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Summary

PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES ON CLINICAL USE OF PROBIOTICS: A NATIONAL SURVEY OF HEALTHCARE PRACTITIONERS

Konstantinos Triantafyllou

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A survey of 185 Greek healthcare practitioners, predominantly gastroenterologists, reveals widespread familiarity with probiotics and perception of safety, but heterogeneous practices regarding indications, timing, and duration of use across gastrointestinal conditions.

KEY POINTS

- The most commonly recognized therapeutic indications were irritable bowel syndrome (87.6%), prevention of antibiotic-associated diarrhea (84.3%), pouchitis (55.1%), prevention of Clostridiodes difficile infection (50.3%), and acute diarrhea (41.1%).
- Saccharomyces boulardii (69.2%), Lactobacillus acidophilus (68.1%), and Bifidobacterium bifidum (57.8%) were the most commonly recognized prescribed strains.
- Practices varied widely: 46% always prescribe probiotics during Helicobacter pylori eradication, with 38.1% recommending duration equal to and 44.5% extended beyond the eradication regimen.
- For IBS, 69% choose multi-strain formulations, most commonly for IBS-diarrhea subtype (78.4%), but timing of response assessment ranged broadly from 7 days to 3 months.
- Apparent discrepancies in practice patterns underscore the need for continuous medical education and consensus recommendations to guide probiotic use in clinical practice.

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