



COVID-19 and Paediatric Inflammatory Bowel disease: preliminary data call for provisional guidance

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So many factors related to COVID-19 outbreak remain unknown, but one is certain, the number of children with IBD infected with SARS-CoV-2 will increase over the next few weeks. With the accumulated data so far, the confidence in making clinical recommendations increase but their relevance may decrease or need modified as the outbreak continues. We are currently at the earliest point at which there are enough preliminary data to base provisional clinical guidance on. Nonetheless, these recommendations may change with time as more data accumulate, and our understanding grows. In this position paper from the Porto group of ESPGHAN, we aimed not only to provide consensus statements for managing paediatric IBD (PIBD) in the era of COVID-19, but also to collate global experience to base these statements upon.

In a global multicentre collaboration, we report the first cases of children with IBD infected with SARS-CoV-19, all of whom had mild infection. We bring systematic data from China and South-Korea, the first endemic countries for COVID-19, showing that no children with IBD were infected but of 79 children that delayed their biological treatment because of COVID-19, 17 (22%) had an IBD flare. Ten guidance points for clinicians caring for PIBD patients in epidemic areas have been endorsed with consensus rate of 92-100%.

We conclude compared with adults, COVID-19 in children appears much less severe, since, in contrast, PIBD is more extensive and has a more severe disease course the risk of inappropriate monitoring and treatment of the underlying IBD outweighs the risks from COVID-19 in children. Thus, standard IBD treatments in children including biologics should continue at present through the pandemic.

Link to the Porto group position paper regarding COVID-19 and PIBD:

<https://journals.lww.com/jpgn/Documents/COVID-19%20Paediatric%20IBD%20Porto%20group%20of%20ESPGHAN.pdf>