

INTERACTION WITH THE PEERS IMPROVES THE PROBABILITY OF ACCEPTANCE OF ONABOTULINUM TOXINA TREATMENT IN SPINAL CORD INJURED (SCI) PATIENTS –AN INDIAN EXPERIENCE.

Hypothesis / aims of study

Acceptance of a newer form of treatment is not easy for most patients. Lack of reliable information and limited awareness impedes acceptance. It requires considerable time and effort to help them overcome their concerns and fears.

We studied how our patient's interactions with their fellow patients and peers affect the decision making for their own treatment.

Study design, materials and methods

We randomly assigned the SCI patients being advised onabotulinum treatment for the control of neurogenic detrusor overactivity associated incontinence into one of the two groups.

Eighty four patients in group A were counselled about the treatment by the urologist himself. The other eighty four patients in group B, after having a similar initial physician's consult, were permitted interactions with peers and fellow patients who had earlier received the same treatment.

Their acceptance rate for the onabotulinum treatment was recorded. Their response about the influence of peer counselling and the reasons for their decision making were obtained.

Results

In group A, only 20/84 patients accepted the option to receive onabotulinum toxin A. The remaining 64 patients who refused onabotulinum toxin A treatment felt that their concerns were not satisfactorily addressed by their physician and they still felt unsure.

In group B, significantly more patients (56/84) agreed for onabotulinum toxinA treatment after interaction with the fellow patients and peers. Thirty six of these patients reported the positive and decisive influence of the peer interaction. They reported better resolution of most of their queries and concerns by their peers that were left unaddressed by their physician. Most patients felt peer's opinions to be more honest and free from bias. Simple non-technical discussion in layman's terms was noted to ease their understanding. An economic concern as to "who is paying for the treatment" was the other most important factor affecting the acceptance of such an expensive treatment.

Interpretation of results

Informal interaction with the peers and fellow patients, in addition to the physician's consultation, helps the patients to resolve their concerns and queries better and encourages their informed participation in the given treatment plan.

Concluding message

Encouraging informal interaction with the fellow patients and peers who have earlier received similar treatment helps patients make up their mind better especially in case of newer forms of treatments such as onabotulinum toxin A.

Disclosures

Funding: none **Clinical Trial:** No **Subjects:** HUMAN **Ethics not Req'd:** retrospective evaluation and added use of a questionnaire alone with no change in the treatment offered to both the groups. **Helsinki:** Yes **Informed Consent:** Yes