

| Common Bladder Issues     | Common Bowel Issues         |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Urinary urgency/frequency | Chronic constipation        |
| Incontinence              | Fecal incontinence          |
| Retention                 | Abdominal bloating and pain |
| Recurrent UTI             |                             |

# Imbedding Pelvic Physiotherapy into a Neurologic Setting

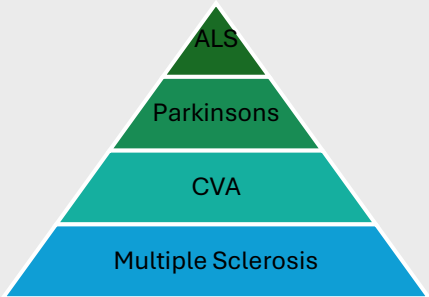


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**Background:** Neurogenic bladder represents a significant determinant of quality of life among patients with underlying neurological diagnoses such as multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury, and cerebrovascular accident. Pelvic floor muscle training, in conjunction with adjunctive modality-based interventions, has been demonstrated to be an effective treatment approach for neurogenic bladder within this patient population (Manalia et al., 2024). Furthermore, even in cases where complete resolution of neurogenic bladder or bowel dysfunction is not achievable, pelvic floor physiotherapy has been shown to reduce symptom burden and improve overall quality of life (Anklesaria et al., 2025).

**Setting:** This quality improvement project was conducted within the neurologic rehabilitation program of a large hospital-based system. Data collection occurred between 2018 and 2023, in conjunction with the institution's physiotherapy residency program.

Most common diagnoses referred



| Initial Screening Questions                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.) Are you experiencing any urinary incontinence?                  |
| 2.) Are you able to delay to the urge to urinate? If so, how long?  |
| 3.) Are you experiencing any constipation?                          |
| 4.) Are you experiencing any fecal incontinence?                    |
| 5.) Are you experiencing any pain in the pelvic or abdominal region |

**Implementation:** Physical, occupational, and speech therapists administered a standardized set of pelvic floor screening questions during the initial patient evaluation. A positive response to any screening question prompted referral to a pelvic floor physiotherapist, who subsequently determined whether the patient warranted physiotherapy treatment or referral to a physician for further diagnostic evaluation.

**Results:** Implementation of improved screening methods was associated with a significant increase in referrals for patients presenting with neurogenic bowel and bladder dysfunction. A concurrent improvement in quality of life was observed among patients with underlying neurologic dysfunction. However, general neurologic functional outcome measures did not demonstrate a corresponding change.

| Education                                                                                                  | Therapeutic Exercise                                                                                                   | Neurologic Re-education                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Bladder training</li> <li>•Constipation recommendations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Pelvic floor muscle exercises</li> <li>•Core and diaphragm training</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Pelvic floor coordination</li> <li>•Modalities (estim and biofeedback)</li> </ul> |

| Revised Screening Questions                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.) Do you leak urine when you cough, laugh, or sneeze?                      |
| 2.) Do you strain when you have a bowel movement?                            |
| 3.) Do you have pain with sexual functioning or medical pelvic examinations? |

References:  
 Manaila, A. I., Roman, N. A., Baseanu, I. C. C., Minzatanu, D., Tachel, V. I., Basalic, E. B., & Miclaus, R. S. (2024). The Efficiency of Rehabilitation Therapy in Patients Diagnosed with Neurogenic Bladder: A Systematic Review. *Medicina* (Kaunas, Lithuania), 60(7), 1152. <https://doi.org/10.3390/medicina60071152>  
 Anklesaria, S., Padiyar, R., Solomon, J. M., Bø, K., Pai, A. R., Rao, C. R., Umakanth, S., & Ramachandra, P. (2025). Physiotherapy interventions for pelvic floor dysfunctions in stroke survivors - a scoping review of literature. *Topics in stroke rehabilitation*, 32(7), 744–756. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10749357.2025.2463284>