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Summary

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN BIOACTIVE FOOD CHEMICALS AND SYMPTOMS IN IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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A cross-sectional survey of 204 IBS patients and 22 healthy controls found that IBS patients more frequently report extra-intestinal symptoms and 10% follow a low food chemical diet despite scant evidence supporting its use.

KEY POINTS

- IBS participants were significantly more likely than healthy controls to report extra-intestinal symptoms including headaches, migraines, fatigue, difficulty sleeping, rhinitis, urticaria, and mood disturbance (all p□0.04).
- 21 of 204 IBS participants (10%) were following a low food chemical diet targeting salicylates, amines, glutamate and other additives, compared to none in the control group.
- IBS participants were more likely to suspect at least one food chemical as a trigger for gastrointestinal symptoms (38% vs 13%, p=0.03) and extra-intestinal symptoms (30% vs 9%, p=0.04).
- The authors note that data supporting the low chemical diet is scant and safety concerns exist due to its restrictive nature potentially causing nutritional deficiencies and disordered eating.
- This survey provides context for clinicians considering dietary approaches in IBS patients who present with both gastrointestinal and extra-intestinal symptoms.

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