



**Immediate Release**

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**“Overactive Bladder” not widely understood  
80% were not aware of the condition and 70% did not seek medical help**

Many Hong Kong people have urinary problems, like frequency, nocturia, urgency, or in some serious cases, urge incontinence. As such, Hong Kong Urological Association has appointed the University of Hong Kong to conduct a market survey to the public on “Overactive Bladder” (OAB) in August in order to understand the prevalence rate in Hong Kong, the patient's knowledge on the symptoms, treatment option, and the impact to the quality of life.

The survey was conducted by telephone interview and successfully reached 1,306 people at 40 years of age or above. Results indicated that half of the respondents have urinary storage problems in bladder. 13% of the respondents had the symptoms of OAB, and 80% of them were not aware of the condition and 70% did not seek medical help. The survey also revealed that the quality of life of patient was largely affected by the symptoms. 51.3% of patients often pay attention to the location of restrooms; 40.7% told that their quality of sleep was badly affected and 21.3% reduced outdoor activities because of the symptoms. Most importantly, 26.5% of the patients felt emotionally affected.

According to the census of mid-year 2006, it is roughly estimated that there is around 47% of Hong Kong population at age of 40 or above. That means, around 420,000 people in Hong Kong are suffering from OAB based on 13% of prevalence rate.

The cause of OAB is not well defined. But it may be due to that the lower urinary tract cannot perform the function probably and the patient can experience multiple symptoms. The bladder muscle of OAB patient would suddenly contract even the bladder contain little urine, that causes a sudden increase of the pressure inside the bladder. This abnormal contraction causes urgency, and may result in urge incontinence. In addition, frequency, nocturia are the common symptoms of OAB. Therefore it is necessary for patients to consult medical expert for correct diagnosis.

OAB is not limited to female. In fact, all men and women of any age are prone to OAB. In general, the prevalence rate for female is slightly higher than for at younger age, such as 40. For older population, say 70 year-old, the prevalence rate for male is higher. The reasons may be that men commonly have prostate problem during aging, such as benign prostatic hyperplasia which may lead to OAB.

Although OAB has major impact on many patients, the survey showed that 75% of the patients did not consult doctor. The reasons are: (1) 66.3% of them think that the urinary symptoms are a normal part of aging; (2) 61% did not pay attention because the symptoms are not very



serious or they are not bordered greatly and so they choose not to consult doctor.

"OAB is not a normal physiological phenomenon of aging. Most patients choose doing nothing as they misunderstood that those urinary symptoms are non-curable or there is treatment available. This misconception often leads to late consultation when the condition is worsen, consequently resulting in requirement of more complicated treatment regime." said Dr. Wong Wai Sang, the chairman of Hong Kong Urological Association.

Moreover, it is found that the patient's knowledge on OAB is very low. 81% of the patients said that they had never heard about OAB; 10% told that they had heard about, but do not know the meaning. Only 10% of them replied that they understand what OAB is. The figures reflect that most patients are unaware of the problem due to misunderstanding of the concept, and so leading to delay consultation or receiving no appropriate treatment before the disease worsens.

The survey also discovered that the majority of patients had never received medical treatment or stopped the medicine because they has doubt the effectiveness and/or the side effects of the treatment. Dr. Wong explained: "It may be because some of the patients were taking conventional medicine, which has more severe side effects liked dry mouth, constipation and blurred vision. However, nowadays there are more bladder-selective medications available in the market and so causing fewer side effects comparing with the conventional medicine. Those new medicines can avoid the abnormal contraction of the bladder muscle, and thus reduce urgency, frequency and urgent incontinence with better tolerability. Also the urinary bladder capacity is increased with improvement of bladder control. More importantly, the good safety profile can avoid patients to withdraw the medication due to intolerability to the side effects. If patients have any concern, they should consult their doctor to understand the pros and cons of the treatment, instead of giving up treatment or trying any drug by themselves."

Finally, Dr. Wong emphasized that: "In order to control the OAB effectively, one should not hesitate to seek medical consultation. In fact, treatment option is available for OAB. If the symptoms arise, do consult a doctor. Through appropriate medical treatment with support of pelvis floor muscle exercise, the symptoms can be relieved and in turns the quality of life can be greatly improved."

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