

Irritable Bowel Syndrome Patient Experience in Canada

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Background

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a chronic, often debilitating, functional gastrointestinal disorder with symptoms that include abdominal pain and altered bowel behaviours of constipation and/or diarrhea, affecting approximately 13-20% of Canadians. The real world experience of patients is still poorly understood.

48% of patients indicate they experience poor quality of life in an average month due to IBS

Methods

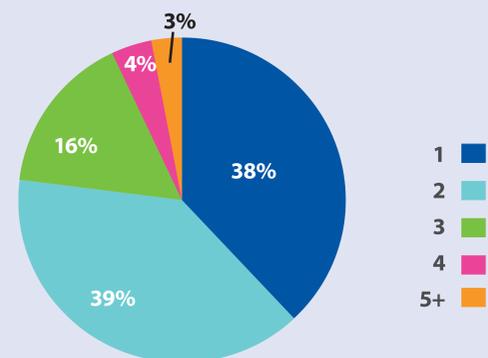
To learn how IBS affects patients in Canada, the Gastrointestinal Society hosted a survey on its English (www.badgut.org) and French (www.mauxdeventre.org) websites during spring 2016. Links to this survey were posted on social media and via invitation using a market research company. To qualify, survey participants had to be living in Canada and have IBS or be the parent/guardian of a child with IBS. Questions were on a broad range of topics, including symptom severity, medication use, experience with the health care system, comorbidities, and quality of life.

The Gastrointestinal Society, a Canadian registered charity patient group, represents gastrointestinal and liver patients on a variety of health care fronts, including access to medications. For access to all this study's results contact:

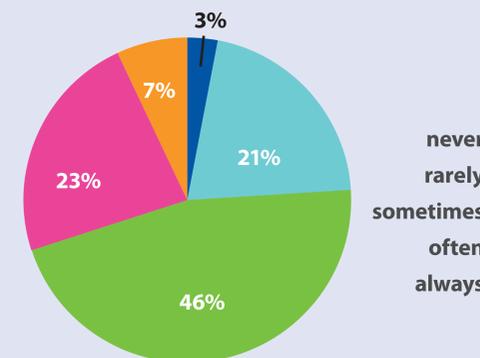
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We received funding from Allergan Canada to conduct this independent survey.

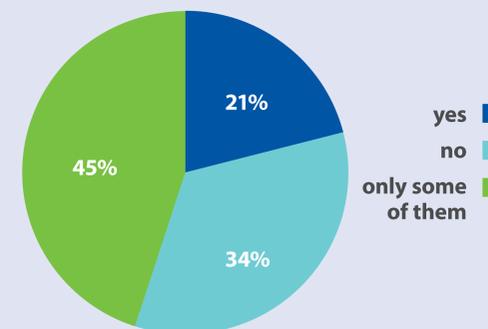
On average, how many different treatments do you use on a regular basis to manage your IBS symptoms?



How often do your symptoms interfere with everyday life such as work, school, and social situations?



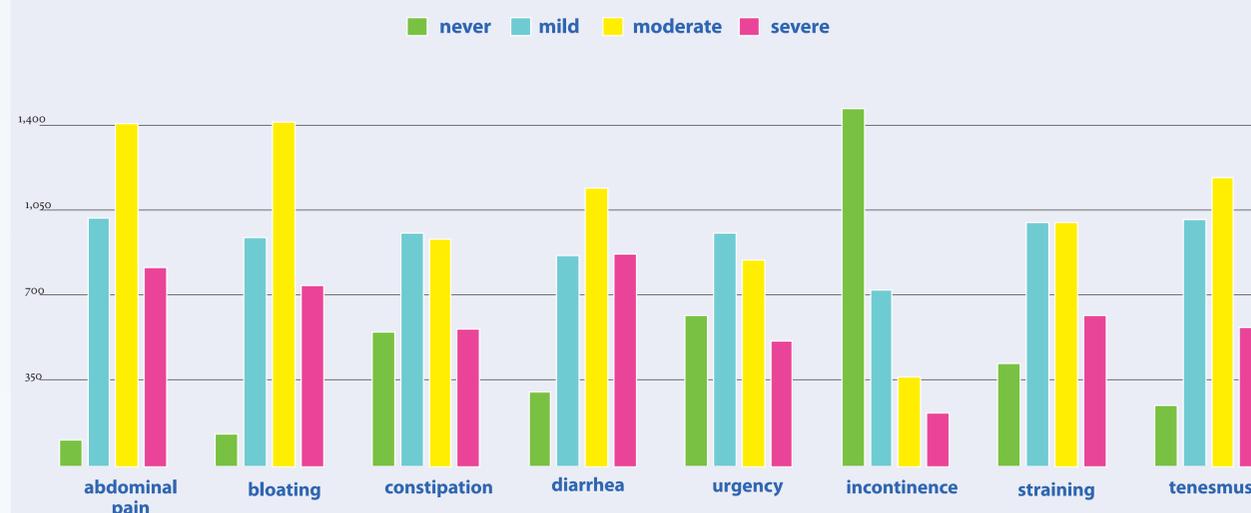
Do you feel confident that your IBS symptoms are under control?



IBS in Health Care

- **26% visit their health care providers three times or more annually**
- **12% have been hospitalized due to IBS**
- **the most common diagnostic test ordered by physicians was a colonoscopy (61%)**
- **other diagnostic tests include laboratory tests (36%), gastroscopy (30%), and ultrasound (28%)**

Please note the degree of severity for each symptom you have experienced during the last THREE MONTHS.



Results

Respondents from every province and territory totalled 2,961. 90% were between 30-69 years of age, 86% female, 97% were adults with IBS. 53% had IBS for more than 10 years. 35% had IBS-D, 18% IBS-C, 41% IBS-M, and 6% unsure. In IBS-C patients, abdominal pain was identified as a distinct predominant symptom. Those with IBS-D experienced many symptoms, with abdominal pain, bloating, urgency, and diarrhea identified as highly concerning. 31% experienced severe abdominal pain in the last 3 months, with severe pain being constant in a high proportion. 62% of patients indicated they experienced pain continuing after bowel movement. The top factors driving patients to see their physician were pain/discomfort and impact of IBS on their personal/professional/daily life. Approximately 93% and 49% of patients consulted with a family doctor and gastroenterologist, respectively, for their IBS. 60% had a colonoscopy. 12% have been hospitalized for IBS. 76% indicated that their symptoms interfere with everyday life and 46% missed work or school due to IBS. Most IBS patients use ≥ 2 medications on a regular basis to control their symptoms yet only 21% are confident their symptoms are under control. Compounding the issue, 16% are unable to afford any of their prescribed medications, and 26% can only afford some of them.

Conclusions

Canadian IBS patients suffer from multiple symptoms, with the pain experienced by patients being the prime motivating factor to seek care. 79% have symptoms not under control. The conventional standard of care for IBS requires many different treatments to manage the multiple symptoms, with the majority of IBS patients requiring 2 or more treatments on a regular basis. IBS patients experience a wide range of symptoms and comorbidities. It can be a struggle for them to find treatments that are effective and affordable.

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