

Understanding Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms (LUTS) and Their Impact on Life-Space in Older Adults Jason Gronert, MBA: Lisa Granville, MD: Suzanne Baker, MA: LaVon Edgerton, BA

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Background

- ◆By age 56, roughly 7 out of 10 men and women report at least one lower urinary tract symptom (LUTS). Patients affected by LUTS experience a marked impact on their health related quality of life.
- ◆Life-space refers to the size of the spatial area throughout which a person moves in their daily life and is a major factor in determining one's overall health.
- ◆Although both of these topics have undergone extensive examination, the direct impact of LUTS on life-space has yet to gain thorough analysis.
- ◆The aim of this study was to understand patients' beliefs and behaviors regarding their lower urinary tract symptoms and how this may affect their life-space.

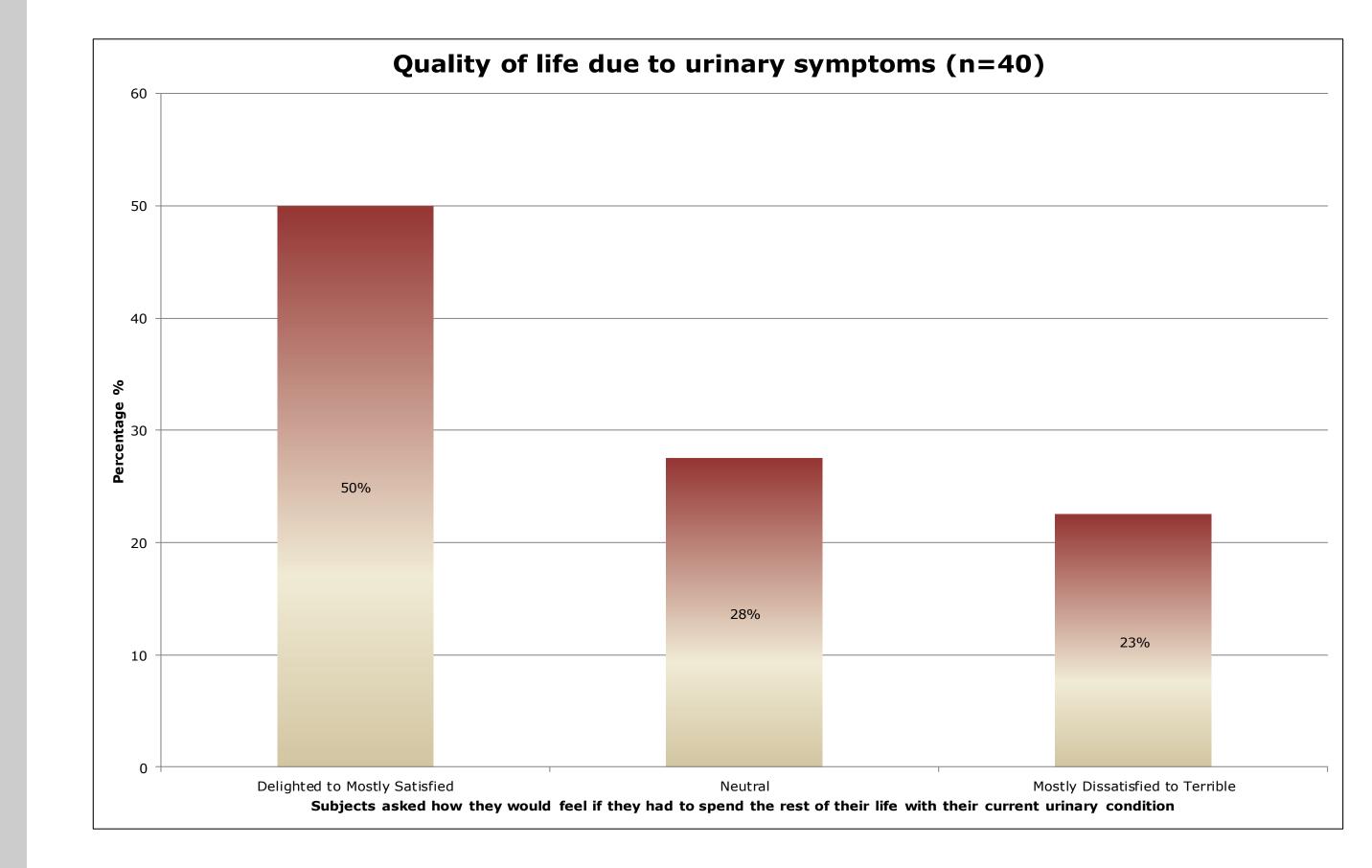


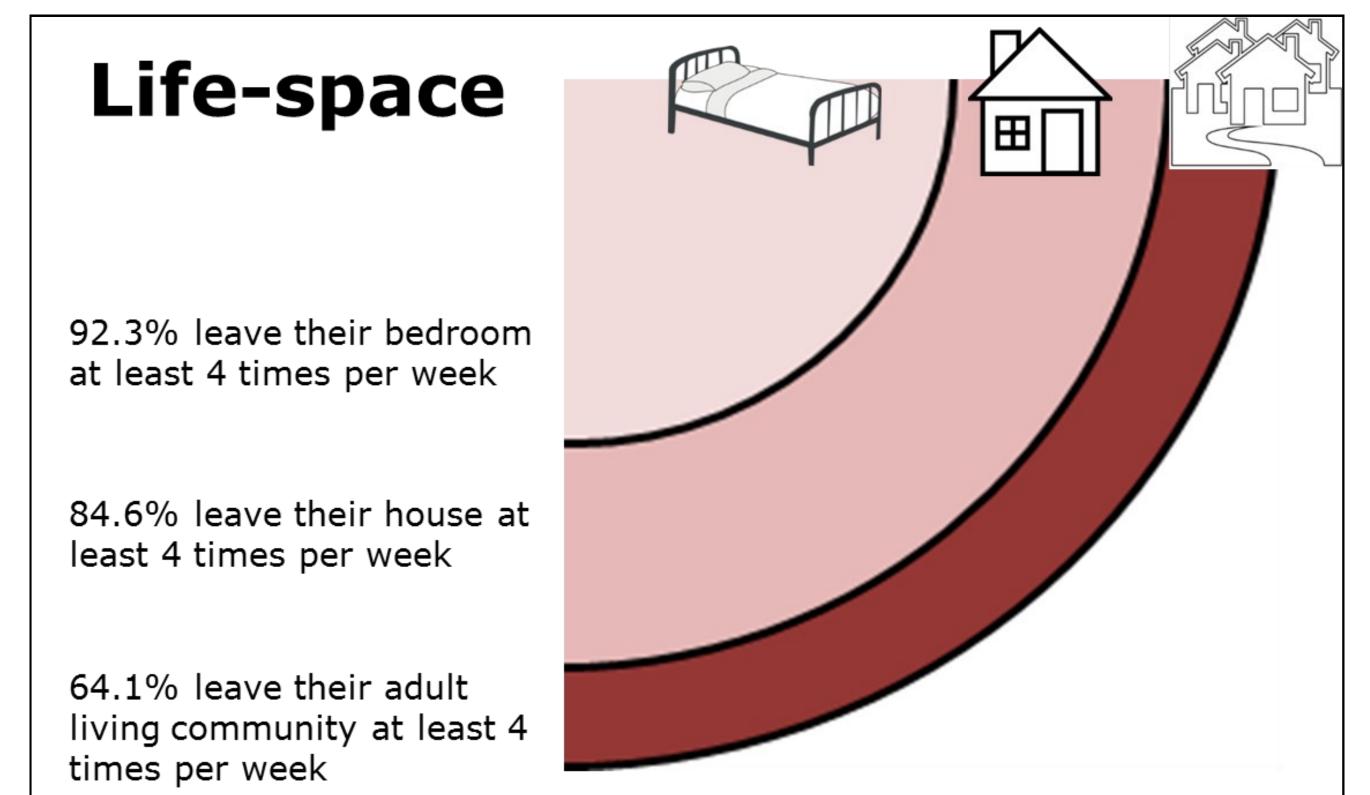
Methods

- ◆Participants were community-dwelling older adults from a continuing care retirement community in Tallahassee, FL within independent living and assisted living facilities.
- ♦40 subjects completed a 30-item questionnaire consisting of an International Prostate Symptom Score (IPSS) to assess their urinary symptoms and questions to examine how far they travel from home during their daily lives.
- ◆Participants were interviewed if they (1) stated they were willing to be interviewed on the survey form and (2) demonstrated an elevated IPSS score greater than 7 out of a possible 35 or a decreased life-space measured by leaving their community less than 4 times per week.
- ◆Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 24 subjects using a semi-structured format. Each interview was recorded and later transcribed.

Results **Subject Demographics** Average Age 83 years old Male 32.5% Female 67.5% **Marital Status** Married 45% Not married 55% Irritative Urinary Symptoms subjects experiencing nocturia and urinary urgency (n=40) Obstructive Urinary Symptoms Percentages of subjects experiencing weak urinary stream and urinary Less Less More Not than 1 than About than at time half half Almost YOUR all in 5 the the always SCORE time time time Over the past month how many times did you most typically get up each night to urinate from the time you went to bed until the time you got up in the morning? If you