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## New Studies Examine the Evidence on Probiotics in IBS

A Novel Probiotic -- B. infantis 35625 -- Shows Promise in Normalizing Bowel Movement Frequency

**HONOLULU, October 31, 2005** -- A new study of the probiotic strain *B. infantis 35624* shows promising results in normalizing frequency of bowel movements in patients suffering from constipation or diarrhea – the two ends of the spectrum in Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). Probiotics, viable microorganisms with beneficial physiologic or therapeutic activities, were the subject of several analyses presented at the 70<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting of the American College of Gastroenterology. Recent studies have suggested a role for probiotics in treating IBS.

Dr. Eamonn M.M. Quigley and colleagues at University Cork College, Ireland and the University of Manchester in the U.K. presented the results of a subset analysis of a trial of the novel probiotic strain *B. infantis 35624* concerning 85 women with IBS who received the probiotic and 80 women who received placebo for four weeks. These researchers found that use of this probiotic strain significantly normalized bowel habit among IBS patients with diarrhea or constipation, increasing the number of bowel movements in constipated patients and reducing frequency in those with diarrhea.

Researchers at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN, conducted a meta-analysis of clinical trials of probiotics in IBS, examining seven randomized, controlled trials in their research. Specifically, they looked at improvement in the symptom of bloating. There was a significant variation in the effect of probiotics across the studies, and the Mayo researchers concluded that these studies reveal only a modest improvement in bloating, but they note that larger trials are needed.

A team of investigators at the University of New Mexico conducted a systematic review of the safety and efficacy of probiotics in IBS that included eight randomized clinical trials in adults.

The New Mexico group noted that there was large variation among the studies, and that many of the trials included only a small number of patients. "We found that various probiotic regimens may be useful in IBS, but larger trials are needed to verify findings from the smaller studies we analyzed," said Dr. Paveen Roy, the study's lead researcher.

## About Irritable Bowel Syndrome

IBS is a functional gastrointestinal (GI) disorder characterized by recurring symptoms of abdominal discomfort or pain associated with an altered bowel habit, either constipation, diarrhea, or both. More than 58 million people suffer from IBS, which affects more women (80%) than men. IBS is a real medical condition, but it is not life threatening, and will not lead to other serious diseases. In IBS, the GI tract may function differently, processing more slowly (or more quickly) than the average person. While the cause of this different "pace" of the GI tract in IBS is not known, and there is no cure, there are usually ways to help manage specific symptoms. Physicians now have more scientific knowledge and an improved range of treatment options that can provide relief for IBS sufferers. The American College of Gastroenterology has resources for patients with IBS online at <a href="www.ibsrelief.org">www.ibsrelief.org</a> and free educational materials are available by calling ACG's toll-free hotline 866-IBS-RELIEF.

## About the American College of Gastroenterology

The ACG was formed in 1932 to advance the scientific study and medical treatment of disorders of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract. The College promotes the highest standards in medical education and is guided by its commitment to meeting the needs of clinical gastroenterology practitioners. Consumers can get more information on GI diseases through the following ACG-sponsored programs:

- 1-800-978-7666 (free brochures on common GI disorders, including ulcer, colon cancer, gallstones, and liver disease)
- 1-866-IBS-RELIEF and www.ibsrelief.org (free educational materials)
- 1-800-HRT-BURN (free brochure and video on heartburn and GERD)
- www.acg.gi.org (ACG's Web site)

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