

Study shows rates of IBD in RI among the highest in the country, national rates climbing

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A study led by the Hasbro Children's Hospital Division of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Nutrition and Liver Diseases found that the incidence of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) in Rhode Island is one of the highest ever reported in the United States and that IBD rates nationally are much higher than previously reported. The increased prevalence of IBD cases points to a need for more research into the causes of IBD and development of more targeted treatments.

IBD, which includes Crohn's disease and [ulcerative colitis](#), is a chronic, debilitating condition characterized by inflammation of the gastrointestinal tract. Studies have shown the incidence of IBD is increasing worldwide.

The study, recently published in the journal *Inflammatory Bowel Diseases* by Jason M. Shapiro, M.D., a pediatric gastroenterologist at Hasbro Children's Hospital, examined the statewide incidence of IBD through his work with The Ocean State Crohn's and Colitis Area Registry, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-funded registry of patients with IBD in Rhode Island. The study team reviewed medical records from all practicing adult and pediatric gastroenterologists in Rhode Island, as well as practices in Connecticut and Massachusetts that may care for RI residents, to determine the true incidence of IBD in Rhode Island between the years 2008-2010.

A total of 971 Rhode Islanders were identified as having IBD by the study team. This is an average incidence of approximately 30 cases of IBD per 100,000 persons in this three-year time frame with 15.1 and 13.9 per 100,000 diagnosed with ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease, respectively. The incidence of IBD in Rhode Island was found to be among the highest in the world and higher than that previously reported from US populations in Minnesota and Northern California. In comparison, Minnesota previously reported an incidence of 8.8 and 7.9 per 100,000 for ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease between 1990-2000, while the Northern California group reported incidences of 12 and 6.3 for ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease between 1996-2002.

"Our findings show that the incidence of IBD in the United States is increasing and highlights the importance of further research into IBD, so we can better help this growing population," said Shapiro. "We still have so many unanswered questions, such as what causes IBD, how can we predict which patients will have a more complicated case and how can we identify which patients will benefit from more aggressive medical treatments early in their disease course? Most importantly, we need to focus on identifying and developing better treatments."

Shapiro stressed that further research is critical to addressing the rising prevalence of IBD and providing better treatments to the growing patient population, especially when it comes to pediatric patients. "One-third of IBD patients are diagnosed during childhood and adolescence," explained Shapiro. "Earlier intervention and identifying better, targeted treatments is especially important for this vulnerable patient population facing years of possible disease-related complications. Optimizing growth potential and ensuring normal pubertal progression in the face of IBD is a priority."

Provided by Lifespan

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