

PHYSIOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT OF IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME (IBS): PSYCHOTHERAPY, INSTEAD OF PHARMACOTHERAPY, OF GUT BRAIN

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Pankaj Garg, Amit Soni, Sohail S Sodhi. Garg Fistula Research Institute, Panchkula, India. Email- drgargpankaj@gmail.com

Purpose/ Background

As psychotherapy(non-pharmacological approach) works well for ‘irritable’ person, similar approach(regulating the gut physiologically) should work stabilize the ‘irritable’ gut. Soluble fiber(Psyllium husk) is one of the best known non-pharmacological bowel regulator. Previous studies have missed two vital aspects of fiber supplement intake- quantity of fiber intake and amount of water to be taken along with water. Taking fiber supplement optimally and other physiologic steps(FEED) were studied in a small cohort of patients.

Methods/ Interventions

The patients, diagnosed with IBS (as per Rome IV criteria) were prescribed the following steps(FEED)-(F) -Psyllium husk fiber (Ispaghulla husk), 5 tsf (25 grams) taken with 500ml water once a day, (E) -Elevationof feet by keeping a small bench(of 12-16 inches height) below the feet to increase hip flexion while sitting on toilet-commode, (E) -Exercises of the abdominal muscles and (D)-Drinking (500-600 ml) of water empty stomach in the morning. (Figure-1)

Published studies had utilized 7-10 grams of soluble fiber(psyllium) supplement. The resultant benefit was just a proportion of the potential achievable benefit. The average fiber requirement for an adult is 35-40 grams/day whereas the intake is <15 grams/day. So there is approximate deficiency of 20-25 grams fiber/day which needs to be supplemented. When the fiber supplement was increased from 10 to 20 grams/day, there was significant increase in the relief in IBS patients. Second aspect is the amount of water taken along with the fiber. Psyllium absorbs water, takes water to the rectum, thereby making stools softer and bulkier. However, for this to happen optimally, adequate water must be taken along with the fiber intake(@25ml water/gram fiber, 500ml water with 25 grams fiber/day). These aspects which markedly increases the efficacy of fiber supplement was ignored by previous studies.

Elevating the feet while sitting on toilet commode straightens the rectoanal canal which by relieving functional obstruction makes defecation process easier and less strainful. Drinking water in morning and doing abdominal wall exercises while sitting on toilet-commode activate gastrocolic reflex and help in bowel regulation. All these physiological steps(FEED) when implemented together, helps to regulate bowel and provide substantial relief in IBS.

Results/Outcome(s)

In the pilot study, FEED was recommended to 7 patients of IBS (4-IBS with constipation, 2-IBS with diarrhea, IBS mixed). After 6 weeks, all patients responded well to this physiological treatment and reported a major relief (>90%) in their symptoms.

Conclusions

Physiological (non-pharmacological) treatment(FEED) can play a major role in the management of IBS.

Conflict of Interest: Nil for the authors

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- (D)**-Drinking (500-600 ml) of water empty stomach in the morning.