Abstract

Title: The effects of the low-FODMAP-diet compared to traditional nutrition therapy on abdominal pain and stool changes in IBS-patients

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Background: Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), is a common functional gastrointestinal disease with a global prevalence of 10-20%. The disease not only leads to suffering and a reduced quality of life in patients - but also incurs great expenses on both health care and society due to frequent hospital visits and a reduced work productivity. In recent years, the reduction of so called FODMAPs in the diet has been presented as a means of treating IBS-symptoms.

Objective: The objective of this review was to examine the current scientific evidence on the effects of a low-FODMAP diet compared to a traditional IBS diet therapy on IBS symptoms.

Search strategy: A systematic literature search was conducted in the Pubmed, Scopus and Cochrane databases. The search terms “Irritable Bowel Syndrome” and “FODMAP” were used.

Selection criteria: The inclusion criteria were: RCTs comparing the effects of a low-FODMAP diet with a traditional IBS diet therapy on IBS-symptoms, study population consisting of adult patients diagnosed with IBS per the ROME III criteria and study language in either English or Swedish. Exclusion criteria were: Study populations with gastrointestinal diseases other than IBS and gastrointestinal surgery, except for appendectomy and cholecystectomy. Pregnant and breastfeeding women were also excluded.

Data collection and analysis: In total, two RCTs were reviewed – one Swedish study by Böhn et al. (2015) and one American study by Eswaran et al. (2016). The endpoints compared between the studies were the specific IBS symptoms of abdominal pain, stool frequency and stool consistency.

Main results: The studies showed that both interventions improved IBS-symptoms. One of the studies pointed to a significant advantage to the low-FODMAP diet compared with traditional IBS diet therapy, and the other did not show any significant differences between the two.

Conclusions: The evidence supporting the efficacy of a low-FODMAP diet over traditional IBS diet therapy is Low (++).

Keywords: IBS, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, Diet, FODMAP, “Fermentable Oligo-, Di-, Monosaccharides and Polyols”, ROME III