

**GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET**

Master thesis

ADHERENCE TO DIETARY TREATMENT IN RELATION TO SYMPTOM IMPROVEMENT – THE CARIBS (CARBOHYDRATES IN IBS) STUDY

Diet plays a key role in the management of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). Lately, several different dietary regimes have been shown to effectively reduce symptoms of IBS, and to improve quality of life. The current IBS clinical dietary guidelines, according to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) emphasizes the importance of healthy eating patterns as first-line dietary advice. These recommendations include having a regular meal intake, to take time to eat and restricting intake of coffee, tea, fizzy drinks, alcohol, and whole grains. For patients who do not get adequate symptom relief by these initial dietary modifications, a more restrictive dietary approach, known as the low FODMAP (fermentable oligo-, di-, monosaccharides and polyols) diet, may be utilized. The low FODMAP diet limits intake of short chain carbohydrates that are poorly digested and osmotically active, thus reducing the delivery of fermentable substrates and water to the colon. In recent years, it has also been proposed that the tolerance of sugary and starch-rich foods in general can be reduced, partly due to variations in the sucrase-isomaltase enzyme complex. Reducing the total amount of carbohydrates in the diet could thus potentially have a beneficial effect in IBS.

In the CARIBS study, we have evaluated the efficacy of a combination of the low FODMAP diet and the traditional dietary advice recommended in the NICE guidelines, versus a diet low in total carbohydrates. Both diets had similar efficacy after the four-week intervention, and the effectiveness largely persisted over a six-month follow-up period.

We now aim to study if adherence to the dietary intervention was a predictor for symptom response, i.e., if better adherence led to a greater symptom response. Also, we aim to study if long-term adherence to the dietary regime led to greater symptom reduction in the long term. Data regarding which types of foods that the study participants struggled most with during the intervention period will also be reported.

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