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## **ORIGINAL ARTICLE**

# Impact of overactive bladder symptoms on work activity: The ACTIVHA study



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### **KEYWORDS**

Overactive bladder; Urinary incontinence; Employment; Occupational health; Spain

#### **Abstract**

Objectives: To analyze the impact of overactive bladder (OAB) symptoms on the work activity of patients in Spain.

Method: An observational, multicentre cross-sectional study was conducted with 149 urologists and 131 gynecologists of Spain and included patients diagnosed with OAB, according to clinical judgment, who were of working age (18–65 years). We collected sociodemographic, clinical and work activity data. The patients filled out the Bladder Control Self-Assessment Questionnaire (B-SAQ) and the Work Productivity and Activity Impairment Questionnaire-General Health (WPAI-GH). The effect of each symptom on the daily and occupational activity was assessed. The results were stratified according to sex and the presence of urgency and urinary incontinence (UI) according to the B-SAQ.

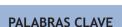
Results: We assessed 768 patients (89% women), with a mean (SD) age of 52.5 (9.3) years and 2.6 (2.6) years of OAB progression. The most common symptoms according to the patients urgency (89.8%), nocturia (75.7%), urge urinary incontinence (68.5%) and frequency (68.2%). Ninety-six percent of the patients adopted adaptive measures for their OAB. According to the B-SAQ, 543 patients (71%) presented urgency; of these, 294 (54%) showed UI. The symptom that most affected work activity was frequency (59.8%). According to the WPAI-GH, the patients reported an impact of 32% during the workday (41% in patients urgency and UI) and a work time missed due to OAB of 6.5% (9.9% in patients with urgency and UI).

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Vejiga hiperactiva; Incontinencia urinaria; Empleo; Salud laboral; España Conclusions: The symptoms of OAB negatively affect work activity, especially in patients who have urgent urination and UI.

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# Impacto de los síntomas de vejiga hiperactiva sobre la actividad laboral: estudio ACTIVHA

#### Resumen

*Objetivos*: Analizar el impacto de los síntomas de vejiga hiperactiva (VH) sobre la actividad laboral de pacientes en España.

Método: Estudio observacional, multicéntrico y transversal con 149 urólogos y 131 ginecólogos de España que incluyeron pacientes diagnosticados de VH según criterio clínico, en edad laboral (18-65 años). Se recogieron datos sociodemográficos, clínicos y de actividad laboral. Los pacientes cumplimentaron el Cuestionario de Autoevaluación del Control de la Vejiga (CACV) y el Work Productivity and Activity Impairment Questionnaire-General Health (WPAI-GH). Se evaluó el impacto de cada síntoma sobre la actividad diaria y laboral. Los resultados se estratificaron según género y presencia de urgencia e incontinencia urinaria (IU) según el CACV.

Resultados: Se evaluaron 768 pacientes (89% mujeres), con una media (DE) de edad de 52,5 (9,3) años y 2,6 (2,6) años de evolución de VH. La sintomatología más frecuente según el paciente fue urgencia (89,8%), seguida de nicturia (75,7%), incontinencia urinaria de urgencia (68,5%) y frecuencia (68,2%). El 96% adoptaron medidas adaptativas para la VH. Según el CACV, 543 pacientes (71%) presentaban urgencia y de estos, 294 (54%) presentaban IU. El síntoma que más afectaba la actividad laboral fue la frecuencia (59,8%). Según el WPAI-GH, los pacientes refirieron un impacto del 32% durante la jornada laboral (41% en pacientes con urgencia e IU) y una pérdida de tiempo de trabajo del 6,5% (un 9,9% en pacientes con urgencia e IU).

Conclusiones: Los síntomas de VH impactan negativamente sobre la actividad laboral, especialmente en pacientes que presentan urgencia e IU.

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### Introduction

Overactive bladder syndrome (OAB) is defined as urgency, with or without urge incontinence, usually accompanied by increased urinary frequency and nocturia. In Spain, the prevalence of OAB is 21.5%, this being higher in women than in men. In addition, this figure increases significantly with age, so when considering adult patients of working age, the prevalence is stimated at 11.5%.

The symptoms of OAB have a marked negative impact on the health related quality of life (HRQL) of patients, who are sometimes forced to impose adaptive measures that can affect their daily life and work activity. According to the data presented in the EPIC study, 25% of patients under 65 indicated having some type of difficulty attributable to the symptoms of OAB. On the other hand, a study carried out in 6 European countries concluded that patients with OAB were concerned about being forced to interrupt a work meeting and that their symptoms had interfered when making work decisions. The EpiLUTS study also concluded that patients with more bothersome OAB symptoms had a greater work productivity impairment.

An additional problem is that many of the patients with OAB are ashamed to visit their doctor, which makes it difficult to get the appropriate treatment and to recover their usual lifestyle and HRQL.<sup>8–10</sup>

The evidence generated in recent years in relation to the impact of OAB on work activity shows that these symptoms could represent a major burden for patients, employers and the National Health Service.

There are very few studies that assess the impact of OAB symptoms on work activity in the Spanish population, and particularly those that use appropriately validated questionnaires such as the *Work Productivity and Activity Impairment Questionnaire-General Health* (WPAI-GH).<sup>11</sup> Thus, the present study was designed to determine the impact of OAB symptoms on basic aspects of patients' lives, such as their work activity.

### Material and methods

An epidemiological, observational, multicenter, and cross-sectional study, conducted between 2010 and 2011, in which 280 researchers (149 urologists and 131 gynecologists) from all over Spain was designed. Each investigator had to include 3 consecutive patients aged between 18 and 65 (considering this age range as occupationally active), with diagnosis of OAB (defined as presence of urgency with or without urinary incontinence [UI] normally associated with increased urinary frequency and nocturia) according to the clinical criteria of the researcher, and who signed the corresponding informed consent. Patients with urinary infection confirmed

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