

# Lactulose hydrogen breath test and functional symptoms in pediatric patients

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**Background** The role of small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO) in functional digestive disorders in the pediatric population is a matter of controversy, since methods currently used to establish this diagnosis are difficult to interpret. The aim of this work was to analyze the characteristics of the lactulose H<sub>2</sub> breath test (LHBT) in children with functional gastrointestinal symptoms according to more recent criteria. **Methods** Seventy-two patients and 17 controls were enrolled. A questionnaire was administered regarding digestive symptoms (abdominal pain, bloating, vomiting, and bowel-movement disorders). A lactose hydrogen breath test was performed to rule out lactose malabsorption and a LHBT was used to measure the time elapsed between lactulose oral ingestion and an increment of H<sub>2</sub> concentration of 20 ppm over basal. **Results** There were no differences of age and gender between patients and controls. Mean time to 20-ppm change was shorter in patients ( $56.3 \pm 3$  min) compared to h