

Despite Maximal Therapy Gastroparesis Leads To Significant Disability

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Introduction:

Gastroparesis (GP) is a functional disorder resulting in dysmotility or paralysis of the stomach causing nausea and vomiting. Patients experience a range of symptom severity and frequency. Initial treatment is anti-emetics and pro-kinetics. Those not improved are offered surgical implantation with an electrical stimulation device (Enterra) and pyloroplasty. Despite maximum medical and surgical therapy, symptoms often result in reduction in capacity for one to work and provide adequate basic income. Many GP patients apply for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) by the US Federal government to have adequate income and fulfill basic needs.

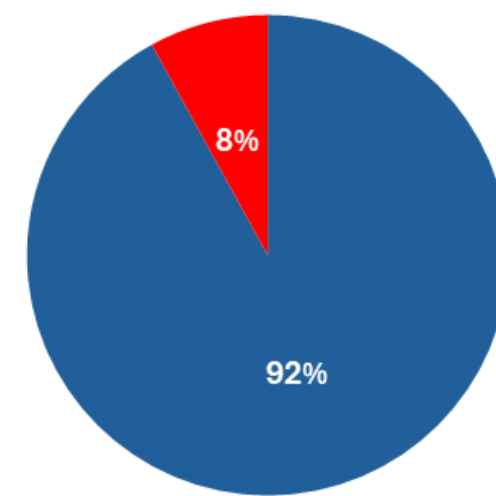
Materials and methods:

After IRB approval and informed consent, we administered a survey questionnaire to patients with GP who had previously undergone both pyloroplasty and insertion of an electrical stimulation device (Enterra). Twenty-five agreed to participate by answering 13 questions regarding hospitalizations, symptoms, and adverse effects on daily living.

Results:

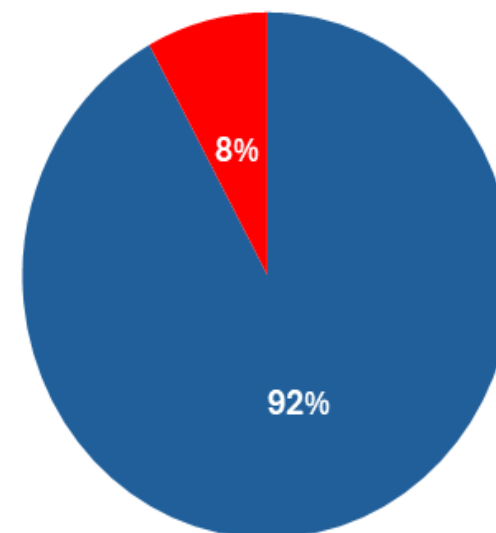
Patients were hospitalized on average 3.2 times/year with an 8.6 day average LOS. Patients experienced symptoms of nausea and vomiting on average 5 day/week. Most (23/25) patients reported that the GP symptoms prevented them from fulfilling their personal and professional obligations leading to negative feedback and consequences. 21/25 surveyed patients reported the need to extend deadlines to successfully accomplish tasks. Most (16/25) patients reported feelings of being unfairly judged or marginalized by members of the medical community during majority of interactions. Of those patients surveyed, 52% had applied for SSDI. Thirteen patients applied and were initially denied SSDI. The average SSDI applicant had applied 1.76 times, a costly and arduous process.

Reported negative professional experience with gastroparesis



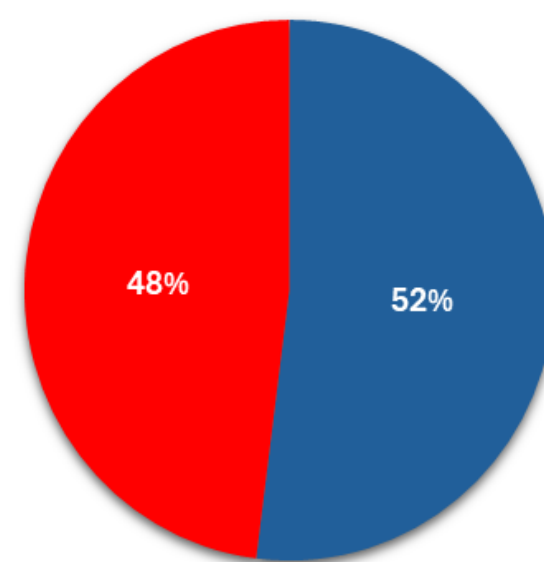
■ Reported negative associations with GP ■ No reported associations with GP

Effect on productivity



■ Negatively affects productivity ■ Not reported to affect productivity

Social Security Disability Income



■ Have applied ■ Have not applied

Discussion / Conclusion:

Gastroparesis remains a debilitating disease in most patients, despite best efforts by medical and surgical interventions. These data support the fact that this condition remains poorly understood and treated. Further, that GP leads to disability and decreases one's ability to care for themselves.