

LUTS TALK ABOUT A TOILET PROBLEM



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Lower urinary tract symptoms or LUTS, according to consultant urologist Dr Praveen Singam, describe unusual symptoms that affect the urinary system. There are different types of symptoms, which can range from urine storage issues (urgency, etc) to voiding issues (difficulty to pee, weak stream, etc). These symptoms can be bothersome, and in men, erectile dysfunction may also occur alongside LUTS.

The Asian Survey of Aging Males reported that 30-60% of men 50 years old and above have moderate to severe LUTS.¹ A more recent study, published in the World Journal of Urology, surveyed adult men 18 years old and above from Vietnam, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, who were either attending a urologist's clinic for the first time or had been seeking consultation for LUTS for at least a month.

- 88%** reported being awakened from sleep by the urge to pee during the night (nocturia).²
- 61%** reported experiencing slow or weak urine stream while peeing.²
- 55%** experienced involuntary leaking of urine after one has finished peeing, or post micturition dribble.² Dr Praveen points out that this is especially bothersome for Muslims as it affects their ability to perform daily prayers.
- 52%** had difficulties "holding it in" due to urgency.² Once the urge to pee sets in, they have to go to the toilet quickly.

While the study focused on men, Dr Praveen pointed out that LUTS also affect women. Also, while they often affect older people, younger people can also develop LUTS – the study could not find any age-related trend when it comes to these symptoms.²

LUTS CAN BE BOTHERSOME

The same study reported that about half the people affected by LUTS feel some degree of bother. More than 80% of the participants would like to receive further treatment.²

LUTS CAN COMPLEX TOO

Someone with LUTS doesn't just experience one symptom – he or she may experience a few of them at

the same time. Also, LUTS is a multi-etiological condition – not only are there many possible causes for LUTS, there may be more than one causes behind an affected person's LUTS. These causes are not necessarily related to just the bladder – they can also be due to issues related to age as well as problems in the prostate gland, kidneys and more.

Dr Praveen points out that age also can be a factor, as one's body may experience degenerative changes that lead to LUTS.

- NOCTURNAL POLYURIA?
- DIABETES?
- INFECTION?
- OVERACTIVE BLADDER?
- CAN BENIGN PROSTATIC HYPERPLASIA BE A CAUSE?
- CAN IT BE DUE TO A HEART PROBLEM?

Just a few of the many possible questions going through a urologist's mind when presented with a LUTS patient

Therefore, Dr Praveen explains that a urologist typically takes a thorough medical history of the patient as well as conducts any necessary medical examinations first before deciding on the best course of treatment. Treatment can vary from one person to another depending on the causes and symptoms.

It is also possible, Dr Praveen adds, for LUTS to be caused by unknown factors, although such an occurrence is rare. Nonetheless, the urologist will be working closely with the patient to ensure to restore the patient's quality of life as best as possible.

Patients affected by bothersome symptoms should see a doctor instead of suffering in silence. However, if the symptoms persist, it may be worth visiting a urologist for further examination and treatment.

NOCTURNAL POLYURIA: TREATABLE, BUT UNDERDIAGNOSED

Nocturia is one of the more common symptoms of LUTS. It has many possible causes, but nocturnal polyuria is a common one. Therefore, sometimes nocturnal polyuria may be present when nocturia is a component of LUTS.

However, Dr Praveen believes that nocturnal polyuria is commonly under-reported, likely because it can be overlooked by many doctors. Furthermore, proper diagnosis involves the patient filling up a voiding diary (see text box), and patients may find this a difficult task to complete.

Since nocturnal polyuria is common but possibly underdiagnosed, it's worth taking some time to have a closer look at it.

A NIGHT-TIME URINE PRODUCTION ISSUE

Nocturnal polyuria is a condition in which more than one third of one's total daily urine volume is produced at night, although the total urine production throughout the day remains normal.³

WHAT CAUSES NOCTURNAL POLYURIA?

There are many possible causes. Here are some common ones.

Heart and blood vessel issues. Conditions such as congestive heart failure and venous insufficiency (a condition when the walls and valves of the veins are not functioning properly) can cause fluids to pool at the extremities, especially the feet. When one lies down to sleep at night,

the fluids find their way to the kidneys, resulting in increased urine production.⁴

Kidney damage. People affected by nephrotic syndrome and chronic kidney disease will have their normal kidney function impaired.⁴

Issues with the nerves and/or brain. These include damage to the nerves that control the involuntary functions of the body (autonomic neuropathy) and conditions such as Parkinson's disease.⁴

Hormonal imbalance. Studies have found that lower than normal levels of a hormone called arginine vasopressin (AVP) can lead to night-time urine overproduction.⁵ If lowered AVP levels are detected in a patient with nocturnal polyuria, the urologist can prescribe medications that, when taken, act similarly to AVP in the body and help reduce night-time urine production.

Other possible causes include obstructive sleep apnoea and diabetes. Certain medications may also cause nocturnal polyuria as a side effect.

IT CAN BE TREATED

For some people with nocturnal polyuria, waking up several times a night becomes bothersome and affects their quality of sleep. Therefore, Dr Praveen advises those whose quality of life is affected by their condition to see a doctor. After all, nocturnal polyuria can be treated.

The urologist may also advise certain changes to the patient's lifestyle, such as restricting intake of certain fluid-rich foods until the condition is better controlled.

KEEP A GOOD RECORD

To diagnose nocturnal polyuria, the patient will be given a void diary (sometimes called urine diary) to record the amount of urine released throughout the day and night, for three consecutive days. Some patients may find such record-keeping a hassle, but Dr Praveen assures the effort is worth it, as accurate diagnosis can allow the doctor to treat the problem properly. No more waking up at night many times to pee!



References: 1. Li, M.K., Garcia, L.A., & Reson, R. (2005). Lower urinary tract symptoms and male sexual dysfunction in Asia: a survey of ageing men from five Asian countries. *BJU Int* 96: 1339-1354. 2. Ho, L.Y. et al. (2018). Symptom prevalence, bother, and treatment satisfaction in men with lower urinary tract symptoms in Southeast Asia: a multinational, cross-sectional survey. *World J Urol* 36(11):79-86. 3. Van Kerrebroeck, P. et al. (2002). The standardization of terminology in nocturia: report from the Standardisation Sub-committee of the International Continence Society. *NeuroUrol Urodyn*: 214:179-183. 4. Kujubu, D.A. (2009). Nocturia in elderly persons and nocturnal polyuria. In *Geriatric nephrology curriculum* (pp.1-4). CA, US: American Society of Nephrology. 5. Weis, J.P. (2012). Nocturia: focus on etiology and consequences. *Rev Urol*: 14(3-4):45-55.

Visit www.waketopee.ie for more information on nocturia polyuria.

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