Management of urinary incontinence in women

- General Practitioners’ and physiotherapists’ implementation of a new national clinical guideline

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Background
30-50% of middle-aged and elderly women are suffering from urinary incontinence and may, consequently experience a significantly reduced quality of life. The national, clinical guideline recommends offering supervised pelvic floor muscle training to motivated women with stress urinary incontinence before any surgery, as rehabilitation of pelvic floor muscles is effective and without complications. Previous studies indicate that less than 10% of women are offered training after consulting their general practitioner (GP). Urinary incontinence is taboo-coated, and affected women rarely know that urinary incontinence can be treated. Thus four out of five women with urinary incontinence do not even seek healthcare assistance. There is, therefore, a need for greater attention to urinary incontinence in women, when they consult their GP. In order to promote the GPs’ detection of urinary incontinence in women, we need to identify the characteristics of women suffering from it. In addition, we lack knowledge of GPs’ and physiotherapists’ (PTs’) current management of urinary incontinence in women, as well as the facilitators and barriers to the implementation of the National Clinical Guideline on Urinary Incontinence in Women.

Aim
The project aims to investigate
1) the characteristics of women with urinary incontinence, which are relevant to detection in general practice
2) GPs’ and PTs’ current management of urinary incontinence in women
3) the barriers to and facilitators of the implementation of the National Clinical Guideline on Urinary Incontinence in Women

Methods
The project applies both quantitative and qualitative methods. The characteristics of women with urinary incontinence are documented by using a quantitative, descriptive analysis of quality of life, lifestyle factors, impact on daily life, multimorbidity, and symptom burden. The analysis is based on a population-based cross-sectional study of 50,000 participating women. An audit registration is applied to the documentation of GPs’ and PTs’ current management of urinary incontinence in women, and by using qualitative, individual interviews with GPs and PTs, we elucidate barriers to and facilitators of their implementation of the recommendations in the National Clinical Guideline on Urinary Incontinence in Women

Project Status
Knowledge from this project will contribute to improve the treatment of urinary incontinence in women, enabling women to be offered an earlier and more relevant treatment.

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