

# URINARY AND ANO-RECTAL SPHINCTER DYSFUNCTION IN CHRONIC PELVIC PAIN SYNDROME: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY IN A PHYSICAL MEDICINE AND REHABILITATION CENTER

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## Background and Aims

Chronic pelvic pain syndrome (CPPS) is a multifactorial condition that significantly impairs quality of life. Urinary and ano-rectal sphincter disturbances often coexist, exacerbating functional morbidity. This cross-sectional study aimed to assess the prevalence and characteristics of sphincteric disorders in patients with CPPS managed in a Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) setting.

## Methods

Between January and December 2024, 130 consecutive patients (83 women, 47 men; mean age  $44.3 \pm 11.7$  years) with CPPS duration  $> 6$  months were enrolled. Assessments included clinical history; pelvic pain intensity via Visual Analog Scale (VAS) and neuropathic pain screening (DN4); urinary sphincter evaluation using the Urinary Sphincter Profile (USP) score; ano-rectal function via the Cleveland Clinic Constipation and Incontinence scores; and health-related quality of life using the SF-12 questionnaire. Complementary investigations (urodynamic studies, imaging) were performed when indicated.

## Results

Mean CPPS duration was  $3.2 \pm 1.5$  years. Etiologies comprised endometriosis (23.1 %), pelvic myofascial pain (20 %), traumatic childbirth sequelae (13.1 %), prostatodynia (11.5 %), post-surgical changes (10.8 %), interstitial cystitis (9.2 %), and idiopathic cases (12.3 %). Urinary symptoms were reported by 64.6 % (urgency 40.8 %, dysuria 29.2 %, incontinence 21.5 %), while 38.5 % exhibited ano-rectal disturbances (constipation 26.2 %, fecal incontinence 12.3 %). Dual sphincter involvement occurred in 23.1 %. Neuropathic pain (DN4  $> 4$ ) was present in 41.5 %. Average VAS was  $6.8 \pm 1.3$ , mean USP score  $14.0 \pm 3.9$ , and 68.5 % had impaired physical SF-12 scores ( $< 35$ ).

## Conclusion

Sphincteric dysfunction, especially urinary, is highly prevalent in CPPS and substantially undermines physical quality of life. Central sensitization features in over 40 % of patients, and one-quarter experience combined urinary and ano-rectal involvement. A comprehensive, multidisciplinary PM&R approach incorporating targeted sphincter evaluation is essential for optimal management.

**Keywords:** Chronic, pelvic, pain-Sphincter, dysfunction-Urinary, symptoms-Ano-rectal