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Background/Aim

Screening for Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms (LUTS) could raise awareness and increase knowledge among healthy older adults through prompting conversations about bladder health, treatment seeking and self-management approaches. This has the potential to improve symptoms and associated health related quality of life (QOL).

The International Prostate Symptom Score (IPSS) questionnaire (1) is a brief (8-item), self-report screening measure of LUTS (7-items) and associated QOL (1-item), which can be used with both men and women. Cut-off IPSS scores are used to interpret the severity of LUTS by categorising scores into: mild (1-7), moderate (8-19) or severe (20-35) symptoms.

An alternative approach however is to regard LUTS as a dimensional rather than a categorical construct by considering an overall score in relation to normative values produced from a comparative general population.

The aim of the current study was to produce IPSS normative data for older community-living adults in the UK.

Method

The current study used data from a large UK survey of LUTS in healthy, community-living older adults (2), which involved participants completing the 7 IPSS LUTS items.

IPSS normative values were calculated and are presented as means, standard deviations, medians, ranges and 25th and 75th percentile scores, broken down by age and gender.

Results

Data from a total of 1103 survey respondents including 503 men and 579 women aged between 60 and 99 years were analysed.

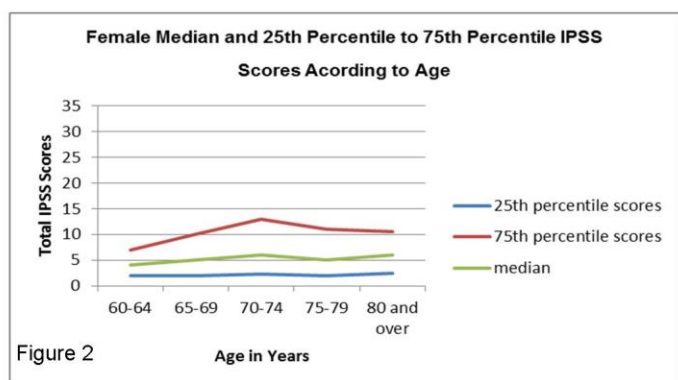
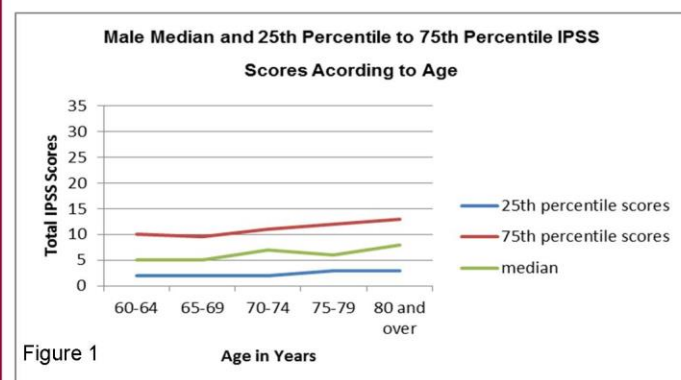
Males tended to report higher IPSS scores than females for all age groups (Table 1). Median total IPSS scores for both males and females increased with age from scores of 5 to 8 in men and from scores of 4 to 6 in women.

Median scores and 25th to 75th percentile scores indicate that mild LUTS are the norm for both genders (Figures 1 and 2).

Table 1: IPSS Scores According to Age and Gender

		60-64 years	65-69 years	70-74 years	75-79 years	≥80 years	Total
Males	M (SD)	7.12 (6.73)	7.30 (7.12)	7.86 (6.55)	8.71 (7.30)	9.12 (7.0)	7.75 (6.91)
	Md	5.00	5.00	7.00	6.00	8.00	6.00
	Range (Min-max)	33 (0-33)	33 (0-33)	28 (0-28)	26 (0-26)	35 (0-35)	35 (0-35)
Females	M (SD)	5.37 (5.39)	6.81 (7.15)	8.36 (6.60)	7.20 (6.60)	7.56 (6.55)	6.85 (6.63)
	Md	4.00	5.00	6.00	5.00	6.00	5.00
	Range (Min-max)	27 (0-27)	31 (0-31)	30 (0-30)	27 (0-27)	26 (0-26)	31 (0-31)

M = mean; SD = Standard Deviation; Md = Median; Min-max = minimum IPSS score to maximum IPSS score



Discussion

This study provides the first IPSS normative values for a sample of healthy community-living older adults in the UK. The findings will be useful for researchers and practitioners as an individual's IPSS score can be compared with the normative value for peers of a similar age and gender, making the score more meaningful to the individual.

Presenting the normative values could help to highlight that mild LUTS are normal in ageing, and to combat the perception that poor bladder health is an inevitable part of ageing, as all norms in the current study fall into either mild or low moderate symptom categories.

Future Direction: It would be useful to investigate how the norms that we have produced, compare with norms for older adults in other countries, to determine whether there are differences in the prevalence of LUTS.