



Urinary Incontinence in Children: Etiologies and Psychosocial Impact

A.Marzouk , Y.Ben Ahmed (2); R.Thabti (1), L.Jallouli (1), F.Friha (1), A.Kefi(1)

(1)Pediatrics Department of the Regional Hospital of Ben Arous

(2)Department of Pediatric Surgery, Tunis Children's Hospital



Introduction:

- Urinary incontinence: a common but often underestimated pediatric condition, frequently concealed by children and their families.
- Can significantly affect a child's emotional, social, and academic development.

Patients and methods:

- Prospective study was conducted over **3 months** in a pediatric unit. Included were children **over 5 years of age with urinary incontinence occurring at least once monthly for three consecutive months**.
- All patients underwent detailed clinical evaluations to rule out organic causes.
- Investigations were guided by clinical suspicion. The social and psychological impact was also assessed.

Results:

- Twenty-six cases** were collected
- Male-to-female ratio** : 1.88.
- The mean age** : 7 years $\pm$ 10 months
- Consanguinity** : 19% of cases,
- 50% had a first-degree family history of voiding disorders.
- Secondary incontinence with psychological triggers** :4%.
- No signs of organic disease or neurological anomalies were found clinically.

Association:

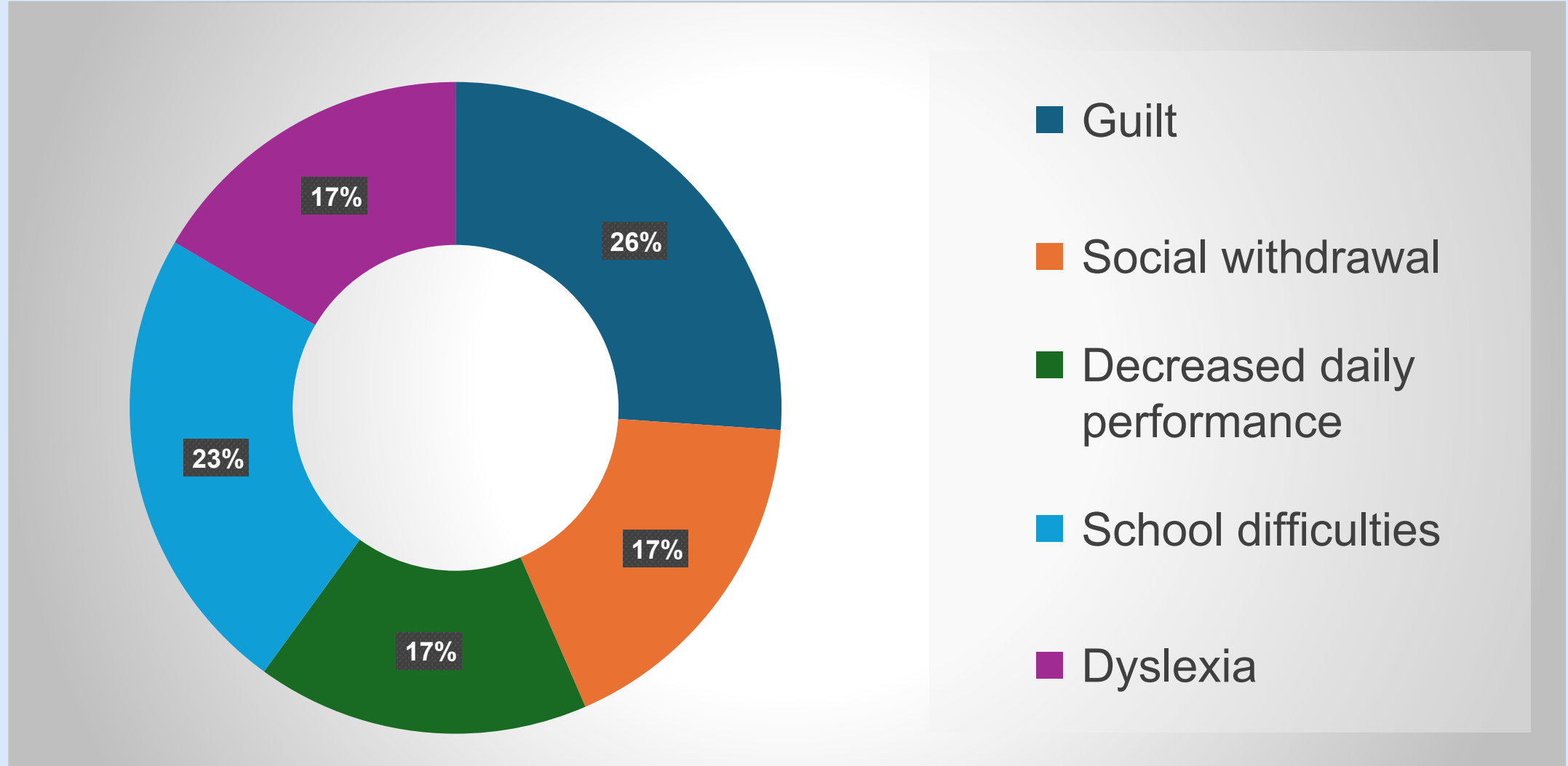
Constipation	15%
Parasitic infection	30%

- Renal ultrasound abnormalities:** 15% of cases

- Incontinence: **Diurnal and nocturnal:** 35%
Nocturnal-only: 65%.

