

Clinical Practice Guideline Review: Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

2021 AMERICAN COLLEGE OF GASTROENTEROLOGY (ACG) GUIDELINE RECOMMENDATIONS¹:

“We suggest that gut-directed psychotherapies be used to treat global IBS symptoms.”

- Gut-directed psychotherapies (GDPs) target the brain-gut-microbiome axis, modulating symptom perception and emotional responses (e.g., fear, catastrophizing, hypervigilance, and stress).
- According to the ACG: “In summary, we **suggest the use of GDPs in conjunction with other IBS therapies** for patients who are emotionally stable but who exhibit cognitive-affective drivers of IBS symptoms because (i) GDPs are low risk when used by qualified health professionals – no studies to date have reported serious adverse events or negative outcomes; (ii) there are long-term benefits of these therapies even after they are discontinued; and (iii) GDPs are IBS-subtype agnostic and can address the large group of patients with IBS-M or IBS-U for whom fewer pharmacological treatments are available.”
- Also suggested are “techniques that alter pain perception by activating brain centers that downregulate sensations from the gut and increase psychological flexibility, acceptance, and self-efficacy.”

RECOMMENDED MECHANISMS/INTERVENTIONS:

- A wide range of skills-based techniques including “relaxation training, cognitive reframing of unhelpful thoughts, decreasing helplessness, exposure, and behavioral experimentation around avoidance of symptoms or settings in which they occur,” as well as “mindfulness, and mindfulness-based stress reduction.”
- Since IBS is multifactorial, ACG recognizes that **personalized approaches are critical to effective care.**
- GDPs have been well-tested as adjunctive to medical therapies in moderate to severe IBS against a range of active and inactive control groups.

HOW LIN ALIGNS WITH ACG GUIDELINES:

Delivers GDPs at Scale: Lin applies gut-directed cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), mindfulness, somatic techniques, and more to personalize care and target the gut-brain axis.

Personalized, Coach-Guided Care: Patients receive consistent support to reframe symptoms, reduce avoidance, and build self-efficacy.

Designed as Adjunctive, Low-Risk Care: Covered by insurance, Lin fits alongside medical treatment for IBS-M, IBS-U, and more.

¹ Lacy BE, Pimentel M, Brenner DM, et al. ACG Clinical guideline: Management of irritable bowel syndrome. American Journal of Gastroenterology. 2021;116(1):17-44. [doi:https://doi.org/10.14309/ajg.0000000000001036](https://doi.org/10.14309/ajg.0000000000001036)