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Summary

PREVALENCE OF URGENCY AND ASSOCIATED BURDEN AMONG INDIVIDUALS WITH BOWEL SYMPTOMS IN THE SWEDISH GENERAL POPULATION

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In a Swedish population survey of 825 individuals with bowel symptoms, 71% reported urgency related to bowel movements, with frequent urgency (≥50% of the time) independently associated with impaired quality of life after adjusting for other symptom severity.

KEY POINTS

- Among 535 individuals meeting Rome IV criteria for functional bowel disorders, frequent urgency was most prevalent in functional diarrhea (45%) and IBS-D (54%), but was also present in 14% of IBS-C and 6% of functional constipation patients.
- Increasing frequency of urgency correlated with progressively higher bowel symptom severity scores (median IBS-SSS 41 for no urgency, 80 for occasional urgency, 183 for frequent urgency) and worsening quality of life (median EQ-5D-5L 0.93, 0.91, and 0.88, respectively).
- More frequent urgency independently predicted impaired quality of life (β = -0.35, 95% CI -0.60 to -0.11, p = 0.005) even after adjusting for age, sex, and severity of bowel, non-GI somatic, and psychological symptoms.
- Urgency was prevalent across all bowel habit subtypes, suggesting that this symptom warrants attention regardless of whether patients have diarrhea or constipation.
- The authors conclude that the effects of current treatments on urgency as a specific symptom require further investigation.

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