

Fecal incontinence and quality of life

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Fecal incontinence (FI) is a normal part of aging, or the perception that no treatment is available. Doctors may fail to comprehend patient hints about diarrhea and FI or may be reluctant to ask about fecal leakage, perhaps because of their own embarrassment or the perception that FI is a trivial concern.

A team led by Lynne Bartlett from James Cook University in Australia addressed this issue and their article is to be published on July 14, 2009 in the [World Journal of Gastroenterology](#). The Fecal Incontinence Quality Of Life (FIQL) questionnaire, a disease-specific tool, was designed to evaluate the impact of FI on four aspects of patients' QOL: lifestyle; coping behavior; depression or self perception; and level of [embarrassment](#). Each aspect is described as a score measured on a scale between 1 and 4, where 1 is very affected and 4 is not affected.

The results revealed that more than 22% of patients had their QOL affected severely by FI. Patients reported that they had not previously been asked about FI by a medical practitioner nor did they voluntarily disclose its presence. Furthermore, the negative impact on participants' lives worsened with the loss of both solid and liquid stool and the increased frequency and quantity of soiling. Recent reports have highlighted the impact conservative treatments have had on the QOL of [patients](#) with FI. This study reports that despite these improvements many people continue to suffer unaware of some advances.

More information: Bartlett L, Nowak M, Ho YH. Impact of fecal incontinence on quality of life. *World J Gastroenterol* 2009; 15(26):

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