

To What Extent is Treatment Available for Crohn's

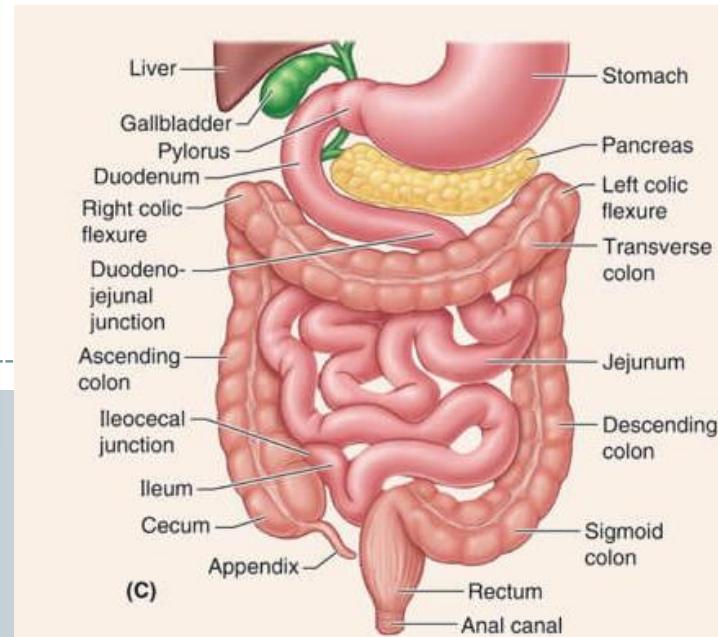
Disease Effective?

Effectiveness of Treatment:

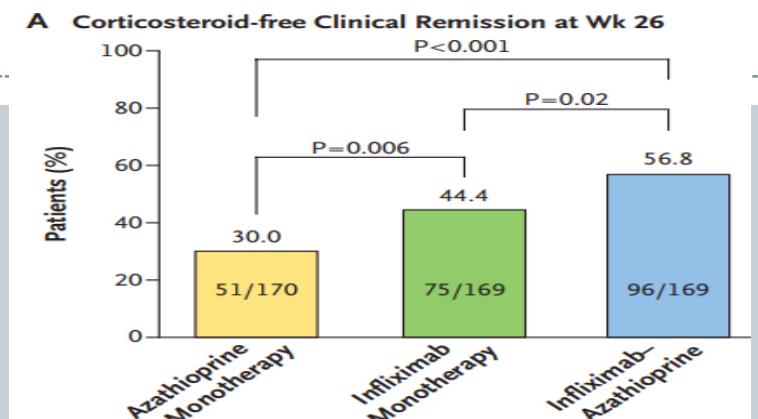
What is Crohn's Disease?

Crohn's disease is an autoimmune disease which causes inflammation of the intestines (damaged areas of the gut in between healthy areas). It is also a chronic illness, its symptoms including abdominal pain and painful bowel movements. The disease is managed with treatment that decreases the inflammation but does not cure it. This is due to Crohn's disease having no definite cause or cure, which is evidence of the continuous need for development and research within the field of medicine.

By, Hafsha Hameed Lebbe



The results of a journal study had shown that a larger proportion of patients had entered remission (temporary state in which the symptoms of the disease are less severe) earlier from combination therapy (56.8%), then infliximab monotherapy (44.4%) and Azathioprine alone (30.0%) was the least effective treatment.



Treatment available for Crohn's Disease:

- 1. Amino salicylates-** these are anti-inflammatory drugs which reduce the inflammation of the intestines. They are used for patients with mild to moderate forms of the disease and given in the form of tablets.
- 2. Corticosteroids-** these are powerful anti-inflammatory drugs given to patients with moderate to severe symptoms. However, they also suppress the immune system which results in them being prescribed for short term use.
- 3. Tumour Necrosis Factor Inhibitor-** TNF's are naturally occurring proteins which are made as a result of inflammation, therefore TNF inhibitors are used to suppress their production.
- 4. Surgery-** A surgeon can carry out a bowel resection in which a small section of the damaged intestine is removed, and the remaining ends are joined together.

Future of Treatments:

Researchers are looking into the M. Para tuberculosis (MAP) bacterium which may be responsible for causing Crohn's disease, this is due to it being found in cattle which experience similar symptoms to humans.

There is still research to be done regarding the specific role of MAP in Crohn's, the two hypotheses are:

1. Patients are selectively exposed or more genetically susceptible to infections from MAP.
2. The bacterium which is commonly found in food chains may selectively colonise in ulcers, however, it may not result in increased inflammation.

A vaccine is being produced as an anti MAP for humans which is currently being tested in clinical trials for safety and efficacy.

Effects of Crohn's Disease on the Intestines?

Crohn's Disease (CD) causes inflammation of the intestines and affects the Gastro-Intestinal Tract which consists of the mouth, oesophagus, stomach, small and large intestines and anus.

Crohn's disease can cause the inner walls of the intestines to have a cobble-stone like appearance, due to the swelling and scarring of tissue.

Fistulas are abnormal channels which connect one internal organ to another, this occurs as a result of an abscess (localised collection of pus which is the bodies response to an infection).

