

Preface

Constipation is a very common symptom and although it rarely leads to decreased quantity of life, constipation can have a major impact on the quality of one's life. Contrary to some common misperceptions, not all constipation can be attributed to the same etiology or pathophysiology. Sometimes individuals may experience constipation on a limited basis due to a lifestyle change (like a hike to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and back in 110° weather!) But for others, this symptom can be a problem that is chronic. While for some it may represent a lifestyle issue, for others constipation is a problem of motility or it is indicative of primary gastrointestinal issues. And in others still, constipation could be a manifestation of some medical problem, or quite commonly, it may result from therapy for another medical issue.

This text offers state-of-the-art information about the pathophysiologic basis of the symptom of constipation and outlines current approaches in diagnosis and management. The reader has the benefit of reading material from world-renowned experts in the area of neurogastroenterology and medical education. Figures and tables help to enhance your learning about this problem by providing visual information, helping to make sense of a very difficult and perplexing symptom. The final chapters include a compilation of cases based on the material presented; they can be used in settings for medical students, residents, fellows, allied health trainees, and continuing professional education for physicians and mid-level providers. Finally, there is a section entitled "Putting It All Together," which provides a summary in an FAQ format.

How to Use This Book for All Users

This book aspires to the highest level of sophistication with references to the state-of-the-art literature on a very complex and interesting topic. Therefore our primary target audience includes the training GI fellow or gastroenterologist. But we also

wanted to make this book accessible to students, other trainees, healthcare professionals, and the many physicians (Internists, Family Practitioners, OB/GYN doctors, surgeons, women's health specialists, etc.) who may have an interest in this area or are caring for patients with constipation. To facilitate learning, there are a few features of this book that are unique:

1. Learning objectives precede each chapter so that it is clear to the reader what is being covered in the chapter.
2. Each chapter has a special section that summarizes the key points reviewed in the chapter. These may be helpful in particular to non-gastroenterologists who may want to recognize the key points and then determine if they need to know more detail about that particular section.
3. The book includes a compendium of cases that can be applied in many settings: for medical or allied health students, at workshops, or at GI or Departmental conferences in academic centers or hospitals.

A caveat to patients and their families and friends: Although you or your loved one may be suffering from the symptom of constipation, this book is intended for those with a sophisticated background in medical information including pathophysiology, metabolism, pharmacology, and neurogastroenterology. It may be tempting to self-diagnose or consider a solution to your problem. The authors and editor ask that you seek care from your physician, sharing any concerns or symptoms.

We wish our readers a great learning experience and we hope this book helps you to promote improvements in bowel movements and quality of life for your patients!

Farmington, CT

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Constipation

A Practical Approach to Diagnosis and Treatment

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