

The burden of Urological and Sexual dysfunction in Multiple Sclerosis : Study of a large Greek cohort

D. Tzanetakos, E. Andreadou, A. Kyrozis, M. Anagnostouli, M.E. Evangelopoulos, G. Koutsis, C.Chrysovitsanou, C. Kilidireas
1st Department of Neurology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece

Background and goals :

Genitourinary dysfunction is frequent in Multiple Sclerosis (MS) patients, but is often not acknowledged or addressed by treating physicians. We sought to assess the prevalence of genitourinary dysfunction in Greek MS patients.

Methods :

We included 153 MS patients (104 women and 49 men, mean age 45.8 years) assessed in our MS outpatient clinic between September 2016 and May 2017. All patients gave informed consent and completed questionnaires on urinary and sexual symptoms, related symptomatic treatments and impact of these problems on quality of life (QOL).

Results :

Urinary symptoms were reported by 85 of 153 patients, specifically 59 of 104 women (57%) and 26 of 49 men (53%). The most prevalent symptoms were nocturia (N=50, 32.7%), urgency of urination (N=45, 29.4%), frequent urination (N=41, 26.8%), urine leaks (N=37, 24.2%), incomplete emptying of the urinary bladder (N=34, 22.2%). Urinary incontinence, repeated urinary tract infections and intermittent self-catheterization were reported in less than 10%. Regarding gender differences, 30 of 104 women (28.9%) and 7 of 49 men (14.3%) reported urine leaks (p -value = 0.050). No significant differences were found for other urinary symptoms.

Sexual symptoms were reported by 69 patients (45.1%), including 48 women (46.2%) and 21 men (42.9%). The most prevalent symptoms were low sex drive (N=56, 36.6%), sexual performance anxiety (N=14, 9.2%), reduced sensation perigenitally (N=12, 7.8%) and orgasmic dysfunction (N=9, 5.9%). Vaginal dryness was reported in 11 women (10.6%), while 16 men (32.7%) complained for erectile dysfunction and 4 (8.2%) for ejaculatory problems. Sexual performance anxiety was reported by 5 of 104 women (4.8%) and 9 of 49 men (18.4%) (gender difference p -value = 0.007). Thirty of 85 patients (35.2%) with urinary dysfunction and 31 of 69 (44.9%) with sexual dysfunction felt that these problems had a moderate to severe impact on their QOL. However, only 20% of patients with urological problems and 5.8% with sexual problems were receiving treatment.

Conclusions :

The most significant gender difference was a significantly higher sexual performance anxiety in men than women. Despite the high prevalence of genitourinary dysfunction and an overall significant effect on QOL, only a small percentage of patients received symptomatic treatments.

