

Inflammation in Crohn's Disease: The Evolution Continues (Eli Lilly and Company) (Complete Session)

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This symposium linked the inflammatory pathophysiology of Crohn's disease to current and emerging monitoring strategies, emphasizing that clinical remission alone is insufficient and that endoscopic healing, biomarker normalization, and potentially transmural and histological healing are necessary to prevent disease progression.

KEY POINTS

- The speaker stated that in the SONIC trial, 47% of patients in clinical remission still had endoscopic activity, and that chronic mucosal inflammation drives complications including strictures, fistulae, and need for surgery.
- The CALM study was presented showing that patients achieving deep remission (steroid-free clinical remission plus endoscopic remission defined as CDEIS <4 without deep ulcers) had approximately 80% freedom from progression over three years versus 50% progression in those not achieving it.
- Faecal calprotectin reflects neutrophil degranulation in the gut; the speaker recommended checking it at diagnosis to establish baseline values and monitoring trends, noting it is more specific for colonic disease and can be elevated by inflammatory pseudopolyps even in remission.
- Intestinal ultrasound was described as an emerging point-of-care tool for assessing transmural inflammation; the speaker reported that early biologic introduction was associated with three times higher probability of achieving transmural healing, which correlated with reduced surgery and treatment escalation.
- The speaker stated that 25% of patients with endoscopic mucosal healing continue to have histological inflammation (defined as presence of ulcerations, erosions, or mucosal neutrophils), and that persistent histological activity may predict higher relapse and treatment failure rates.

- The speaker emphasized that monitoring strategies should be individualized and reasonable, balancing ambitious treatment targets with available therapies, and that patient education about why monitoring beyond symptoms matters is essential for engagement.

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