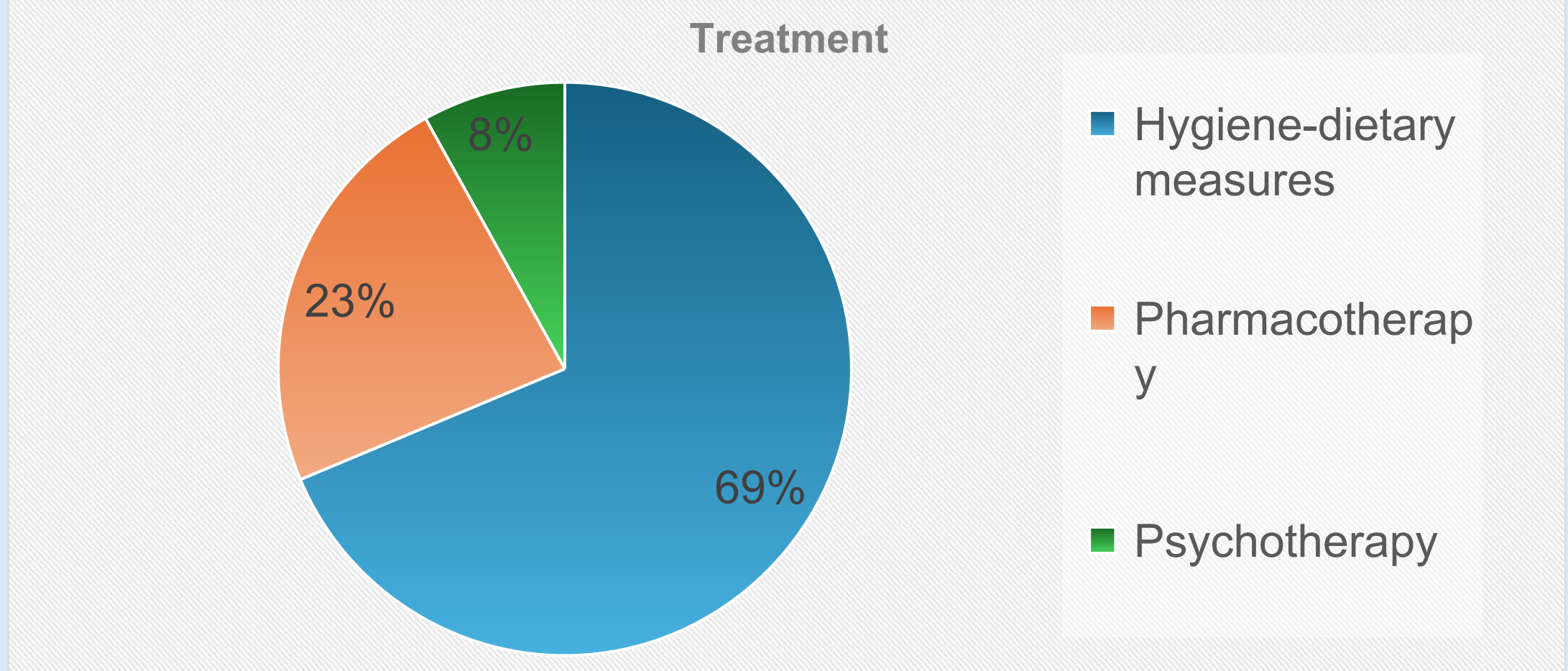
Psychosocial consequences:

Guilt (30%), social withdrawal (20%), decreased daily performance (19%), school difficulties (27%), and associated dyslexia (19%).



