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Behavioral Therapy Can Quickly Calm Irritable Bowels

Submitted by [Rasik Sharma](#) on Wed, 05/05/2010 - 13:23 **Featured Health TNM**

The Best Way To Treat IBS

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A small study has found behavioural therapy brings about a rapid improvement in [patients](#) suffering from irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), with the [benefits](#) lasting at least several months.

These findings add credence to evidence that 'talk therapy' or [cognitive behavioral therapy](#), as it is also called is effective for IBS, including suggesting those patients who respond rapidly to the treatment, are particularly likely to fare well in the long term.

Of the 71 adults randomly assigned to receive cognitive behavioral therapy for IBS as part of the study, 30% turned out to be rapid responders. Completing a standard questionnaire, patients reported adequate relief of [abdominal pain](#) and bowel symptoms, within four weeks of beginning the therapy.

Researchers found nearly all i. e. 20 of 21 rapid responders maintained these improvements for three months after their therapy sessions had ended.

Whereas, only 28% of the 50 study participants who failed to show rapid improvement, were considered treatment responders after three months.

The study findings have been published in the journal Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology.

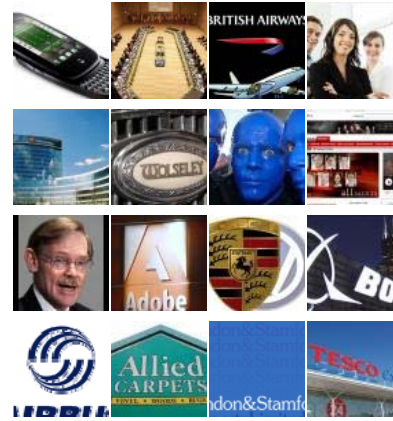
Lead researcher Dr. Jeffrey M. Lackner from the State University of New York, Buffalo said cognitive behavioral therapy was known to be a very promising treatment for IBS, with the current findings helping to identify which patients would likely maintain a positive response.

Lackner and his colleagues are conducting a larger, longer-term study, as the current study being a small one, it remains unclear how long the benefits of cognitive behavioral therapy may last i. e. do they carry over to 9 months, a year or more.

IBS symptoms include bouts of abdominal cramps, bloating and changes in bowel habits i. e. diarrhoea or constipation, or alternating episodes of both. While, no one knows the exact cause of the disorder, there are certain symptom triggers like particular foods, large meals and emotional stress.

Cognitive behavioral therapy helps IBS patients to recognize their symptom triggers and manage them. Other treatment options include general diet changes, like reducing gas-producing foods; fibre supplements, if constipation is

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a primary symptom; and anti-diarrhoeal medications, when diarrhoea is a primary symptom.

There are two [prescription medications](#) for specific IBS cases: Lotronex, for women with diarrhoea dominant IBS not responding to other treatments; and Amitiza, for constipation dominant IBS.

Around 20% of American adults have IBS symptoms, with women affected at about twice the rate of men.

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