

Is bladder training effective for treating an overactive bladder in adults?

Clinical Question How effective and safe is bladder training for treating adults with overactive bladder (OAB) compared to no treatment, anticholinergics, β 3-adrenoceptor agonists, or pelvic floor muscle training (PFMT) alone or in combination?

Bottom Line Bladder training may cure or improve OAB compared to no treatment. Moreover, bladder training may be more effective to cure or improve OAB than anticholinergics and there may be fewer adverse events. There may be no difference in efficacy or safety between bladder training and PFMT.

When compared to anticholinergics alone, combination therapy with bladder training and anticholinergics had little or no effect on cure or improvement, symptom-related QoL, or adverse events.

Caveat Participants in these trials were predominantly women (89.3%). The majority of outcomes were informed by low or very low quality of evidence as the overall trial numbers were small, did not treat missing data appropriately and most had an open label design which may have caused bias.

Context OAB is a common chronic condition involving daytime frequent urination, urination during sleep, and sudden urge to urinate with or without urinary incontinence (unintentional passing of urine). The disorder reduces quality of life and results in a significant economic burden on society. Bladder training is a behavioural therapy that establishes treatment goals and uses techniques to modify inappropriate responses to urinary urgency.

Cochrane Systematic Review Funada S, Yoshioka T, Luo Y, Sato A, Akamatsu S, Watanabe N. Bladder training for treating overactive bladder in adults. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2023, Issue 10. Art. No.: CD013571. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD013571.pub2.

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Systematic review link:

<https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD013571.pub2/full>