Factors impacting quality of life in women with fecal incontinence.

Submitted by admin on Mon, 08/19/2013 - 3:11pm

**Title**
Factors impacting quality of life in women with fecal incontinence.

**Publication Type**
Journal Article

**Year of Publication**
2010

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**Journal**
Dis Colon Rectum

**Volume**
53

**Issue**
8

**Pagination**
1148-54

**Date Published**
2010 Aug

**ISSN**
1530-0358

**Keywords**
Adult, Aged, Aged, 80 and over, Defecation, Disease Progression, Endosonography, Fecal Incontinence, Female, Follow-Up Studies, Humans, Manometry, Middle Aged, Pressure, Prognosis, Quality of Life, Questionnaires, Retrospective Studies, Severity of Illness Index, Young Adult

**Abstract**

**PURPOSE:** The aim of this study was to characterize differences in health-related quality of life among women presenting for treatment of fecal incontinence.

**METHODS:** Among 155 women presenting for treatment of fecal incontinence in a specialty clinic, validated questionnaires measured impact on quality of life (Modified Manchester Health Questionnaire) and severity (the Fecal Incontinence Severity Index). Bowel symptoms, including frequency, urgency, and stool consistency, were ascertained. Comorbid diseases were self-reported. Linear regression models were constructed from significant univariate variables to examine differences observed in quality of life scores.

**RESULTS:** The average age was 58.7 +/- 11.5 years, with no differences found in quality of life scores according to race, body mass index, or number of vaginal deliveries (P > .05). Younger age, increased urinary incontinence symptoms, prior cholecystectomy, prior hysterectomy, and severity of bowel symptoms correlated with a negative impact on quality of life in univariate analysis (P < .05). Average severity scores were 30.5 +/- 13.7, with moderate correlation seen with increasing severity and quality of life scores (R2 = 0.60). After controlling for severity, women had increased quality of life scores with more bowel urgency (15 points; 95% CI, 8.1-21.2), harder stool consistency (10 points; 95% CI,
3.8-16.3), and prior hysterectomy (9 points; 95% CI, 2.7-15.4).

**CONCLUSION:** Bowel symptoms and having undergone a hysterectomy had the greatest negative impact on quality of life in women seeking treatment for fecal incontinence. Targeting individualized treatments to improve bowel symptoms may improve quality of life for women with fecal incontinence.