



# First line diet & lifestyle intervention reduced use of medication in patients with Irritable Bowel Syndrome

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## Introduction

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a functional gastro-intestinal disorder affecting 10-15% of the Western population<sup>1</sup>. Management includes both non-pharmacological and pharmacological treatment. It is estimated that 33% - 91% of patients receive a prescription for medication<sup>2</sup>. There is a dearth of research on the effect of non-pharmacological interventions on the requirement for medications.

## Aims

To compare the use of medication in patients with IBS before and after diet and lifestyle intervention.

## Methods

Baseline clinical data including the global symptom question (GSQ) ('do you currently have satisfactory relief of your gut symptoms?') and medication use were recorded from consecutive patients before diet and lifestyle intervention from a clinical specialist dietitian. The assessment was repeated three months later. Data were analysed using SPSS (IBM, v.24). Paired categorical data were analysed using McNemar's test, and a paired t-test was used to compare continuous data.

## Results

N=116 patients were included in the study of which n=56 (48%) were taking medication for their symptoms at baseline. Following diet and lifestyle intervention, n=100 (86.2%) reported symptomatic improvement (GSQ=yes).

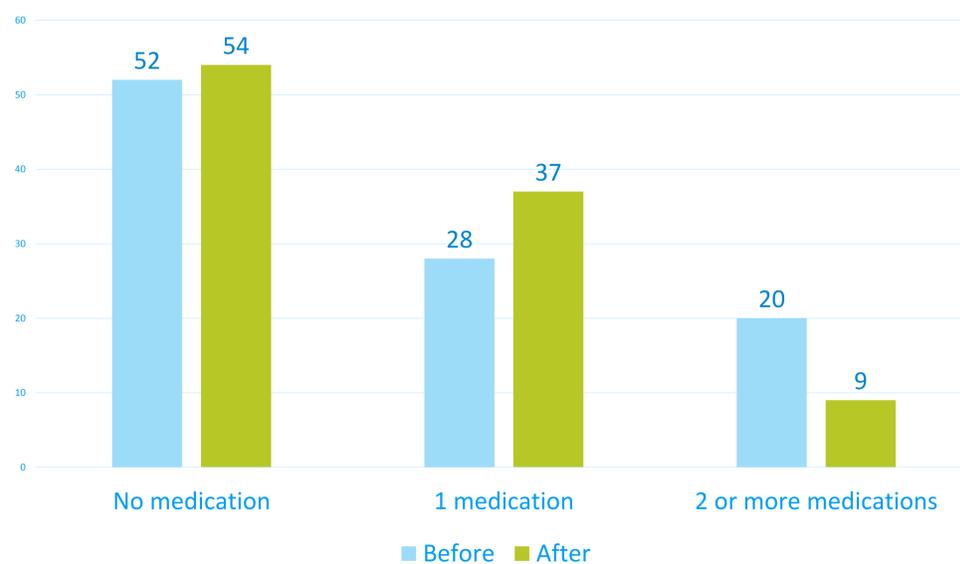
Medications used included laxatives, antidiarrhoeals, PPIs, antispasmodics and pain relief.

There was no significant change in medication use among the 16 people who answered 'No' to the GSQ.

In those who reported improvement in their symptoms, the mean (SD) number of daily medications reduced from 0.76 (0.1) to 0.57 (0.7) following three-month intervention (P=0.025, 95% CI (0.24, 0.36)).

When comparing those requiring no medication, 1 medication, or 2+ medications daily, there was a reduction in medication use following the intervention (McNemar's Test, P=0.034). 24 people (24%) reduced the number of medications they took to manage their IBS.

Medication use before and after dietetic intervention for IBS



## Conclusion

**Non-pharmacological management improved symptoms for patients with IBS and reduced use of medication. Moreover, the success rate of the intervention was high with almost 9 in 10 patients achieving symptomatic relief. We suggest that all patients with IBS have access to a specialist dietitian.**

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