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NON-ANTIBIOTIC PRODUCTS TO PREVENT AND TREAT URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS (NURTURE STUDY)

S. Leitch¹, P. Krishnaswamy², S. Hagen³, J. Booth³, K. Guerrero⁴

¹NHS Lothian, UK

²NHS Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK

³Glasgow Caledonian University, UK

⁴NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, UK

Introduction

Acute uncomplicated cystitis occurs in 50-80% of women, translating to large costs to women and the NHS, alongside increased use of complementary and alternative medicines (CAMs).

This study aimed to survey women's knowledge of complementary and alternative medicines to prevent and treat UTI alongside their experiences/attitudes towards these products.

Methods

A cross-sectional questionnaire-based survey, including the Complementary and Alternative Medicine Beliefs Inventory (CAMBI) questionnaire, compared responses from women recruited from 4 different settings:

Group 1: Urogynaecology outpatient clinics

Group 2: General gynaecology outpatient clinics

Group 3: Primary care appointments

Group 4: Social media

Results

837 women responded [Group 1: n=128 (15.3%); Group 2: n=229 (27.3%); Group 3: n=318 (38%); Group 4: n=162 (19.4%)]. Mean age was 50 years [range 17-92 years] with group 4 having the youngest population [mean 39 years, range 17-75 years].

Over 90% of women had tried CAMs for UTI management. Cranberry supplements were the most commonly heard about [n=591, 54.3%] and most likely of the CAM therapies to be perceived as effective for UTI treatment/prevention [n= 73, 66%].

Most participants [58%] had not discussed the use of CAMs with a Healthcare Practitioner (HCP). The younger online cohort, with higher incidence of recurrent UTIs [n=38, 23.5%], were more likely to desire further information from HCPs [n=108; 67%].

Results from the CAMBI questionnaire were similar across all four groups, with responses generally indicating pro-CAM beliefs. Most women believed in natural treatments as well as the need for holistic health.

Conclusions

Over 90% of women had tried non-antibiotic therapies for UTI management, cranberry supplements being the most common.

Most women believed in non-antibiotic natural therapies and taking an active role in their treatment. Overall, women were keen for further information regarding CAMs and this study shows they would likely engage with alternative methods of treatment.