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REVIEW

Clinical practice guidelines for the management of constipation in adults. Part 1: Definition, aetiology and clinical manifestations[☆]

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Abstract Clinical practice guidelines for the management of constipation in adults aim to generate recommendations on the optimal approach to chronic constipation in the primary care and specialized outpatient setting. Their main objective is to provide healthcare professionals who care for patients with chronic constipation with a tool that allows them to make the best decisions about the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of this condition. They are intended for family physicians, primary care and specialist nurses, gastroenterologists and other health professionals involved in the treatment of these patients, as well as patients themselves. The

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guidelines have been developed in response to the high prevalence of chronic constipation, its impact on patient quality of life and recent advances in pharmacological management. The Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation Working Group (GRADE) system has been used to classify the scientific evidence and strengthen the recommendations. © 2016 Elsevier España, S.L.U., AEEH and AEG. All rights reserved.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Estreñimiento;
Guía de práctica
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Enfermedad crónica

Guía de práctica clínica sobre el manejo del estreñimiento crónico en el paciente adulto. Parte 1: Definición, etiología y manifestaciones clínicas

Resumen La guía de práctica clínica sobre el manejo del paciente con estreñimiento en los pacientes adultos se fundamenta en una serie de recomendaciones y estrategias con el objetivo de proporcionar a los profesionales sanitarios encargados de la asistencia a pacientes con estreñimiento crónico una herramienta que les permita tomar las mejores decisiones sobre la prevención, diagnóstico y tratamiento del estreñimiento. Esta guía de práctica clínica persigue una atención eficiente del estreñimiento a partir de un trabajo coordinado y multidisciplinar con la participación de la atención primaria y especializada. La guía va dirigida a los médicos de familia, a los profesionales de enfermería de atención primaria y especializada, a los gastroenterólogos, a otros especialistas que atienden a pacientes con estreñimiento y a las personas afectadas con esta problemática. La elaboración de esta guía se justifica fundamentalmente por la elevada frecuencia del estreñimiento crónico, el impacto que este tiene en la calidad de vida de los pacientes y por los avances recientes en el manejo farmacológico del estreñimiento. Para clasificar la evidencia científica y la fuerza de las recomendaciones se ha utilizado el Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation Working Group (sistema GRADE).

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Introduction

Constipation is a symptom suffered by a large number of people and which is brought about by multifactorial causes. Many people have experienced constipation at some point in their life, although it usually occurs for a limited period of time and is not a serious problem. Long-term constipation affects women and older adults more frequently. It is a disorder that has a negative effect on people's well-being and quality of life. It is a common reason for medical consultation in primary care and is treated by self-medication by a high proportion of the affected population. Knowing the causes, preventing, diagnosing and treating constipation will benefit many of those affected.

In order for clinical decisions to be appropriate, efficient and safe, professionals need to update their knowledge constantly. This clinical practice guideline (CPG) on the management of chronic constipation in adult patients sets out the efficient treatment of this disorder using a coordinated and multidisciplinary approach with the participation of primary and specialised care.

Methodology

Professional representatives of the scientific societies involved and methodologists participated in the preparation of this CPG. All the essential criteria referred to in the Appraisal of Guidelines, Research and Evaluation for

Europe (AGREE) (<http://www.agreecollaboration.org/>), a tool designed to help producers and users of CPG and considered the standard for their preparation, have been taken into account in the preparation of this guideline.

For the classification of the scientific evidence and the strength of the recommendations, the Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation Working Group (GRADE system) (<http://www.gradeworkinggroup.org/>)¹⁻³ (Tables 1 and 2) was used.

Once a complete draft of the guide had been prepared, the external reviewers, who were representatives of the various related specialties, provided their comments and suggestions.

Definition

Constipation is characterised by difficult or infrequent bowel movements, often accompanied by excessive exertion during defecation or a feeling of incomplete evacuation.⁴ In most cases it does not have an underlying organic cause and is considered chronic idiopathic constipation (CIC), also known as chronic functional constipation. In fact, CIC shares several symptoms with irritable bowel syndrome with constipation (IBS-C), although in IBS-C, abdominal pain/discomfort must be present to make the diagnosis.⁵ Even so, there are authors who consider CIC and IBS-C as 2 different entities and others that include them as subsections of the same spectrum.⁴⁻⁶

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