URINARY INCONTINENCE

Could two cups of coffee a day cause urinary incontinence in men?

After controlling for age, risk factors, and potential confounders, a recent study of National Health and Nutritional Examination Surveys (NHANES) data has demonstrated a link between caffeine intake of ≥ 234 mg/day (equivalent to less than two cups of coffee) and moderate or severe urinary incontinence in men.

Among the 3,960 male NHANES participants with complete data for age, race, BMI, medical history (including prostate disease), continence, water and alcohol intake, and daily caffeine consumption, the prevalence of urinary incontinence (stress, urgency, or mixed) was 12.9%, with 4.4% reporting moderate or severe incontinence—defined as weekly (or more frequent) leakage of more than a few drops.

Caffeine intake for this population ranged from 0–2,415 mg/day (mean 169 mg/day), with men in the upper 75th percentile (≥ 234 mg/day) at significant risk of moderate or severe incontinence ($P=0.008$). Interestingly, after adjusting for potential confounding variables, water

intake and total moisture intake were not related to incontinence of any type.

Epidemiologic studies have already revealed an association between caffeine intake and incontinence in women, but this is the first study to report a similar correlation in men. In fact, previous studies in the UK, USA, and Japan have found no such link, although these trials have known limitations.

“Future research is needed to better define the impact of caffeine reduction on urinary symptoms,” says Alayne Markland, who led the study. “We would advise physicians to start with a conservative approach, including fluid and caffeine reduction (if excessive), for managing incontinence in men.”

Melanie Clyne

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