

Irritable Bowel Syndrome(IBS)

IBS is a benign, chronic symptom complex of altered bowel habits and abdominal pain.

Aetiology:

- No organic cause can be found.
- Altered GI motility occurs in the form of exaggerated gastrocolic reflex, altered gastric emptying, increased small bowel contractions and increased small intestinal transit.
- Psychological disturbance like anxiety, tension and excessive worry are all aetiologically significant.
- Neurotransmitters such as serotonin may be an important factors.
- Certain foods may precipitate an attack.

Clinical Features :

Diagnostic criteria for diagnosing irritable bowel syndrome is at least three month of continuous or recurrent symptoms of abdominal pain or discomfort which is

- a) Relieved with defaecation and/or
- b) Associated with change in frequency of stool and/or
- c) Associated with a change in consistency of stool.

The above symptoms may be described by the patients as follows:

- a) Altered bowel frequency (> 3 bowel movements a day or < 3 bowel movements a week)
- b) Altered form of stool (lumpy/hard or loose/ watery stool)
- c) Altered passage of stool (straining urgency or feeling of incomplete evacuation)

- d) Passage of mucus
- e) Bloating or feeling of abdominal distension.

Rome III Criteria

Recurrent abdominal pain or discomfort at least 3 days per month in the last 3 months (with symptom onset at least 6 months prior to diagnosis) associated with two or more of the following:

- Improvement with defecation
- Onset associated with a change in frequency of stool
- Onset associated with a change in appearance of stool

Investigations :

All Patients

1. Stool for occult blood series
2. If diarrhoea is present , stool for leukocyte , ova , parasites, bacterial pathogens.
3. Sigmoidoscopy
4. Barium enema examination.

Selected Patients

1. Upper GI and small bowel endoscopy
2. Ultrasound of gallbladder
3. Abdominal CT scan
4. Serum amylase level

5. Lactose tolerance test
6. Mucosal biopsy of small bowel or colon.

Nocturnal and bloody diarrhoea are against diagnosis of irritable bowel syndrome.