were to spend the rest of your life with your urinary condition just the way it is now, how would you feel about that? Opening of (ureteral orifice) International Consensus Committee (ICC) recommends the use of only a single question to assess the patient's quality of life. The ers to this question range from "delighted" to "terrible" or 0 to 6. Although this single question may or may not capture the global it of BPH symptoms on quality of life, it may serve as a valuable starting point for doctor-patient conversation.

Results





How do urinary tract symptoms affect patients' lives?

Daily preparations and precautions

"No matter where I go, it's extremely important that I absolutely empty my bladder before I leave the house, and when I'm moving about in the world I'm always locating the next restroom. That's just the way it is."

The trip of a lifetime

"I was on a trip...and I visited Niagara Falls. There was this big sign that said there are no restrooms on this boat...in the midst of Niagara Falls with mist falling everywhere and I wanted to go real bad but I couldn't...So I had an uncomfortable voyage."



Discussion/Lessons Learned

- ◆Increased urinary symptoms may not correlate with decreased life-space due to coping strategies.
- ◆Subjects cope with urinary symptoms by putting symptoms in perspective relative to diseases or conditions that affect family and friends.
- ◆The often progressive nature of these symptoms leads to behavior modification over time so subjects can continue to maintain active lifestyles.

Strategies for discussing sensitive issues that may lead to more discovery of disease impact on patient

- ◆Acknowledge discomfort/awkwardness up front.
- ♦ Ask patient to "share with me a story about a time when..."



Limitations/Next Steps

Limitations:

◆Subjects enrolled in the study all live in the same adult living community and share many characteristics including race, financial status, and access to healthcare.

Questions to explore further:

- ◆ Does the relationship between urinary symptoms and lifespace translate to broader populations of older adults?
- ♦ What coping strategies do older adults use for other medical conditions so they can maintain the same lifespace?
- ◆How much more do the strategies of acknowledging discomfort in speaking about sensitive issues and asking patients to personalize their condition by telling a story reveal about the impact of diseases on patients?