

How well can women assess their partner's urinary symptoms?

An IPSS-based study



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INTRODUCTION

- LUTS in men are a rising problem as more men age
- International Prostate Symptom Score (IPSS) is the most commonly used questionnaire to evaluate LUTS
- Self-completion results in an incomplete questionnaire in 53-73% and (especially in men with a lower level education) in an inaccurate representation of symptoms.
- A partner or family member can provide help in completing the questionnaire. But what can be done when the patient is entirely unable to complete the IPSS, even with help?
- This study investigates the reliability of IPSS of men with LUTS filled out by the ones closest to them: their partner

METHODS

- 43 couples were included:
 - men (> 50yrs) attending the urology outpatient clinic were asked to participate
 - partner (relationship > 1yr, ≥ 3 nights a week together)
- Scoring: individual questions, total scores and subscores
- Statistics: Pearson (P) and Spearman (S) correlation, Bland-Altman plotting (BA) and Kappa (K)

		Partner			
		Mild	Moderate	Severe	Total
Patient	Subscore				
	Mild	1	4	0	5
	Moderate	6	7	10	23
	Severe	1	2	12	15
Total		8	13	22	43

Table. Correlation between IPSS scores completed by the patient himself and the IPSS scores completed by the partner on the male LUTS

RESULTS

- Correlation **total score** patient and partner: P 0.62, S 0.61, BA showed substantial spread and K was 0.162 (slight)
- As men had high scores, partners tended to score higher
- **Severity category** (mild, moderate, severe):
 - 20 couples (46.5%) scored in the same severity category
 - 22 couples (51.2%) differed one category
 - 1 couple (2.3%) differed two categories
- Partners slightly ended to overscore and therefore seemed only moderately able to assess true symptom severity
- **QoL:** partners proved only modestly reliable (K 0.192)
- **Subscores:** irritative subscore proved slightly better assessed than the storage subscore, mainly because the question on nocturia, (K 0.367)

INTERPRETATION

- Partners were found to be only modestly able to reliably replace their husbands
- The sudden request to partners to fill out the form does not conform to the reality where the questionnaire is sent in advance; the partner's result in that situation might be better
- If the IPSS is not sufficiently understood, another instrument could possibly be used, as shown in previous research

CONCLUSION

- Partners proved only modestly able to reliably substitute their spouse
- With an increase in men depending on carers, especially ones not as close as spouses tested in this study, a trustworthy alternative assessment of symptoms by another than patients themselves is desirable