are now for the rest of their lives. In addition, 51.9% had to change their underclothes more than once a day (26.9%) and wear protection (51.9%), such as sanitary pads because of leakage. They reported that symptoms adversely affected their physical activity and social life.

4. Conclusions

The findings of this study indicated that most women experienced stress incontinence with urge symptom, and considered stress incontinence to be the most problematic symptom. They also reported the experience of incontinence on sexual intercourse, and answered that their symptoms reduced their quality of life. The findings suggest that nurses need to identify those who were at risk and hesitate to seek help for assessment and treatment of incontinence, and to provide primary prevention strategies for at risk women before they experience urinary incontinence symptoms and problems.