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Treatment of ulcerative colitis using fecal bacteriotherapy.

Borody TJ¹, Warren EF, Leis S, Surace R, Ashman O.

Author information

Abstract

BACKGROUND: Although the etiology of idiopathic ulcerative colitis (UC) remains poorly understood, the intestinal flora is suspected to play an important role. Specific, consistent abnormalities in flora composition peculiar to UC have not yet been described, however *Clostridium difficile* colitis has been cured by the infusion of human fecal flora into the colon. This approach may also be applicable to the treatment of UC on the basis of restoration of flora imbalances.

GOAL: To observe the clinical, colonoscopic and histologic effects of human probiotic infusions (HPI) in 6 selected patients with UC.

CASE REPORTS: Six patients (3 men and 3 women aged 25-53 years) with UC for less than 5 years were treated with HPI. All patients had suffered severe, recurrent symptoms and UC had been confirmed on colonoscopy and histology. Fecal flora donors were healthy adults who were extensively screened for parasites and bacterial pathogens. Patients were prepared with antibiotics and oral polyethylene glycol lavage. Fecal suspensions were administered as retention enemas within 10 minutes of preparation and the process repeated daily for 5 days. By 1 week post-HPI some symptoms of UC had improved. Complete reversal of symptoms was achieved in all patients by 4 months post-HPI, by which time all other UC medications had been ceased. At 1 to 13 years post-HPI and without any UC medication, there was no clinical, colonoscopic, or histologic evidence of UC in any patient.

CONCLUSIONS: Colonic infusion of donor human intestinal flora can reverse UC in selected patients. These anecdotal results support the concept of abnormal bowel flora or even a specific, albeit unidentified, bacterial pathogen causing UC.

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