

## ABSTRACT

### THE EFFECTS OF GENDER ON THE REPORTING OF SYMPTOMS, THE ACCESSING OF MEDICAL CARE, AND THE APPLICABILITY OF THE ROME II CRITERIA AMONG HISPANICS WITH IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME

The prevalence of irritable bowel syndrome in the Hispanic population is not well documented. However, research indicates that women are twice as likely to be diagnosed with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) in the general population. A retrospective research design with a sample of convenience (n=139) was used to determine gender differences in the reporting of symptoms, interval from onset of symptoms to first presentation for treatment, and interval from initial presentation to final diagnosis in Hispanics with IBS. Gender differences in the reported symptoms were not significant. However, the interval between the onset of symptoms and initial presentation for medical treatment between genders was significant with females taking almost twice as long to access care. There was no significant gender difference in the interval from first appointment to diagnosis. Lastly, the symptoms reported by both genders did not fit the Rome Criteria, making this tool inappropriate for this population

Jacqueline Gregory  
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