

Treatment of Adolescents with IBD and Anxiety

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OVERVIEW:

Anxiety in Youth

- At any one time, about 3% of teens are suffering from anxiety disorders
- During the teen years, about 10-15% of teens will suffer with an anxiety disorder
- Related to problems in school, social and family lives
- Tends to be chronic when untreated
- Risk for depression and substance abuse
- Often goes unidentified and untreated

Anxiety in Youth with IBD

- Most common mental health condition in youth with IBD (along with depression)
- Related to reduced quality of life
- Potential to impact medical management

Aim of the Study

- Identify youth with anxiety and IBD
- Develop an integrated program to address both anxiety and IBD concerns
- Examine emotional and health benefits of the program

Inclusion Criteria

- Youth ages 11 to 17
- Diagnosed with IBD
- Experiencing anxiety that is interfering, exaggerated, or excessively distressing, and has been present for several months or longer (that has been identified by the Pediatric Gastroenterologist/Psychologist associated with the study)

Study Procedure

- Meet 12 times with the patient
- 3 separate times with parent
- Approximately 1 hour each visit
- Sessions take place at Mt. Sinai

TREATMENT:

Provide Education about:

- Anxiety
- IBD
- Relationship between anxiety and IBD symptoms

Teach IBD Specific Coping:

- Managing flares
- Identifying areas of control
- Planning for college
- Travel
- Having symptoms at school or in public
- Medication adherence
- Diet

Pain Management

- Breathing Techniques
- Physical Activity

Modify Thoughts

- Identify and change excessive, exaggerated, and nonfunctional thoughts

Encourage Patient to Face Challenging Situations

- Patient is exposed gradually to fearful/distressing situations
- Learn to cope

Where are we now?

- Program is on-going
- 30% of patients at Children's IBD Center rated themselves as experiencing elevated anxiety
- Preliminary findings show that all patients report reduced anxiety symptoms following the program
- Fears regarding IBD reduced
- Coping with unpredictable symptoms and pain better (pain went from moderate to mild)
- Quality of life greatly improved
- Global functioning improved

Response From Families

- Very positive
- Families seem to like that the program is integrative and addresses IBD concerns
- Having the program at Mt. Sinai allowed for services to be available in conjunction with medical care

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