



SESSION 1

MENTAL HEALTH AND IBD

Supporting the Patient with Mental Health Issues

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It is well established that individuals with IBD have a greater risk for elevated mental health concerns. Depression and clinical anxiety are almost twice as likely for those with IBD compared to those without,¹ and an estimated one-third with depression and two-thirds with anxiety go undiagnosed. Research has demonstrated both brain-to-gut and gut-to-brain directional relationships between psychological comorbidities of depression and anxiety, and disease course in IBD.² These comorbidities additionally impact well-being and quality of life for the IBD patient and are associated with higher IBD-related hospitalization rates and ED visits. All of these aspects illustrate the importance of addressing mental health concerns in the management of IBD. Integrating mental health evaluation and support in the care of the IBD patient aligns with contemporary gold standard care models for IBD.³ Introducing mental health considerations early in disease care, with clear rationale as part of regular a review of systems, can help to improve awareness for both the clinician and patient, validate distress, and facilitate detection of elevated mental health concerns. Presentation of mild, moderate, or more severe anxiety or depression symptoms can guide steps of patient education, activating support systems and 'antidepressant behaviors', the use of online self-guided therapies, and linkage to mental health specialists for targeted psychological therapies such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and mindfulness, and/or pharmacotherapies.

References

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3. Schoenfeld R, Nguyen GC, Bernstein CN. Integrated Care Models: Optimizing Adult Ambulatory Care in Inflammatory Bowel Disease. *J Can Assoc Gastroenterol*. 2018;3(1):44–53.