Comments on Jha et al.: Incontinence during intercourse: myths unravelled

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Dear Editor,

The symptom of coital incontinence (CI) is common yet understudied. Jha et al. have recently published an interesting but, in our opinion, arguable paper [1]. The authors not only present a dramatically high prevalence of CI (60 % of the incontinent women) but also state that no urodynamic diagnosis correlates with any type of CI, either at penetration or at orgasm, concluding that “the exact mechanism of coital incontinence remains unclear”.

With regard to the prevalence of CI, this finding is not at all in agreement with the available data, which show an incidence of CI in incontinent women ranging between 10 % and 27 % [2]. In order to explain their data, the authors stated that using an electronic questionnaire to investigate this disturbance probably reduced the typical embarrassment related to a face-to-face consultation. Recently, however, Coyne et al. presented a data analysis from a cross-sectional internet survey, conducted on 15,860 women, that aimed to estimate the prevalence of urinary symptoms [3]. This is a method of data collection not affected at all by embarrassment; nonetheless, the authors found that only 0.2 % of the incontinent women complained of coital incontinence. It is difficult to explain why only in Jha’s article, CI is a symptom reported by 60 % of the incontinent population; therefore it is also difficult to understand the results of this study.

Moreover, Jha et al. stated that only the very well conducted study by Hilton showed that CI at orgasm is more frequently associated with detrusor overactivity, whereas the subsequent papers “failed to demonstrate this association”. However, Khan et al. focused their attention on incontinence during orgasm and performing urodynamic evaluation during auto-induced orgasm found that orgasm acted as a trigger for involuntary detrusor contractions in three women affected by DO [4].

Recently another prospective study on 132 women with CI has confirmed this theory. Indeed, in this report women with incontinence during orgasm showed a significantly higher rate of DO (69 %) than women with incontinence at penetration (29 %) [5].

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