

Slow adoption of CO₂ insufflation for post-colonoscopy pain

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(HealthDay)—Despite evidence for the benefits of carbon dioxide (CO₂)

insufflation for reducing post-colonoscopy pain, adoption of this innovation has been slow, according to an Ideas and Opinions piece published online May 10 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Noting that use of CO₂ to distend the colon during endoscopy reduces patient [pain](#), Michael Bretthauer, M.D., Ph.D., from Oslo University Hospital in Norway, and colleagues discuss the slow implementation of this effective, inexpensive, low-tech innovation.

The authors note that multiple randomized trials conducted during the past 15 years have shown that CO₂ reduces post-colonoscopy abdominal pain. In meta-analysis, CO₂ insufflation was estimated to reduce the relative risk of post-colonoscopy pain by 74, 64, and 47 percent after one, six, and at 24 hours, respectively. However, in a recent survey, only 47 percent of 580 European endoscopists had heard of CO₂ insufflation and only 4 percent were using it. Barriers to implementation include the fact that CO₂ insufflation is an add-on purchase, which is not widely promoted; its nonappearance in guidelines; and the fact that post-colonoscopy pain is not considered a significant problem.

"Our inability to improve services by using something with meaningful benefit to patients and low costs, such as CO₂ insufflation in colonoscopy, is disturbing," the authors write. "We hope that the current era of patient engagement and shared decision making may at last motivate a change in endoscopy."

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