

Editorial

EMERGING THERAPIES IN IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME

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Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is one of the most common functional gastrointestinal disorder with estimated prevalence in general population of 10-15% in many countries of the world.¹ In Pakistan, IBS has been found to be associated with anxiety and depression in 80% of the patients, especially in health care professionals.² Many pharmacological therapies have been used and have included fiber rich diets, spasmolytic drugs and anti depressants for the treatment of this condition. The knowledge of motor and sensory responses to different stimuli in IBS patients in the pathways to the central nervous system is an important source of information for development of new molecules in this disorder.³ Although, herbal medicines of many varieties⁴ have been used, recently, tremendous progress in our understanding of this truly global disease has occurred⁵ This has lead to the development of new agents targeted at various receptors in the enteric

nervous system.⁶ Several studies from around the world³ have shown that tegaserod, a 5HT₄ agonist, has been an effective agent in constipation-dominant IBS (IBS-C).

A report in this issue of *RMJ* is a step in this direction to study these receptors and effects of various drugs on this condition.⁷ Tegaserod has been used in IBS-C with considerable usefulness in Pakistan.⁸ In addition; several other receptors have been targeted in this condition. These include 5HT₃ antagonist alosetron, 5HT₃ antagonist cilansetron, 5HT₄ agonist/5HT₃ antagonist renzapride, k-opioid agonist asimadoline, chloride channel activator loprostone, neurokinin modulator telnetant and benzodiazepine derivative dexetofisopam among several others.⁶ While research is continuing and new therapies with effects on various receptors are emerging, the effects of patient relationship in this chronic illness cannot be underscored.⁹

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