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HOW WOMEN LINK THEIR EXPERIENCES AND QUALITY OF LIFE TO PELVIC ORGAN PROLAPSE AND PESSARY USE: A QUALITATIVE FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS

A.Maidwell-Smith, M. Dembinsky, S. Hagan, R. Kearney, C. Bugge

Background

40% women over 40-years-old are affected by Pelvic Organ Prolapse (POP), many of whom will trial vaginal pessaries if offered (1,2). Traditionally, vaginal pessaries are managed by the healthcare team. However, the TOPSY trial aimed to investigate whether self-management of vaginal pessaries was safe and effective when compared to standard, clinic-based care (3, 4). Aim This secondary qualitative enquiry aimed to capture women's experiences to understand factors regarding POP and pessary use that affects Quality of Life (QoL).

Methods

Participants completed surveys at 6, 12, and 18 months post-randomisation in the TOPSY trial. The questionnaire included an open-ended question to explore participants' experiences of POP and pessary use: "Finally, do you have any comments related to your pessary or prolapse or to the answers you have given?" Participants' answers to the open-ended question were coded by one researcher using inductive framework analysis (5). There was reflexive discourse with a second researcher throughout to agree the final coding frame.

Results

A total of 340 women were randomised into the TOPSY trial. Not all women provided a response to the questionnaire item. The analysis was based on data from 506 responses across all three time points. Four main factors relating to POP and/or pessary use were found to affect participants' QoL: 'Impact of POP', 'Impact of Pessary Use', 'Mental Wellbeing', and 'Sexual Functioning' (Figure 1).

Implications for Practice

Greater clinician understanding of these factors and fostering open discussion with women regarding POP and/or pessary use is likely to be helpful to women as they navigate their QoL, regardless of whether women receive clinic-based care or self-manage their pessaries.

References

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