

THE FREQUENCY OF URINARY INCONTINENCE IN PAKISTANI WOMEN

Pages with reference to book, From 16 To 17

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Urinary incontinence, especially in females causes a great degree of social and hygienic embarrassment. In one of the studies, over 50% of young, healthy, nulliparous females had incontinence; of these only 5% found it troublesome¹. In old age, the frequency of troublesome incontinence rises to about 30%², while the figures in paediatric population are about 1 in every 200 children³. Overall incidence of urinary incontinence in European rural areas is about 4.1%⁴. This high frequency of urinary incontinence in European population is probably because, (a) soiling of clothes is not considered a major problem and (b) all of them use commode type of toilet. In Pakistan soiling of clothes prohibits the person from performing daily religious activities, moreover a large population uses squatting type of toilet which empties the bladder completely, therefore, the frequency of urinary incontinence is likely to be low. The present study was done in two socially different groups who use different type of toilets, and see the frequency of incontinence in these groups and compare it with other studies.

PATIENTS, METHODS AND RESULTS

Group I (usually poor socio-economic group) comprised of females and their accompanying relatives attending the antenatal clinic of Civil Hospital, Karachi, while group II (higher socioeconomic group) consisted of family members and relatives of medical students. A questionnaire bearing information on the presence and frequency of urinary incontinence, its relation to cough, sneezing, laughing, duration of symptoms, and whether present before delivery or occurred later was filled by both the groups. Information on the type of toilet facilities (commode[squatting]) was also noted. A total of 267 females filled the questionnaire completely, of these 130 belonged to group I who always used squatting type of toilet while 137 belonged to group II and used commode type of toilet. The frequency of urinary incontinence in the two groups and its relation to various acts is shown in the accompanying table.

TABLE. Urinary Incontinence in Females.

TOILET FACILITIES	NO.	NO. + VE	(%)	INCONTINENCE DURING			
				Laughing	Sneezing	Coughing	Prior to Pregnancy
Squatting (Group I)	130	16	(12.3)	Nil	16	9	4
Commode (Group II)	137	39	(28.5)	2	39	33	11
Overall	267	55	(20.5)	2	55	42	15

Females using commode type of toilet had a higher incontinence rate (28.5%) than those using squatting posture (12.3%). Pre-pregnancy incontinence was also more common in the former group. Multiparous females of both the groups had higher frequency of incontinence.

COMMENTS

The present frequency of 20.5% urinary incontinence in Pakistani females, is much lower than that reported from the West¹⁻⁴. The lower frequency of incontinence in females using squatting type of toilet is probably because of better stream, training and complete evacuation of urinary bladder during

this posture, resulting in maintenance of sphincter and perineal muscle tone. Due to fast urbanization in our society, there is a likelihood of an increase in the frequency of urinary incontinence of our female population.

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