

World Digestive Health Day in Paraíba: A report of a social action in the northeast of Brazil



Tarciana Costa, PhD

Scientific Director of Gastroenterology Society of Paraíba (2015-2016)
Titular member of Brazilian Federation of Gastroenterology
Gastroenterology Society of Paraíba and Universidade Federal da Paraíba (UFPB)
João Pessoa, Brazil

Food intolerances are responsible for many digestive symptoms, such as bloating, abdominal distension, abdominal pain and diarrhea. In Brazil and other countries in South America, there is a high prevalence of lactose intolerance, and it is estimated that 70% of the adult population has different degrees of it, with typical clinical symptoms such as abdominal pain, flatulence and diarrhea¹. In the pediatric population, allergy to cow's

milk protein (CMPA) should be investigated when the child develops gastrointestinal symptoms when having contact with cow's milk. In Europe, the prevalence of allergy to cow's milk protein in the first year of life is 2% to 3%, and after 6 years, drops to 1%². A Brazilian study found that the incidence of CMPA is 2.2% and the prevalence is 5.7%³. Celiac disease is an inflammatory disease of the small intestine associated with permanent

intolerance to gluten, occurring in genetically susceptible individuals⁴. In the past, it was seen as rare; however, recent population studies have shown prevalence between 1:120 and 1:300 in the general population, both European and North American⁵. In Brazil, studies among blood donors demonstrated prevalence of 1:6816, 1:2737 and 1:2148, suggesting that this is not rare in our country.

The Gastroenterology Society of Paraíba (SGPB), under the management of Prof. Heraldo Rocha, PhD (2015-2016), in partnership with the Brazilian Federation of Gastroenterology (FBG), promoted a social event to celebrate World Digestive Health Day, celebrated every May 29. The event happened on May 30, 2016 in the city of João Pessoa (Paraíba/ Brazil),



Members of SGPB

in the event hall of Tambiá Shopping, located downtown. This site was chosen because it is an area with large flow of people.

This year, the theme chosen by the World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO) was “Diet and the Gut”. In our event, according to this guideline, we shared information about the most prevalent eating disorders with general public, as well as guidance on how the dietary pattern may be associated with the onset of gastrointestinal symptoms. Some specific subjects were discussed such as celiac disease, non-celiac gluten sensitivity, lactose intolerance, allergy to cow’s milk protein, functional dyspepsia, among other gastroenterological disorders associated with diet.

The event was well received by the attendees. People participated in the discussions and most of them took the opportunity to ask questions on the topic. More than one thousand people attended the event throughout the day and visited the stand. Most of them congratulated SGPB for organizing the event, connecting the medical and academic community with the general population. People of different ages and socio-economic levels were present, strengthening the reach of actions like this. For implementation of the action, SGPB had the support of the Lauro Wanderley University Hospital (EBSERH) - Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB), as well as the support of members of Integrated Gastroen-

terology League of Paraíba (LIG-PB). Present at the event were clinical gastroenterologists, gastropediatricians and resident doctors of gastroenterology from UFPB. We prepared informative printed material with illustrations on the topic discussed, that were handed out during the event.

The Gastroenterology Society of Paraíba believes in the importance of carrying out actions like this, promoting discussions about relevant issues of gastroenterology directly with the population, out of doctors’ offices. In 2015, similar action was promoted based on the theme “Heartburn,” in accordance to the theme suggested by the WGO in that occasion, and had great success among public as well. This year (2016), the scope of the event included the population more broadly, attracting adults and children, arousing curiosity and interest in nutritional care. Thus, the guidelines reached the target public in a subtle and humorous way, conveying scientific knowledge based on evidence from the medical literature to the population at large.

References

1. MONDINI L, Monteiro CA. Mudanças no padrão de alimentação da população urbana brasileira (1962-1988). *Saúde Pública*, dez.1994, vol.28, nº.6, p.433-439
2. KOLETZKO, S. et al. Diagnostic approach and management of cow’s milk protein allergy in infants and children: ESPGHAN GI Committee practical guidelines. *Journal of Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition*, v. 55, p. 221-229, 2012
3. SPOLIDORO, J. V. et al. Cow’s milk protein allergy in children: a survey on features in Brazil. *Journal Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition*, v. 29, n. 1, p. s.27, 2005
4. Kennedy NP, Feighery C. Clinical features of coeliac disease today. *Biomed Pharmacother*. 2000;54:373-80.
5. Cronin CC, Shanahan F. Exploring the iceberg - the spectrum of celiac disease. *Am J Gastroenterol*. 2003;98:518-9
6. Gandolfi L, Pratesi R, Cordoba JC, Tauil PL, Gasparin M, Catassi C. Prevalence of celiac disease among blood donors in Brazil. *Am J Gastroenterol*. 2000;95:689-92.
7. Melo SB, Fernandes MI, Peres LC, Troncon LE, Galvao LC. Prevalence and demographic characteristics of celiac disease among blood donors in Ribeirao Preto, Sao Paulo State, Brazil. *Dig Dis Sci*. 2006;51:1020-5
8. Oliveira RP, Sdepanian VL, Barreto JA, Cortez AJ, Carvalho FO, Bordin JO, de Camargo Soares MA, da Silva Patrício FR, Kawakami E, de Moraes MB, Fagundes-Neto U. High prevalence of celiac disease in Brazilian blood donor volunteers based on screening by IgA antitissue transglutaminase antibody. *Eur J Gastroenterol Hepatol*. 2007;19:43-9.