Author’s response to reviews

Title: Gastrointestinal symptoms before and during menses in healthy women.

Authors:

Matthew T Bernstein (mattberns12@gmail.com)
Lesley A Graff (lgraff@hsc.mb.ca)
Lisa Avery (averylisa@hotmail.com)
Carrie Palatnick (cariesp@gmail.com)
Katie Parnerowski (kparnerowski@hotmail.com)
Laura E Targownik (Laura.Targownik@med.umanitoba.ca)

Version: 4 Date: 10 January 2014

Author’s response to reviews: see over
January 10, 2014

BMC Women’s Health

Dear Editor:

Re: MS: 1272433734908218
Research article
Gastrointestinal symptoms before and during menses in healthy women

The following is a point by point response to the feedback provided by the section editor and reviewer 1, for the re-submitted manuscript. The changes have been bolded in the revised manuscript.

Section Editor:
1. This study has methodological flaws which the reviewers have identified. I agree with the reviewer who suggests that diaries would have provided better data but obviously these are not available.
   Authors’ response
   We certainly agree a prospective daily diary methodology would provide data to better clarify directionality and timing in relationships among the symptoms. We previously acknowledged these limitations in the discussion section (pg 12), and we have added a sentence on pg 12 to more explicitly identify optimal methods: “A prospective approach using daily symptom diaries would be optimal for future studies.”

2. There is no attempt to try and link the pathophysiology of menstrual pain secondary to prostaglandins with GI symptoms.
   Authors’ response
   We have added some discussion on the potential pathophysiological link between menstrual pain and gastrointestinal symptoms through prostaglandins in the Discussion section on page 11.

3. There is no report of how many women declined to participate in the study. This must be added
   Authors’ response
   Please note that this information is contained in Figure 1 on page 24, which provides a participant flow chart showing the number of women approached and the number who proceeded to complete the study (i.e., n=25 or 11% did not participate). We have now added this information at the beginning of the Results section as well.

Reviewer 1:
1. Table 2 - Mood should be corrected to emotional.
   Authors’ response
   That change has been made

2. I appreciate a professional appearing table; these are not there yet.
   Authors’ response
We have adjusted the tables so the content is double spaced and the tables are all the same width. We have also separated the longer tables into two-part tables (3a/3b; 4a/4b) to more clearly delineate the premenstrual and menses comparisons. If the editor has other suggestions for improving the table appearance, we would be happy to make those changes.

Hopefully this addresses the remaining queries. We look forward to hearing from you regarding the status of the submission.

Sincerely,

Lesley Graff PhD

Associate Professor

Department of Clinical Health Psychology

Faculty of Medicine, University of Manitoba