

Urinary Incontinence among the elderly

In Hong Kong, around 10% to 15% of elderly people (aged 65 or above) suffer from urinary incontinence, which is usually caused by diseases, such as bladder infection, lithic, constipation, stroke, Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson Syndrome.

Research conducted by the University of Hong Kong found that 45% of elderly aged 65 or above living in elderly home had urinary incontinence. Compare with the situation in the 1990s, the incidence rate was rapidly increased by 20% to 30%.

The chance of women having incontinence doubles that of men because of their shorter urethra, hormonal change after menopause, declining contraction power of the bladder and bacterial infection. Pregnancy will also weaken their pelvic muscle, resulting in less effective control in urination.

Types of urinary incontinence include stress incontinence, urge incontinence, functional incontinence, mixed incontinence and overflow incontinence.

Many incontinence patients feel embarrassed to rely on others for urination, resulting in weakened self confidence. Some might even refrain from going out and participating in social activities. For those stayed in elderly home, heavy reliance on diaper and the remoteness of toilet may also result in incontinence.

In fact, more than 30% to 40% of elderly incontinence can be cured by medication. Bladder training can revitalize pelvic muscle. Support from family members is also important. They can help incontinence patients to develop a patterned urination habit, and assist them to use related health care products. Patients staying in elderly home should be familiarized themselves with the environment and keep participate in activities, which can help prevent incontinence.