

How to manage a normal life: Helpful tools for IBD patients

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Presentation

Nurses

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The speaker addressed under-recognized aspects of IBD care including fatigue management and the need for healthcare professionals to initiate conversations about relationships and sexuality with IBD patients.

KEY POINTS

- Fatigue occurs in 50% of IBD patients at diagnosis, is twice as common as in healthy controls, and is more common in Crohn's disease than ulcerative colitis and in active disease versus remission, as stated by the speaker.
- The speaker reported that in a study of approximately 250 patients, lack of energy was stated to be the most burdensome symptom, more than gastrointestinal complaints such as diarrhoea.
- The IBD Fatigue Scale is a 40-item disease-specific questionnaire that can be used in clinical settings and has been translated to many languages, according to the speaker.
- The speaker stated that evidence for fatigue interventions remains uncertain, with treatments such as self-directed stress management and physical activity showing only slight or uncertain benefit, and patients rarely achieve complete fatigue resolution.
- In Swedish and Danish studies presented by the speaker, 84 to 86% of patients reported they did not spontaneously raise questions about sexual health with healthcare professionals, citing discomfort, embarrassment, and lack of time.
- The speaker described that 64% of patients in a Swedish study wished healthcare professionals would raise questions about intimacy and sexuality as a routine part of care, and the speaker's team is developing a communication tool to help initiate these conversations.

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