

# **Efficacy and mode of action of mesalazine in the treatment of diarrhoea-predominant irritable bowel syndrome (IBS-D): a multicentre, parallel-group, randomised placebo-controlled trial**

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## **Plain English summary**

### **Treatment of diarrhoea-predominant irritable bowel syndrome**

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## Plain English summary

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a chronic condition characterised by abdominal pain or discomfort and irregular bowel habit, which has many causes involving an interaction between the gut and brain. Mast cells in the gut lining which can be activated by allergy or stress are thought to be important in causing symptoms in some patients with IBS because they can release chemicals that cause pain and diarrhoea. Currently, there are few effective treatments available to alleviate these symptoms. Recent small studies have shown that mesalazine, an 'anti-inflammatory' drug, may be able to modify and reverse the symptoms of IBS with diarrhoea. One small study suggested that mesalazine reduced mast cell numbers. This current study is one of the largest studies looking at the use of mesalazine as a form of treatment for IBS with diarrhoea. Unfortunately, this study did not show any beneficial effect of mesalazine treatment in unselected patients with IBS and diarrhoea. Potentially, there is a subgroup of patients with IBS who developed their symptoms following a bout of gastroenteritis and who appeared to benefit from mesalazine treatment, but a larger study is needed to confirm this. We did not find that the mast cell mediators released from mucosal biopsies were useful markers of disease, as they failed to correlate with any symptoms.

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