This is an interesting multi-national study assessing healthcare costs in several European countries. The data are well documented in the manuscript and tables. The following comments are intended to strengthen the manuscript and acknowledge additional limitations

1. Biased sample: Study center recruitment in table 1 shows that most patients were attending specialist centers and only Germany and Spain had recruited participants from primary care. Therefore, this introduces referral bias in the sample studied. This needs to be acknowledged in the discussion.

2. Comparison between health care utilization and costs between specialist care and primary care patients: though the sample size is small, it may be worth contrasting the results with the specialist care cohort in the SAME countries, that is Germany and Spain.

3. You need to discuss the potential limitation introduced by the fact that the sample size required 90 per country and this was not achieved by several participating countries e.g. Sweden and France.
4. Given the small sample size in Sweden, and the specialty care cohort there, it may be that the indirect costs in Sweden need to be downplayed as they may be reflective of the same secondary or tertiary care bias which may be more accessible to higher paid patients. This may be totally wrong....and if so, you need to discuss it.

5. Some of the health care costs reflect utilization of tests. Do you have information on the types of test e.g. relatively expensive colonoscopy or CT imaging? If possible, how might these costs be reduced e.g. with biomarkers, such as stool DNA markers or blood to screen for colon cancer; with colonic transit and anorectal manometry to obtain more specific diagnosis than the exclusive symptom-based criteria for IBS-C, which do not define whether to treat rectal evacuation disorder or introduce more effective therapy earlier, and avoid emergency department attendance or even hospitalization.

6. With regard to hospitalization, there is an opportunity to discuss the results of health care utilization for GI indications from the work of Peery A, Sandler R et al at University of North Carolina in USA. Those studies also show significant health care utilization and hospitalization costs due to constipation.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

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