

## **Assessing the Perception of the Illness in Women with Urinary Incontinence**

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**Background and Aim:** Urinary incontinence is a chronic disease that most women tolerate it with self-control strategies and do not seek treatment. Perception of illness can affect people's health-related behaviors because based on their beliefs and information. Therefore, by achieving the status of perceptions of illness of urinary incontinence, it is possible to understand the challenges affecting patients' seek treatment in order to make appropriate interventions that leading to promotion utilization of people from the services of medical centers. So we designed a study to assess the perception of illness of women with urinary incontinence. **Methods:** In this cross-sectional study, 150 women with urinary incontinence referred to teaching hospitals in Tehran, Iran, were purposefully selected by convenience sampling method. Data collection tools included demographic questionnaire and brief illness perception questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS software version 18. **Results:** The mean age of participants in this study was  $(46/36 \pm 12/48)$  and the duration of the disease was  $(5/6 \pm 3/9)$  years. The mean total score of perception of the illness was  $(48/06 \pm 7/00)$ . Mean perception of the dimensions were as follows, dimension of outcome  $(4/83 \pm 1/87)$  duration of the disease  $(6/79 \pm 2/02)$ , personal control  $(5/38 \pm 2/1)$ , treatment control  $(6/59 \pm 2/07)$ , nature of the disease  $(5/89 \pm 2/00)$ , worry  $(6/49 \pm 2/08)$ , cognition of the disease  $(5/88 \pm 2/29)$  and emotional response  $(6/22 \pm 2/1)$ . The lowest dimension was related to the perception of outcome and the highest dimension was related to the perception of the duration of incontinence. **Conclusion:** The emergence of the lowest scores of perception in the dimensions of outcome and personal control indicates adaptation to the disease instead of seeking treatment, which can be due to the use of most women self-control strategies in this disease. Also, obtaining the highest score in dimension of the duration of the disease can be related to the belief that there is no solution to eliminate incontinence and thus the assume that it stays for a long time. In general, according to the obtained scores, it seems that there is a need to strengthen the perception of incontinence in women, which results in facilitating seeking for treatment.

**Keywords:** *Perception of the Illness, Urinary Incontinence, Chronic Illness*