



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, Oct. 6, 2008, 8am EDT

Contact Rosanne Riesenman mediaonly@acg.gi.org
ACG 301-263-9000 or Press Room in Orlando
Gaylord Palms as of Sun Oct. 5 at 3:00 pm
407-586-0000 Daytona Room

New Studies Examine the Effectiveness of Probiotics in IBS

Orlando, FL, October 6, 2008 – Several studies presented at the American College of Gastroenterology’s 73rd Annual Scientific Meeting in Orlando highlight the safety and efficacy of probiotics in improving symptoms and normalizing bowel movement frequency in patients suffering from constipation or diarrhea related to Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS).

New Systematic Review of Probiotics in IBS

A systematic review of the efficacy of probiotics in IBS that included 19 randomized controlled trials in 1,628 IBS patients found that “probiotics are effective in IBS, but we do not have enough information to be sure whether there is one probiotic that is particularly effective or whether combinations of probiotics are required,” according to Dr. Paul Moayyedi, the study’s lead researcher. Moayyedi and co-investigators at Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, FL and Rochester, MN; McMaster University in Ontario, Canada; University College in Cork, Ireland and Montefiore Medical Center in New York City, conducted this meta-analysis presented at the ACG Annual Scientific Meeting in Orlando.

Multi-Strain Probiotic for IBS Patients with Diarrhea

Dr. Gerald Friedman of The Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York and co-investigator Greg Biancone conducted a multi-center analysis to determine if a multi-strain probiotic was effective in reducing the frequency of diarrhea in 84 IBS patients (IBS-D). In this small study, a multi-strain probiotic administered daily for 28 days normalized bowel habits in IBS patients compared to those who received the placebo. The average number of daily diarrheal episodes in the probiotic group significantly decreased from day 1 to day 28 compared to slight decreases in the placebo group during the same period.

Analysis of Probiotics in Children with IBS

In a placebo-controlled, double-blinded, cross-over study conducted at seven pediatric GI centers in the United States, Italy, and India, Dr. Stefano Guandalini of the University of Chicago and his research team randomly assigned 59 pediatric IBS patients to receive either a probiotic agent (VSL#3®) or a placebo for six weeks. At the end of six weeks, patients switched to the other arm of the study and underwent six more weeks of treatment. Patients filled out a questionnaire to assess their symptoms and overall quality of life before and after treatment. Researchers found the probiotic agent was safe and significantly more effective than the placebo in alleviating IBS-related symptoms (abdominal pain/discomfort, bloating, stool dysfunction) in children and teenagers.

About Irritable Bowel Syndrome

IBS is a functional gastrointestinal (GI) disorder characterized by recurring symptoms of abdominal discomfort or pain associated with an altered bowel habit, either constipation, diarrhea, or both. In IBS, the GI tract may function differently, processing more slowly (or more quickly) than the average person. While the cause of this different “pace” of the GI tract in IBS is not known, and while there is no cure, there are usually ways to help manage specific symptoms. For more information on IBS, go to the ACG Web Site at www.acg.gi.org

About the American College of Gastroenterology

Founded in 1932, the American College of Gastroenterology (ACG) is an organization with an international membership of more than 10,000 individuals from 80 countries. The College is committed to serving the clinically oriented digestive disease specialist through its emphasis on scholarly practice, teaching and research. The mission of the College is to serve the evolving needs of physicians in the delivery of high quality, scientifically sound, humanistic, ethical, and cost-effective health care to gastroenterology patients.

The ACG is committed to providing accurate, unbiased and up-to-date health information. Visit the ACG Web site www.acg.gi.org to access educational resources for patients and their families spanning the broad range of digestive diseases and conditions - both common and not-so-common. Organized by disease, state and organ system, these educational materials, developed by ACG physician experts, are offered for the information and benefit of patients and the public.

###