

Anxiety plus overactive bladder tied to biopsychosocial impacts in women

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Women with overactive bladder (OAB) and at least mild anxiety

symptoms report greater psychosocial burdens, according to a study published online Feb. 13 in *Neurology Urodynamics*.

William S. Reynolds, M.D., from the Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee, and colleagues examined the effect of anxiety on OAB with a specific focus on bladder hypersensitivity. The analysis included 120 women with OAB and focused on patient-reported urinary symptom severity and quality of life, psychological stress symptoms, general somatic symptoms, and results of quantitative sensory testing, including temporal summation to heat pain.

The researchers found that 30 percent of women had at least mild anxiety. There were no group differences observed for urinary symptom severity; however, more anxious women reported worse OAB-specific [quality of life](#), greater psychological stress burden, higher stress reactivity, and greater somatic symptoms.

There were no differences seen between anxiety groups for pain threshold and tolerance on quantitative sensory testing. However, temporal summation to heat pain was higher among women with anxiety versus women without anxiety, indicating greater central sensitization.

"A key novel finding in the current study is that [women](#) with OAB and anxiety demonstrated elevated temporal summation to heat pain relative to those without [anxiety](#)," the authors write. "Elevated temporal summation to heat [pain](#) is an objective marker of central sensitization to C-fiber input, so our findings support a potential role for central sensitization as a pathophysiologic mechanism contributing to OAB in those with greater psychological burden."

More information: William S. Reynolds et al, The biopsychosocial impacts of anxiety on overactive bladder in women, *Neurourology and Urodynamics* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/nau.25152](https://doi.org/10.1002/nau.25152)

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