

Incontinence sufferers have lower quality of life

December 16 2006

Debate continues over testing and treatment, balance may be needed

An article published in *The American Journal of Gastroenterology* highlights the ongoing debate over whether testing is necessary prior to diagnosis and treatment of patients with fecal incontinence (FI), the involuntary discharge of bowel contents. FI sufferers deal with significant quality of life issues and their condition often remains undiagnosed.

Dr. Satish S.C. Rao, co-author of the study believes that a balance between the two primary treatment methods; those based on testing and those based on empirical data, must be achieved. "Diagnostic testing for fecal incontinence may not be required in every patient, but its judicious use will provide an objective portrayal of the underlying mechanism(s) together with a more reliable diagnosis," says Rao.

However, these tests are not widely available. There is lack of training and concerns with the standardization of tests and the interpretation of results. "An improvement in diagnostic testing and cognitive skills can only occur through a renaissance in our approach to the art and science of gastroenterology," says Rao.

Source: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Citation: Incontinence sufferers have lower quality of life (2006, December 16) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2006-12-incontinence-quality-life.html>

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