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Summary

THE INADEQUACY OF MALABSORPTION AS A PREDICTOR OF CARBOHYDRATE INDUCED SYMPTOMS: EXPLORING SYMPTOM BURDEN AFTER LACTOSE CONSUMPTION

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In 753 patients with functional gastrointestinal disorders, 26% of those with lactose malabsorption had no significant symptoms after lactose challenge while 45% without malabsorption experienced symptoms, indicating that malabsorption is only one factor in lactose-related symptoms.

KEY POINTS

- Among 308 patients with lactose malabsorption, 80 (26.0%) had no clinically relevant symptoms following a 50 g lactose challenge, while 189 of 445 patients (45.3%) without malabsorption experienced relevant symptoms.
- Patients with both malabsorption and symptoms (S+/M+) had significantly higher total symptom burden (148.5 mm VAS) compared to symptomatic patients without malabsorption (S+/M-, 80.3 mm VAS, $p<0.001$).
- The adult Carbohydrate Perception Questionnaire (aCPQ) is a validated, test-specific instrument for assessing gastrointestinal symptoms after carbohydrate challenge and is recommended for use with hydrogen breath testing.
- The findings have implications for both diagnosis and therapy of lactose intolerance, as malabsorption alone does not predict symptom development.

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