

Prevalence and Consultation Behaviour of Self-Reported Rectal Bleeding by Face-to-Face Interview in an Asian Community

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Background and Aim: Although rectal bleeding is a common gastrointestinal symptom, there are very few community-based studies. All of these studies were conducted in the Western. So far, epidemiologic characteristics of rectal bleeding have not been defined in an Asian country. We aimed to characterize self-reported rectal bleeding and its association with functional bowel disorders in Turkey. Factors affecting health care seeking behaviour were questioned as well.

Subjects and Methods: In this study, 760 subjects were chosen randomly. Questionnaires were completed by nurses with face-to-face interview with each participant.

Results: Of the 707 (93%) subjects were included in this study, 9.5% had functional dyspepsia, 8.6% had IBS (irritable bowel syndrome), 24.5% had functional constipation, and 13.8% had functional abdominal bloating. The prevalence of rectal bleeding in the previous year was 14.7%. The recent onset of rectal bleeding was 2.7%. Rectal bleeding was more common among the subjects younger than 45 years. Subjects who had functional constipation or constipation-dominant IBS reported rectal bleeding more frequently than others. The rate of consultation was only 41.3% among the subjects with rectal bleeding. Subjects age ≥ 45 -yr and had marked bleeding or bleeding more than twice a day or fear of cancer sought health care more frequently than others.

Conclusion: Rectal bleeding is a common symptom in Turkey as in the Western countries. Advanced age and fear of cancer were independent predictors for consultation behaviour in this group.