

The Impact of Inflammatory Bowel Disease in Canada 2018: Children and Adolescents with IBD

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Abstract

Canada has among the highest rates of childhood-onset IBD in the world. Over 7000 children and youth under 18 years old are living with IBD in Canada, and 600 to 650 children under 16 years old are diagnosed annually. While the peak age of onset of IBD is highest in the second and third decades of life, over the past two decades incidence has risen most rapidly in children under 5 years old. The treatment of children with IBD presents important challenges including therapeutic choices, risk of adverse events to medications, psychosocial impact on the child and family, increased cost of health care and the implications of the transition from pediatric to adult care. Despite the unique circumstances faced by children and their families, there is a lack of research to help understand the causes of the rising incidence and the best therapies for children with IBD. Scientific evidence—and specifically clinical trials of pharmaceuticals—are too often extrapolated from adult research. Health care providers must strive to understand the unique impact of childhood-onset IBD on patients and families, while researchers must expand work to address the important needs of this growing patient population.