GASTROINTESTINAL SYMPTOMS IN PATIENTS WITH POSTURAL ORTHOSTATIC TACHYCARDIA SYNDROME IN RELATION TO HEMODYNAMIC FINDINGS

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A Swedish cross-sectional study of 43 POTS patients found widespread gastrointestinal symptoms equivalent to moderate IBS severity, with higher heart rate acceleration during tilt testing inversely correlated with chronic GI symptom severity.

KEY POINTS

- All gastrointestinal symptom variables were significantly higher in POTS patients compared to 74 healthy controls, with nausea being most prevalent (79.1%), followed by abdominal fullness (69.8%) and bloating (66.7%).
- Total IBS severity scoring system score was 213 (135-319) in POTS patients versus 13 (0-54) in controls, and bloating and flatulence, and constipation were reported as the most severe symptoms on the VAS-IBS scale.
- An inverse correlation was found between maximum heart rate acceleration and abdominal pain (r=-0.406, p=0.007), with no positive correlations between heart rate changes and any gastrointestinal symptoms.
- When excluding seven patients with organic GI disorders, inverse correlations were observed between heart rate acceleration and abdominal pain, constipation, symptom influence on daily life, and total IBS severity score.
- The authors suggest the inverse relationship between heart rate acceleration and GI symptom severity may reflect heterogeneity in POTS pathophysiology or treatment bias.

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