



The Surrey Institute
of Clinical
Hypnotherapy

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TOILET ANXIETY STATISTICS

SICH TOILET ANXIETY RESEARCH PROJECT

Insights from 100 anonymised clinical cases where toilet anxiety was the primary presenting concern at intake.

STUDY OVERVIEW



100

anonymised
clinical cases

- ✓ Help-seeking clinical dataset (not a population prevalence study)
- ✓ Anonymised clinical cases where toilet anxiety was the primary presenting problem at intake
- ✓ Intake data and clinical records from closed cases

WHAT IS TOILET ANXIETY?



Persistent fear about not reaching a toilet in time, and the behaviours that follow, such as repeated toilet visits, route planning, avoidance and safety habits.

This is different from embarrassment about using public toilets or fear of toilets (phobia).

PATIENT CHARACTERISTICS

GENDER



58%

Female

42% Male

AGE



37

Mean age (years)

Median age: 34

Range: 16 – 83

DURATION OF PROBLEM



16

YEARS

Mean duration (years)

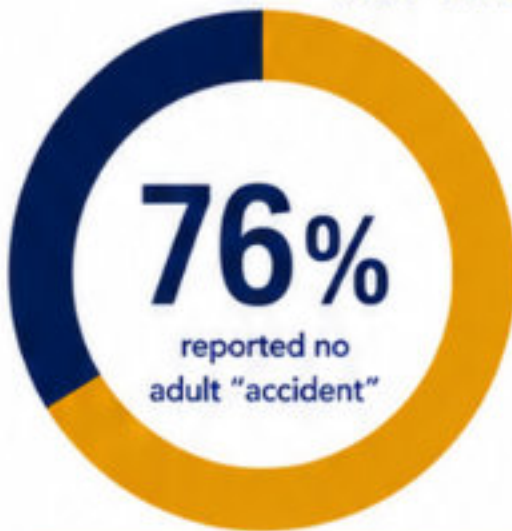
Median: 12 years

Range: 1 – 60 years



On average, patients had been living with toilet anxiety for 16 years before seeking the right kind of help.

KEY FINDING



76% of patients reported no adult "accident", despite high levels of fear and significant life impact.



"Accident" refers to how the person understood the question and may include anything from a full loss of control to minor leakage.

These are anonymised clinical cases, not a population-level estimate.

CLINICAL CONTEXT



9%

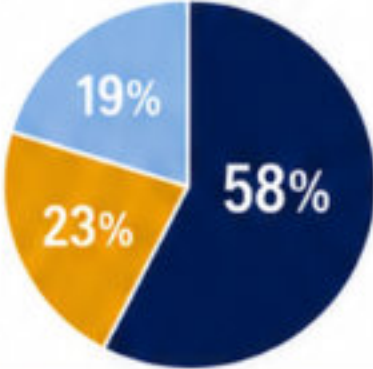
had a recorded IBS or other physical diagnosis



81.6%

were able to delay using the toilet at home

TYPE OF TOILET ANXIETY



- Defecation-related (58%)
- Urination-related (23%)
- Both (19%)

PREVALENCE OF SAFETY BEHAVIOURS (% of patients)



98%

Multiple toilet visits before leaving home



91%

Toilet surfing / checking access



91%

Avoiding places or situations



86%

Restricting food or drinks



85.9%

Using distraction techniques (99 valid responses)



49.0%

Using medication (99 valid responses)



44%

Carrying an emergency bag



100% of patients used at least one safety behaviour. These behaviours may reduce short-term anxiety but keep the problem going.

HOW TO INTERPRET THESE STATISTICS



- These figures describe patterns in a help-seeking clinical sample, not the general population.
- Different wording, definitions and inclusion criteria can change the numbers – compare with caution.
- Patterns across the data are more informative than any single figure.
- Under-reporting is likely – many people never disclose this problem.

LIMITATIONS

- Help-seeking clinical sample (n = 100)
- Not a population prevalence study
- Definitions may vary between individuals
- Not generalisable to the wider population
- Interim findings – ongoing research
- Data cannot be used to estimate prevalence

CITATION

Howard P.
SICH Toilet Anxiety Research Project.
Interim Analysis of 100 Anonymised Clinical Cases.
The Surrey Institute of Clinical Hypnotherapy.
Version 1.0. July 2026.
www.sich.co.uk

READ THE FULL CLINICIAN REPORT



Scan to view or visit:
www.sich.co.uk/14246/toilet-anxiety-research/



These statistics are based on a random sample of 100 closed cases from patients presenting with toilet anxiety as the primary concern at intake. They are intended to support understanding, discussion and further research, not to estimate prevalence.



SICH Toilet Anxiety Research Project