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Nota di contenuto	Cover -- Title Page -- Copyright Page -- Contents -- Abbreviations -- Contributors -- Preface -- First Foreword -- Second Foreword -- Part I Basic Principles -- Chapter 1 Basic Urodynamics and Fundamental Issues -- Introduction to Urodynamics -- Basics of Urodynamics -- Fundamentals -- A Brief History of Urodynamics -- Summary -- References -- Chapter 2 Applied Anatomy and Physiology -- Introduction -- Upper Urinary Tract -- The Urinary Bladder -- The Male Urethra -- The Female Urethra -- The Pelvis -- Nervous System Control of the Lower Urinary Tract -- References -- Chapter 3 The Physics of Urodynamic Measurements -- Measurement of Pressure -- Measuring Pressure in Urodynamics -- Measuring Pressure Correctly -- Setting Zero (Reference) Pressure and Calibrating -- Measuring Infused Volume -- Measuring Flow Rate -- References -- Part II Functional Urology -- Chapter 4 Patient Assessment -- Patient-Reported Outcome Questionnaires -- FVCs and Bladder Diaries -- Medical History -- Physical Examination -- Other Investigations -- References -- Chapter 5 Treatments for Lower Urinary Tract Dysfunction -- Storage Phase Problems -- Voiding Problems -- Post-Micturition Symptoms -- References -- Part III Urodynamic Techniques -- Chapter 6 Uroflowmetry -- How to Do the Test -- Reporting a Test Result --

Interpretation -- Equipment -- Summary -- References -- Chapter 7
Cystometry and Pressure-Flow Studies -- Principles of Cystometry --
Technique of Filling Cystometry -- Voiding Cystometry -- Pressure-
Flow Studies -- Electromyography -- References -- Chapter 8 Video
Urodynamics -- Anatomical and Physiological Observations During
VUDS -- Roles of VUDS in Men -- Roles of VUDS in Women -- VUDS in
People with Neurological Disease and Children -- Renal Failure
and Transplant Patients -- Whitaker Testing -- Using VUDS to
Understand Limitations of Pressure Recording.
Equipment Needed -- Considerations when Using X-rays -- Performing
the Test -- Advantages and Disadvantages of VUDS -- Alternatives to
VUDS -- References -- Chapter 9 Ambulatory Urodynamics --
Indications for AUDS -- Technique of AUDS -- Analysis -- References
-- Chapter 10 Studies Assessing Urethral Pressures -- Static Urethral
Pressure Profilometry -- Interpreting the UPP -- The 'Stress' Urethral
Profile -- Urethral Leak Point Pressure Measurement -- Indications
for Urethral Function Testing -- References -- Chapter 11 Non-
invasive Urodynamics -- Introduction -- Non-invasive Urodynamic
Techniques -- The Penile Cuff Test -- Practicalities of the Penile Cuff
Test -- Current Standing -- References -- Part IV Urodynamics in
Clinical Practice -- Chapter 12 Urodynamics in Children -- Children
with Neurological Disorders -- Children with Non-neurological
Disorders -- Practical Aspects of Urodynamic Studies -- Summary
and Recommendations -- References -- Chapter 13 Urodynamics in
Women -- Stress Urinary Incontinence -- Overactive Bladder --
Urethral Relaxation Incontinence -- Mixed Urinary Incontinence --
Mixed Incontinence (Urinary and Faecal 'Double' Incontinence) --
Situational Incontinence -- Coital/Orgasm Leakage and Giggle
Incontinence -- BOO and Detrusor Underactivity (DUA) -- Urinary
Infections and Inflammation -- Conclusions -- References -- Chapter
14 Urodynamics in Men -- Men with LUTS -- Post-Prostatectomy
Symptoms -- Special Situations -- References -- Chapter 15 Structural
Changes of the Bladder Outlet -- Impaired Blood Supply to the Bladder
Outlet -- Trauma -- Hypospadias -- Surgical Mesh -- Gender
Confirmation Surgery -- References -- Chapter 16 Neurological
Disease and LUTS -- Impaired Neurological Control of the Lower
Urinary Tract: General Principles -- Understanding the Neurological
Situations -- Life-Threatening Issues in NLUTD.
Assessment of LUTS in Neurological Disease -- Urodynamic
Observations -- Urodynamic Technique in the Neurogenic Patient --
NLUTD Treatment -- Specific Neurological Diseases -- Assisting
Neurology and Neurosurgery Teams in Defining the Neurological Lesion
-- References -- Chapter 17 Urodynamics in Older People --
Understanding and Evaluating Frailty -- The Management Pathway
in Older People -- Patterns of LUTS in Older People -- Therapy
Decisions -- References -- Part V Running a Urodynamics Unit --
Chapter 18 Troubleshooting During Urodynamics -- Uroflowmetry --
Filling Cystometry -- Pressure-Flow Studies -- Conclusions --
References -- Chapter 19 Artefacts in Urodynamics -- Artefacts During
Flow -- Artefacts During Filling Cystometry -- Artefacts During
Pressure-Flow Studies -- References -- Chapter 20 Anorectal
Physiology -- Anorectal Physiology -- Conservative Treatment --
Management of Colorectal Pelvic Floor Patients -- Faecal Incontinence
-- Psychological Distress and Quality of Life -- Future Direction
of Colorectal Pelvic Floor Surgery -- References -- Chapter 21
Organisation of the Urodynamic Unit -- Patient Referral -- The Patient's
Hospital Attendance -- Planning a New Urodynamic Service --
Reference -- Chapter 22 Equipment -- Maintenance Routines

