Malnutrition Common in IBD Regardless of Age

BY SHERRY BOSCHERT

SAN DIEGO — Malnutrition was as likely in adults with inflammatory bowel disease as it was in children, a study of data on 385 patients showed.

The investigators were surprised to find statistically similar rates of malnutrition in 264 adults with IBD, compared with 121 pediatric cases—9% vs. 10%, respectively, Valerie Marcil, Ph.D., reported in an award-winning poster presentation at the annual meeting of the American College of Gastroenterology.

Malnutrition is common in IBD, and it had been thought that the added energy costs of growth in children and adolescents would make them more likely to be malnourished than were their adult counterparts.

Anemia was more common in pediatric patients (59%) than in adults (22%), while vitamin B_{12} deficiency was seen more often in adults (12%) than in pediatric cases (5%), reported Dr. Marcil of McGill University, Montreal, and her associates. There were no significant differences between age groups in the percentage of patients who had low serum levels of iron (17% in adults and 22% in children) or folate (2% and 3%, respectively).

The investigators also divided the study participants into subgroups with Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, or unclassified colitis. The data showed that active Crohn's disease made malnutrition more likely in both adults and pediatric cases, compared with inactive disease.

Crohn's disease was the most common form of IBD in both adults (74%) and children (92%) in this study.

The cross-sectional comparison used data from four tertiary care centers in the university's IBD database. ■