

# Do Anticholinergic Medications Really Pose a Higher Risk for Adverse Effects in Irritable Bowel Syndrome Patients Over Age 65? A Community Based Study

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## Purpose:

To determine if concerns regarding an increased incidence of adverse effects when anticholinergic (AC) medications are utilized in irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) patients (pts) over 65 years old are valid.

## Methods:

A prospective, outcomes study was set up to review treatment results of IBS pts age > 65, at a community based GI practice in Altamonte Springs, Florida. Of 966 individual IBS pts seen in 2009, 192 were > 65 years old, and were prescribed AC medication, including hyoscyamine, chlordiazepoxide/clidinium, dicyclomine and belladonna/phenobarbital. Usual recommended adult dosages were administered. Charts were reviewed for side effects, duration of IBS and clinical association of stress, anxiety and depression.

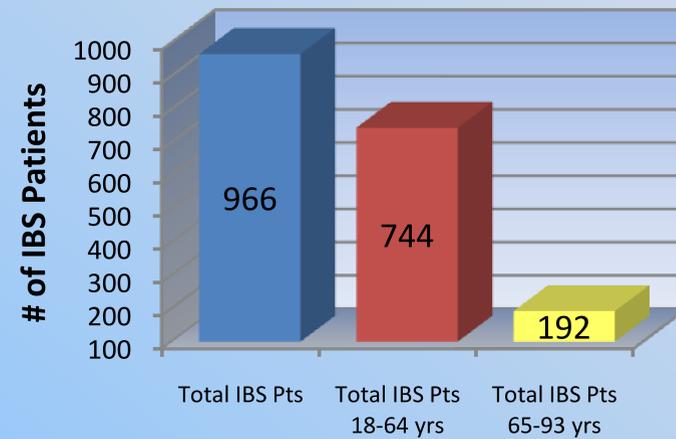
## Results:

83% (159/192) of pts were much improved (>75% better) with AC treatment. 12% (23/192) were somewhat better (< 50% better) and 5% showed no improvement. Side effects were primarily dry mouth (36%) and sleepiness (9%), did not increase in incidence with advancing age nor limit usage. The oldest patient was 93. 84% of these pts were felt to have accompanying stress, anxiety disorder or depression. IBS symptoms began before age 35 in 12%, age 36-55 in 17%, age 56-65 in 28% and over age 65 in 43%. Medication was taken for an average of 6 months.

## Conclusion:

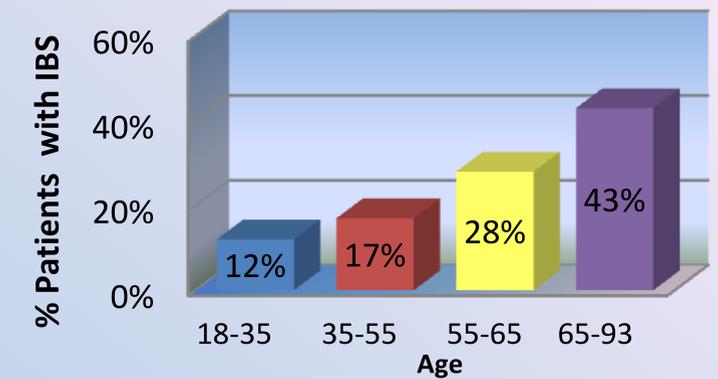
- 1.AC medications were extremely effective in 83% of elderly IBS pts.
- 2.AC medications were safe and side effects did not limit their usage in pts > 65 years old.
- 3.Stress, anxiety and /or depression were present in 84% of pts.
- 4.IBS symptoms began after age 65 in 43% of these pts, with 71% beginning after age 55.
- 5.Hopefully, more studies will be done with AC medications as they are efficacious, cheap and show few side effects, contrary to popular belief.

IBS patients Population

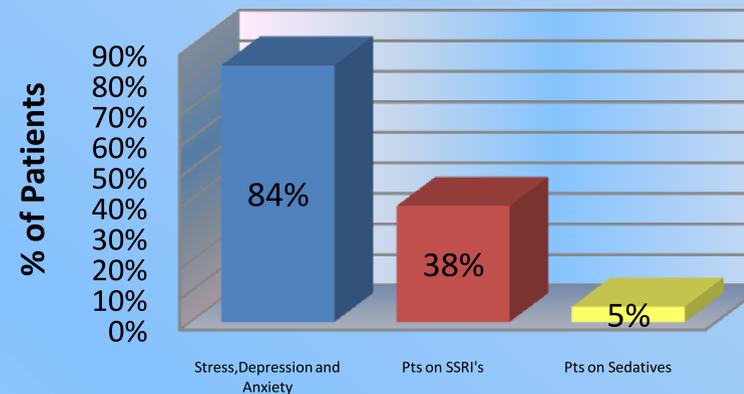


Age of onset of IBS

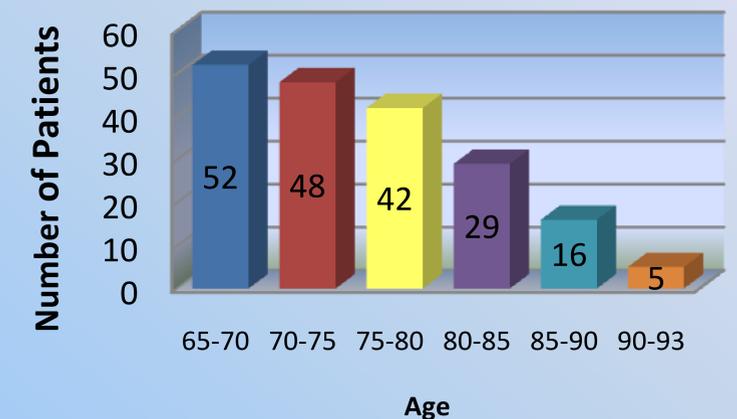
(N=192)



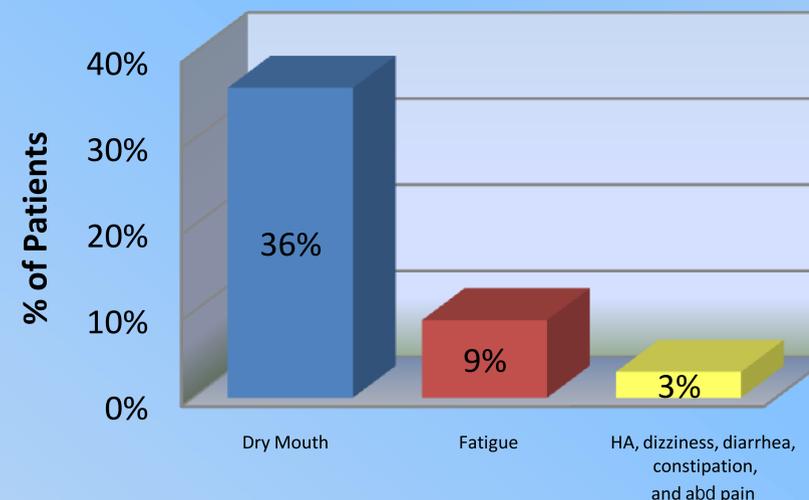
Depression/Anxiety in Elderly IBS Pts



Age Breakdown of Patients over 65



Adverse Effects



Improvement on Anticolnergics

