Probiotics for improving quality of life in ulcerative colitis: Exploring the patient perspective [1]

Abstract

Ulcerative colitis (UC) is known to burden patients in ways that are not always clinically apparent and therefore easily overlooked in conventional treatment regimens. The medical needs of UC patients thus may be unmet, calling for novel patient-centered approaches to alleviate disease impact and improve quality of life (QoL). Probiotics are suggested as a safe and effective addition to current regimens, but the clinical evidence base appears insufficient to support efficacy verdicts. This study therefore qualitatively explored UC’s impact on QoL from a patient perspective, and evaluated the potential of a multispecies probiotic for impact alleviation. Semistructured interviews were held with 23 UC patients, who had either opted for a trial period with the multispecies probiotic Ecologic® 825 (n=14) or had not (n=9). The thematic analysis elucidates the broad nature of UC’s impact, identifying 5 core impact domains and effects throughout. Furthermore, as patients’ attitudes towards probiotics were predominantly positive, 57% of users reported positive impact of consumption, and the vast majority of these deemed this as (highly) relevant for improving QoL, the findings favor probiotic supplementation and warrant further clinical evaluation. In this regard, defecation frequency and stool texture seem promising outcome parameters for being most often reported.

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