

Multi-dimensional Nature of IBS: Looking Beyond the Criteria-based Diagnosis

Uday C Ghoshal

Professor, Dept. of Gastroenterology, SGPGI, Lucknow, India

Diagnosis of IBS is popularly made by symptom-based criteria with reasonable investigation to exclude organic disorders. However, there is a paradigm shift in understanding the pathophysiology of IBS in the recent time. Emerging evidence suggest that a sub-set of IBS may have micro-organic basis such as gut dysbiosis including small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO), low grade inflammation, dietary intolerance, abnormal gut transit, prior gastrointestinal infection and infestation, abnormal intestinal permeability and neuro-hormonal dysregulation. Recognizing some of these pathophysiological abnormalities may have important therapeutic implications. For examples, patients with SIBO and IBS are expected to respond more often with antibiotic treatment than those without SIBO. Moreover, with recent introduction of the explanatory model, which requires explaining the specific abnormality responsible for the symptom generation and aggravation necessitate physician to first understand the pathophysiological basis of symptoms himself/herself. It is also important to understand that patients with less severe symptoms, those with considerable psychological co-morbidity may not require such extensive investigations and specific treatment for a micro-organic cause. Considering all these, the upcoming Rome IV algorithm, to be released in 2016, is going to bring in a new dimension to management of IBS, the multi-dimensional clinical profile (MDCP). MDCP necessitate the physician to assess several important issues in addition to the categorical diagnosis of functional gastrointestinal disorders such as IBS.

- Categorical Rome diagnosis
- Additional information that sub-classifies the diagnosis leading to more specific treatment (e.g. diarrhea-predominant, constipation-predominant, pain-predominant etc. overlapping)
- The personal impact of the disorder on the patient (severity)
- Physiological abnormalities or biomarkers
- Psychological influences of the disorder

It is expected that use of MDCP in patients with IBS will help to explore pathophysiological basis of symptom generation and its specific and effective management. Moreover, it is expected to bring newer dimension on research in IBS.