

## CORRESPONDENCE

Content

Response to "Pathologies in Irritable Bowel Syndrome"

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It is heartening to see a keen interest in our article titled "Frequency of organic pathologies in Irritable Bowel Syndrome patients" published in *JPMI* 2009;23(4);34-46<sup>2</sup>.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), by definition encompasses a symptom complex of altered bowel habits with abdominal pain / discomfort without any organic cause<sup>3,6</sup>. However, it is a well established disease entity with well defined diagnostic criteria<sup>7,8</sup> and population based studies conducted in the developed countries with large number of patients have shown that it is predominantly affecting females<sup>9</sup>.

The primary objective of our study was to know the frequency of organic pathologies in patients meeting symptoms based criteria for IBS. As it was a hospital based study, so the number of patients was quite low i.e. 85 with a majority of male patients. The male to female ratio was 4:1. These findings were not consistent with the findings of the literature from the developed countries of the west, where females are affected predominantly by IBS. The first plausible explanations to this finding may have been the fact that this was not a population based study and the number of patients was quite low. Secondly, there has been a trend noted in the Asian population with more male patients being diagnosed as IBS<sup>10</sup>.

The second interesting fact is the association of anxiety, depression and other psychiatric disorders with IBS and it is rightly pointed out that the prevalence of psychiatric disorders would have been more than the present percentages, if proper diagnostic criteria would have been used for the assessment of the psychiatric illnesses<sup>1</sup>. As mentioned earlier, this was not our aim of study and to diagnose a patient with a psychiatric illness, we referred them to the out-patient department of psychiatry, Hayatabad Medical Complex for evaluation by a psychiatrist.

In a nutshell, large population based studies need to be conducted in future with the aim to know the gender prevalence of IBS patients

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and the association of IBS with psychiatric illnesses in our society.

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