

COMMON UROLOGIC CONDITIONS AFFECTING WOMEN

Figure 1C illustrates the organs of the female reproductive and urinary systems, and the common urologic conditions that can affect them.

Figure 1C: Common Urologic Conditions Affecting Women

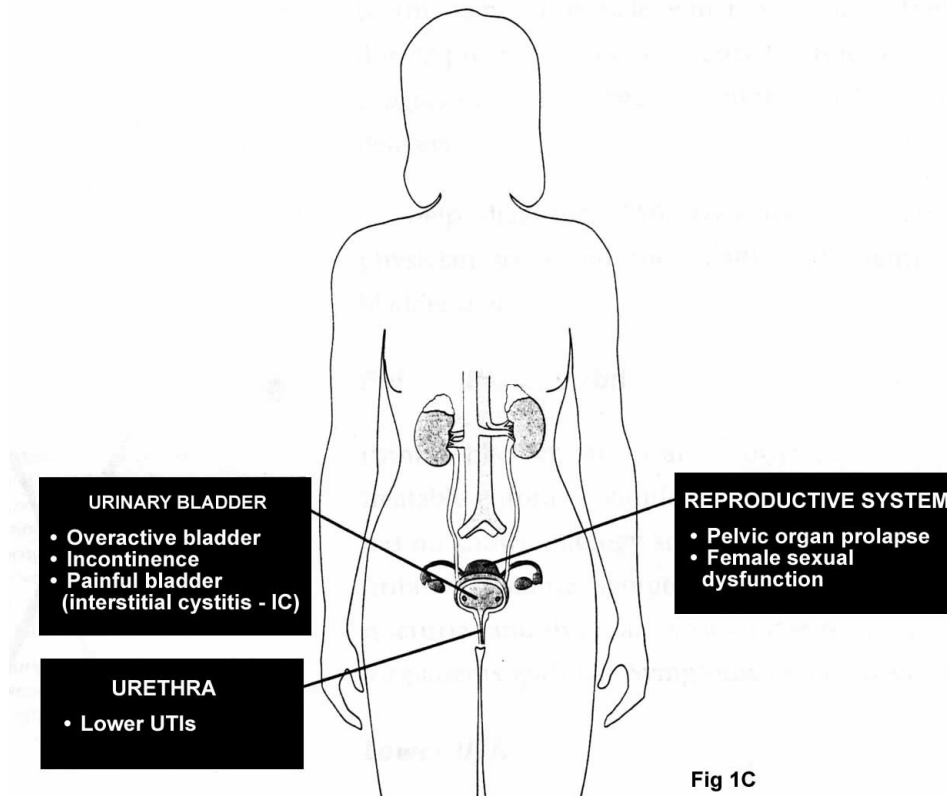


Fig 1C

❖ **OAB and Incontinence**

While both men and women seem to suffer equally from OAB, women are more likely to have OAB with urge incontinence than men.

Pregnancy can have an effect on OAB and incontinence. For example, urinary incontinence occurs in 30% to 50% of pregnant women. Pregnancy can also cause dysfunction of the urethral smooth muscle, which may cause stress incontinence during pregnancy. Incontinence tends to worsen as pregnancy progresses, but normal function usually returns following delivery.

To help diagnose OAB, patients are often asked by the physician to record their daily and nightly voiding in a bladder diary.

❖ **Painful Bladder (Interstitial Cystitis)**

Painful bladder, also called interstitial cystitis (IC), is a treatable chronic condition that primarily affects women. IC has no known etiology and is characterized by pelvic pain and irritative voiding symptoms, including urgency, frequency, nocturia and dysuria. Sexual intercourse can also be painful for patients with IC. Symptoms usually begin around age 40.

❖ **Lower UTIs**

Women are more likely than men to develop UTIs. The urethra is shorter in women, which allows bacteria to travel more easily from outside the body into the urinary tract. Pregnant women are more likely to develop acute UTI's and are at increased risk of developing Pyelonephritis (acute kidney infection).

❖ **Pelvic Organ Prolapse**

Pelvic organ (or genital) prolapsed can be a cause of urinary incontinence in women. Pelvic organ prolapsed is the downward displacement of any of the pelvic organs, such as the uterus, bladder or cervix, from their usual position. Aging and/or family history are common causes of pelvic organ prolapsed; it may also be a result of labor and delivery. Surgery may be needed to correct the prolapsed and resolve the urinary incontinence.

❖ **Female Sexual Dysfunction**

Sexual dysfunction occurs in both men and women, though female sexual dysfunction has received less attention. Factors that can contribute to female sexual dysfunction include gynecologic problems, diseases, medications, alcohol abuse, and psychosocial conditions. Cigarette smoking, known to cause ED in men, may also negatively affect arousal in women.