

The Prevalence of Urinary Incontinence and Its Effects on Daily Tasks of Women after Childbirth in Horana MOH Area

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Background: Urinary incontinence (UI) is defined as the involuntary leakage of urine that occurs by accident, without being able to control it. Urinary incontinence in women is more prevalent during pregnancy and after childbirth due to hormonal and physical effects. It may affect daily tasks including self-care, childcare, household and occupation-related activities.

Objectives: To identify the prevalence of UI and its effects on the ability to perform daily tasks among the postpartum women in the Horana MOH area

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 242 women from five selected clinics in the Horana MOH area. Women from two months to one year after delivery were participated in the study. The urinary symptoms were assessed using a validated international consultation on incontinence questionnaire-female lower urinary tract symptoms (ICIQ – FLUTS) and a pre-tested questionnaire was used to assess the ability to perform daily tasks. The data were analysed using SPSS version 25.0.

Results: The mean age(\pm SD) of the participants was 30.17(\pm 5.1) years. The prevalence of UI among participants was 21.9% (n=53). The prevalences of stress, urge and mixed UI were 37.8%, 11.3% and 17.0%, respectively. The mode of delivery had a significant association with the UI ($p=0.02$). Only 4 % of the affected women sought medical consultation and the main reason for not seeking medical advice was the intention of thinking that UI was normal after childbirth (84.9 %). Personal hygienic tasks were the most affected daily tasks in women with UI (37.7 %).

Conclusions: UI is a common occurrence during the period of one year after childbirth among postpartum women, while stress UI is the most common type. UI is most likely to occur in women with normal vaginal deliveries. Personal hygiene tasks were the most affected type of daily tasks. Therefore, healthcare workers including public health midwives should assess postpartum women for UI and other urinary symptoms.

Keywords: *After childbirth, Daily tasks, Prevalence, Urinary incontinence, Urinary symptoms*