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Summary

OPIUM TINCTURE HAS ANTI-PROPULSIVE EFFECTS IN CHRONIC DIARRHEA PATIENTS: A RANDOMIZED PLACEBO-CONTROLLED CROSS-OVER TRIAL

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Colorectal

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A randomized controlled trial in 11 patients with chronic diarrhea refractory to loperamide found that opium tincture reduced daily bowel movements and prolonged colonic transit without evidence of sedation or addiction.

KEY POINTS

- Opium tincture (30 drops daily, approximately 15mg oral morphine equivalent) reduced the number of daily bowel movements compared to placebo (median 2 versus 3, overall estimated difference -0.7, p=0.002) in patients with chronic diarrhea refractory to standard treatment.
- Colonic transit time was prolonged with opium tincture compared to placebo (median 17 hours versus 12 hours, p<0.001), while gastric emptying and small bowel transit times were not significantly affected.
- No evidence of sedation or addiction was found, with no significant differences between opium tincture and placebo in reaction time, working memory, or Subjective Opiate Withdrawal Scale scores; miosis (pupil constriction) was observed with opium tincture.
- The trial enrolled 11 subjects (mean age 45 years) with various etiologies including idiopathic, bile acid malabsorption, inflammatory bowel disease, microscopic colitis, and irritable bowel syndrome, treated for seven days in a cross-over design.
- The authors state that studies on long-term effects are needed and that the study was sponsored by an unrestricted grant from Pharmanovia.

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