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THE LANGUAGE OF DISMISSAL: CLINICIANS TO SYMPTOMATIC PATIENTS WITH NEGATIVE TESTS

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Background

Chronic illness is a pervasive, often distressing condition that may cause significant psychological changes and impact one's lifestyle, emotional life, education, self-esteem and social relationships. Chronic illness is the cause of 7/10 deaths according to CDC 2009 figures and account for >50% of all deaths. Chronic UTI is a debilitating condition. The paucity of diagnostic tests results in many patients being denied treatment and often attributed to psychological causes.

Aim

We set out to seek the experience of chronic UTI sufferers as a part of assessment of their Quality of life.

Survey Questions:

1. Has it ever been put to you that your LUTS symptoms are of psychological origin?
2. If so what reason or evidence was given to you by the clinician?
3. What is your view on this theory or proposition?

Methods

The study had ethical committee approval from East London Rec. 500 emails were sent to Chronic UTI sufferers and 236 patients responded.

Results

The maximum number of responses were from the 51-60-year-old group (mean age of our population- 53 years). 9/236 responses were from male patients. 42% responded to question 1 with a Yes and 58 % answered NO

32% of the positive responses to question 1, were thought to have symptoms of psychological origin as their urine tests were negative. 85% of patients felt their symptoms were physical and not psychological. Clinician responses were quoted and the dismissal of the Chronic UTI symptoms as psychological on the basis of negative tests was explicit.

Conclusion

History and symptoms are the key to diagnosing Chronic UTI. Modern medicine has led to overreliance on faulty diagnostics. The impact of a chronic condition and the effect on the quality of life cannot be measured on a Likert scale and open-ended questions are needed to understand the impact on QOL.