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**Combined MRI, high-resolution manometry and a randomised trial of bisacodyl versus hyoscine show the significance of an enlarged colon in constipation**

Wilkinson-Smith V, Scott M, Menys A *et al.* Combined MRI, high-resolution manometry and a randomised trial of bisacodyl versus hyoscine show the significance of an enlarged colon in constipation: the RECLAIM study. *Gut* 2025; 74: 35-44. doi: 10.1136/gutjnl-2024-332755

Constipation affects up to 15% of the population. There is overlap between functional constipation and irritable bowel syndrome, with the pathophysiology of both poorly understood. Delayed transit, evacuatory dysfunction and abnormal sensory function, linked with an enlarged bowel, are all felt to play a role. High-resolution colonic manometry can provide insight, but is invasive and demanding.

Wilkinson-Smith *et al.,* aimed to compare manometry in these conditions with a new non-invasive measure of colonic function: MRI macrogol challenge. They hypothesise that MRI can predict response to a stimulant laxative (bisacodyl) compared with Buscopan, and test this with a double-blind, cross-over trial.

Forty-four healthy volunteers, 43 with irritable bowel with constipation and 37 with functional constipation underwent macrogol challenge to derive whole gut transit time, segmental colonic volumes and motility index. Manometry was also performed. They then underwent a randomised cross-over trial of 10 days Bisacodyl 10mg daily vs. Buscopan 20mg three times/day with pain and regularity of bowel movements measured.

There were no correlations between MRI measures of colonic volume, motility index or transit time. Colonic volumes were significantly greater in those with either diagnosis vs. healthy volunteers. Large colons predicted delayed evacuation and reduced pain with Bisacodyl. Bisacodyl increased bowel movements in both groups vs. Buscopan but caused more pain.

Wilkinson-Smith et al., highlight MRI as a novel way of measuring colonic volume, and highlight that colonic volume plays a role in these conditions, although the underlying pathophysiology remains unclear.