

Oral presentation

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Impact on sexuality and urinary incontinence in adults with spina bifida

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from 49th Annual Meeting of the Society for Research into Hydrocephalus and Spina Bifida
Barcelona, Spain, 29 June – 2 July 2005

Published: 30 December 2005

Cerebrospinal Fluid Research 2005, **2**(Suppl 1):S24 doi:10.1186/1743-8454-2-S1-S24

Background

The aim of this study was to examine the impact of urinary incontinence on sexual activity in adult patients with spina bifida.

Materials and methods

A total of 82 patients (61% male, 39% female) of average age: 30.5 (19–48) affected by spina bifida were available for interview. A questionnaire was administered to determine data related to patient neurological level, management of bladder dysfunction, aspects of their sexual activity and the possible interference with urinary incontinence, among others. The questionnaire also included a section for male patients able to sustain erection, SHIM (Sexual Health Inventory for Male), to determine the degree of their erectile dysfunction. Bivariable and multivariable statistical analysis valued the most common factor interfering the sexual activity of this highly statistically significant population. ($p < 0.05$).

Results

Out of 82 patients tested, only 32.9 % had sexual contact, and most of these had a partner. Urinary incontinence significantly interfered with their sexual activity ($p < 0.05$). Most males used sheaths and most women used intermittent catheters. Data showed males had less frequent sexual activity than females ($p < 0,05$) but masturbated more often. ($p: 0,001$). Analysing patients according to the degree of their lesion showed most patients able to have sexual activity, intercourse and erection, had a statistically significant low lumbar neurological level or sacrum ($p < 0,05$).

Conclusion

The study determined that patients with spina bifida have low sexual activity and their urinary incontinence affects their sexual relationships.