

5½ Things

Every Urologist Should Know About Paruresis a.k.a. Shy Bladder Syndrome

1 What It Is

- Not being able to relieve yourself in the presence of others (actual or perceived) is called Paruresis, generally known as “Shy Bladder Syndrome.”
- Identified in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-5) as a social anxiety disorder.
- A legitimate medical condition affecting hundreds of millions of people worldwide.
- Those suffering from this phobia often live uncomfortable, severely restricted lives.

3 What Is Not Helpful

- Offering statements that minimize the importance of the condition.
- “You’ll have to relax!” or “Everybody, pees. Why can’t you just pee?” (Statements from medical professionals).
- Recommending medications and/or surgical procedures prior to mental health professional consultation.

5 Where to Find Resources

- paruresis.org
 - Founded in 1996, the International Paruresis Association (IPA) has helped thousands of individuals. We can help your patient, too.

2 How It Might Present In Your Office

- Patients can urinate at home, but not at the urology office or when under perceived pressure.
- Slow or weak stream under testing.
- Request to bring a sample to the office.

Help!
I Can’t Pee ...

4 What Is Helpful

- Bathroom doors with locks that clearly indicate “Occupied” or “Vacant” on both sides.
- Patience from staff who may be waiting for a sample to be provided.
- Sharing with patient that statistics show an estimated 7% of the population is affected by Shy Bladder Syndrome.
- Educating your fellow professionals on the prevalence of the disorder and its characteristics.

You are only half the equation...

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Urology professionals are only half of the equation for a full diagnosis. A urologist can say, “plumbing works fine.” A mental health professional can then diagnose the social anxiety component. If patients present themselves with no physical cause, Paruresis may be indicated. Please complete the other half of the equation by recommending mental health support and a connection to the IPA.