



Association of ultra-processed food intake with the risk of inflammatory bowel disease - an idea for the use of nutritional questionnaire based on several clinical cases

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The pathophysiology of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) remains incompletely understood. It is hypothesized that the activation of the intestinal mucosal immune system occurs in response to dysbiosis of the gastrointestinal tract in genetically predisposed individuals. Several studies have identified an association between the consumption of ultra-processed foods and an increased incidence and prevalence of chronic inflammatory diseases, including IBD.

At the Inflammatory Bowel Disease Centre of General Hospital Jesenice, we treat approximately 600 patients annually. As part of our clinical practice, we routinely employ a patient-reported outcome (PRO) questionnaire. Since 2020, a clinical dietitian has been included in the multidisciplinary care of our patients. In three patients with small bowel Crohn's disease, we implemented the Crohn's Disease Exclusion Diet alongside advanced biologic therapy in an effort to achieve remission.

In our clinical observations, disease flare-ups have frequently coincided with the consumption of highly processed foods. Between January and April 2025, three young male patients were admitted to our department with a first-time severe presentation of Crohn's disease. Notably, in all three cases—detailed in the accompanying poster—dietary histories revealed

regular consumption of highly processed foods preceding disease onset.

Based on these observations, we developed a nutritional questionnaire to better understand our patients' dietary habits and to integrate nutritional education into their treatment plans.

References

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