

Question 7 – September 15

Which of the following mechanisms is the most common cause of fecal incontinence?

- A. Anal sphincter dysfunction
- B. Fecal impaction
- C. Impaired rectal sensation
- D. Poor rectal compliance
- E. Pudendal neuropathy

Answer: A

Although there certainly may be overlap in the pathogenic mechanisms in individual patients with fecal incontinence, anal sphincter dysfunction is the most common pathogenic abnormality with pudendal neuropathy and impaired rectal sensation following. Anal sphincter dysfunction is present in almost 80% of patients with fecal incontinence whereas pudendal neuropathy and impaired rectal sensation are each seen in approximately 45% of patients.

Reference:

1. Rao SSC. Practice guidelines: Diagnosis and management of fecal incontinence. Am J Gastroenterol. 2004;99: 1585-604.