Effect of Symptom Management Model on Duration of Bladder Control in Elderly Women with Urinary Incontinence *

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Abstract

**Purpose:** To determine what urinary incontinence effects elderly women living in a community and their methods of management; and to study the effect of symptom management model on duration of bladder control.

**Design:** Mixed methods study

**Methods:** Thirty female aged ≥ 60 years old living in a community and had urinary incontinence categorized into three groups (stress, urge, and mixed incontinence) with 10 each were recruited into the study. Instruments included 1) interviewing questionnaires asking personal information, effects of urinary incontinence on life, and methods of management 2) urination recording form 3) a manual for pelvic floor exercise for female with urinary incontinence. The symptom management model was implemented through four times of group meeting using empowerment techniques. Descriptive statistics, t-test, and content analysis were used for the data analysis.

**Main findings:** Nearly half (46.7%) of the subjects had moderate severity of urinary incontinence. Urinary incontinence had little up to moderate effects on elderly women's daily life. The most used management methods were similar among the three groups: going to the toilet more frequently, drinking less water, staying at home, and staying close to the toilet. Content analysis revealed that the entire subject lacked knowledge of cause and symptom management. After participating in the symptom management model, the groups of urge and mixed incontinence had significantly longer duration of holding urination (p < .001).

**Conclusion and recommendations:** This study suggests that the symptom management model in this study could help elderly women manage their urinary incontinence effectively. Application of this model with certain modification to fit the context of health service centers and communities is encouraged.

**Keywords:** elderly woman, symptom management, urinary incontinence

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