

Pulse article: survey of neurogenic bladder management in spinal cord injury patients around the world

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Abstract

Study design: Online survey distributed to healthcare professionals (HCPs) involved in care of spinal cord injury (SCI) patients with neurogenic lower urinary tract dysfunction (NLUTD).

Objectives: Identify and bring awareness to the variation of neurogenic bladder management in around the world.

Setting: International online questionnaire.

Methods: A 32-question survey was drafted and circulated among a global network of SCI experts for review. The survey was disseminated to healthcare professionals involved in the care of NLUTD in SCI patients via social media, grassroots methods, and international societies. The survey was available for 6 weeks and respondents answered questions regarding SCI population demographics, access to care, common neurogenic bladder management, diagnostic and imaging methods, complications, and follow up.

Results: A total of 296 healthcare professionals, 132 from North America, 87 from Europe, 27 from Asia, 24 from Australia, 14 from South America, and 6 from Africa, responded to the survey. Global concurrence was noted among management method for patients without adequate hand function, first-line treatment for neurogenic detrusor overactivity, and common complications. Continents highly differed in responses regarding management method for patients with adequate hand function, frequency of patients reusing catheters, timing of urodynamics, and duration of antibiotic therapy for urinary tract infections.

Conclusions: The results of this international survey demonstrate the variability and uniqueness in neurogenic bladder management in SCI patients around the world. Increased international discourse and education will improve global communication and transparency with the efforts of reducing discrepancies in care.

Keywords: Caregivers; cross-sectional studies; internet; survey; urinary incontinence.

Areas for reflection

- What factors do you consider as part of your decision to recommend a bladder management method to your patient?
- Does your local practice reflect international guidelines?
- How can you locally raise awareness of national and international guidelines of best practice?