

Research predicts increase in inflammatory bowel disease in developing world

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Dr. Gilaad Kaplan presents his research findings Oct. 16 in Orlando, Fla. Credit: University of Calgary photo

For the last century, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) has been a challenge for patients and the medical community in the western world. New research published today in *The Lancet* by Dr. Gilaad Kaplan shows that countries outside the western world may now be facing the same pattern of increasing IBD rates.

"Over the past 100 years, the incidence of IBD in western countries has

climbed and then plateaued," says Kaplan, an associate professor at the Cumming School of Medicine. "Our research shows that countries outside the western world now appear to be in the first stage of this sequence."

IBD affects over 0.3 percent of the population in North America and Europe, with more than 200,000 patients afflicted in Canada. "IBD is a modern disease, growing in prevalence in North America, Europe and Australia since the 1950s," says Kaplan. "As countries in Asia, South America and the Middle East have become industrialized, IBD has emerged and its incidence is rising dramatically. At the turn of the 21st century, it became a global disease."

Done in collaboration with Siew Ng, PhD, at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the research brings together data from all population-based studies reporting on the incidence or prevalence of IBD since 1990. "As newly industrialized countries become more westernized, we can clearly see that the incidence of IBD is also rapidly rising," says Ng.

As IBD becomes a global problem, Kaplan and Ng are hopeful that a coordinated solution to prevent and treat IBD around the world could be possible. "Future research should focus on identifying [environmental risk factors](#) observed during the early stages of industrialization," says Ng. Kaplan agrees, saying, "Research into environmental intervention that helps to prevent IBD should be prioritized."

Kaplan is presenting the findings at the World Congress of Gastroenterology Oct. 16 in Orlando, Fla. "The increasing prevalence of IBD will challenge clinicians and health policy-makers," says Kaplan. "Globally, we need to prepare our clinical infrastructure and personnel to manage this complex and costly [disease](#)."

More information: Siew C Ng et al. Worldwide incidence and

prevalence of inflammatory bowel disease in the 21st century: a systematic review of population-based studies, *The Lancet* (2017). [DOI: 10.1016/S0140-6736\(17\)32448-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(17)32448-0)

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