

Hospital stays longer without prophylactic laxatives

May 20 2015



(HealthDay)—Failure to use prophylactic laxatives in elderly congestive heart failure (CHF) patients who use laxatives at home is associated with a significantly longer hospital length of stay (LOS), according to a study published online May 13 in the *Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology*.

Kyle Staller, M.D., from Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, and colleagues assessed [home](#) and hospital laxative use upon admission of 618 [older patients](#) (≥65 years) with a diagnosis of CHF.

The researchers found that nearly one-third (32.5 percent) were using laxatives at home, while 41.1 percent were started on a prophylactic laxative on admission. LOS did not significantly differ between patients

receiving prophylaxis and those who did not ($P = 0.32$). LOS was one day longer for patients using laxatives at home compared to those not using laxatives at home (six versus five days; $P = 0.03$). Among patients using laxatives at home, LOS was two days longer for those who were not given prophylactic laxatives on admission (eight versus six days; $P = 0.002$). Failure to use constipation prophylaxis in patients using laxatives at home was the only [independent predictor](#) of increased LOS ($P = 0.03$), in multivariate analysis.

"Our data suggest that routine use of bowel prophylaxis for elderly CHF patients with preexisting constipation may reduce LOS," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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