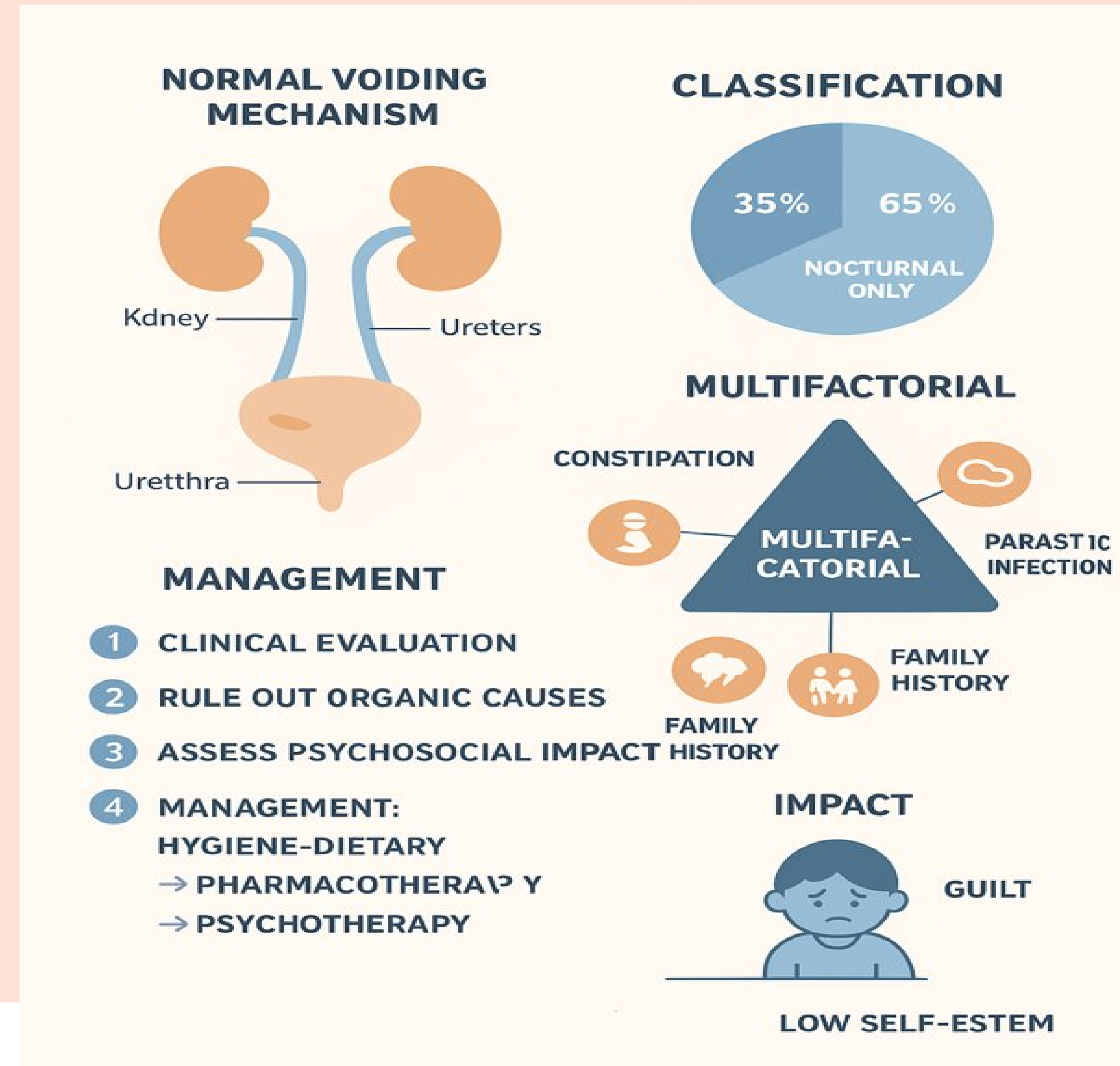
Treatment :

Hygiene-dietary measures (68%), pharmacotherapy (23%), and psychotherapy (8%).



Discussion:

- Urinary incontinence in children is a multifactorial disorder resulting from the interaction of bladder immaturity, behavioral factors, and psychosocial stressors.
- In this study, the absence of organic causes underscores the predominance of functional and emotional components, consistent with previous reports .
- The frequent association with constipation and parasitic infection supports a holistic evaluation of bowel–bladder interaction .
- Beyond physical symptoms, urinary incontinence significantly **impacts emotional well-being and school performance**. Feelings of guilt, shame, and social withdrawal are common and may lead to low self-esteem and academic difficulties .
- These findings highlight the need for early recognition and a multidisciplinary, family-centered approach involving pediatricians, psychologists, and educators. Such collaboration ensures comprehensive management, improves adherence, and enhances long-term quality of life.



References:

- Austin, P. F., Bauer, S. B., Bower, W., et al. (2016). The standardization of terminology of lower urinary tract function in children and adolescents: Update report from the International Children's Continence Society (ICCS). *Neurourology and Urodynamics*, 35(4), 471–481.
- Nevés, T., et al. (2010). Evaluation and treatment of monosymptomatic enuresis: A standardization document from the ICCS. *Journal of Urology*, 183(2), 441–447.
- Bakker, E., van Sprundel, M., van der Auwera, C., et al. (2002). Voiding habits and wetting in a population of 4,332 Belgian schoolchildren aged between 10 and 14 years. *Scandinavian Journal of Urology and Nephrology*, 36(5), 354–362.
- Loening-Baucke, V. (2007). Urinary incontinence and urinary tract infection and their resolution with treatment of chronic constipation of childhood. *Pediatrics*, 119(1), 159–164.
- Joinson, C., Sullivan, S., von Gontard, A., et al. (2019). Psychological problems in children with daytime wetting. *Pediatrics*, 133(4), e882–e890.

Acknowledgment:

The authors would like to thank the medical and nursing staff of the Pediatric Department for their valuable collaboration, as well as the children and families who participated in this study.