

Minireview

Peculiarities of the Diagnosis and Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Diseases in Elderly Patients

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Abstract

Inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD) are chronic inflammatory diseases with increasing prevalence in elderly patients. Multiple comorbidities associated with polypharmacy are to be considered in such patients and impose some limitations in the diagnosis and treatment of IBD. This literature minireview has the purpose of highlighting the particularities of the diagnosis and treatment of IBD in elderly patients. Frailty and sarcopenia are key findings in the geriatric population and need careful consideration and proper therapeutic approach when constructing the diagnosis protocol and treatment regimen in elderly patients with IBD. Considering that the treatment options for IBD in elderly patients are quite extensive, adherence to treatment is expected to be attained. Diagnosing this pathology in the elderly patients' group poses a great responsibility in weighing the risks and benefits of the procedures, as well as costs of hospitalization and comorbidities that can impede a timely diagnosis.

Keywords: inflammatory bowel disease, elderly adults, treatment, diagnosis, peculiarities.

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INTRODUCTION

Inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD), represented by Crohn's disease (CD) and ulcerative colitis (UC), have an important impact on the quality of life (QoL) of elderly adults. Elderly patients with IBD pose additional problems, related to timely diagnosis and treatment adherence. Elderly adults associate numerous comorbidities which can be mistaken for complications of IBD, thus delaying the diagnosis.

Polypharmacy is one of the most important challenges in elderly patients, because of drug-drug interactions and the risk of renal and hepatic injuries.

Environmental factors are thought to play a key role, due to the rising incidence of IBD. In the second half of the twentieth century, the increase in IBD incidence was seen, following the historically highest incidence in Western European, as well as Northern American population[1].