Bladder distension - aspects of a healthcare-related injury

Eva Joelsson-Alm
Intensive Care Nurse, PhD
Södersjukhuset, Stockholm, Sweden
eva.joelsson-alm@sll.se

"I’m not ill, just damaged for the rest of my life"

Definitions

- Urinary retention
  Inability to empty the bladder
- Overdistended bladder
  Bladder volume > 500 ml

Risk factors for urinary retention

- Age
- Gender
- Bed rest
- Stress
- Drugs
- Surgery and anaesthesia
- Pain

Urinary retention and bladder distension

Can cause long-term—sometimes lifelong problems

Indwelling or intermittent catheterization?

- Patients with total hip- or knee arthroplasty
- Compared intermittent catheterization with indwelling catheter treatment for maximum 48 h
- No difference in urinary tract infections. More urinary retention/risk for bladder distension with intermittent catheterization

Systematic review with meta-analysis 2015

Indwelling versus Intermittent Urinary Catheterization following Total Joint Arthroplasty: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis
Background

- 2001 – many adverse event reports at the recovery ward about urinary retention and large bladder volumes
- Care developer – responsible for patient safety issues
- Need for better guidelines

First study…


Aim

- Explore how micturition problems after bladder distension affect the patient’s everyday life
- Explore patients’ experiences of having been exposed to a healthcare-related injury

Design

- Narrative interviews with patients with bladder damage due to overdistension
- The injury should have been classified as an avoidable healthcare-related injury at the Swedish Patient Insurance LÖF
- Qualitative content analysis
Informants

- 13 women and seven men
- Age at injury: 28 yrs – 78 yrs (median 54 yrs)
- Diagnosis/therapy at injury:
  - childbirth
  - gynecologic surgery
  - pregnancy
  - orthopedic surgery
  - infection
  - general surgery
- Micturition status at interview:
  - daily clean intermittent catheterization (11)
  - indwelling Foley catheter (1)
  - other micturition problems (7)
  - no problems (1)

At the time of injury

- No one understood the seriousness
- Lack of knowledge
- Insufficient routines
- Mistrust

Constraints in everyday life

- Dependent on access to clean toilets
- Dependent on disposables
- Clothing restrictions
- Limitations on social life

Impact on everyday life

- Suffering
  - pain
  - urinary tract infection
  - impaired sex life
- Concerns for the future

To report an injury

- No help from the responsible caregiver
- Ambivalence towards filing a report
- A strong wish to prevent harm to others

Our job!

Swedish national guidelines in Vårdhandboken