



Title	Treatment of urinary incontinence
Agency	SBU, The Swedish Council on Technology Assessment in Health Care PO Box 5650, SE-114 86, Stockholm, Sweden; Tel:+46 8 412 3200, Fax:+46 8 4113260, info@sbu.se
Reference	SBU report No.143, February 2000; ISBN 91-87890-56-9

This exhaustive HTA report covers treatments, epidemiology, diagnostics, health economics, and care organization related to incontinence.

The report was authored by a project group of 10 persons representing general practice, urology, gynecology, and nursing. Five external experts reviewed the final report.

The report is based on a critical appraisal of the literature available in MEDLINE and other sources. The scientific basis for current diagnostic procedures and treatments are evaluated. Due to the nature of the condition, both quantitative and qualitative outcome parameters were used. The conclusions of the working group were ranked from A (based on several studies of good quality) to C (based on single studies of acceptable quality). The report is structured in sections on epidemiology, work-up and diagnosis, conservative treatment, pharmacological treatment, surgical treatment, quality of life, incontinence in primary care, incontinence in elderly, incontinence aids, and health economics.

A summary in English is available at: www.sbu.se

SBU Conclusions

Urinary incontinence is a public health problem. In Sweden, 500 000 people (total population – 9 million) are estimated to be incontinent, but only half of them seek treatment. The level of information to the public about available treatment needs to be assessed. Ways of informing the public about incontinence and its treatment need to be developed.

Urinary incontinence is treated by a variety of methods, conservative, pharmacological, and surgical but a large number of patients are treated only with adult diapers. Many of these methods show good results, but comparative evaluations are needed. The efficacy of prophylaxis, eg, during and after pregnancy, needs to be further evaluated.

An improvement in urinary incontinence is of importance for the patient's quality of life. However, perceptions on life quality are individual, and this issue needs to be addressed and investigated in future studies.

Urinary incontinence is a common and often hidden problem across the entire population. The true prevalence needs to be investigated. Preferably, urinary incontinence should be registered as a separate entity in public health statistics so that prevalence and changes in prevalence can be monitored.

Written by Assoc. Prof. Jan Adolfsson, SBU, Sweden