

Bowel Urgency in Ulcerative Colitis: Current Perspectives and Future Directions

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Bowel urgency (BU) is one of the most bothersome symptoms experienced by patients with UC, impacting QoL and psychosocial functioning. Cross-sectional and observational studies indicated¹:

>80%

of patients with UC report bowel urgency (BU)



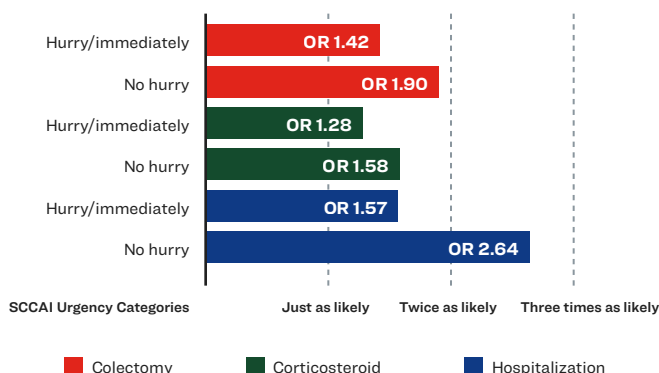
Up to 50% experience BU at least once a day



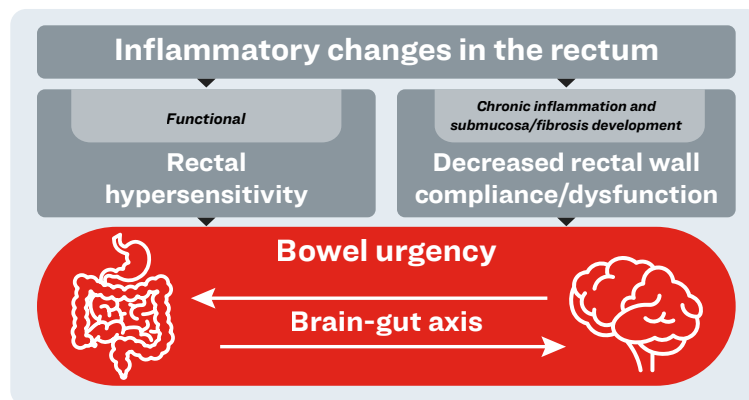
45% of US patients with moderate-to-severe UC have worn protection at least once a week within the last 3 months

Patients with UC or Crohn's disease and mild-to-severe BU are almost 6-fold more likely to have active disease (IBDSI) vs those without BU¹

All levels of BU and urge incontinence have been associated with increased risk of **colectomy**, **corticosteroid use**, and **hospitalization**¹:



The mechanisms of BU in patients with UC is multifactorial¹:



The communication gap between patients and HCPs contributes to suboptimal outcomes. Data from the CONFIDE study indicated that¹:

Less than half of patients reported feeling comfortable disclosing BU to their HCP, most commonly due to embarrassment



30% of patients from the US



43% of patients from Europe

24% of patients ranked BU as having the greatest impact on patients' lives

HCPs do not discuss BU, most commonly assuming patients will initiate the conversation.



4% of HCPs ranked BU as having the greatest impact on patients' lives

BU is not among the top 3 symptoms impacting HCPs' treatment decisions

Holistic approach to managing BU and patient assessments¹

BU is **one of the top three factors** contributing to **treatment satisfaction**



Patient education



Emotional and psychosocial support



Biofeedback and pharmacotherapy, as needed

PROs are increasingly prominent in the assessment of patients with UC:

- Urgency Numeric Rating Scale (NRS)
- 29-item Symptoms and Impacts Questionnaire (SIQ-UC)
- UC Patient-Reported Outcomes Signs and Symptoms (UC-PRO/SS)
- Patient-Reported Outcome-UC (PRO-UC) diary

Bowel urgency has been established as a guideline-recommended treatment goal.²

Clinical guidelines: "Initial treatment of UC should focus on restoration of normal bowel frequency and control of the primary symptoms of bleeding and bowel urgency" – ACG, 2025²

Management of BU can improve QoL and treatment satisfaction for patients with UC. More research is needed on the mechanisms of BU and the use of assessments to measure treatment efficacy.

ACG=American College of Gastroenterology; BU=Bowel Urgency; HCP=Healthcare Practitioner; IBD=Inflammatory Bowel Disease; IBDSI=Inflammatory Bowel Disease Symptom Inventory; SCCAI=Simple Clinical Colitis Activity Index; OR=Odds Ratio; PRO=Patient-Reported Outcome; QoL=Quality of Life; UC=Ulcerative Colitis; US=United States.

1. Dubinsky M, et al. *Am J Gastroenterol*. 2023 Nov 1;118(11):1940-1953. 2. Rubin DT, et al. *Am J Gastroenterol*. 2025;120(6):1187-1224.

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