

Sherbrooke, November 14<sup>th</sup> 2016

Drs. Damian Gardia-Olmo  
Stephen C Strom  
Andrzej Tarnawski  
Editors-in-Chief  
World Journal of Gastroenterology

**Manuscript:** “Non-invasive stimulation techniques to relieve abdominal/pelvic pain: is more always better?”

Dear Drs. Garcia-Olmo, Strom and Tarnawski,

Chronic abdominal and pelvic pain are major challenges for healthcare professionals. Recent studies have suggested that non-invasive brain stimulation techniques, such as transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS), could represent an interesting therapeutic avenue for individuals suffering from chronic pain conditions.

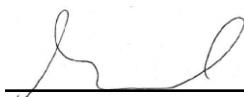
In this letter, we describe the results observed in nine of our patients. Patients were randomly allocated to receive either tDCS and TENS (another neurostimulation technique frequently used in pain patients and targeting peripheral nerves) or TENS alone. Based on the results of a recent study by Schabrun and colleagues (Schabrun et al. *Brain stimul.* 2014; 7: 451-459), we postulated that the combination of tDCS and TENS would be more effective to reduce pain than TENS alone. Contrary to our hypothesis, we observed that combining TENS and tDCS did not to provide additional benefit compared to TENS only, hence questioning the utility of non-invasive brain stimulation techniques in this population.

We believe that these observations will be of interest for clinicians working in gastroenterology and will stimulate discussions regarding the utility of neurostimulation techniques in patients suffering from chronic abdominal and pelvic pain. We also believe that our results will be useful for researchers working with non-invasive brain stimulation techniques, by raising important issues to be considered in future studies (e.g., the necessity to evaluate the effect of multiple/consecutive tDCS sessions).

We attest that our work conforms to the ethical standards of the Research Centre on Aging of the CIUSS de l'Estrie CHUS, and that all authors have substantially contributed. This letter has not been published elsewhere, nor is it submitted to any other journals for publication. None of the authors declare competing and financial interests.

We hope that the material is suitable for your journal, and urge you to please contact us if you require any further information.

Cordially yours,



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