

## Letter to the Editor

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### Overview of the common and rare gastro intestinal diseases in UAE

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Dear Editor,

One fifth of the population in UAE suffers from gastrointestinal diseases including obesity, reflux disease and fatty liver because of obesity, poor diets and close marriage.

Acid reflux, ulcerative colitis and irritable bowel syndrome are increasing in recent years.

There are also a high number of sufferers of fatty liver, caused to a large extent by the excessive consumption of sugary drinks.

Obesity is an issue that can affect the UAE's development as a nation and needs to be managed immediately and effectively, vague discomfort is usually the only symptom of a fatty liver.

Low fibre diets, lack of exercise and consuming large amounts of food and dairy products are responsible for the majority.

Genetics combined with obesity are responsible for people suffering from many disorders.

A case of fatty liver, if ignored, might escalate to an advanced liver problem later in life.

Increasing numbers of inflammatory bowel diseases especially in the young and more severe forms of Crohns disease.

Increasing numbers of cancers especially colorectal cancers affecting younger populations.

During our practice in UAE in our center we came across many rare and unusual disease presentations that were missed because of either lack of awareness or failure to check detailed history including family history and proper physical examination.

These diseases included: Celiac disease that affect 2.3 per cent of the population, inflammatory bowel diseases both ulcerative colitis & Crohns disease with obvious rise in Crohns disease.<sup>1-6</sup>

Studies on colorectal cancer showed that over 60 per cent are discovered in an advanced stage and affecting younger populations and because of that the health authorities started the program to prevent, early detect colorectal cancer.

Our initial study of over 6000 colonoscopies showed prevalence of polyps over 30 per cent and 58 colorectal cancer seen 20 per cent of colorectal cancers were below the age of 40 years.

Many families with inherited colorectal cancers including Lynch syndrome were seen.

Constipation is a real problem in UAE sometimes ending in severe disability and sometimes colectomies performed for some refractory cases.

Missed diseases included over 10 cases of multiple auto immune IGG4 related diseases that presented as pancreaticobiliary manifestation or multiple auto immune diseases, pachymengitis & mesenteric panniculitis.

Many cases of hyper elasticity syndromes associated with reflux disease & 10 cases of vascular compression syndromes mainly superior mesenteric artery syndrome.

Four cases of Behcet disease with intestinal involvement, three cases of Cowden disease, two cases of tylosis with reflux disease and esophageal & colon cancers, one case of Gardner syndrome. One case of Chédiak–Higashi syndrome syndrome with albinism & colitis.<sup>7-11</sup>

We are running monthly meetings for these unusual presentations of common diseases and rare diseases in UAE.

Awareness for young colleagues in all specialties is needed for these diseases.

Sincerely,

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