

COLONIC INERTIA

Constipation definition (by Rome II Criteria)

- Two or more of the following for at least 12 weeks in the preceding 12 months:
 - Straining >25%
 - Lumpy/hard stools >25%
 - Sensation of incomplete evacuation >25%
 - Sensation of blockage >25%
 - Manual maneuvers required for evacuation >25%
 - Less than three BM per week
- Loose stools are not present and there are insufficient criteria for IBS

Three main subgroups

- Normal transit constipation
- Outlet obstruction
- Slow transit constipation (STC)

Evaluation of Constipation

Colonic transit studies with radio opaque markers; balloon expulsion test, defecography, anorectal manometry.

Definition of Colonic inertia

- Severe functional constipation (as defined by Rome Criteria)
- Absence of outlet obstruction
- Delayed transit of markers, with distribution throughout the colon
- Absent or almost absent motor activity (via manometry and/or electromyography) – including response to meals
 - No pace-setter potentials (PP) – slow waves – or action potentials (AP) – fast waves.
 - No response to pharmacologic stimulation during colonic motility recording.
- May be total or segmental

Treatments

- Subtotal Colectomy
 - Benefits: removes diseased portion of bowel
 - Disadvantages: invasive, intraperitoneal
- Pacing
 - Benefits: electrodes placed by colonoscopy/fluoroscopy, can be permanent solution with temporary placement
 - Disadvantages: only worked 66%, small study

References

- Bassotti et al. Toward a Definition of Colonic Inertia. *World Journal of Gastroenterology*. 2004; 10(17) 2465-7.
- Shafik et al. Colonic Pacing. *Archives of Surgery*. 2004; 139: 775-9.

George Gantsoudes, MD
June 2, 2005