

Assessing Baseline Symptoms and Life Quality in Inflammatory Bowel Disease Patients with Comprehensive Self-Management Intervention

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Background: Patients with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) often face gastrointestinal and extraintestinal symptoms which can lead to a decrease in quality of life. The purpose of this study was to quantitatively assess self-reported baseline symptoms and quality of life of those with IBD.

Methods: Twenty-three patients with IBD were recruited from March to December 2023 for a randomized control trial of an IBD comprehensive self-management intervention program. Prior to randomly assigning participants in the study to the intervention or usual care, they completed an online baseline survey. In the survey, the participants rated the severity of symptoms (abdominal pain, bloating, fatigue, joint pain, nausea, gas, and urgency) over the past week on a scale of 0-10, with larger numbers corresponding to greater severity. Additionally, participants completed a 10-question short inflammatory bowel disease questionnaire (SIBDQ), with each question scored on a 7-point Likert scale, in which a lower score indicates a lower health-related quality of life. An SIBDQ score below 50 was considered poor quality of life. The mean and standard deviation of each symptom and SIBDQ were calculated using all patients' responses.

Results: The mean age of participants within the sample was 39.39 years, and 78.26% of participants in the sample had Crohn's disease. Among all patients, fatigue was the symptom with the highest severity (M: 6.70, SD: 2.51). The following most severe symptoms were bloating (M: 4.22, SD: 2.49), abdominal pain (M: 3.87, SD: 2.16), joint pain (M: 3.83, SD: 3.49), and nausea (M: 3.57, SD: 3.01). The total mean SIBDQ score for the sample was 44.17 (SD: 11.12).

Conclusion: Fatigue was the most severe symptom amongst participants, followed by bloating, abdominal pain, joint pain, and nausea. Our sample of IBD patients has low health-related quality of life (<50), as indicated by the mean SIBDQ. Future research should aim to create interventions that not only improve quality of life, but also improve extraintestinal symptoms, such as fatigue and bloating, in patients with IBD.