and Regular Checks -- Procurement -- Reference -- Chapter 23
Working with Limited Resources -- Clinical Issues -- Equipment --
Maintenance Requirements -- Teaching -- Chapter 24 Research
Evidence on the Clinical Role of Urodynamics -- References --
Appendix A Key Patient Assessment Metrics from the International
Consultation on Incontinence Questionnaires (ICIQ) -- ICIQ-FLUTS --
ICIQ-MLUTS -- ICIQ-BD -- Appendix B Fundamentals Documents from
the International Continence Society -- N& -- U 2018 Volume 37
Supplement 6.

Appendix C Patient Information Leaflets from the Bristol Urological
Institute -- Appendix D Practice, Standards, and Equipment
Recommendations -- International Consultation on Incontinence 2016
-- Executive Summary: Urodynamic Testing -- United Kingdom
Continence Society: Minimum standards for Urodynamic Studies, 2018
-- UK Centre for Evidence Based Purchasing -- Buyers' Guide
Urodynamics Systems -- Good Urodynamic Practices Documents
from the International Continence Society -- Index -- EULA.

Sommario/riassunto

"Urodynamics has two basic aims: To reproduce the patient's symptomatic complaints while making key observations. To provide a pathophysiological explanation by correlating the patient's symptoms with the urodynamic findings. These two basic aims are crucial to the purpose of urodynamics - essentially it is a diagnostic test that will aid in the management of patients. The need to make urodynamic observations reflects the fact that the patient's symptoms are important, but they might be somewhat misleading. Most patients with lower urinary tract dysfunction (LUTD) present to their doctor with symptoms. However, lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS - Table 1) should not simply be taken at face value, since a range of differing mechanisms may result in rather similar symptomatic presentations. The statement "the bladder is an unreliable witness" (1) reflects how symptoms are the starting point, but do not actually identify the ultimate explanation. Since treatment should correct the underlying cause, it is necessary to identify mechanisms, avoiding assumption or prejudice coming from taking symptoms at face value. An excellent example of this is voiding LUTS in men, where the cause on urodynamic testing may prove to be bladder outlet obstruction (BOO) and/or detrusor underactivity (DUA); BOO should respond fully to surgery to relieve obstruction such as transurethral resection of prostate (TURP), while such surgery is potentially not helpful in the second (2). Voiding LUTS in males are of unreliable diagnostic value, and only slow stream and hesitancy show any correlation with the urodynamic findings of BOO (3-5). Even with flow rate assessment, one cannot be sure whether BOO is present [Figure 1.1]. The difficulty of assessing LUTD by symptoms alone is the uncertainty about establishing truly what is going on in the individual describing them"--