

PREVALENCE OF SELF-REPORTED INTERSTITIAL CYSTITIS IN A NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE UNITED STATES SURVEY

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INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVE: The National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys (NHANES), conducted by the Centers for Disease Control, are designed to assess the health and nutritional status of adults and children in the United States through interviews and direct physical examinations. NHANES provides a representative snapshot of the non-institutionalized US population but does not include any longitudinal observations. We estimated the prevalence of self-reported interstitial cystitis (IC) in the NHANES III survey participants.

METHODS: NHANES III was carried out during the years 1988-1994. Participants were asked, "Have you ever had symptoms of a bladder infection (such as pain in your bladder and frequent urination) that lasted more than 3 months?" Those who answered 'yes' were then asked, "When you had this condition, were you told that you had interstitial cystitis or painful bladder syndrome?" Those who answered yes to both questions were classified as having IC.

RESULTS: The prevalence of self-reported IC was 0.47% (0.06% in men and 0.85% in women). Demographics for patients with and without IC are presented in the Table.

CONCLUSIONS: In this nationally representative sample, approximately 1:120 women and 1:1700 men report a history of IC. This estimate is strikingly similar to the female prevalence estimate of 0.865% (1:116 women) obtained as part of the 1989 National Household Interview Survey, which utilized the same definition to identify IC patients (Jones, 1994). Although it is likely that a degree of misclassification is present due to inaccurate patient recall and confusion between IC and other forms of cystitis, these results indicate that chronic painful bladder symptoms are a common occurrence in the U.S. population.

Demographic Characteristic	Group	Self-reported IC	No IC	Proportion with/without IC in NHANES population
Race/Ethnicity	White	74.8%	76.2%	0.5%/99.5%
	Black	11.9%	11.1%	0.5%/99.5%
	Hispanic	13.3%	9.1%	0.7%/99.3%
	Other	0%	3.6%	0.0%/100%
Gender	Male	6.0%	47.8%	0.06%/99.9%
	Female	94.0%	52.2%	0.8%/99.2%
Age	18-24	7.3%	14.2%	0.2%/99.8%
	25-34	27.0%	23.0%	0.6%/99.4%
	35-44	22.7%	21.6%	0.5%/99.5%
	45-54	18.4%	13.7%	0.6%/99.4%
	55-64	6.4%	11.4%	0.3%/99.7%
	65-74	8.1%	9.8%	0.4%/99.6%
	75-84	8.0%	5.1%	0.8%/99.2%
	85+	2.0%	1.3%	0.7%/99.3%
Region	Northeast	24.5%	20.7%	0.6%/99.4%
	Midwest	35.9%	24.0%	0.7%/99.3%
	South	27.6%	34.2%	0.4%/99.6%
	West	12.0%	21.1%	0.3%/99.7%