ABSTRACT: Background: Urinary incontinence has been experienced as a problem since 1500 BC. In the twentieth century it is still a major problem that remains a source of distress for many sufferers. A lack of literature regarding the prevalence of stress urinary incontinence (SUI) amongst chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) patients lead to this study. Objective: To determine the prevalence of stress urinary incontinence in female COPD patients between the ages of 30 and 70 years. Methods: This cross-sectional study included 67 female COPD patients (aged 30-70 years) who were interviewed during a three month period. A structured COPD / incontinence questionnaire was used to obtain data. Statistical analysis of results included Fisher's exact test and two-tailed t-tests. A p-value of < 0.05 was considered to be statistical significant. Results: The prevalence of SUI in female COPD patients was estimated as 82.1%. Smoking history was the only variable with a significant positive correlation regarding the patients presenting with SUI (p < 0.05). The proportion of smokers in the subjects presenting with SUI (SUI group - 29/55) is significantly higher than the subjects with no symptoms of SUI (normal group - 2/12). Discussion and Conclusion: The outcome of this study revealed a high prevalence of SUI in female COPD patients. Cigarette smoking, as the major contributing factor, revealed a strong statistical correlation between COPD and SUI.

KEY WORDS: CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE; URINARY INCONTINENCE; STRESS URINARY INCONTINENCE; PREVALENCE; CIGARETTE SMOKING

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