

PREVALENCE OF FUNCTIONAL GASTROINTESTINAL DISEASES AMONG A COHORT OF SRI LANKAN SCHOOL CHILDREN AGED 12 TO 16 YEARS

**Niranga Manjuri Devanarayana¹, Chandralatha Adikari², Waruni Pannala²,
Shaman Rajindrajith²**

Department of Physiology, Department of Paediatrics, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Ragama, Sri Lanka

INTRODUCTION: Even though functional gastrointestinal disorders (FGID), such as irritable bowel syndrome and functional constipation, are common among children and adolescents around the world, little is known regarding their prevalence in developing countries including Sri Lanka. The current symptom based criteria (Rome III criteria) were released in 2006 and are still not widely used by paediatricians for positive diagnosis of FGID. **OBJECTIVES:** To assess prevalence of FGID among a group of Sri Lankan adolescents using Rome III criteria. **DESIGN, SETTING AND METHOD:** This is a cross sectional survey conducted in a randomly selected group of 12-16 year olds in a semi-urban school in Gampaha district. A validated, self-administered questionnaire (developed on Rome III criteria for FGID in children) was distributed after obtaining consent from the school administration and the parents. It was administered in an examination setting, to ensure confidentiality and privacy. The questionnaire was in Sinhala, the first language of the cohort. The questions were simple and easy to understand. Research assistants were present during the whole time with students while they were filling the questionnaires and explanations were given whenever the need arose. FGID were diagnosed using Rome III criteria. **RESULTS:** A total of 464 questionnaires was distributed and 427 (92%) were included in the analysis [214 (50.1%) males, mean age 14.42 years, SD 1.27 years]. Thirty seven incompletely filled questionnaires were excluded from the analysis. According to Rome III criteria, 123 (28.8%) had at least one FGID. Of them, 58 (13.6%) had abdominal pain related FGID [irritable bowel syndrome 30 (7%), functional dyspepsia 14 (3.3%), functional abdominal pain 12 (2.8%) and abdominal migraine 2 (0.46%)]. Prevalence of functional constipation was 4.2% (18). Aerophagia was seen in 27 (6.3%), while adolescent rumination syndrome was seen in 17 (3.9%). Nonretentive faecal incontinence [1 (0.23%)] and cyclical vomiting syndrome [2 (0.46%)] were rare in our group of school children. There was no age or sex difference in the prevalence of any of the above FGID ($p>0.05$). **CONCLUSIONS:** Functional gastrointestinal disorders are a significant problem in our group of school children, affecting more than a quarter of them. Irritable bowel syndrome is the commonest FGID diagnosed.