



Urinary System

Where's the Bathroom

Older adults experience frequent issues related to the urinary system. Urinary incontinence is loss of control that results in involuntary passage of urine. Half of women over the age of 65 experiences bladder leakage especially when coughing and sneezing (23). Persistent urinary incontinence can lead to restriction in social interactions, falling when rushing to the toilet, urinary infections and diminished quality of life. The simulation “Where’s the Bathroom” lets you experience the feeling of needing to pee and the daily struggles that older adults face while living with urinary incontinence. In this simulation, you will place a balloon filled with water between your upper thighs while completing usual daily tasks. The goal of this simulation is to understand how challenging daily activities can become while living with urinary incontinence and help us empathize with those who have this condition.

Materials

- 1 balloon or a Ziploc bag
- water source
- shoes with laces
- chair or sofa
- access to stairs (or a stepping stool instead of stairs)
- extra clothing (shirt, sweaters, pants)
- towels to clean up any spilt water

Procedure

1. Complete the precursor simulations if you have not already done so.
2. If you would like to experience how uncomfortable wearing an adult diaper can be, put a T-shirts in the top front and back part of your pants This is optional.
3. Fill the balloon with water to the size of a small ball. Tie the balloon. If you do not have a balloon, you can fill a Ziploc bag with water, close it and double bag it to avoid leakage.
4. Once ready to begin, place the balloon between your upper thighs, just above your knees.
5. **Holding** the balloon between your legs, try to step into a pair of shoes.
6. Once you have both feet in shoes, bend over and tie up the shoes.
7. Return to a standing position and make a note of how hard or easy the task was.
8. With the balloon still between your legs, walk over to any high shelf in your home.
9. Stand on your tiptoes and stretch up to reach something on the top shelf.
10. **With balloon between legs, go to the top of a staircase.** Now make your way down the stairs without dropping the balloon. Were you successful?
11. Sit and stand 5 times from the chair, holding the balloon between your legs.

Reflection Questions

1. How did it feel to hold the balloon between your thighs?
2. What emotions did you feel while trying to complete the tasks?
3. How do you think you would feel if holding urine was part of your daily routine? How would it affect the activities you like to do?